



Spring 2017



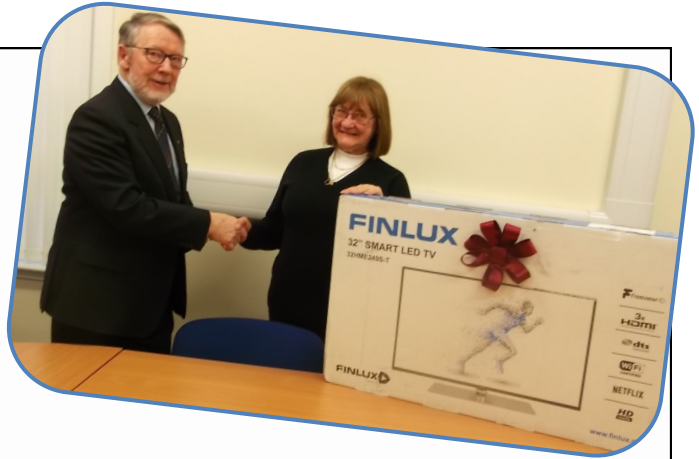
Putting Our Tenants and Our Communities First

Satisfaction Matters!

Congratulations to Mrs Janice Crichton of Rothesay who was the lucky winner of a 40" Smart TV—Janice was one of 400 tenants who agreed to take part in our annual tenant satisfaction survey during November and December last year. All tenants who took part in the survey were entered into a prize draw to win a new TV.

Janice, (pictured right with our Chair, Mr Jim Milne) was delighted with her prize and added that "I usually don't take part in surveys but I'm glad that I did this time!"

Additional satisfaction surveys are carried out with our Gypsy/Travellers, Factored owners and Sheltered housing tenants. If you were one of the hundreds of tenants who were good enough to give us feedback then we want to say a huge



Full results from the surveys and details of other performance issues will be reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator and published in our annual Landlord report in October. A sneak preview of some of the survey results is available on page 2.



Young person's view from Argyll photography competition

Are you aged 10-16 and living in an ACHA house? Would you like to win a £25 gift voucher and have the chance to have your prize winning photograph on the front page of our 2016/17 Landlord Report that will be published in October this year?

If so, contact your local office or email us at communications@acha.co.uk for an entry form and return your entry to us by 31st August 2017. Your photograph should be of a view taken somewhere in Argyll - Good Luck!



Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive

After a long winter, to feel the first warmth of spring recently was a positive. It got me thinking. ACHA has been active over the last four years in working to complete the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. This is a standard introduced by the Scottish Government that requires social landlords to bring their housing stock up to this level by 2020. Warm, dry, thermally efficient homes are key factors in tackling fuel poverty and tackling cold homes, particularly in winter. First hand I have heard from tenants all over Argyll that have received the upgrade that their fuel bills have dropped dramatically. An added benefit also is that many of you have advised me that the new external insulated render makes your homes look brand new. At the end of March 2016, 75% of ACHA's homes had reached the new standard. We hope that by the end of March 2017 it will be close to 90% completion which will leave the Association well placed to complete the remaining homes by 2020.



I just wanted to finish by saying that if you are interested in supporting ACHA by becoming involved in our governance structures particularly at local Area Committee level in your own community please get in touch with me. Getting involved in housing through a voluntary capacity can be very fulfilling and rewarding. Training and support will be given to anyone who has a few hours per month to spare to support the development of good affordable housing in their local community.

With best wishes

Alastair

Latest news on our satisfaction results ...

Just over 90% of our tenants feel that the rent charged represents good value for money.

85% of our tenants advised that they are satisfied with the opportunities provided to participate in ACHA's decision making process.

92% of our Gypsy/Travellers are satisfied with the way ACHA manages their site.

91% of our Sheltered housing tenants have told us they are happy with the Sheltered housing service.

Almost 90% of our tenants are satisfied with the overall service we provide.

88% of our tenants are satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in.



You asked ... We did ...

You, ACHA's customers, are at the heart of everything we do, therefore your opinions and views are very important to us.

