

# Delivering Improved Services for Elderly Tenants

In Argyll and Bute it is predicted that within the next eight years 21% of the population will be aged over 65 and within the next 15 years this figure will have risen to 28%.

**Argyll Community Housing Association recognises the importance of delivering good services for all tenants but particularly for our older residents and is committed to improving existing services and developing new ones.**

ACHA's business plan contains a pledge to review services for elderly tenants within 18 months of transfer. This review, which will seek opinion and input from tenants, will include the services provided to tenants living in sheltered housing complexes and also those provided to elderly people living in their own homes.

**“I will be voting Yes for ACHA to be my new landlord and I think it's great that we will be asked for our opinions on services for older folk.”**

Mrs Wallace, Ardrishaig tenant





When we talked to tenants at roadshows and on their doorstep, we were asked questions about our plans to improve living conditions for all tenants, particularly for older residents and those with particular needs.

We'll be explaining more about our proposals in the run up to the postal ballot of all tenants taking place later in the year but, in the meantime, this leaflet will give answers to some important questions we've been asked by older tenants over the past few months.



### **Will ACHA repair and maintain my Home?**

Yes. ACHA plans to deliver a quicker, more efficient repairs system, using fully equipped vehicles which are driven by multi-skilled trades people. These trades people will be able to deal with most routine and emergency repairs, and will respond quickly to calls from tenants.

The repairs team will also be trained to act as a contact point through which you can let us know about any problems or issues you might have with the repairs service or with the organisation. We will also be introducing a new Repairs Satisfaction Form, giving you the opportunity to tell us if you are happy with the work carried out.

## How quickly would ACHA carry out repairs?

ACHA must comply with the performance standards set by Communities Scotland and will adopt target repair times, for example:

- ACHA will operate a 24hr **Emergency repairs** service
- **Essential repairs** responded to within 5 working days
- **Routine repairs** responded to within 20 working days

## Will kitchens and bathrooms be installed to suit elderly tenants?

ACHA will be spending £13 million each year for the first six years following transfer to bring tenants homes up to a modern standard. This will mean new kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems for all homes that require them.

We will take particular care before any improvements are carried out to ensure that each tenant is happy with the proposed works. Where possible tenants can be



involved in the design, for example tenants can choose the height of wall units and the position of electrical sockets. Tenants will of course choose from a range of kitchen units, worktops, tiles and bathroom suites.

Please note that no tenant will be forced to have a new kitchen or bathroom installed if they are happy with their existing one, provided that the existing fittings are safe and fit for purpose.

## What about rents and housing benefit?

Due to a £40 million investment package from the Scottish Executive ACHA will be able to carry out improvements to your home and to services without significant rent increases. The business plan contains a legal guarantee that rents will not increase above inflation plus 1% for five years. In addition to this ACHA will try to keep that low level of rent increase for a further five years.

Please remember that the Management Committee, on which tenants are currently in the majority, will decide on any future changes to rent levels.

There will also be some new ways for you to pay your rent but you can still pay by direct debit or at your local housing office if you would prefer.

There will be no change to Housing Benefit – it will still be administered and paid by Argyll and Bute Council.

## Welfare rights staff

ACHA will employ staff who will help tenants make sure that they are claiming and receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled. Each year millions of pounds of benefits are unclaimed by tenants who are often in great need.



## **Grass Cutting and Common Area Maintenance**

ACHA will offer a **FREE** grass cutting service to tenants who are unable to cut the grass in their garden due to age, disability or infirmity.

The areas of common ground will be maintained by ACHA to a high standard including grass cutting and weeding of pathways.

## **What will Happen to the Sheltered Housing Complexes?**

ACHA, working in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council plans to continue with the provision of sheltered housing schemes for older people. Recent discussions with tenants in sheltered housing schemes has identified strong support for the stock transfer proposals.

## **Community Development Staff**

ACHA plans to employ staff to help tenants get the most out of life. These staff could assist with setting up community events and social activities, for example lunch clubs and social outings.

## **Will ACHA have a Home Contents Insurance Scheme?**

Yes, ACHA will build on the good scheme offered to tenants at the moment and intends to offer an even better deal on low cost household contents insurance.

## **Where will ACHA have offices?**

There will continue to be local housing offices in the present locations, that is main offices in Dunoon, Oban, Helensburgh and Campbeltown. Additional offices will serve Mid Argyll (Lochgilphead), Bute (Rothesay), Islay (Bowmore) and Mull (Tobermory).

In addition ACHA plans to improve services to more remote communities through the establishment of a mobile office. The mobile office will provide ACHA's services to more remote locations on a regular basis.

**A postal ballot paper will be sent out to you later in the year ...**

**Vote YES for ACHA**

## How to contact us if you have any further questions

If you would like to talk to one of our Housing Officers for more information, please contact us and we will arrange for one of our Officers to visit.

**Oban, Lorn and Isles** Donald Campbell 01631 567971

**Mid Argyll, Kintyre  
and Islay** Donald Campbell 01631 567971  
Seonaid Cameron 01436 658929  
or Garrick Collier 01369 703735

**Helensburgh  
and Lomond** Seonaid Cameron 01436 658929

**Bute and Cowal** Garrick Collier 01369 703735



If you would like to request a copy of this leaflet in large print or on audio tape please contact:

**Christine Johnston**  
**Housing Manager**  
**Argyll Community Housing Association**  
**Blairvadach**  
**Helensburgh**  
**G84 8ND**

or phone: **01436 658927**

email: **christine.johnstone@argyll-bute.gov.uk**

For further information you can visit our website:

**[www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk)**

# Feedback card

(If you require further information please complete and return this tear-off card)

Name

.....

Address

.....

.....

.....

.....

I would like to be sent further information

I would like a home visit

I would like to know more about

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please  
attach  
stamp

Christine Johnston  
Housing Manager  
Argyll Community Housing Association  
Blairvadach  
Helensburgh  
G84 8ND