



# LANGSTANE NEWS

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This edition of your newsletter comes during extraordinary times. Nobody could have predicted the challenges the world would be facing as we stepped into 2020. Covid-19 has impacted massively on our communities, and on how we deliver our services.

Firstly I would like to say a huge thank you to our staff for their amazing response during this crisis. Within a few days of lockdown, most of our staff were working from their homes. Their dedication and flexible working under some very difficult circumstances has made me very proud.

Also, my sincere appreciation goes out to you, our tenants. This virus transformed our normal services, and halted many of our repairs and property upgrades. Your patience and understanding, and your supportive treatment of our staff has helped us get through these difficult and uncertain times together.

You will read updates about how we continue to work through the crisis in the pages ahead. On page 4 you will read about the increased demand for our advice service. Many people are being given advice on paying their rent and other bills during a time when many incomes have reduced. As you will see our Housing Support team has been busy helping tenants who are isolated or unable to leave their homes because of lockdown. We also found a way to let some of our empty homes, which was a

challenge but one that our staff overcame. This helps us to keep our business running and provide our much needed services.

Other work continues. I want to look ahead to our plans for the future. For example, having good information helped us to get in touch with those who needed us most in the early days of this crisis. We want to keep our customer information fresh and up to date so we offer the best possible services in the most efficient way we can. Therefore we'll be reviewing and updating the information we hold for all our tenants. There is more about this on page 10.

Finally, as lockdown eases we will be able to make plans to widen our services, including our repairs service. We will do this gradually and carefully to protect the safety of our staff, our tenants and to safeguard the vital services provided by the NHS.

Recent experience has proved that by working together we can achieve more than we thought possible. I am confident we will emerge from this crisis with new skills and strengths to put to work, providing you with the best possible services.

Take care

## Dealing with fly-tipping



**Fly-tipping is an on-going problem within our neighbourhoods. It makes our areas look bad, can attract vermin, and can lead to even more fly-tipping. We respond by making sure items are uplifted as soon as possible.**

Unfortunately there are some areas where fly-tipping is a big problem. To tackle this we work closely with the local authority. We try to identify the household responsible and take steps to deal with their anti-social behavior.

Here are a couple of examples of how we deal with fly-tipping:

**A one-off item:** In Aberdeen our Estates Assistants dealt with a dumped fridge, identifying and contacting the tenant who owned it. After the tenant refused to deal with their fridge, our team arranged for uplift. This cost us £31.25. This was charged back to the tenant.

**A serious issue:** In one of our Peterhead areas, there was a constant problem with dumped household items. It has cost us around £2,754.78 to remove these. We decided to use temporary CCTV to monitor the bin store. It was effective. The fly-tipping stopped. However, now the cameras have gone, the problem has returned. We will be putting the CCTV back to help deal with the on-going issues.

### The cost of tidying up

In the past budget year we spent £69,042 on what we call environmental cleaning. This includes:

- General outside area cleaning such as sweeping up and removing litter
- Removing fly-tipping
- Cleaning bin stores and bin chutes
- Other work like cleaning up bodily fluids

### The work of tidying up

Dealing with fly-tipping is time consuming and involves some serious teamwork.

#### Our Estates Assistants:

- Work to highlight and address scheme environmental issues
- Are the point of contact for tenants
- Complete regular inspections of their schemes, taking action to resolve problems
- Investigate any complaints about the service

#### Housing Officers:

- Visit tenants to discuss anti-social behaviour, and carry out home inspections
- Monitor the quality of our cleaning and gardening services
- Meet our tenants for an estate walkabout to agree how to deal with particular problems in the area, like graffiti or fly-tipping
- Deal with all aspects of tenancy and area management

#### General Assistants:

- Uplift and remove fly-tipping (sometimes we use a contractor for particularly large items)

All our staff will report back anything of concern that they see when they are out and about in our areas.

#### If you need to report fly-tipping:

- Contact us on 01224 423000 or email [info@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:info@langstane-ha.co.uk)
- Alternatively you can contact Zero Waste Scotland using the Dumb Dumper form [www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/DumbDumpers](http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/DumbDumpers)

If you have large items to dispose of please call one of the numbers below to arrange an uplift:

- Aberdeen City Council Customer Contact Centre: 03000 200 292
- Aberdeenshire Council Waste-line: 03456 081207 (open 8am to 6pm)
- Moray Council Bulky Uplift Hotline: 0300 123 4565



## A new opportunity coming your way!



**Do you want to have a role in running the Association?**

**Do you want to be a part of making our big decisions?**

Our Board members are keen to set up a small group of tenants who will be able to do just this.

