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Winter 2025

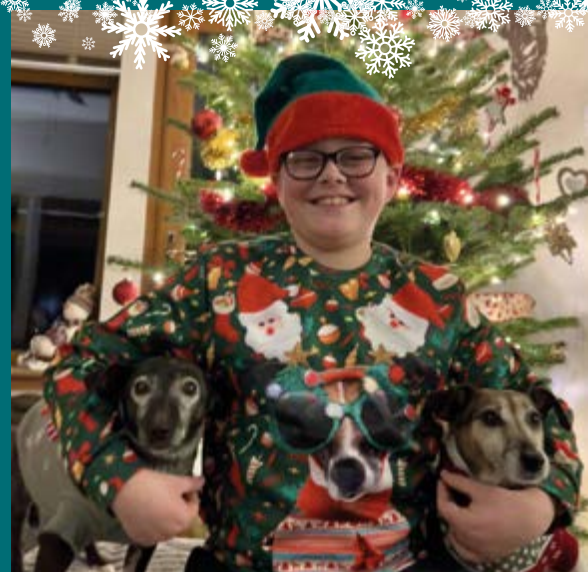
Newsletter



*Season's
Greetings*
from all at
Osprey

Making a difference every day





Not Santa's but CEO's little helpers

CEO's Introduction

As the year draws to a close and Christmas fast approaches, I am pleased to welcome you to this edition of our tenant newsletter. This time of year reminds us of the importance of warmth, comfort, and safety—we aim to deliver homes not houses and this ethos remains central to our service delivery and supporting our tenants. Our team have worked hard to support many households to sustain their tenancies, which will always be our priority.

Over the past year, we have taken forward several initiatives aimed at enhancing the tenant experience and ensuring that our services meet the highest standards of quality to meet tenant expectations. In particular, I would like to thank OTRA for their efforts and dedication in the successful completion of their Scrutiny project. This project focussed on how we process our empty homes and their recommendations have been endorsed with changes that help us to continually improve and deliver value for money. This project was shortlisted in the Chartered Institute of Housing Annual Awards and a testament to the hard work of the tenants and team members involved.

Looking ahead to the new year, we are committed to further investment and development of our digital infrastructure and tenant services. You will find more information in this newsletter with a focus on our new website and upgraded tenant portal launch – watch this space!

On behalf of our entire team, I extend my best wishes over the festive period and look forward to 2026.

Stacy Angus, Chief Executive

CHRISTMAS AT OSPREY

Festive Opening Hours for 2025

The Osprey Housing offices and main phone lines will be closed on **Friday 24 December as of 12.30.**

The office will re-open at **09:00 on Monday 5 January 2026.**

If you need to report a repairs emergency during the office closure please contact our **Out of Hours Emergency number: 01224 548030.**

All non emergency repairs should be reported by e-mail to: enquiries@ospreyhousing.org.uk and will be dealt with on our return. You can also report repairs via our website – www.ospreyhousing.org.uk or tenant portal.

Paying rent over the festive period

At this time of year it is important to remember that your rent is still due on or before the 1st of the Month and it's critical to plan how you will maintain this through the office closure. If you usually call to make your rent payments, you will need to do so before the office closes on 24 December 2025. Alternatively, there are other ways for you to pay your rent:

- **Using your Allpay card at Pay point outlets or at the post office. Pay online at www.allpayments.net using your Allpay card reference (you can obtain this by contacting our office before we close for Christmas).**
- **Pay using the Allpay Mobile App which is available to download from the Apple Store and Google Play.**
- **Pay using Tenant Portal.**

If you know you will have difficulty paying your rent it is best to contact your Housing Officer. Help and advice is always available and we will make every effort to help if you are having financial difficulties.



