

# Tenantmatters

'OUR HOUSES, YOUR HOMES'



**MANORESTATES**  
Housing Association

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Our Office will be closed on the following dates:**

- Friday 7th April and Monday 10th April
- Monday 1st May
- Monday 8th May
- Monday 22nd May and Tuesday 23rd May
- Friday 30th June and Monday 3rd July

While the office is closed, you can still access our emergency repairs service by contacting the following numbers:

For all gas and central heating repairs, contact **Lothian Gas** on **0131 440 4666**

For all other repairs, contact **Novus** on **01506 242 120** or **0131 510 8540**

Please note that staff will be unavailable between 9.00a.m. and 11.00 a.m. every Wednesday for staff training. Our office is also closed 12.30pm to 1.30pm for lunch, we close at 3.30 on Fridays.

If you are planning to visit us please make sure our office is not closed as you may not be able to be seen by a staff member if you attend.

We would recommend that if you need to speak to a specific member of staff you contact ahead of time to arrange an appointment.

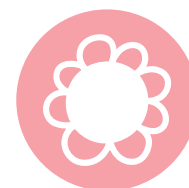
## FOR INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE!



[www.manorestates.org.uk](http://www.manorestates.org.uk)

## WELCOME TO YOUR SPRING NEWSLETTER

Welcome to your Spring newsletter. It is encouraging to see the first signs of spring beginning to appear – especially the lighter mornings and evenings.



The start of a new financial year is always a busy time for Association staff, with the requirement to finalise accounts and submit various returns to the Scottish Housing Regulator and other bodies.

Our main priority, though, remains our commitment to providing excellent services to tenants and staff will continue to work hard to make sure this happens.

We know that sometimes things do go wrong and we want to be honest and transparent about how we deal with these issues – please see the separate article about complaints and get in touch with us if there are any aspects of the service you are unhappy with.

● We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative, if there is any other information you would like us to include, please contact **Alasdair Fraser** at the office **0131 510 8540** or email [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk).

## BOARD NEWS

**As you will already know, the Association is governed by a Board made up of volunteers who bring a range of skills and experience to the organisation. The Board meets at least eight times per year, usually on the last Wednesday of each month.**



The Board's main remit is to agree strategic plans for the future of the Association, keep a close eye on financial issues and monitor performance against targets in key areas.

Recent issues considered by the Board include:

- Approval of the Association's budget for 2023/24
- Review of complaints made to the Association and how these have been dealt with
- The contract for dealing with repairs
- Update on the Association's Strategic Plan for the period 2022 - 2027 (Year 2 update)

All of the work that the Association does is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator. One of their requirements is that each year the Board has to submit an **Annual Assurance Statement**.

We will be reviewing the Assurance Statement to be sent to the Regulator in October. This year there will be a focus on our approach to ensuring tenant safety – if you would like to like to be part of that review, please contact **Carolyn Hughes**.

More information about the Board is available on our website where you can also view minutes of recent meetings

<https://www.manorestates.org.uk/tenants/publications/>

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES OR COMMENTS REGARDING**

**THE ASSOCIATION'S BOARD, PLEASE CONTACT CAROLYN HUGHES**

**AT THE OFFICE 0131 510 8540 OR EMAIL [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk)**

## STAFF CHANGES

The Association has had a number of staff changes in recent months – details below.



### Property Services Team

**Lennox Scoburgh** and **Craig Neilson** have been awarded full time contracts from 1 January 2023, joining **Lisa Spencer** and **Louise Hastie** in provision of Admin services for the team. **Glyn Bills** has joined, on a temporary basis, and **Alisa Gashi** has now left to spend some time travelling.

**Ward Linney** has been successful in securing the permanent full time role of Project Contract and Compliance Coordinator - he arranges our Contract Procurement and planned maintenance works, ensures our asset database has all the correct entries and also manages our compliance records.

### Corporate Services Team

**Iwona Nowak** joined our Corporate Services Team on 9 January 2023 as our Senior Finance Officer, replacing **Vicky Woolf** who left the Association last year.

### Housing Management Team

After a successful recruitment process our Income Assistant, **Esme McLeod**, will be moving from her secondment to a permanent full time member of staff from 1 April 2023. In addition, we will be increasing our Welfare Rights Service provision and **Anna Riva** will be with us for an additional day each week.

We welcome all our new staff to the Association and look forward to working with them all in the coming months.

## WORRIED ABOUT THE INCREASE IN ENERGY COSTS?

★ For many of our tenants, difficulty paying for heating is a real issue. We know that with the increasing fuel costs it can be difficult to heat your home whilst keeping an eye on the bills.