You will have access to some of the work done at Board of Management meetings. Your opinions about what we should do will go straight to the Board. The group will meet a few times a year to look at a variety of things from what we spend our money on, to how well we deliver our services and what changes we make to improve.



We'll be looking for volunteers to meet up as soon as it's safe to do so, and have a chat to see if you think this is for you.

To take part, or if you'd like to know more, email us at [supportservices@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:supportservices@langstane-ha.co.uk) or call Samantha Hough on 01224 423120.

**You said - we did!**



We use your complaints, feedback and suggestions to improve our services.

You said you would like to see a greater staff presence on schemes, and you would like to see an improvement in the cleaning services you are paying for.

Outcome: We now have regular meetings at our Fraser Court scheme, and plan to extend this to other areas where we can. In terms of cleaning - we now have a strict rota for scheme checks. This is our direct response to your complaints.



Housing Service Support Team

## Our Social Justice Team has a new name

Our Social Justice team have recently changed their name. Options for the new name were put to a tenant vote last year. They are now the Langstane Housing Support Service (LHSS). This year the team will register with the Care Inspectorate so they can provide a broader and more in depth level of support to tenants and other service users.

To contact the team directly please call 01224 423000 or email [LHsupportservice@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:LHsupportservice@langstane-ha.co.uk).

## Tenant Consultation – Value for Money Statement

We asked our Register of Interested Tenants for their thoughts on our Value for Money Statement. You can read the statement below:

**Value for Money for Langstane Housing Association means:**

- obtaining the best value for services through tendering
- not compromising on quality when saving money
- making general efficiencies wherever we can and reducing costs without affecting tenant services
- making the most of tenants' rents by spending wisely on things that matter to tenants
- keeping rents affordable

**How do we demonstrate Value for Money to our tenants and other stakeholders?**

- We ensure that Value for Money remains a priority in our business plan and on a day to day basis
- We compare the cost of activities with other similar organisations through benchmarking
- We improve performance and increase satisfaction
- We review rent affordability on an annual basis and take this into consideration when considering a rent increase
- We report on the general efficiencies we make to tenants and the Board of Management

- We operate within the prudent budget set each year

The majority of tenants who responded agreed with our Statement. The full results went to the Board of Management in June. The final Value for Money statement is on our website, along with the results of the tenant survey.



Read about how our dedicated staff adapted to help tenants during the pandemic.

### Langstane Housing Support Service (LHSS)

We had to rethink the ways we offer support to our tenants in need.

Social distancing rules mean we can't have face-to-face meetings for any length of time, or go inside tenants' homes. However, we still provide support to tenants who need it. We are just doing it in new ways!

A basic support we offer is for tenancy start up. This involves:

- Supporting tenants to apply for furnishings,
- Supporting new tenants with utility issues and
- Applying to local charities for basic starter packs.

All this work continues while we stick to the social distancing rules.

LHSS also continue to support tenants being referred to them. Referrals come to us through:

- Tenants contacting us themselves
- Family or neighbours raising concerns
- Our own housing and repairs team or outside agencies raising concerns

We attempt to contact every person referred to us. We will use telephone, email or letter to get in touch.

Tenants already using the service still need our continued support. We have stayed in contact using telephone and video calling. Some calls are brief, lasting just a few minutes while we help with information and advice. Some people need more time and a support call can last an hour or more. The team have continued to deliver food parcels and starter packs to tenants.

Multi agency meetings such as Adult Support and Protection reviews have continued, so the team continue to go to these when they need to.

When lockdown started, we decided to contact every tenant over 70 for a wellbeing check. It is a big job, but the team have been working through the list! Some of these calls generated new referrals to the team asking for regular wellbeing checks.

In addition, the staff identified tenants in the 'vulnerable' category and have been referring them to the Local Authority assistance hub where they can get help for food and medication deliveries while they are shielding at home.