Christmas Competition



For this edition's competition why not send us photos showing off how you have decorated the outside of your home this Christmas? There will be a prize of £50 of vouchers for the winner! Send your photos to:

crupton@ospreyhousing.org.uk by **16 January 2026**

Andy's Man Club

Christmas can be a lonely time for some of us. It appears that everyone else is having fun and we feel desperate and alone. Osprey's Team benefited from a frank and honest session led by Mark and David from Andy's Man Club at our recent training morning. They are a men's suicide prevention charity, offering free to attend peer-to-peer support groups across the United Kingdom



and online. They meet every Monday (except Bank Holidays) at 7pm in their quest to end the stigma surrounding men's mental health and help men through the power of conversation.

Hopefully what we learned will help us support you and each other through the toughest times.

Find out more here: <https://linktr.ee/andysmanclub>
#ITSOKAYTALK



OTRA Scrutiny Project on Lettable Standards Shortlisted for National Award!



The Osprey Tenants and Residents Association (OTRA) recently successfully completed a scrutiny project, focusing on Lettable Standards,

the condition and quality of properties before new tenants move in.

As part of the project, OTRA members visited a range of void properties of different ages and types. This hands-on approach gave the group a valuable insight into the varied challenges Osprey faces when carrying out void works to prepare homes for re-letting.

Each member of the scrutiny panel used a scoring sheet to assess the properties. Once all properties had been reviewed and scored, the findings were collated into a comprehensive report of observations and recommendations. These recommendations were then presented to Osprey's Board and Senior Leadership Team, who have since implemented several of the proposed improvements.

We're delighted to share that this Scrutiny Project has been shortlisted for the Scottish Housing Awards 2025, a fantastic achievement and well-deserved recognition of the hard work, commitment, and collaboration that went into the project from start to finish.

Looking ahead, OTRA plans to undertake another Scrutiny Project in the New Year, continuing our commitment to ensuring that tenants' voices are heard and that housing standards remain high across all Osprey properties.

If you're interested in becoming a member of OTRA and helping shape the future of Osprey Housing services, we'd love to hear from you!

- Email: lmunro@ospreyhousing.org.uk
- Phone: 07801 746396



Contents Insurance for Tenants



As a tenant, protecting your personal belongings is your responsibility. While Osprey Housing covers the structure of your home, it is up to you to ensure your possessions—like furniture, electronics, and floor coverings—are insured against unexpected events such as fire, flood, or theft.

Contents insurance offers peace of mind by helping you recover financially if your belongings are damaged or stolen. It's easy to overlook this protection, especially when budgeting is tight. But ask yourself: could you afford to replace your appliances, soft furnishings, or flooring if disaster struck?

Fortunately, contents insurance is often more affordable than people think. The cost typically depends on the value of your items, and there are many policies available to suit different needs and budgets.

To help you get started, here are some useful resources for comparing policies and finding the right coverage:

GoCompare – Tenants Insurance

MoneySavingExpert – Renters Contents Insurance Guide

Citizens Advice – Household Contents Insurance

One popular option specifically designed for tenants is Thistle Tenant Risks. You can explore their offerings at:

<https://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk/>

They provide an online enquiry form, or you can contact them via email at tenantscontents@thistleinsurance.co.uk or by phone at **0345 450 7286**.

Whatever policy you choose, make sure it provides the coverage that best fits your lifestyle and belongings.

A Day in the Life of a Senior Housing Officer

It is safe to say, that no two days in Housing are ever the same. When you log on in the morning, you rarely know exactly how your day is going to unfold. As a Senior Housing Officer, I wear two hats: I'm the Housing Officer for Area 6 (Blackdog to Peterhead), acting as the main contact for tenants on tenancy-related matters, and as the Senior, I support other Housing Officers by talking over any difficult cases, developing procedures, engaging with key partners such as local authorities, and responding to any service complaints which are made. During busy periods, or where there is staff absence, it is important that services are still provided by the Housing Team and so analysing workloads and getting suitable cover is also an important part of the role.

