

Housing Matters

Taigheadas na Gàidhealtachd

Autumn 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Alison Clark – Chief Officer for Housing and Communities

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of our Tenants Newsletter

Welcome to this edition of the Tenants Newsletter. It is just over a year since I took up this post, and I continue to be impressed by the dedication of both the housing staff teams and the tenant volunteers who give up their time. I have enjoyed meeting and hearing from tenants through the forums and through estate walkabouts.

It has been a busy year, with a focus on delivery of energy efficiency works across a number of properties, continued positive performance around repairs, a new tenant engagement strategy agreed and ongoing support from our housing management team to tenants in arrears. My thanks go to the tenants who were part of the team developing the new Domestic Abuse Housing Policy to support those affected by domestic violence. This will be considered at the Housing and Property Committee in November.

The November Committee will also see consideration of a proposed Financial Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), along with proposals for a long-term rent strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that the HRA is in a strong and sustainable position that can deliver on the priorities of tenants. The newsletter gives an update on this year's rent consultation which will include proposals for the new 5-year rent strategy. It is hoped this

approach will also help tenants budget.

It is essential that we hear from you about the housing services that matter most to you and what you want your rent money to be spent on. The Council will meet to decide on rents for next year in January 2026 and your views are important as they guide Elected Members in their decision-making.

This issue also features information on how to access the report detailing how we performed as a landlord over the last year. This is called the Annual Customer Report and is based on the information we provide to the Scottish Housing Regulator each year.

Finally, there is also a lot of positive news about the ways in which tenants have been helping to shape our policies and the impact they have had on ways in which we communicate. I would encourage tenants to get in touch and participate in the upcoming opportunities detailed in this newsletter- the more tenants who can help with shaping housing services, the better.

**Alison Clark, Chief Officer
Housing and Communities**



Annual Report to Customers 2024-25

Every year Highland Council submits a performance report, known as the **Annual Return on the Charter**, to the Scottish Housing Regulator. This allows an assessment to be made on how Highland are performing against a set of outcomes, known as the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The full report can be found here <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/landlords/highland-council/>.

We've asked our tenant volunteers what information they find interesting and important, so this year the customer report summary will look a bit different based on this feedback and we are extremely grateful for this input.

The report summary can be accessed here: <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/3VI0U7g7fOOL1Kvj?ref=Link&loc=play>

If you would like a paper copy, or if there are any areas that you would like more information about, then please get in touch by contacting tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk.



Getting Involved

There are lots of ways to get involved and have your say about Housing. This year we have received invaluable input from tenants helping to shape our policies and the ways we communicate with tenants.

The new **Highland Tenant News Bulletin** is a regular online update of tenant participation activity across Highland and keeps tenants informed of events and meetings taking place as well as celebrating tenant group success. The current format of the bulletin was selected as it provides the best experience for tenants who may use screen readers and can be viewed in an accessible format as well as downloaded and printed. This was a direct result of tenants advising us what they need to be able to access our communications.

Tenant involvement continues to play a key role in shaping housing policy and service delivery. Over the past year, tenant volunteers have contributed meaningfully to several strategic developments including the Contractors' Code of Conduct and the Annual Review of the Tenant Participation Action Plan; and will be invited to contribute to the review of the Domestic Abuse Policy, Allocations Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy and the upcoming Rent Consultation.

The Highland Area Tenant forum continues to meet throughout the year where tenants discuss and decide the agenda and each meeting aims to focus on one specific service area such as repairs, capital improvements, and tenant participation. Local in person forums have also been restarting in Lochaber and Caithness and Sutherland. The next Highland Area forum will take place online in November and will be focussed on the upcoming rent consultation.

If you are interested or would like to find out more about any of the opportunities to participate, please contact the team on tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk or speak to your local officer.