Some of the more unusual support we have provided lately includes sourcing

donations of wool for a lady who lives alone, likes to knit, and was not able to get wool from the shops. This tenant does not have a TV, but loves to knit. We also provided some clothes and toiletries to a gentleman in need.

If you need some help and support, and would like to speak to a member of the Langstane Support Service, please do not hesitate to get in touch. To do this you can call 01224 423000, email [LHsupportservice@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:LHsupportservice@langstane-ha.co.uk) or send a private message via Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Langstane/](https://www.facebook.com/Langstane/).



## Rent Management Team and the Tenant Welfare Advisor

Our Rent Team's main concern during lockdown is that tenants have all the information and advice they need to help them pay their rent. We have been working hard with tenants to try and overcome challenges faced in relation to changes to household incomes.

Some of the changes tenants experienced are:

- Loss of work
- Redundancy
- Being furloughed
- Self Employed and not able to work
- Sick leave due to Coronavirus
- Self isolating due to Coronavirus

Examples of the help our team have been providing during lockdown include:

- Advice on the government schemes available, for example Furlough
- Applying for Universal Credit and;
- Arranging affordable repayment plans

We have spent a lot of time speaking with tenants whose incomes have been significantly reduced during lockdown. In particular we talk about the importance of not getting into too much debt, and how long it can take to recover financially from not paying full rent and getting into arrears.

Our Tenant Welfare Advisor has been helping tenants filling in forms to apply

for benefits. This has been a challenge to do remotely over the telephone and takes a lot longer. Being a digital champion, he has also assisted tenants with any IT challenges they face. Some tenants have never used a computer to complete forms.

If you are experiencing financial problems and would like help from us, please do not hesitate to get in touch. You can call 01224 423000, email [info@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:info@langstane-ha.co.uk) or send a private message via Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Langstane/](https://www.facebook.com/Langstane/).



Social distancing and government restrictions have changed our normal routines. Here is some advice to help you keep your home as safe as possible and highlight some safety steps that we take to make sure your home stays safe.



### Legionella

Legionella is waterborne bacteria that can cause a respiratory illness called Legionnaire's disease if water droplets containing the bacteria are breathed in.

The risk is usually quite low but can be increased where water outlets such as taps and showers are not used regularly. An example is an outdoor tap not being used if you are spending more time inside.

To reduce the risk it is important that any water outlets which you don't use regularly are run for 10 minutes each week to clear stale water. If you have face coverings it is advisable to use them while flushing through the outlets to avoid breathing in water droplets.

This is particularly important if you are returning home after being away for a long time. If you are vulnerable and are returning home after a stay in hospital or care you can contact us. We can help with these checks before you get back home.



### Fire Safety

Fire safety is always important but never more so than when we are all at home for longer than usual. Fire safety relates to your own home and also the communal areas that you share with others.

We have a zero tolerance fire safety policy for items stored in communal areas. These can slow down escape in the event of an emergency or cause fire and smoke. You will be asked to remove your belongings from communal areas. If we have to remove them, the owner may be charged the cost of collection and storage.

Top tips for fire safety in your own home:

- Test each of your smoke detectors weekly – these are key to early detection
- Don't leave the cooker/hob unattended while in use
- Make sure all exits in your home are clear and nothing is blocking the way
- Create a fire evacuation plan – what you will do in the event of a fire

If you have concerns about fire safety in your home please contact us for advice, You can also visit the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service website at [www.firescotland.go.uk/your-safety/for-householders.aspx](http://www.firescotland.go.uk/your-safety/for-householders.aspx).



### Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material that can be found in properties built before 2000. The most common places are in Artex finishes, fire safety barriers, and heating systems (but it can be found in other locations). Artex is safe if it is in good condition and not disturbed.

We maintain a register of asbestos which is known or presumed to exist within communal areas of our developments. We also check individual dwellings for asbestos before we do any disruptive maintenance or upgrade work.

If you are thinking about doing any DIY in your property please make sure you request written approval. Use our alterations form so that we are aware and can give you advice should your property contain asbestos. The alteration form can be found on our website at [www.langstane-ha.co.uk](http://www.langstane-ha.co.uk) or call us to ask for one on 01224 423000.



### Electrical Safety

We have a duty to make sure your home has a safe electrical system. Your system is made up of a fuse box (consumer unit) and circuit breakers (MC / RCD / RCBO) and outlets (sockets and lights).