Here's a glimpse into what a typical day might look like:

7:30 AM – Starting the Day

I'm an early starter and often one of the first in on office days. I begin by reviewing tenant communications, checking our housing management system Homemaster for outstanding contacts, and identifying cases that need action. A quick diary check helps me prepare for any meetings or home visits scheduled for the day.

9:00 AM – The “Office opens”

Once the phone lines open, I start making calls. These range from discussing tenancy concerns to speaking with prospective tenants about property allocations. Every call is unique and requires empathy, clear communication, and a solid understanding of our policies and procedures. Calls aren't just to/from tenants but also many of my colleagues who require my input or expertise.

10:00am – Meetings

Meetings are a regular part of my day—whether with the Housing Team, as part of an organisational project, or with external partners. I always aim to contribute meaningfully and take away something valuable, ensuring that customer focus remains at the heart of everything we do.

12:30 – Lunch Break

Taking time away from the screen and phone is essential, especially after tough calls. While it's not always possible, I prioritise a proper lunch break. If I'm working from home, I make the most of the daylight—especially in winter—and take the dogs for a walk around the block.

13:00 PM – Home visits and Inspections

I can often be found out and about in my “patch” conducting home visits. Whether these are prearranged or ad hoc, I look to make the most of my time in the area. Sometimes visits can be challenging so it's important to treat everyone with respect and work with tenants. I like to think that I am approachable – often hearing “Oi Jamie, come here a sec” when I am out and about. I also keep a keen eye on our developments, noting issues such as untidy gardens or areas which need a bit of TLC.

4:30 PM – Wrapping Up

At the end of the day, I log in one final time to update accounts with notes from visits and pass on messages to other departments. This might include raising work orders or inspections for the Asset Officer—poor Scott usually ends up with a list from me (sorry!). This role demands flexibility, resilience, and a genuine commitment to making a difference in people's lives—and I like to think I deliver that every day.

Digital Updates: Making Your Experience Easier and Faster

Osprey housing are continually investing in new digital improvements designed to make your interactions with us simpler, quicker, and more convenient. This also allows us to automate a lot of routine admin tasks so that more time can be spent where it matters most – with our tenants.

What's New?

• TENANT PORTAL - MY HOME

In July this year, we launched TENANT PORTAL - MY HOME. As tenants you have the ability to access and manage more of your tenancy online. This includes reporting repairs, checking your rent balance, and updating your contact details—all from the comfort of your home. To access My Home, visit <https://www.ospreyhousing.org.uk/your-tenancy/tenant-portal>. If you've never used the system before, you will be able to register, however if you are struggling to do so, please contact our office and someone will be able to assist.

• CALL MASKING

We recently went live with Call Masking for when tenants call the office to make a payment. The system provides tenants additional security and peace of mind that their card details are secure when making a payment. When you call to make a payment, the staff member will talk you through exactly what to do. Alternative payment methods are available, and advice on these can be found on our website or by speaking with any staff member.

• DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Continued emphasis is being placed on reducing the amount of paperwork that we are posting out to tenants. This not only means that communication is received instantly, but this is more sustainable. We request that tenants keep us up to date with the correct email address and phone number – they can be changed by contacting the office or you can make amendments yourself through the tenant portal. It is also important to regularly check your Junk folder just in case anything slips through. Any system generated emails we send you will come from Homemaster@ospreyhousing.org.uk

• PAY BY LINK

We are continuing to invest in ways to make it simpler to manage your tenancy, including paying your rent. In addition to the existing options of Direct Debit, Standing Order, Callpay/Allpay and PayFrom, we now have available “Pay By Link”. This payment method allows us to send you a link, which can be saved to your device, so that you can easily make a payment online using your debit or credit card. Speak with anyone in our Customer Services or Housing Teams to provide you with you with your bespoke link.



Future Development

We are excited to share that we are currently in the process of developing our new tenant website and My Home premium. Both systems will be integrated, along with These Homes, to provide a seamless service to our tenants. This will provide tenants with a greater ability to manage their tenancies. Further information on these updates will be shared once we have a launch dates confirmed.

