

# Tenant Panel & RTO News

Spring edition

May 2020

**Welcome to the spring edition of the Tenant Panel & RTO News.** We hope you're keeping well and following government guidance on coronavirus. Please keep yourself and others safe the best you can. Advice on coronavirus is changing all the time, you can check [www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus) and [www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk) for the latest NHS and Council Services updates.

**Look out for the special edition of the Tenants' Courier** due out this week. It



includes lots of useful contact numbers and coronavirus safety information, as well as a puzzle for children under 16 to complete for a chance to win

cinema vouchers, which they will be able to use once the cinemas reopen.

**Most housing officers are working from home to help keep you and themselves safe.** They've been talking to tenants in their patch by phone and email to provide help with rent payment and information on Council services. We've worked hard to put emergency services in place and are now working on plans to resume services gradually, as soon as it's safe to do. It's essential that we work in ways that protect you, our staff and the wider community.

## Are you shielding?

If you're shielding you can get food and/or medicines if you don't have any family or friends who can help you, or any other way to get essentials delivered. Register by mobile phone using the contact number on your Scottish Government letter or call our local assistance centre on 0131 200 2388 or email [shielding@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:shielding@edinburgh.gov.uk).

## Support for vulnerable tenants

The Council has set up a local support line to help people who are not in the higher clinical risk group but need support if they too don't have family or friends helping. The helpline is for people who are over 70, have a disability, need mental health support, are pregnant, receive a flu jab for health reasons, and/or don't have online access to get information. Email [edinburghvulnerable@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:edinburghvulnerable@edinburgh.gov.uk) or call 0131 200 2306.

## Reporting critical repairs

If you need a critical repair, please call 0131 200 2345. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We must focus on the most urgent repairs for now to keep you and our staff safe. If your repair isn't urgent it won't be logged, and you'll be asked to call back once the coronavirus emergency is over.

We appreciate your understanding at this difficult time.

**Keeping in touch with tenants.** We're living in unprecedented times and are unlikely to be going back to 'normal' for a bit yet, so how can you share your ideas and views on services? Please send us your ideas and, tenant groups, please tell us how you're keeping in touch locally. Email [tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk) or call 0131 529 7805 to discuss.

**A group of tenants explored tenant satisfaction with the standard of let** when tenants move in to their Council home and reported their findings to lead councillors senior housing managers.

The group recommends:

- ✓ make sure houses meet the Standard of Let (SOL) when they are let
- ✓ complete outstanding repairs within 28 days of the new tenant moving in
- ✓ give an easy to read summary of the SOL to possible new tenants before viewing
- ✓ include SOL in the new tenant sign up pack
- ✓ make sure all local offices apply the same approach
- ✓ train housing officers on the SOL
- ✓ have good communication between housing officers and possible new tenants
- ✓ make it easier for tenants to contact the local offices
- ✓ find out why costs are high but tenant satisfaction low.

These recommendations have all been accepted and officers will meet with the tenant working group to review progress as soon as it's safe to do so. Thank you to everyone who took part.

For further information on the newsheet, email [tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk)  
Or call 0131 529 7805.

## Community benefits

We began working with Travis Perkins Managed Services and the Onecity Trust in 2015 to improve our housing communities. Since then, 28 projects have been awarded funding of over £154,000. On 27 November 2019, we got together to visit some of the projects funded in 2019 and present them with their cheques.

Our first visit was to North Edinburgh Arts, who were awarded £8,000 to employ a member of staff for 15 hours a week to coordinate food collections and volunteers. Their café serves over 300 customers every week and is linked with Fareshare Go, which redistributes surplus food to local community groups and charities. There's a sharing shelf in the café with free food, domestic items, toys, etc, which people can help themselves to without any referral or stigma.

We then visited WHALE Arts, who were awarded £9,000 to continue to support women and men over 16 suffering poor mental health linked to socio-economic, cultural and poverty issues. The group works with the wider community providing art projects for nursery groups, hospitals and schools.

Finally, we visited the Pilmeny Development Project, who were awarded £4,500 for staff costs and accommodation. Their main work is on reducing social isolation by connecting older people, who may be vulnerable or finding it hard to get involved, to opportunities, services and activities.

If you're a community group looking for funds, visit [www.onecity.org.uk](http://www.onecity.org.uk) - for more information.



Call ITS on 0131 242 8181 and quote reference **XX-XXX**