Following a telephone survey of over 400 of our tenants and factored owners in 2015, we thought it was important that improvements which have been made, or will be made, as a result of your influence were highlighted.

You suggested that a facility could be set up to accept photos of, for example, graffiti and vandalism. We have taken this excellent suggestion on board and are working on introducing this initiative in the coming months.

You also asked for explanation on what grass and open space areas ACHA do and do not maintain. An article on this will be included in a future newsletter.

Feedback from the survey indicated that some of our tenants are concerned that follow up remedial repairs to new kitchens, bathrooms, heating and rewiring, installed in homes though ACHA's investment programme, might not be attended to. To make sure that any concerns you have in this respect are addressed we will write to you two months before the end of the installation warranty period just to double check that everything is okay.

Of course you can also report repairs or issues at any time by contacting the Customer Service Centre by phone on 0800 028 2755 or though the ACHA website, www.acha.co.uk.

Some of our tenants raised concerns about condensation and dampness. As a consequence of this we will be introducing new information leaflets for tenants and additional diagnostic training for our staff.

ACHA also provides a factoring service for owners where we share common building elements. **Feedback from our factored owners indicated that communication from us could be better and this has resulted in information/notice boards being erected in the common close areas of factored blocks detailing any common works which have been carried out. This year we also intend to introduce annual property surveys of our factored blocks which we hope will allow owners to plan for future expenditure to the common elements.**

The initiatives above are a small example of many suggestions taken on board which have come through feedback from our tenants. A **very big thank you** to all who have participated in past surveys and if you are contacted inviting you to participate in future surveys please do consider taking part.

Your views are valuable to us and do make a difference.

Garden in Bloom 2017

Our annual Garden in Bloom competition was launched in March and is open to all ACHA tenants.

Photographs of the winning gardens and containers will be published on our website later this year. Nomination forms are available from our local offices.



*your feedback is
important to us and
helps us to improve
our service*

Our winners gallery

Oban Lorn and the Isles Hamper winner

Congratulations to Mrs J Twort, pictured right, receiving her prize from Reverend Dugald Cameron during the opening of our new build project at Catalina Avenue, Oban. Pupils from Park school were also in attendance.

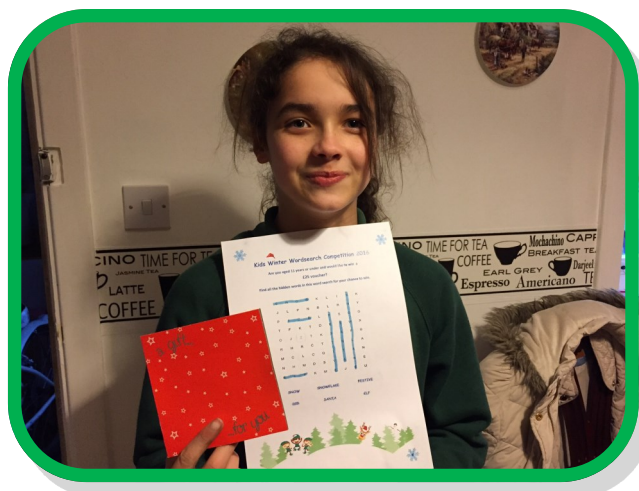


Congratulations to Jade-Lilly Munro, pictured left with her trophy for winning the Christmas card competition held in Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

Well done Aaliyah

In the last newsletter, we ran a Kids Winter Word Search Competition as we would like our younger readers to get involved with ACHA; after all they are our tenants of tomorrow.

We are delighted to congratulate Aaliyah Gates from Dunoon who was picked as the winner of the kids winter word search competition and won shopping vouchers worth £25.



Email address prize draw

We offer our tenants various ways to contact us - all tenants who register their email address with us are entered into a prize draw to win £100 worth of vouchers. **Congratulations** to this years' winner Mrs G McAffer, from Rosneath, who will receive £100 of high street vouchers. To register your email address simply contact your local office (as per the contact details on the back page).