Digital Inclusion: Support for Everyone

We understand that not everyone has easy access to the internet or feels confident using digital tools. That's why we're committed to ensuring no one is left behind.

Here's how we can help:

- **Training and Guidance:** Our officers are Digital Champions and can provide basic guidance on how to get online with your devices and carry out basic tasks.
- **Access to devices:** We have a small digital engagement fund that we can access, along with access to refurbished devices that we can provide to tenants who are digitally excluded.
- **Alternative Options:** If you prefer, you can still contact us by phone or visit our office—digital services are an option, not a requirement.

Need Help?

Don't worry if you're not confident with technology—we'll provide guidance and support every step of the way. Our team will be available to help you get set up.



Preparing for Winter

Love it or loath it, winter is upon us. We have already had snow this year and we will likely be in for more bouts of winter weather coming our way! There are however a few simple things that we can do to help ensure we enjoy a trouble free cold spell.



Keep Your Home Warm: Just as it's important to keep yourself warm, it's also important to keep your home warm. Frozen and burst pipes can cause a lot of damage, stress and suffering but keeping the ambient temperature of your property up, can help avoid this.

Keep an Eye out for: Leaking pipes and taps – especially outside where a build-up of ice could become a hazard. Down pipes and gutters can become full of snow and ice. Your boiler should be working properly – if it is not, then report the fault. The last thing you will want is to be without heat or hot water over Christmas!

Keep in Touch: Let us know quickly if any of these things above cause concern and we can arrange to have them inspected or repaired if required.

Going Away: If you are lucky enough to be heading away over the winter, please ensure your heating is left on low, and you have sufficient gas and electric provision. Also let a friend or family member know that you are away – they may be able to keep an eye on your house for you. If you do give a key to somebody else let us know.

Keep Alert: Winter weather forecasts, weather warnings and emergency contact numbers can help you be aware and prepared for what's coming. Don't get caught out with a sudden change in the weather or temperature drop. You can also use these to check for road, school or public building closures or any loss of public transport. It is also worthwhile keeping your household insurance documents and emergency telephone numbers handy - just in case!

Keep Your Home Aired: Simply battening down the hatches for winter can itself lead to other problems, so it is equally important to keep your property aired regularly to help prevent condensation or mould build up. Keep trickle vents open and always use your fans every time you boil the kettle or a pan of water and when having a shower or bath. Also try and avoid drying clothes over radiators, if possible place clothes on an airer in a room with the door closed and the fan on.

Winter Clothes Drying: Air drying outside will always be the cheapest way to dry your clothes, but let's face it, over winter in Scotland, it's just not always practical! So we'd like to give you some tips and ideas on how to deal with damp laundry over the cooler months, whilst preventing excess moisture in your home, which can lead to condensation and mould.

The most important thing to consider is that all that water in your damp laundry won't just disappear, so ventilation is key:

- Place the airer in a room with an extractor fan, such as the bathroom or kitchen, and use this to help remove the damp air.
- Alternatively, you could place it in a room that is not used during the day, like a bedroom, and close the door and open the window, to keep the room well ventilated, but avoid cooling the rest of the home.
- Don't hang clothes directly on radiators, this blocks the vents on the top of the radiator and prevents it from heating the room, instead use the clothes rails that hang off the radiator. (hanging on radiators can also increase your heating bills as the radiators work harder to compensate).
- If you have an electric fan, you can point this at the clothes airer to speed up drying time (we'd recommend keeping a window open too).
- Consider purchasing a dehumidifier, (prices start around £80 and cost around 7p per hour to run). Most will allow you to set a required humidity, so it's only running when the humidity increases, or you could only run it when there is laundry to dry. These really help to speed up drying times indoors and prevent clothes from developing a musty smell.
- If you have a tumble dryer, you still need to ensure it's in a well-ventilated room.