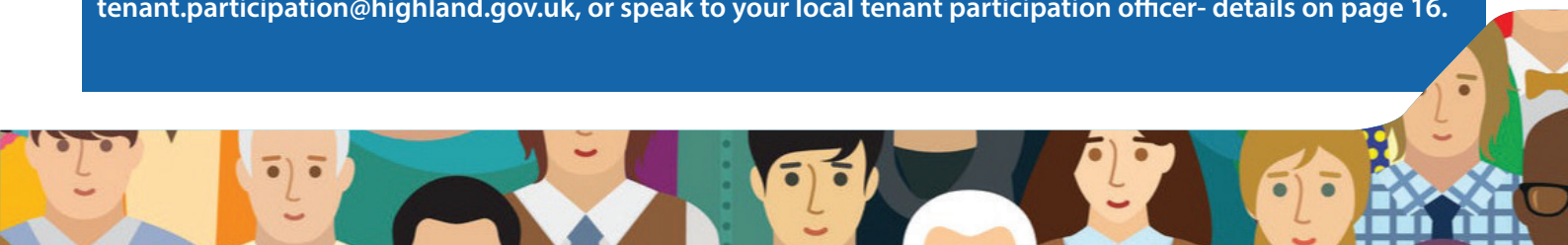
Rent Consultation 2026 - 2027

Throughout November and December, we will be seeking your views on the proposed rent increase for 2026-27 and we will be asking you to tell us what is important to you. We will contact you by email, text, or letter and you will be invited to complete a short survey. We will also be hosting a number of drop-in sessions where you can come and speak with one of the team and we can record your feedback.

The rent setting consultation will include information on how your rent money is spent, what the costs of delivering housing services are, and the impact of rising costs.

The rent consultation this year will be different than before as it will focus on proposals around a 5-year rent strategy. A long-term strategy will hopefully provide tenants with some assurance as to household budget management in the next 5 years. It will also incorporate tenant priorities around issues such as maintaining existing services, increasing investment in capital improvements and increasing the new build programme.

If you would like to discuss this with us in person, by telephone or in a virtual meeting then please email us on tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk, or speak to your local tenant participation officer- details on page 16.





Garden Competition



BEFORE



AFTER

Thank you to all the tenants who submitted photos for our tenant garden competition. There really are some very beautiful gardens with dedicated tenants caring for them. After much deliberation, Alison Clark, Chief Officer- Housing and Communities, chose the **winning garden** in Lochaber belonging to **David Johnstone**. David completely transformed his garden from a very overgrown area to an immaculate raised bed full of beautifully maintained shrubs and flowers.

Our **runner-up garden** is located on the Isle of Skye and belongs to **Mr and Mrs Mahon**. They keep a very tidy garden full of characterful garden ornaments and pretty hanging baskets and Alison noted the creative use of space.

Both prize winners will be contacted in due course and presented with their prizes.



Contact Scotland BSL is a video relay service, providing instant British Sign Language (BSL) video interpreting for all calls to Scotland. Contact Scotland BSL is funded by The Scottish Government to enable full access to make phone calls **24 hours, 7 days** a week in British Sign Language.

It is primarily for any Deaf person to make free calls to any Scottish services. They can also call family, friends, businesses, or services anywhere in the UK. Services etc, can also call back the Deaf person if Deaf person is registered with Contact Scotland BSL.

If you are a Deaf, you can use Contact Scotland BSL on a computer, smartphone or tablet. If you are using a PC or Mac, you can visit Contact Scotland BSL web through our website:

service.signvideo.uk/contactscotland

or you can download our free Contact Scotland BSL app via smartphone or tablet:

<https://contactscotland-bsl.org/download>



Scotland's national BSL
interpreting video relay service
24 hours | 7 days a week | Non-emergency calls only



All in a single app
Free to download

Contact Scotland BSL interpreting video relay service is VRS for all and free to use. We are open 24/7 so you can call anytime.

Who do you want to call?

www.contactscotland-bsl.org

Scan me



Highland Council Welfare Team

Free, Confidential and Impartial Support



The Highland Council Welfare Team offers free, confidential, and impartial support to help you maximise and manage your income.

If you would like assistance with personal budgeting, a financial health check, or a benefits review to ensure you're not missing out on any entitlements - including both means-tested and non-means-tested benefits - please contact us by  welfare.support@highland.gov.uk or  **0800 090 1004**

We can support you with applications for a wide range of benefits and payments provided by:

The Department for Work and Pensions

- Universal Credit (including migrations)
- Pension credit

Social Security Scotland

- Adult disability payment
- Pension age disability payments

The Highland Council

- Council discounts/exemptions
- Housing Benefit
- Free school meals/Clothing grants

The Scottish Welfare Fund

- Crisis grants
- Community care grants

We also offer representation and support with Mandatory Reconsiderations and Appeals for Department for Work & Pensions and Social Security Scotland benefits.

Appointments are available via home visits or at service points across the Highland Council area.

Claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)?