Good neighbour award 2017

ACHA believe in “putting our tenants and our communities first” so each year we run a Good Neighbour Award to recognise kind and caring ACHA tenants. This is your chance to say “thank you” to an unsung hero, who has made a difference to your life or the lives of people within your community.

Good Neighbour Award 2017 application forms are available from your local ACHA office or can be downloaded at www.acha.co.uk. The closing date for nominations is **Thursday 31st August 2017**.

The winner will be selected by representatives from our Area Committees and will receive **£100 worth of high street vouchers**, along with a commemorative certificate.

We would also like the winner to be featured in a press release, with a photograph highlighting why they won.



Cowal Place — our tree or shadow?

Famous American President Abraham Lincoln once said: “Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing”.

Sometimes people or places get a reputation that is far from the reality. It takes a long time to get a good reputation and that might be ruined by just one bad incident or report. Quite often the reality of living somewhere is far better than what people may think or say.

Cowal Place in Dunoon is one such example. We have many applicants tell us they don't want to live there because of 'the reputation'. What is the reality though?

We spoke to the acting police inspector in Dunoon regarding the number of telephone calls that police receive from residents in Cowal Place and Valrose Terrace area. He commented on the huge improvement he has noticed in the area since returning to Cowal. Over a recent six-week period, the Police received only two telephone calls to the area and neither were anti-social related. Residents we have spoken to are proud of their homes, feel a real sense of community and are happy to see their children play outside. It is where they choose to live.

So to use President Lincoln's comparison, it would appear that the 'shadow' is very different to the 'tree'. If that is the case, would you consider a property in Cowal Place?



Are you proud of your area or street? Do you want to let everyone know about the great community spirit in your area? If so, please nominate your area or street for our new '**great place to live**' wall of fame. Email us at communications@acha.co.uk and give us some details about why your street or area is a great place to live and we'll run a feature on it in our next newsletter.

What is Tenant Scrutiny?

Tenant scrutiny is the process where tenants check and challenge how ACHA delivers services. The Your Voice group offer recommendations for change and champion where ACHA gets it right. They do this by:

- acting as a 'critical friend';
- helping to improve services;
- enabling the voice of all tenants to be heard.

Who are the Your Voice group?

Your Voice is six ordinary tenants who can spare a little time to make a big difference. New members are always welcome.

So what's the big difference Scrutiny can make?

In their first exercise, Your Voice looked at ACHA's void (empty house) procedures. This involved members visiting empty houses, examining current procedures and speaking to staff.

As a result of Your Voice's recommendations standards of cleanliness and decoration for void properties were redefined and a "Quality Assured" approach to certify that all properties have been post inspected and quality checked before being released for re let was developed. Furthermore, a leaflet was devised, which publicises the updated standard.

The group have started their second exercise which looks at "The life of a Repair" with a view to putting ACHA's Repairs service under the magnifying glass

If you would like to join the Your Voice group or would like more information

Please contact: - David Rae, Compliance, Policy and Communications Assistant, Argyll Community Housing Association Ltd, Lamont House, 9-19 Stuckleckie Road, Helensburgh, G84 7NL, Tel: 01546 605912, Mobile: 07789943243, or e-mail: david.rae@acha.co.uk

Deal drugs and risk losing your home!

The message is clear - If you grow or sell drugs in or in the locality of an ACHA property, then you could lose your home.

ACHA, and our communities have a zero tolerance policy against tenants, their families, friends and visitors who use our housing stock for immoral or illegal purposes.

Illegal drug use and drug dealing is a particular concern to local residents and tenants of the Association. Tenants conducting themselves in an anti-social manner will have strong action taken against them by the Association. We have recently obtained Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in respect of tenants who refused to stop engaging in such behaviour. On several occasions tenants who have been convicted of drug related offences have been evicted.

If you are an ACHA tenant who would like to discuss an anti-social behaviour issue in your community please telephone our Anti-Social Behaviour Hotline: **0800 028 2755**, or email us at myestates@acha.co.uk. All telephone calls are confidential. Suspected illegal activity or Anti-social behaviour should also be reported to the Police by calling 101.