We aim to test your property every 5 years and do any repairs needed at the time of the test. This test is called an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

Modern electrical equipment is designed to be sensitive and protect your home from the slightest electrical danger. If a fuse 'trips' in your consumer unit there are some simple steps you can take to find out what happened:

1. Look at your consumer unit (fuse box). Check if a switch is in the off or down position. All your fuses should be labelled clearly showing what they control. This will guide you to where the problem might be.
2. If the tripped fuse is labelled 'sockets' you will need to try and identify which piece of equipment is causing the problem. Switch off anything that is plugged in. Once this is done you should be able to switch the fuse to the on position.
3. You can then plug all your items back in – however do this one at a time! If the fuse trips again it is likely that the last item you plugged in is the cause of the problem. Don't use this item until it is checked and repaired by a qualified professional.
4. If a different fuse has tripped then give us a call as. You may need an electrician to visit.

We hope that you find this information useful. If you have any concerns about the electricity in your home please contact the Asset Management Team on 01224 423000.

## Problems with neighbours?

We are about to review our policy for dealing with anti-social behaviour. You can take part in the review. Please read this article, and then give us your views about how we provide the service, and what we could do to improve things on the consultation survey.



'informed of their responsibilities when signing their tenancy agreement. We regularly inspect our schemes to check compliance with tenancy conditions. We also work with other agencies to address issues before they escalate.

Is not always possible for us to prevent anti-social problems occurring.

### How do we handle reports of anti-social behaviour?

When you complain to your Housing Officer they will discuss the issue with you and find out what happened. We understand that some tenants are upset when they make a complaint about ASB. We ask questions because it is important that we get as much information as possible about the incident. We will ask you:

- What happened? - including any background to the incident
- Where did it happen?
- Were there any witnesses?
- When did it happen? – dates and times
- How did it affect you?

We will also ask if the issue was reported to anyone else like the Police or the Dog Warden. Reporting the problem to another agency, or letting us know if another neighbour was affected will help us corroborate the complaint. This makes it easier for us to take action.

### What does the law say?

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a very broad term. It describes a range of unacceptable activity. Section 143 of the Anti-Social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 defines anti-social conduct:

'A person engages in anti-social behaviour if he/she:

- a) Acts in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress; or
- b) Pursues a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress, to at least one person who is not of the same household.'

Some examples of anti-social behaviour are:

- Noise such as shouting and loud music
- Littering, including fly-tipping
- Harassment and intimidating behaviour
- Vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage
- Nuisance from vehicles including noise and rogue parking
- Failure to control pets including noise and fouling
- Criminal activity such as drugs misuse or prostitution

During 2019/20 the Association received 503 complaints of anti-social behaviour. We managed to resolve the problem on 451 occasions.

Where possible we will try to prevent ASB. We make sure help is available for tenants with support needs. We keep tenants



## What can we do about anti-social behaviour?

We use a range of options. These work on an escalating basis – this gives a tenant who is being anti-social a chance to change their behaviour to stop us taking further, more serious action.

Some complaints of anti-social behaviour are due to lifestyle differences. We promote co-operation and understanding between tenants. During investigation, our Housing Officers may refer the complaint to other agencies. This allows professionals with special skills in resolving conflicts to help find a good outcome. Where there is criminal behaviour tenants are encouraged and reminded to report crimes to the Police.

## Options we have to address anti-social behaviour include:

- **Informal discussion:** we will speak to everyone involved and try to find a way for people to get along without further issues. This could be asking someone not to use their washing machine late at night, or moving their speakers to a different place to cut noise levels.
- **Warnings:** these are verbal or written depending on the nature of the anti-social behaviour, and how long we have spent working to resolve it. The purpose of a warning is to make a person aware of the impact of their behaviour, and to remind them of the consequences if their behaviour continues.
- **Mediation:** this is used to establish common ground and resolve issues between people. It is a specialist service conducted by a specialist agency and is not available in all areas.
- **Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC):** this is an informal written agreement that is specific about the behaviour of a person. It can involve multiple agencies working with the people experiencing anti-social behaviour. They provide support to help prevent these issues occurring again. These contracts are informal but can prevent the need to pursue legal action.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO):** the purpose of an ASBO is to stop a person behaving in a certain way or doing certain things. Although an ASBO is a civil court matter, breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence. The person can be fined or in extreme cases jailed.
- **Interdict:** this is a civil court order that directs someone not to do something or to stay away from a specific person or place. An interdict can be used for any type of behaviour. In certain cases it may be appropriate for a tenant to pursue an interdict against a person in order to resolve a situation.
- **Tenancy conversion:** a tenancy can be converted from a Scottish Secure tenancy to a Short Scottish Secure tenancy where a tenant, someone living with them or a visitor to their property has behaved in an anti-social manner to someone in the locality in the last three years. Short Secure tenancies can be granted to a potential new tenant if they have a history of anti-social behaviour in the last three years.