Moving to Universal Credit – what you need to know

As part of the next phase of moving all eligible households to Universal Credit from the older style benefits, the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) will be issuing “migration notices” to people claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) until December 2025. If you receive one of these letters you must apply for Universal Credit by the deadline date in the letter.



Existing financial support from your current benefits will end if you do not claim Universal Credit by the deadline date – and you may not be eligible for some financial protection available to those moving over to UC.

Please also remember that if you currently claim Housing Benefit to help you pay your rent **this will stop if you do not claim UC by the deadline date** – this will not automatically move over to the housing element of UC – you must claim UC to keep your housing costs covered or you may end up in arrears.

WHAT TO DO:

- Read the Migration Notice.
- Gather all the documents you may need – for instance, ID, current income and housing costs.
- Apply for Universal Credit online at <https://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk/start>



If you are worried about claiming Universal Credit, help and support is available from the following:

- A dedicated **Move to UC** telephone line

 **0800 169 0328** (Monday - Friday, 8am to 6pm, free from mobiles and landlines)

 www.gov.uk/dwp/move-to-uc



The “Help to Claim” service – delivered by Citizens Advice Scotland

 **0800 023 2581**



- Lots of information on  [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- Face to face support in local Jobcentres

If in doubt – ask your Housing Officer

Policy Updates

Coming soon.....



Domestic Abuse Policy

The Housing Service will be seeking committee approval in November for the introduction of a Domestic Abuse Policy. The policy sets out our approach to assisting victims-survivors of domestic abuse in relation to their housing needs, in line with national legislation, guidance and best practice. The policy aims to ensure a consistent, trauma-informed and person-centred response across all housing services, and to strengthen the Council's role in preventing homelessness caused by domestic abuse.



Empty Homes Strategy

The Housing Service will also be seeking approval from Committee in November for the Empty Homes Strategy. The aim of the Empty Homes Strategy is to bring empty and under-used properties back into use, so that they provide (primary) homes for people living in Highland's communities.

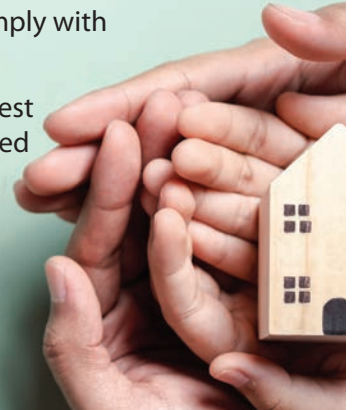
The Strategy proposes a focus on two objectives to achieve this - these are to:-

1. Encourage and empower owners and communities to bring empty properties back into use as primary homes and
2. Target resources at approaches which effectively deliver homes

Highland Housing Register Policy Review

A review of the Highland Housing Policy will be commencing soon, and it will include:-

- Ensure it continues to comply with current legislation
- Ensure that those in greatest housing need are prioritised
- Consider need to reside and letting areas
- Consider key worker status and identification



We want to hear from you!

HIGHLAND HOUSING NEED & DEMAND SURVEY

www.researchresource.co.uk/AJHighlandHNDA.html

The Highland Council has launched a survey about the housing needs of local households.



The survey will allow the Council to plan for new housing and housing services, making sure the needs of all residents and communities are met.

Whether you're a homeowner, tenant, or looking for a home in Highland, take our quick 5-minute survey and help shape the future of housing across the Highland region.

Have your say before the 7th November 2025

Take part in the survey by:

- Completing an online survey via the survey link or by scanning the QR code
- Contacting Research Resource to complete a telephone survey on 0141 641 6410 or at info@researchresource.co.uk

The survey will be entirely confidential and will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act. You can find out more about how Research Resource will treat the data in their Privacy Notice on their website (www.researchresource.co.uk).

Housing Online

We have introduced a new way for Highland Council tenants to keep up-to-date with their rent accounts and make sure they pay their rent on time. This is called "Housing Online".

Once you register to access online services, you can:

- view rent account balance
- pay your rent
- see payments you have made
- see Housing Benefits
- see Universal Credit Housing payments
- and access a paper direct debit to print

You can find this on the Highland Council website - go to **highland.gov.uk** and search for "Pay your council rent".

Please remember – when you signed your Scottish Secure Lease at the start of your tenancy, you agreed to pay your rent on time and in advance. If you pay weekly, your rent is debited to your account on a Monday for the week ahead, and you have to pay by the Friday, or you will be in arrears.