Your Area Committee News

Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee would like to show its support for the Kirkmichael Community Development Group (KCDG), who are a small number of local residents working together to improve services and facilities for local residents. One of their biggest successes to date has been the Meet and Eat project, where older members of the community come together for something to eat and a chat. More recently the Meet and Eat group have gone further afield, on a trip to the theatre. KCDG is also involved in running bingo nights, organising summer fun days and arranging for a new community noticeboard to go up. One of their most important roles is making sure that organisations like ACHA, the Council and the Police hear from local people about what is needed in the community.



Pictured—the Kirkmichael Community Development Group, along with Councillor Aileen Morton. Photo taken by Rebecca Simpson

The new Chair of KCDG is Liz Simpson, who also leads on the Meet and Eat project. Liz says, “We would really welcome new people getting involved, even if just on an occasional basis. It’s been great to see things improve so much in the area over the last couple of years – we’re determined to keep building on that.”

Mid Argyll and Kintyre Area Committee

What can you buy for a pound nowadays?

Not a lot! But you could get life membership of ACHA – our tenant led housing association. Being a member makes it possible for you to serve on the Board of Management or on your local Area Committee.

It can be very satisfying being able to have a say in decisions made by Area Committees. For example, it is at area committee level that Estate Management Action Plans are decided. Also, it is the responsibility of area committees to allocate money to charities who apply for grants of up to £500. Being a member of the association, you will also be involved in judging the ‘Garden in Bloom’ and sunflower competitions.

Area committees only meet six times a year – that is every second month. They last approximately 2 hours. Travel expenses are reimbursed and you enjoy a light lunch together before your journey home.



Pictured above: members of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee

Oban Lorn and the Isles Area Committee

The Oban Lorn and the Isles Area Committee are always keen to engage with the local community and want to have a positive impact on local tenants and areas. There are a number of ways they do this. The area committee regularly have a stall at local shows, such as the ones at Appin, Dalmally and Islay where they can talk with tenants about issues that affect them. The committee have responsibility for the Estate Management budget which is used to fund small projects that will improve the appearance of schemes and estates. The committee also consider applications to the Community Action Fund which has been set up to help small local charities who carry out work in the community.

If you wish to know more about any of this, you can check out our website www.acha.co.uk or contact Amanda MacKenzie on 01546 605930

Not sure how to use your electric storage heating?
Paying too much to keep your home comfortably warm?
Dampness and condensation a problem in your home?
Old appliances costing too much to run?

Call us: 01631 565183 to book an appointment with an assessor

Email us: enquiries@alienergy.org.uk

Like us on Facebook: [ALLenergy](https://www.facebook.com/ALLenergy)

Tweet us: [@ALLenergy13](https://twitter.com/ALLenergy13)

Call us to find out how our Affordable Warmth Team can help you!

Speak to us if you want to:

- Spend less to heat and light your home.
- Feel warmer and more comfortable at home.
- Increase your income and manage your energy bills.

We offer free, confidential and impartial advice and support to people in Argyll and Bute.

Our affordable warmth team can provide specific advice for you and your home. All our advice is free and where possible we will visit you in your home.

We have helped ACHA tenants with the following recently;
fuel debt, set up and manage repayment plans, switch suppliers, use their heating controls more effectively, grant funded replacement white goods, benefit checks, Warm Home Discount applications and more.

We could help you too!

ALLenergy is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, Scottish Charity Registration: SC032495

Laundry Do's and Don'ts

Do

- * Ensure wash temperatures and detergents are suitable to remove oil based stains —washing cotton at 40 °C **will not** remove oily stains;
- * Allow laundry to complete the cooling cycle in the tumble dryer;
- * Dry tea towels on a washing line if possible, rather than in a tumble dryer;
- * Shake out laundry to ventilate and allow laundered items to cool;
- * Clean filters, remove fluff, lint and debris from dryers and keep them regularly maintained as per the manufacturer's guidelines;
- * Keep a fire extinguisher in the laundry area if possible.