Repair Priority Table

Repairs are an issue that tenants are understandably concerned about. If you have a problem you want it sorted out immediately, however, this is not always possible. In order to help you understand the expected timeframes please see the information below:



GAS LEAK - Important:

- If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, call SGN immediately on **0800 111 999**.

ADVICE FOR TENANT

- Steps to Take in a Gas Emergency

- Call SGN – **0800 111 999** (Free 24/7 emergency line)
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter (if safe to do so)
- Open windows and doors to ventilate
- Do not use electrical devices or switches
- Do not smoke or use naked flames
- Evacuate the property if the smell is strong or you feel unwell
- Wait for SGN engineer to declare the property safe

EMERGENCY REPAIRS

- Critical (4 Hours)

Definition: Immediate danger to life, health, or property.

Examples:

- Gas leak or smell of gas – Call SGN: 0800 111 999
- Major flooding or burst pipe, leak that cannot be contained.
- Exposed live electrical wires
- Total loss of electricity
- Fire damage affecting safety

- Carbon monoxide alarm activation
- Structural collapse or ceiling falling in
- Insecure external doors or windows (e.g. after break-in)
- Blocked toilet (if only one in the property)
- Smoke alarm sounding constantly
- Water penetration affecting electrics
- Electrical fire or burning smell from sockets
- Broken/smashed windows

EMERGENCY REPAIRS

- High (24 Hours)

Definition: Serious risk or severe inconvenience, but not life-threatening.

Examples:

- No heating or hot water (especially in cold weather)
- Dangerous stair treads or handrails
- Faulty or missing smoke detectors
- Overflowing internal drains
- Faulty communal lighting in stairwells or corridors

URGENT REPAIRS (3 Days)

Definition: Could escalate into emergencies or cause significant discomfort.

Examples:

- Roof leaks causing water ingress
- Minor water leaks (e.g. under sink or bath)
- Damp and mould (especially for

- vulnerable residents)
- Broken windows (secure but damaged)
- Faulty extractor fans in kitchen/bathroom
- Loose or broken bannisters
- Other faults in smoke alarms
- Overflowing gutters causing damp
- Toilet not flushing (if second toilet available)
- Heating not working (in mild weather)
- Broken door handles or internal locks
- Pest infestation affecting health (e.g. rats, wasps) only if internal

ROUTINE REPAIRS (15 Days)

Definition: Non-urgent issues that do not pose immediate risk.

Examples:

- Dripping taps
- Minor plastering or paint touch-ups
- Internal door adjustments or repairs
- Gutter cleaning or minor repairs
- Window handle or lock replacements
- Cupboard door repairs
- Fence panel replacement
- Loose tiles or flooring
- Squeaky doors or windows
- Replacing light bulbs in communal areas
- Adjusting kitchen unit doors
- Draughts at doors or windows

What can I do to keep my home safe from the risk of fire

If a fire starts in your home

- there are three steps that can save your life:



GET OUT!



NEVER GO BACK INSIDE!



CALL 999!

as soon as you are safe to do so

- **KITCHEN SAFETY**—More fires start in the kitchen than anywhere else in the home. Every kitchen should have at least one heat alarm fitted and be linked to your smoke alarms. If a cooking fire breaks out in your kitchen the heat alarm can alert you before any smoke alarm in your home. For more information see: [Kitchen safety | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#)

- **BEDTIME CHECK**—Before going to bed you can help keep your family safe by checking your home for potential fire hazards. This will only take a few minutes but can help keep everyone safe while you sleep. For more information see: [Bedtime checks | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#)

- **CANDLE SAFETY**—Candles are a great way to add ambiance and warmth to any room, but they can

also pose a fire hazard if not used properly. Candles are a major cause of fires. Consider using battery operated candles, which give the same light effect without the risk from flames. For more information see: [Candle safety | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#)