If you pay monthly you have to pay a month up front – at the beginning of the month, not at the end. If you pay at the end, your account will be in arrears every month until you make your monthly payment and you will continually get arrears reminder letters.

If this is an issue for you, speak to your housing officer who can advise you how to pay a little bit extra for a few months until you are paying in advance – this will stop all the annoying arrears reminder letters.

A New Website Built Around You

The Highland Council will be launching its new website towards the end of the year. This will serve as the foundation for the ambitious MyCouncil programme which over time will transform how the Council interacts with its customers.

From the very beginning it was clear that any overhaul of the current site would have to start with the users. Our team embarked on an extensive fact gathering mission which included focus groups, consultations and speaking to hundreds of people across the Highlands including tenants. We listened to what you had to say, and your feedback was the bedrock on which this new website was built.

Some key takeaways from these sessions were what people regarded as a priority when dealing with us. Customers emphasised the importance of being able to contact the correct person first time when they had a query. They stressed the need to have clear expectations set and the value of being given updates through to resolution.

Our vision for this programme has been to put the customer at the centre of what we do, make it easy for customers to contact us, and to keep them informed as their enquiries progress.

Another aspect of the new website that we are particularly proud of is the emphasis we put on accessibility during its design. Research showed us that many of our users experience a wide range of disabilities and so from the outset our intention was to build something that works for everyone. This means:

- It will be more mobile-friendly
- It will work better with adaptive technology such as screen readers
- It will offer a more refined and easier to navigate experience
- It will no longer use PDFs to support people accessing the website on mobile devices and who are not able to download content
- Jargon has been minimised; clear headings aid navigation; and content is structured logically

The ethos behind the design is to focus on the user journey. We want visitors to be able to complete their desired task with minimal fuss. It doesn't matter if you are paying your Council Tax, checking your bin calendar or looking up school meal menus you will be able to get to where you need quickly and efficiently.

And don't worry - this isn't about replacing people. We know that many of you still prefer to speak to us directly, and we'll still be here to help.



Area Updates...

Nairn

We say a fond farewell to
Queenspark Residents' Group!



The group was formed after tenants raised concerns about issues regarding the estate with their Tenant Participation Officer from Highland Council. This prompted a "Rate Your Estate" walkabout, which became the starting point for the tenants' group.

Since then, Queenspark Residents' Group has played a vital role in shaping a more inclusive, responsive, and well-connected community.

The group continued to grow in strength, successfully organising events, launching community initiatives, and encouraging active resident engagement throughout the years.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- **Fundraising:** the group raised over £900 through the Highland Community Lottery, with 36 prize winners to date. Launched regular car boot sales in partnership with Sainsbury's.
- **Community Events:** Organised multiple successful community events including:
 - Halloween Fright Night
 - Burns Night Coffee Morning
 - Easter Extravaganza
 - Picnic in the Park
- **Family Outings:** Family bus trip to Landmark Adventure Park
- **Neighbourhood Safety:** Established a Neighbourhood Watch scheme to improve community safety and awareness.
- **Community Engagement & Training:** Represented residents' views in Highland Council consultations (20mph scheme, rent consultation, tenants forums).
- **Completed Social Housing in Scotland training** with the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- **Representation & Partnership:** Maintained strong partnerships by attending and contributing to the local community groups and organisations.

These achievements reflect the group's commitment to creating a safer and more supportive and connected neighbourhood. Thank you once again for your huge efforts and positive impact you have made to the community!

Tenant Participation Team.



Nairn housing drop-in session took place on 26th August, offering valuable support and advice to members of the public.

Officers from the Highland Council Housing Department, Welfare Support Team and Alienergy were on hand throughout the event, providing face-to-face guidance on a range of issues including housing concerns, welfare support, and energy advice.

Plans are already underway to repeat the initiative in the future.

Skye and Lochalsh

The **South Skye Housing Drop-in** was held on the 10th September in Broadford library and was well attended with some tenants even catching a bus from 20 miles away to come and speak with Tenant Participation Officer, Catriona. All tenants left contact details to continue liaising with Housing and steps are being taken to explore the possibility of a few new resident groups. Watch this space!

The **Liveras Park Residents Group** will be celebrating their first AGM and reflecting on all the positive outcomes the group has achieved for residents in their first year. This included liaising with maintenance for the renewal of the paths around the estate, new external meter box doors, creation of a new path, discussions on waste and the successful managing of a rat problem through proficient reporting and action. Having already secured funding for two new benches, the group's aim this year is to raise the funds for the groundwork and have the benches installed ready to be enjoyed next summer.