This will mean that many of us may have to limit their energy usage which can lead to poor health and suffering.

We know that this will be a very anxious and worrying time of year and many tenants are worried about how they will manage any increased outgoings. If you are struggling please get in touch with our Housing Team on **0131 510 8540 option 5**.

### Maximise your Income

We can help you to make sure you are claiming the correct benefits. This could increase your income as well as make you eligible for other types of assistance. If you are worried about fuel costs get in touch.

## COMPLAINTS

We always seek to provide the best possible services to our customers. We do recognise that things can go wrong on occasion and when that happens, we want you to let us know about it. We will try to resolve the matter for you as soon as possible.

Some issues that come to our attention are more serious or complex matters. These cases are likely to need more detailed investigation and are usually referred to senior members of staff to review. In accordance with our Complaints Procedures, we must respond within 20 working days or let you know of the reasons for any delay.



## YOU SAID, WE DID

A recent complaint included information that a gas supply had been capped. A gas supply is usually capped if there are no funds on a pre-payment meter, which means that we cannot carry out the required annual gas service.

In this case, we recognised that we could have done more to help the tenant to resolve the matter. As a result, we:

- We apologised to the tenant
- Gave information regarding energy advice available that would help with any debt on the meter
- Amended our procedures to ensure that we seek to engage with tenants in this position at an earlier stage

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the Association's services, please get in touch – we will do our best to help you.

## PAYING YOUR RENT

★ Have your circumstances changed or has your income reduced?

We understand that the current cost of living crisis has put a strain on finances however we would encourage you to think twice about delaying your rent or arrears payments. People who opt to miss their regular payments then struggle to catch up with the missed payments meaning arrears continue to increase.

If you are experiencing difficulties paying your rent, please contact our Income Assistant, **Esme McLeod**, immediately. We will try to help you access support and reach a reasonable arrangement to pay any debts by instalment and we can also refer you to our Welfare Rights Service for support.

**CONTACT ESME - 0131 510 8540 OPTION 5**

**OR [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk)**





## CONTACT AND HOUSEHOLD DETAILS

★ **It is important that you keep us updated with any changes to your contact details or who lives in your household.**

We will be sending out household details forms to all our tenants over the coming months for you to return with any updates.

It is extremely important that you notify us immediately if anyone moves in or out of your home. We can only take account of any changes from the date you notify us and this could affect future tenancy issues, for example, who would be able to succeed to the tenancy following the death of the tenant.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS MATTER OR ARE UNSURE WHAT YOU SHOULD DO, PLEASE CONTACT the Housing Team on 0131 510 8540 option 5**



## GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARD

★ **We ran a Good Neighbour Award in our last newsletter with a deadline of 31 January 2023. Tenants were invited to nominate a neighbour who they feel has made a difference on their estate.**

We are pleased to announce that the winner of the award was **Mr Duff** at **Tressillian Gardens**. Mr Duff was nominated by a neighbour who noted that he has made a difference in their lives arranging events at the local community centre for residents.

Mr Duff was presented with a **£100 gift card** at one of the regular bacon roll mornings.



Mr Duff



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKS

★ **It's important we ensure that the electrical supply and installations in your home are safe.**

We test and inspect all the homes we own (and any communal areas). We also test and inspect properties before re-letting them to new tenants. This check is called an Electrical Installations Condition Report (EICR) and it is carried out every five years.

You'll need to make sure we can access your home for the appointment. When we come to your home we'll be as thorough as we can by ensuring the consumer unit (or Distribution Board), wiring and electrical accessories are thoroughly tested and inspected for faults.

### What steps do we take to complete the EICR?

- ✓ We will contact you before your electrical safety check is due to arrange an appointment. We will aim to offer an appointment that is convenient to you.
- ✓ A qualified electrician will visit you on the day of your appointment to complete the safety checks. It should take four hours to complete.
- ✓ If we find any emergency repairs that need to be carried out as part of your visit, we will complete these before we leave. For any other repairs, these will be booked at a later date.
- ✓ We keep a record of the last checks done and will get in touch to let you know when you're due the next one.

### What do you need to do?

- ✓ When we contact you about your electrical safety check, you must arrange an appointment with our contractor. We must complete an EICR inspection, and it is a condition of your tenancy is that you allow access for us to complete it.
- ✓ Once we have confirmed an appointment, it is important that you are in on the agreed date and time to provide our electrician access so they can complete the safety check.

## TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

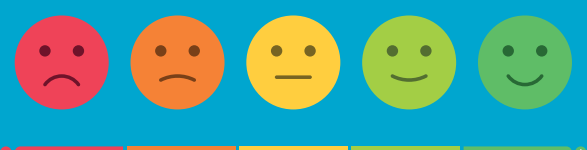
**Again, thank you to all tenants who completed the Tenant Satisfaction Survey.**



**Miss W** at **Balerno** is our Tenant Satisfaction prize draw winner – Miss W won £100 for her feedback with our consultants carrying out our tenant satisfaction survey.

We have yet to complete full analysis of the results of the survey and will be reporting these in the next edition of the newsletter. If you would like to be involved in

reviewing the results and develop a plan to identify where the Association needs to take action to improve, please contact **Carolyn Hughes** at the office **0131 510 8540** or email [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk).





## WELFARE RIGHTS SERVICE



**At the end of last year our Welfare Rights Officer Anna Riva gave a presentation at our Centres at Greenlaw Rig, Sutherland Street and Tressilian Gardens.**

The main focus was to make sure tenants did not miss out on a benefit check and possible entitlement to a range of benefits.

We are happy to say 11 tenants took the opportunity to have their benefits checked and so far we have results on 8 successful claims for benefits which include 5 claims for Attendance Allowance, 1 Housing Benefit Claim, and 1 Council Tax Reduction claim. There was also 1 Grant Award to help with household items.



In addition, 3 other checks were carried out and the tenants fortunately had all the correct benefits in place.

Many thanks to those who attended and if anyone who now wishes to have their benefit income checked please contact the **Housing Team** on **0131 510 8540** or at [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk) for a referral. (You do not have to live in Retirement Housing to access this service).



## RUBBISH DUMPING



**We continue to see rubbish being dumped on and around our estates by residents.**

This is happening in the common stairs and communal areas. We would like to remind residents that rubbish should not be dumped anywhere on the estate especially in the common stairs. Rubbish includes items like old furniture and sofas.

There are also a lot of items being stored in common stairs including prams and children's toys - this can cause issues where a common stair is an emergency access in case of a fire.

You can report any build-up of rubbish or fly-tipping to Edinburgh Council on [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/litter-flytipping/flytipping](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/litter-flytipping/flytipping).

If you have any items you need to dispose of you can arrange an uplift at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/specialuplift](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/specialuplift) or visit [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycling-3](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycling-3) for details on how to recycle unused items.

## CONTACT MANOR ESTATES HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD.

Suite 4  
5 New Mart Place  
Edinburgh  
EH14 1RW

Tel: 0131 510 8540  
Email: [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk)  
Web: [www.manorestates.org.uk](http://www.manorestates.org.uk)



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## GAS SERVICING AND GAS SAFETY

**We want to make sure that all homes are safe and secure. Gas safety is a particular concern as the consequences of faulty systems or appliances could be extremely serious, even deadly.**

That is why we currently employ Lothian Gas to carry out an annual service and safety check in all properties where there is gas-fuelled heating, most of our properties. There are two issues that occasionally present us with difficulties in carrying out this work.

- It is a legal requirement that we carry out gas safety checks on an annual basis to keep you and your family safe. This means it is incredibly important that you allow us access to enable us to do so. Sometimes we have to force access into people's homes, action that we will only ever take as a last resort, but one that could also result in you being billed for the cost (currently around £275)
- If you have a pre-payment meter and there is no credit, we cannot carry out the safety check. In these circumstances we have to 'cap' the supply. If you subsequently top up your meter, you will be unable to use gas until we can 'uncap' the supply and carry out the service.

If you are having difficulties keeping your pre-payment meter topped up, please contact us to see if we can help you. We can sign-post you to external agencies that may be able to offer advice and assistance. Our Welfare Rights Officer can also offer a benefit check to make sure you are receiving everything you are entitled to.

## QUARTERLY WINNERS FOR LOTHIAN GAS PRIZE DRAW

**Jul – Sept 2022**  
**Ms P, Niddrie Mill**

**Oct – Dec 2022**  
**Mr E, Niddrie Mill**



**Each tenant will receive a B&Q gift card for £25.**

Your feedback is important to us and to the contractors we use as it helps us to monitor performance & can lead to making adjustments to improve service delivery for future planned maintenance contracts.

## MANOR ESTATES TENANT PORTAL

Have you signed up for our new portal? The new portal allows you to check what information we hold about you, your rent account details (including printing a rent statement) along with recent repairs information.

You can visit the portal from our website [www.manorestates.org.uk](http://www.manorestates.org.uk). Please note this is a new service so we ask that you bear with us whilst we deal with any teething problems that arise.

**PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE IF YOU**

**HAVE ANY FEEDBACK OR SUGGESTIONS**

**0131 510 8540 OR EMAIL [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk)**