- **Eviction:** in extreme cases we will start court proceedings and request an eviction order. There is now a streamlined process where serious anti-social or criminal behaviour has been proven in court and the tenant has been convicted. We will have to prove to a Sheriff that we have tried all other alternatives to resolve the issue before going for eviction. If the case goes to a hearing then our staff, and often the neighbouring tenants will have to give evidence to prove how serious the behaviour is and how it affects them. The Sheriff will decide if it is reasonable to evict the tenant from their home.

## What is not anti-social behaviour?

Some things are not anti-social behaviour. These include:

- Being unable to park outside your home
- DIY and car repairs – unless they are taking place late at night
- Children playing
- People gathering socially – unless they are shouting, swearing and intimidating others
- Disagreement with another person's lifestyle choice or behaviour where it is reasonable and does not impact others.

All complaints are taken seriously. We record and investigate them. If you complain, our staff keep you up to date with what they are doing and how long that might take. Some cases will take weeks or even months to resolve.

Once the complaint investigation is finished we will always ask for feedback from the person who complained. This is done by survey. We ask a few questions about your experience of reporting your complaint, your satisfaction with our service, and how you felt about the outcome of the complaint. You also get an opportunity to make comments or raise questions about your experience of the service.

## Want to help us review our anti-social complaints service?

Please answer the short survey using the link on your newsletter email, or by filling in the consultation insert enclosed with this newsletter.

## Planned Maintenance Programme 2020-2021

The focus for the year is health and safety. Here are details of our current and planned projects:

- Smoke detector upgrades
- Electrical inspections by our contractor in all properties, and any corrective work required
- Starting a replacement fire door programme and;
- Fitting new window restrictors

We are working in line with government guidelines regarding social distancing as the health and safety of staff, tenants and contractors continues to be our top priority. We will do this work when the safety restrictions allow. These are changing all the time so we will react at each phase of new guidance. This could result in unavoidable delays. We will keep you updated as best we can.

### Replacement Kitchens & Bathrooms

Our contractors contact tenants to arrange surveys. Surveys for kitchens are to agree layout, let tenants choose cabinet door colours, worktop splashback and vinyl floor colours. We also make sure the room will meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). Bathroom surveys are to discuss flooring and wallboard (waterproof wall panel) choices. Ground floor tenants can choose if they want to have a shower tray fitted instead of a bath.

Replacement plans	
Kitchens	Cloverfield Close, Aberdeen
Bathrooms	114-141 Fraser Court, Aberdeen

### Heating Upgrades

Our contractor visits each tenant to survey the property and decide if a full heating upgrade is required or only a boiler or radiators.

Replacement plans	
100-141 Fraser Court, Aberdeen	We will be completing an options appraisal for heating upgrade or heat metering installation.
2-4 Charlotte Street, Aberdeen	

## Staff Profile



Welcome to Steve Buchanan, our new plumber, who joined the team in January. Before Langstane Steve worked for Hutcheon Services and was offshore for many years. He brings with him a wealth of plumbing and heating experience. Here is what Steve has to say about his time so far:

“Since joining Langstane I’ve been made to feel very welcome by all the staff. I’m looking forward to getting back to work as soon as possible to continue helping to resolve tenant’s problems”.

I’m sure you will join me in wishing Steve the best of luck in his role.