Easter Ross

There has been positive steps taken in Balintore to tackle some of the more persistent nuisance and abandoned vehicles. Housing have been working closely with colleagues from Environmental health to take action to remove these.



Caithness and Sutherland

Leona Geddes, the Tenant Participation Officer for Caithness and Sutherland, held a Scottish Housing Day Event in Wick. Council Leader Raymond Bremner spoke at the event, answering questions from tenants and chatting to everyone that attended. Allenergy, Alzheimer's Scotland, Fire Service, Housing Management Officers, Housing Options Officer, Maintenance Officers, Work.Life.Highland and Cairn Housing also attended. The event went really well and received lots of positive feedback.



COMMUNITY LED SUPPORT HERE FOR CAITHNESS COMMUNITY POP UP HUBS



GET ADVICE



FIND SUPPORT



STAY CONNECTED

Community Pop Up Hub - Come along to find out what community services are available in your area. Find out all about our frailty services and how some simple chair based exercises can make all the difference to making you feel better. Learn about small aids and adaptations, and lots of other tips to help promote independence in the home.

Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, cake and a chat!

Leona will be in attendance at the
Caithness Community Pop Up Hub
at Wick Library
on Wednesday 12th November
10-12pm
All welcome!

You can also catch Leona for a cuppa and a
chat in **The Haven, Wick,**
Tuesday 2nd December 12:30pm – 2pm
AND

Stepping Stones, Thurso,
Wednesday 3rd December 12:30pm – 2pm

Inverness



On the 8th September a Highland Tenants Event was held in Inverness Library with representatives from Housing, Trading standards, Police Scotland, Cairn HA, Welfare advice, Albyn HA and Allenergy. The event was well attended and focussed on the Scottish Housing Day theme of 'Good Neighbours'.

Estate walkabouts have been held in Raigmore, Merkinch and Hilton with Housing staff, tenants and elected members in attendance. The walkabouts provide an opportunity for tenants to advise what improvements they would like to see in their area so Housing can prioritise budgets accordingly.



A Housing and Police Community Event was held on 10th September at Raigmore Community Centre. This was an opportunity for residents to meet with several different agencies in the one place for advice and support.

Regular drop-ins have also been taking place in Raigmore in a bid to tackle Anti-social behaviour in the area. **The next drop-ins** are scheduled for

Tuesday 28th October
2:00pm – 4:00pm

Wednesday 12th November
11:15 - 1:15pm

Lochaber



Caol Resident Group had their Prize Bingo on the 19th September in the Caol Community Centre and presented two local tenants, Joan and Colin Strange, with the Davie McCook Good Citizens award for all the volunteering and work they do for the Community.



Scottish Housing Day is an annual event which aims to raise awareness of the challenges and successes in Scotland's housing sector and this year they encouraged a nationwide discussion on how important good neighbours are to wellbeing and living well in our homes. To mark this day, on the 17th September, Tenant Participation put on a very successful and well attended event with a tasty lunch and speakers from Trading Standards, Welfare Support, Highland Council Waste Department, Ali Energy and stalls from Adult Learning and Age Scotland.



Bite & Blether

EVERY MON 1-3pm

CAOL YOUTH CENTRE

This is free to everyone in the community.

The aim is to tackle social isolation and prevent food waste. We hope to get people out to meet others within our community and get something eat, (soup on a cold day or a sandwich when its warmer) and a cuppa, scone or cake!!

You will also get a chance to find out what's going on in our community.

This is provided by
Caol Residents Group,
Highlife Highland and
Highland Council Tenant
Participation Team

For more info contact Karin: 07795276149



The Plantation Larder celebrated one year of sharing, saving food, and supporting the community with a fun, free event at the end of August.

Volunteers handed out meal kits containing a recipe card and everything you need to create a delicious meal. Fun crafts, face painting and hot food was enjoyed on the day by attendees of all ages.



The newly formed Inverlochry Group have created a sub group for the play park and are liaising with Highland Council as they have been awarded £20,000 of funding and are adding some new equipment this year. They will also hold a Christmas event with date to follow.

The next **Lochaber Tenant Forum** will take place on **Thursday 20th November** with Roads and Licensing attending.