Don't

- * Leave laundry in dryer overnight;
- * Place warm, damp laundry in polythene bags, combustible containers or baskets or in poorly ventilated areas;
- * Remove laundry from the tumble dryer before completing the cooling cycle;
- * Leave freshly laundered fabrics stacked overnight.

How to diagnose common boiler problems

It's important to check that your boiler is fully functional to keep you and your home warm throughout winter. Follow our handy hints to help you identify common boiler problems:

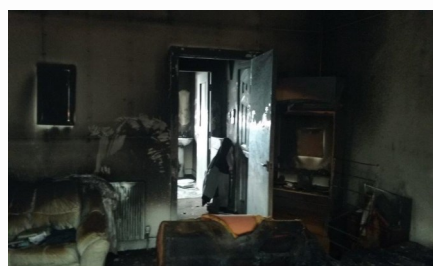


- ♦ **Electric supply** - Do you have credit in your meter (pre-payment only), is the power supply to the boiler switched on. 
- ♦ **Gas supply** - Do you have credit in your meter (pre-payment only?)
- ♦ **Boiler Water Pressure** - Check the water pressure gauge on the front of the boiler this should read between 1 and 1.5 Bar 
- ♦ **Time Clock** - Check that the Time clock is on and calling for heat/hot water  
- ♦ **Room thermostats** - Is your central heating thermostat turned up asking for heat, rotate the dial to a higher temperature and check whether heating comes on? 
- ♦ **Thermostatic radiator valves** - Check the thermostatic radiator valve is on (turn to highest setting) 

If you have followed the points above and your heating or hot water fails to run please contact the repairs service on **0800 028 2755** and ask for an Engineer to attend.

Can you afford to replace everything you own??

Throughout the year, some of our tenants are, unfortunately, victims of burglary, flood or fire. These events are devastating enough but the impact is ten times worse if you don't have contents insurance. Whilst ACHA can repair your home we cannot replace your personal belongings - you need to have contents insurance to do this.



There are many insurance companies who can offer reasonably priced contents insurance Including Thistle Insurance who offer ACHA tenants competitive rates for cover. Thistle insurance can be contacted via www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk or on **0345 450 7286**

We want you and your family to be safe at all times and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue are able to offer free fire safety checks - just call **0800 0731 999** or text 'FIRE' to 80800

Community News

ACHA's Community Action Fund

If you are part of a registered charity that could make use of a grant up to £500, then contact ACHA on 0800 028 2755 and ask for our Community Action Fund application form - it's only one page. The application form can also be downloaded from our website at www.acha.co.uk/Services/Communityactionfund.html.

Good luck!

Some recent grant recipients:

The Community Bureau, Helensburgh	£500
Soroba Young Family Group, Oban	£340
Tarbert Village Hall	£500
Befrienders	£500
Lochgilphead Phoenix Project	£300
Home Start Lorn	£500
Family Mediation Argyll and Bute	£500
Friends of Hermitage Park Association	£500
The GRAB Trust	£500
Route 81 Youth Project	£500
Oban Hospice	£500

Applications will be considered by your local ACHA Area Committee during their normal meeting cycle.

Now

Recruiting



Bute and Cowal Area

Committee members wanted

Are you over 16, live in the Bute or Cowal area, free to attend 6 meetings a year and have an interest in your local community? If so, this is an ideal opportunity to take part in local representation and decision making, have your say on issues that could affect you, your neighbours and friends in your local area.

ACHA's Area Committees form part of our Governing Body and have delegated powers from the Board of Management. We need at least 5 people for your local area committee to operate — the majority of whom must be tenants.

Are you interested? If so please contact Garrick Collier on 01546 605957, via email at garrick.collier@acha.co.uk or pop into either of our local offices in Bute or Cowal.