## Keeping safe



**Nobody wants to be a victim of crime. Here are some tips to help you keep your family, your home and yourself safe.**

- Make sure your doors and windows are secure at all times.
- Don’t leave a spare key under a mat or leave keys in the lock of an opened door.
- Keep your car and house keys on different keyrings.
- If you keep money in the house, keep it in various places.
- Don’t leave any valuables in sight of a window.
- Avoid hanging your wall calendar near a window where appointments can be seen as this may highlight when your home will be empty.
- Keep a record of what valuables you have, such as, laptop, tablet and mobile phone and register this information on the national mobile property register at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).



### If you go on holiday;

- If you have a trusted neighbour then you could ask them to keep an eye on your home while you are away
- Set your lights on a timer
- If you have an alarm then make sure it’s set
- Don’t advertise you are away through social media

If you have concerns about the security of your home please call us on 01224 423000. If concerned about a possible break-in or other criminal activity around your home or in your community call Police Scotland on 101. Or call 999 in an emergency.



## Your Right to Repair – annual reminder time!



We have a legal duty to carry out certain small, urgent repairs called 'Qualifying Repairs' within set timescales. If we fail to respond within that set timescale, you have the right to arrange for certain repairs to be carried out. An alternative contractor can be used. A compensation payment will be paid in these circumstances.

It is important that you talk to us before you exercise your Right to Repair. We will provide advice on the steps you must follow. This will make sure you avoid spending money you cannot claim back. If you don't want to talk to us about it, please take advice from somewhere like your local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Further information on the Right to Repair Scheme is available on our website.

Here is a list of the qualifying repairs, and the deadline we have to fix them.

- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler – 1 day
- Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house – 1 day
- Blocked sink, bath or drain – 1 day
- Electric power – loss of electric power/partial loss of electric power – 3 days
- Insecure external window, door or lock – 1 day
- Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns – 1 day

- Loss or partial loss of gas supply – 1 day
- Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where there is no alternative heating – 1 day
- Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house -1 day
- Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting – 1 day
- Water supply – loss of water supply – 1 day
- Water supply – partial loss of water supply – 3 days
- Unsafe timber flooring or treads – 3 days
- Mechanical extractor fan internal kitchen or bathroom not working – 7 days

These repairs will be carried out by either Heatcare Oil & Gas or our own Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). If one of these cannot carry out the repair, it will be handled by the other. For example, if Heatcare are unable to complete the job then our DLO will do it.

If you do not want either of these options for your repair we will provide an alternative contractor upon request.

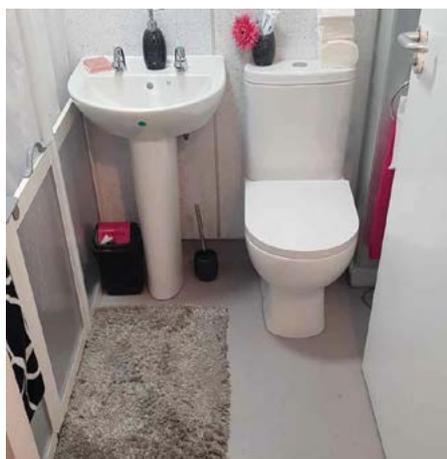


## Case study – Helping a tenant to stay in her home

Our tenant requested digital help to apply for a transfer. She was surprised to learn that with our help she could stay in her own home. The issue was her bathroom. Due to having some mobility issues she struggled every day. She thought moving house would give her the chance to have more accessible space. We advised a home visit with an Occupational Therapist (OT) would help get things sorted out. The referral from this visit is what we need to approve a big property adaptation. Once we got the OT referral the adaptation was approved. Within weeks the work was underway. The bath was removed and replaced with a walk-in shower and aqua panels. Our Technical Officer worked closely with the tenant to make sure everything was going smoothly and she was happy.

The work is finished and our tenant is extremely happy. She no longer needs to move out of her home. Here is some feedback from our satisfied customer:

"My new bathroom has taken the stress out of showering as I was always worried I would fall and with living on my own that made me quite frantic. The workmen were really helpful and asked me what I wanted and didn't just tell me what I was getting. I got to choose my own flooring and wall boards so thank you for that Langstane. Your help and support has made my life a lot easier and I am very grateful".



## Meet the cleaners

Samsic UK are a national provider of facility management services. They have huge experience of working in housing, and also in sectors including education, retail and health care.

After a competitive tendering process Samsic UK got the contract for fortnightly cleaning of communal areas in most of our developments.