Lochaber Christmas Events:



Wednesday 3rd December 6pm
Plantation Christmas Lights Switch on

Thursday 4th December 5.30pm
Claggan Christmas Lights Switch on

Friday 5th December - 5.30pm
Upper Achintore Christmas tree light switch on - 5.30pm

Saturday 6th December from 4.00pm
Caol's Big Christmas Event from 4pm at Caol Community Centre

Santa's grotto and kids' activities 4-7pm followed by family entertainment until 11pm



ALLenergy is here to help this winter

The cost of living crisis continues and a large number of tenants, particularly in remote rural areas of the Highland region, will face the decision between heating and eating this winter as many tenants are finding it a struggle to afford to adequately heat their homes.

Although the control of energy prices is outwith the control of the Council, we want to help our tenants mitigate the worse impacts of the cost of living crisis. ALLenergy's Affordable Warmth Advice Team can access various fuel poverty crisis intervention grants and schemes, alongside support to improve resilience to fuel poverty going forward and assist tenants who are at high risk.

The technology behind the radio-teleswitch (RTS), which controls storage heater charge times for many households, is coming to the end of its operational life and was due to be switched off in June 2025. However, with around 80,000 meters still needing replaced across Scotland, the decision to switch off has been paused and will now be done in phases with no impact to Scottish households between October 2025 and March 2026. The RTS switch off means all meters reliant on the technology will need to be replaced. If you have electric storage heating and are on the Total Heat Total Control tariff, it's likely that your meter will need to be replaced to ensure you still have heating and hot water after the switch off. ALLenergy is encouraging anyone who thinks they may have a meter reliant on RTS to contact their supplier to request a meter change. Suppliers have now achieved improvements in technology to overcome issues with signalling and wiring so if you were told you couldn't get a replacement meter previously, there should be a remedy now.

HELP & ADVICE

You can get help and advice from ALLenergy by contacting your housing officer and asking to be referred to ALLenergy or you can contact ALLenergy directly on



01631 565 183



enquiries@alienenergy.org.uk



www.alienenergy.org.uk



ALIENERGY

Argyll, Lomond & the Islands Energy Agency

ALLenergy's Affordable Warmth Service can help by

- Accessing free top-up vouchers for electricity and gas pre-payment meters.
- Accessing funds for bulk heating fuel deliveries- coal, LPG, Oil, bottled gas, wood, etc.
- Advice on using appliances and heating in the home more efficiently to save money.
- Helping to understand energy bills to make sure the charge is accurate.
- Accessing schemes to receive a new energy efficient fridge freezer, cooker and washing machine.
- Showing someone how to read their meter and what the information on there means to them.
- Accessing energy supplier's Warm Home Discount- a £150 credit to their electricity account.
- Help people set up online energy accounts to get better deals with their supplier, submit meter readings online, check and pay energy bills online.
- Help to identify dampness and condensation causes and reduce the effect.
- Support householders to switch tariffs and meters to better suit their property and circumstances.
- Help to identify behaviour change in the home to save energy and money.
- Liaising with suppliers about complaints, fuel debt and payments.
- Raising complaints with the Energy Ombudsman.
- Providing Cosy Kits with hot water bottles, blankets, thermal socks, and power cut information.
- Referrals to specialist financial / debt advice (Citizens Advice Bureau) etc.



Are You Winter Ready ?

As we come into the winter months, it is worth making sure you have useful items and information to hand in case of power cuts and unexpected repairs.

Packing a small emergency kit and keeping it in a safe place at home will stand you in good stead in a wide range of emergency situations. You may find these things useful:

- A torch and spare batteries (or a wind-up torch) in case of a power cut
- Any essential medication, some toiletries and a first aid kit
- Bottled water and ready to eat food like cans or packets of soup
- Extra Blankets
- A battery powered radio will help you stay in touch with the news if there has been a power cut.
- Keep mobile phones charged so that you can call family or friends and emergency services if required. Additional power banks can be especially useful during prolonged power cuts for keeping devices charged and you connected to the outside world.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Make a list of all the telephone numbers you might need and keep them handy. Here are a few to get you started:-

Police, Fire and Ambulance: Emergency	999
Police, Fire and Ambulance: Non Emergency	101
NHS 24	111
Highland Council repairs	01349 886602
Out of hours Housing repairs	01349 886691
Roads, flooding and street lighting	01349 886601
If you smell gas - National Gas Emergency Service	0800 111 999
Power cut	105
Scottish Water	0800 0778 778

More useful information, including travel info, can be found on the Highland Council website
<https://www.highland.gov.uk/readyforwinter>.