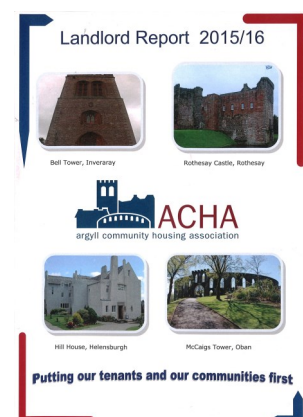
Give us your opinion!

Each year we publish our Landlord report which provides tenants and other customers with details of how well we have delivered services during the previous year. Your input into this report is very important to us and we would like to hear your opinions on the proposed content and layout of this year's report. We won't take up too much of your time and you can answer a few short questions via post or email. If you would like to take part simply register your interest by emailing communications@acha.co.uk or phoning 0800 028 2755.

In October 2016 we published our third Landlord report, a copy of which can be found on our website www.acha.co.uk.

This report provides tenants with information on ACHA's progress towards meeting the performance requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

You can also view and compare ACHA's performance against other landlords on the Scottish Housing Regulators website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk



Repairs Performance — ten years of improvement

Argyll Community Housing Association owns and maintains over 5,000 houses across Argyll and Bute. Your satisfaction with the repairs we do in your home is extremely important to us and our teams of contractors work very hard on our behalf to provide you with a first class service.

In the 10 years ACHA has been in operation we have carried out over 200,000 repairs to tenanted and empty properties.

The repairs we carry out are measured in 4 categories:

- Emergency Repairs to tenanted properties
- Urgent Repairs to tenanted properties
- Routine Repairs to tenanted properties
- Repairs to empty properties

We also monitor:

- the number of out of hours emergency call outs requested by you;
- the number of appointments which are kept by our contractors, and
- the levels of satisfaction you have with the works they carry out in your home.

Maintaining good performance can sometimes be very challenging for us. We operate over a large geographical area, inclement weather can sometimes prevent our operatives from working safely and obtaining some of the specialist materials we need to complete your repair can take time.

Despite these challenges, you tell us that our contractors have provided an excellent repairs service. Over the last 10 years we have:

- dealt with 209,551 repairs requests, which included 16,391 out of hours emergency repairs;
- completed 95.7% Emergency repairs within target;
- completed 94.4% Urgent repairs within target;
- completed 96.1% Routine repairs within target;
- kept 97.0% of the appointments contractors made with you;
- achieved satisfaction levels of 96.7%.

We've come a long way since November 2006 when ACHA first started out and our improved repairs performance levels demonstrate this really well.

In our first full year of operation (2007/8) for example we completed 87% of routine repairs within target - last year this figure was just over 95%

We aim to continue to improve our performance and satisfaction figures across all of our service during the coming year.



How to Contact ACHA:
Customer Service Centre
0800 028 2755
www.acha.co.uk
communications@acha.co.uk



If you would like this newsletter in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio CD, in an electronic format or you would like someone to read it or explain any of it please contact Charlene Munro on 01546 605855 or email us at communications@acha.co.uk

All our newsletters are available on our website www.acha.co.uk

Annual Direct Debit Prize Draw

Pay your rent by Direct Debit and enter our prize draw—you can download the form from our website, alternatively you can contact your local office.



Other ways to pay — Standing order, Direct Debit



Bute

13-16 Longhill Crescent, Rothesay, Bute, PA20 0JT, telephone 01546 605870, e-mail: housing.bute@acha.co.uk

Cowal

Dolphin Hall, Manse Ave, Dunoon PA23 8DQ, telephone 01546 605950, e-mail: housing.cowal@acha.co.uk

Helensburgh and Lomond

Lamont House, 9-19 Stuckleckie Road, Helensburgh, G84 7NL, telephone 01546 605920, e-mail: housing.lomond@acha.co.uk

Islay

11 Flora Street, Bowmore PA43 7JX, telephone 01546 605890, e-mail: housing.islay@acha.co.uk

Kintyre

Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED, telephone 01546 605880, e-mail: housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk

Mid Argyll

Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8JL, telephone 01546 605800, e-mail: housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk

Oban, Lorn and Isles

Menzies House, Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34 4RY, telephone 01546 605930, e-mail: housing.lorn@acha.co.uk