The cleaners have a schedule of jobs for each development. Their core tasks are:

- Full vacuum and clean of the staircases and common landings. If the property doesn't have a carpet the floor coverings are mopped and brushed.
- Washing down surfaces such as window sills, stair stringers, balustrades, dado rails.
- Remove chewing gum from carpets/surfaces.
- Clean internal glass.
- Remove scuffs or marks on walls/flooring.
- Clean lifts (if the property has a lift). That includes walls, glass, and removal of litter.

Due to Health and Safety rules, the cleaners are not allowed to move any

personal items like bikes, prams, or bags of rubbish to clean common landings. We ask that these are removed by tenants and communal areas are kept clear of obstructions all the time.

### Meet the area teams:

**Aberdeenshire and Moray** - Carl & Dave cover Inverbervie, Buckie, Elgin, Forres and Macduff. Carl has been with Samsic UK for 16 months. He enjoys organising local music and comedy events, and spending time with his two kids. Dave has been with the company for 2 years. He also works designing websites and online courses, and enjoys camping, cycling and running.

**Aberdeen City** – we have two teams for the city, Alpha and Bravo.

Alpha team is Tracy and Jordan. Tracy has been with Samsic UK for 9 months. She loves spending time with her kids and grandson. Jordan has been with Samsic UK for a year, and likes to spend his spare time playing football and gaming with friends.

The Bravo team is Isabel who has worked for Samsic UK for 7 months, and Nelson who has been on their staff for 2 months. Isabel enjoys doing some baking with her daughter, and relaxing with a good movie. Nelson enjoys fixing up his car, cooking and gaming.

### Meet the Manager – Rose

Rose regularly checks the standard of cleaning. The results of the checks are then sent to the Association. If there are any issues identified, the cleaners will return and sort out the issue. Rose also helps the cleaners by providing cover if the team are short of staff. When not at work, Rose loves to spend time socialising with her family and friends.

Our cleaners have very busy, challenging jobs. When they are working in your buildings, please give them the time and space they need to get through their tasks. A friendly word is always welcome too! Sadly, we had to stop the service in one area of Aberdeen due to repeated verbal abuse being directed at the cleaners. We will not accept this kind of thing happening to our staff or contractors.



## Coming this autumn....



The better we know our tenants, the better our services can be.

Being a tenant of Langstane Housing gives you access to much more than your property. We provide a lot of different services designed to help you get the most out of living in your home, and to make sure that you stay in your home for as long as you need to.

The more we know about you, the better we can be sure you get the most from our services.

### How do we do that?

We ask for a lot of information from you when you become a tenant. This helps us to understand what you need from us. However, this information can go out of date. We are doing a big update this autumn.

### What does the update involve?

We'll be sending all tenants a set of questions to answer. They help us to match you with services you might need. We will ask about your health, your income and spending on your household bills, and also how suitable your current home is for you.

### What if I don't want to answer your questions?

You don't have to answer them. But, we want to make sure you get best value from our services. Your answers will help us make sure you get the most from being a tenant with us.

### Is my information safe?

Yes, the information you provide is only for us to use to make sure you get the most from Langstane's services. For full information about how we look after your

personal data please see our privacy notice on our website.

### What are the prizes?

We want to offer as many prizes as possible so you have a good chance of winning something if you take part. We have ten shopping vouchers worth £20 each offered through a prize draw for the completed surveys.

### How will I get this survey?

If we have your email address we will send you an online survey. If you don't have email you can still take part by post. We'll send you a paper questionnaire and a pre-paid envelope so you can post your answers to us for free.



## Mystery shopping update



In February 2020 we started our Mystery Shopping project. The aim was to see how well we work to our Customer Care Standards. First we had a tenant meeting. Then we sent home packs to tenants who had previously shown interest in being involved but couldn't make the meeting.

Sadly, this project has been hit by the effects of Covid-19. Services have been restricted, and our tenants have a lot to deal with. We have not had as many mystery shops as we hoped for.

However it is a start, and we are very grateful for the results we have had so far. The project will continue for the next few months.

If you are interested in being involved in checking us against our service standards, or would like more information contact Samantha, our Customer Participation Officer, on 01224 423120 or at [samantha.hough@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:samantha.hough@langstane-ha.co.uk).