PREVENTING DAMAGE

You can help avoid burst pipes and prevent damage to your home and your belongings by doing these simple things:

- Try to keep your home reasonably warm day and night. Consider leaving your central heating on low and using your timer, even if you are going away for a few days. In particularly cold weather, leave your loft hatch open to allow heat into the loft space.
- Never leave a tap dripping.
- Check that the stopcock works so that you can turn off the water if there is a burst. It is usually in the kitchen or bathroom. If you can't find it; it is leaking; or you can't turn it off, contact us for help.
- For greater peace of mind, if you go away for a few days in the winter, turn your water off.

If you do not take these precautions, we may ask you to pay the cost of damage caused by a burst pipe to your home and to your neighbour's homes.

If an emergency does occur, please remember that we do not insure your furniture, belongings or decoration against flood, theft, fire, vandalism and other household risks. As a Highland Council tenant, you are responsible for providing your own home contents insurance to cover your personal possessions.

You can find out more about home contents insurance from Citizens Advice Scotland by following this link or scanning the QR code:
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/insurance/types-of-insurance/household-contents-insurance/>



Contractors' Code of Conduct Update

Highland Council's Housing and Building Maintenance Service has recently updated its Contractors' Code of Conduct, with significant input from tenants. The revised Code sets clear expectations for contractors carrying out repairs and maintenance in tenants' homes, ensuring work is delivered safely, respectfully, and to a consistently high standard.

A key part of the update is the emphasis on tenant involvement many of the changes were shaped by feedback from tenants, who asked for greater clarity around communication, cleanliness, and accountability. Their views have helped the Council strengthen the standards that contractors must follow, placing tenant experience at the heart of the service.

One important area tenants should be aware of is photographic evidence of works. Contractors are now required to take "before and after" photos of repair jobs, as well as additional images where a replacement is being requested. These photographs are used for quality assurance and payment purposes. Contractors must explain to tenants why the images are being taken and then show them to confirm that no personal or sensitive information is captured. All photos are securely uploaded to the Council's Connect system and deleted from devices.

By making these changes, Highland Council aims to improve transparency and accountability in the repairs process while protecting the dignity, privacy, and safety of tenants. The updated Code of Conduct reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to working in partnership with tenants and ensuring services continue to meet their needs.



Highland Trusted Trader – Find Reliable Local Help!

Need help with small jobs around your council house - like **decorating, tidying the garden, or installing your own appliances?**

Highland Trusted Trader is a free service from Highland Council Trading Standards that connects you with local businesses who have been vetted for quality, fairness and reliability.



www.trustedtrader.scot/Highland



0333 444 7016

Scan the QR code
to access the website



SCAN ME

KEY BENEFITS



Free to use for all Highland residents



Vetted by Trading Standards



Real customer reviews



Protection from rogue traders



Phone support available



Supports fair, local business practices

Highland Trusted Trader is supported by
Police Scotland and consumeradvice.scot



Highland
Trusted Trader





Community Partnership Networking Events - November 2025

The Highland Community Planning Partnership Development Team is excited to invite you to a series of Community Networking Events happening across the region this November!

These in-person events will follow a market stall-style format and run for a minimum of 2 hours in venues across a number of Community Partnership areas with further dates and venues to be confirmed.

Why Attend?

- Meet local groups, organisations, and service providers
- Discover projects and activities available in your area
- Learn about community priorities and progress
- Explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership working
- Connect with others who care about your community

Whether you're a resident, volunteer, practitioner, or part of a local group, these events are a great chance to network, share ideas, and get inspired.

Free to attend – Everyone welcome!

Badenoch & Strathspey CP

Tuesday 4th November • 14.00 – 16.00
Carrbridge Village Hall, Carrbridge,

Mid Ross CP

Thursday 6th November • 10.00 – 12.00
Fortrose Library, Fortrose

Lochaber CP

Wednesday 12th November • 13.00 – 19.00
Nevis Centre, Fort William

Nairn & Nairnshire CP

Friday 14th November • 12.00 – 14.00
Nairn Community & Arts Centre, Nairn



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Support for working parents and parents looking to return to employment

Our team can help you access a range of opportunities that are designed to provide support and advice to help low-income working parents boost their earning potential, by supporting skills and learning for career progression, reducing barriers to progression wherever possible, or providing advice on how to get financial support that working families are entitled to.

These are some of the specific opportunities currently available to help low-income working parents in Highland.