- **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**—One of the most common causes of fire in the home is faulty wiring, overloaded circuits and malfunctioning appliances. Switching off at the socket and pulling the plug out is the only way to be sure no electricity is flowing through an appliance. For more information see: [Electrical safety | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#)

- **E-BIKE AND E-SCOOTERS**—Charging e-bikes and e-scooters should always be done safely as failing to do so puts your family

and home at risk. For more information see: [E-bike and E-Scooters | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#)

- **SMOKING**—In Scotland smoking is the main cause of death from fires in the home. You can cut the chances of this happening to you by stubbing out a cigarette in an ashtray and pouring water on cigar or cigarette ends before putting in an outside bin. For more information see: [Smoking | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](#)



Social value. What is social value?

Social value is a term used to describe the measurement of positive changes experienced within a community, which help tenants. Much of this value can be measured.

Wellbeing valuation helps us understand the impact of a social intervention by looking at how much it improves a person's wellbeing. It translates that improvement into a monetary equivalent—essentially, the amount of money it would take to achieve the same boost in wellbeing.

How do we measure impact and why?

We gather data on the indicators in the HACT Value Bank calculator to produce as comprehensive a wellbeing valuation as possible. This enables us to show the impact of the work carried out within communities. However, when it isn't possible to survey tenants, we can use data that we already gather.

Measuring social value not only provides us with measurable outcomes, it helps Osprey by revealing what is working well and also identifying areas where we can improve our efforts.

Our social value journey!

2019 - Part of the Impact Project Team to introduce social value and create guidance for the Social Housing sector in Scotland

2020 - Creation of Tool kit for sector

2021 - Introduction of monitoring the social value of support for new Osprey tenant - average £17,309 per household.

2022 - Member of research consortium alongside Shelter & HACT measuring the social value of moving into new social housing in Scotland - average £10,184 per household. Results revealed that the most positive changes experienced with a move to an Osprey tenancy were:

- access to greenspace
- moving to a good neighbourhood
- feeling part of the community
- not being worried about crime

Read the full report here: - [The Social Value of Social Homes in Scotland.](#)

2024 - Investment in Social Value Insight Tool for project recording.

2024 - Social value project to measure the impact of tenancy support for all tenants – average £39,844 per household.

2025 - Working with OTRA to measure social value through being a member & the value of the changes brought about through the scrutiny projects.



Become involved!

Through the work of OTRA – Osprey Tenants and Residents Association, we will be measuring the impact of the positive changes brought about by scrutiny projects.

By becoming a part of OTRA, you will not only be able to discuss and organise matters in relation to where you live and the services we provide, you will also be able to evidence any improvements through social value monitoring.

If you are interested in joining OTRA, you will find further details here - [Get Involved - Osprey Housing](#) or contact us on 01224 548000.



Inappropriate Behaviour

Recently there have been a number of instances where members of the Osprey team have been subject to unreasonable behaviour from tenants. We understand that this behaviour can be driven from frustration

however it is not fair on our staff team who

are here to help you and are doing their best. Being aggressive, threatening or making unreasonable demands towards our team will not be tolerated and we ask that you treat our team with respect whether this is in person or on the phone.

We do not accept that our team should be subjected to swearing or offensive language directed at them even when a tenant is under stress, angry or upset. This type of language may cause offence and we believe that every one of our team has the right not to be subjected to language they would consider as abusive.

This includes making malicious, unwarranted, or defamatory comments or making remarks which are related to any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. What is deemed offensive will be different for different team members, but includes cultural, racial, or religious references.

We will try in every instance to give the best service that we can but sometimes circumstances are outwith our control and your cooperation and understanding is needed to reach the right outcome. Unacceptable behaviour from tenants will result in action being taken every time this is experienced by our team and this may ultimately result in escalation to legal action due to breach of tenancy.

This action is supported by Osprey Tenants and Residents Association (OTRA) who are supportive of a zero-tolerance approach to abusive behaviour from tenants.