## Tenant nominates Langstane Housing Support Service (LHSS) for an award!

In February we found out that a tenant we support had nominated our team for a Recovery Star award. The award was in the 'special recognition category' for anyone who has gone 'above and beyond' expectation in supporting others. Sadly the awards event was postponed until after the pandemic. However, the team are delighted to be nominated and to be seen as 'getting it right' for tenants.

We asked the tenant who nominated the team to share her story with us. Please read Jennifer's story in her own words:

"Last year was a very difficult and dark year for me. I've lived with mental health issues for many years now. Last year I lost control in my life and things went downhill rapidly. As I became more unwell I lost everything and I was exposed to people who took advantage of me and used my vulnerabilities against me. This resulted in me losing all my money, my possessions, including my furniture and even most of my clothes. I lost everything I owned and more.

The Langstane Housing Support Team got involved when my housing officer became concerned. They helped me a lot and I am so grateful. They visited me every week, sometimes more than once a week. They helped me sort out money, clothing and furniture for my flat. They even supported me to get to appointments.

With my permission, the staff worked with my doctor and my support worker to support me and make sure I was safe. I was very lucky to have a lovely neighbour who also helped me during this time.

Everything that happened last year had a massive effect on my mental health and without the support of everyone I don't know where I would be now. I have slowly started to get my life back on track. I've worked hard and I'm in a better place now. I'm back in touch with my family. The lockdown has been very hard for everyone but I'm looking forward to the time when it's over and I can get back to some normality. I really want to say a big thank you to Susan, Helen, Billy and Monica from the LHSS team and I also want to thank my mental health team Kirsten, Kelly and Rachel I think you are all amazing".

If you would like to talk confidentially to a member of the team please contact them on either 01224 423000 or email [LHsupportservice@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:LHsupportservice@langstane-ha.co.uk).



Jennifer

## Funding boost for our Langstane Housing Support Service

**£1,000** was awarded to our Langstane Housing Support Service. It came from the Station House Media Unit (SHMU). SHMU was given £25,000 from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund to support local communities through the coronavirus pandemic. This money is being used by the team to continue their valuable support of tenants and applicants with things like starter packs, shopping vouchers and activity packs.

## Feeding birds in your garden?

In the last edition we shared news about a tenant's award winning garden in Aberdeen. We focussed on how much he enjoyed feeding the birds that visit him. If you get birds in your garden and would like to put up feeding stations and/or feeders then please contact the Association and request permission to do this.

The reason we want you to ask first is because there have been times when tenants have left scraps of bread and other foods that have caused a vermin problem. We want to help avoid this, but still have our feathered friends visiting wherever possible.

To discuss this with a member of the team please call 01224 423000 or email [info@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:info@langstane-ha.co.uk).



## Congratulations Stephanie!



Stephanie is our rent increase consultation 2020 prize winner. She won a £50 Asda voucher.

Congratulations Stephanie – we hope you bought yourself something nice.

Thank you to everyone who responded. Please do take part in our surveys and consultations that are coming up. Responses are reported to our Board of Management to help guide their decisions. Results of consultations are published on our website.

Your voice really does count.



## Vanilla Ice cream in 10 minutes without an ice cream maker!



### You will need:

- 3 large bowls
- Vanilla flavour – 1 teaspoon
- Double cream – 600 ml
- Caster Sugar – 250g
- 6 eggs

Serves 6

Firstly separate your egg whites from the yolks. Then in the first bowl, mix your egg whites till firm, in your second bowl

beat your egg yolks with sugar until the mixture is creamy. In your third bowl whip the vanilla and cream until firm. Then add your eggs to your cream mix and beat again. Finally, fold in egg whites and freeze in container for 1 day.

Then serve and enjoy!

To see more ice cream recipes in an assortment of flavours visit [allrecipes.co.uk/](http://allrecipes.co.uk/)



## EMERGENCY NUMBERS



### Emergency Repair Cover when our offices are closed:

Please contact **Heatcare Oil & Gas**  
**01343 842 042**  
(Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire & Moray)

Gas (Heatcare) **01343 842 042**  
Gas emergency **0800 111 999**  
Electricity - Power Cut **0800 300 999**  
Loss of Water Supply **08000 778 778**

The office is currently closed because of the Coronavirus pandemic. A re-opening date is yet to be confirmed.