Raised Up North is a programme designed to help working parents across Highland increase their earning potential, by providing funding for training and qualifications that will help them progress in work.

Parental Transition Fund: Aimed at supporting parents moving into employment or increasing their hours by at least 5 hours per week.

Launch Pad Training Fund: To provide a training pot for upskilling and training that will give clients access to employed and self-employed roles, some of which could be home based to work around family commitments.

Launch Pad – Start Up - Clients who take advantage of the Launch Pad Training Fund may look to become self-employed having completed their training.

To find out more, contact us via
email employability@highland.gov.uk
or call us for free on **0300 303 1570**

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Employability Team Sgioba So-fhastachd

Supporting people:

- Into work
- To develop their skills
- To re-train

Supporting Employers:

- To give someone an opportunity

Please get in touch for an informal chat
Email: Employ.Ability@highland.gov.uk
Call for free on: **0300 303 1570**
www.highland.gov.uk/employability
f @HighlandCouncilEmployabilityService t @THC_Employ_Serv

Green Bin plastic containers, metal containers & cartons

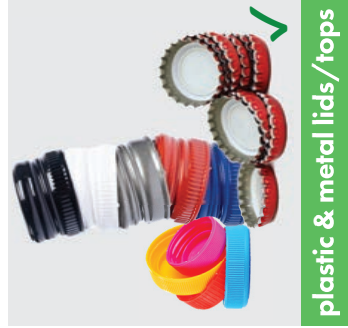
Blue Bin paper, card & cardboard



plastic bottles



plastic pots, tubs & trays



plastic & metal lids/tops



tins & cans



clean aluminium foil/trays



clean aluminium foil/trays



empty aerosols



metal tins & plastic tubs



food and drink cartons



newspaper & magazines



envelopes & junk mail



shredded paper



paperback books



egg boxes, toilet roll tubes



egg boxes, toilet roll tubes



cards and wrapping paper



cereal boxes & food sleeves



cardboard boxes

Please do **NOT** put these in the green bin

- X paper, card & cardboard
- X takeaway cups
- X plastic film/bags
- X nappies

- X scrap metal
- X sandwich packaging
- X paper towels/blue roll
- X polystyrene

- X unclean or wet items
- X food waste
- X oil or paint cans
- X *glass

Please do **NOT** put these in the blue bin

- X plastics, metals & cartons
- X takeaway cups
- X food waste
- X nappies

- X sandwich packaging
- X tissues/napkins
- X plastic film/bags
- X polystyrene

- X pizza boxes
- X paper towels/blue roll
- X unclean or wet items
- X *glass

*Please take glass to your local mixed glass recycling point.

Useful Phone Numbers

Housing enquiries / Homeless Service	01349 886602
Out of hours Housing emergency repair / homeless service	01349 886691
Welfare Support Team	0800 090 1004
Universal Credit – open from 8am until 6pm Monday - Friday	(phone) 0800 328 5644
NHS 24 (only to be called if local GP practice is closed)	111
Waste enquiries	01349 886603
Power Cut?	105
GAS (Emergency)	0800 111 999
Police	(Non Emergency) 101
Samaritans	116 123
Social Work-out of hours	0808 175 3646
Scottish Citizens Advice Helpline	0800 028 1456

Useful Websites

Health and care advice	https://www.nhsinform.scot/
Scottish Gov Cost of living support	http://gov.scot/costoflivingsupport
Highland Council Welfare Team – Worrying about Money leaflet	https://bit.ly/3JnUBNp
Citizen Advice Scotland	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/
Dept of Work and Pensions	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions
Advice for Refugees and Asylum Seekers	https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/healthcare-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers
Universal Credit advice	https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk
Money Advice	https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en

Your Local Tenant Participation Officers

Area	TPO	Email address	Telephone no
Caithness & Sutherland	Leona Geddes	leona.geddes@highland.gov.uk	07785 932517
Easter Ross	Suzy Boardman	suzy.boardman@highland.gov.uk	07557 744413
Nairn, Mid & West Ross	Justyna Leslie	justyna.leslie@highland.gov.uk	07767 162258
Skye & Lochalsh	Catriona Sutherland	catriona.sutherland1@highland.gov.uk	07867 269265
Lochaber	Karin McKay	karin.mckay@highland.gov.uk	07785 477696
Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey	Kerri Macdonald	kerri.macdonald@highland.gov.uk	07774 337689