



Summer 2023



Newsletter

"for tenants by tenants" 

www.ospreyhousing.org.uk

 /ospreyhousing
 @ospreyhousing



Win prizes for the best Osprey Gardens this Summer!
– see back page for more information

Making a difference every day



Welcome to the Osprey summer newsletter



Welcome to our summer edition of the Osprey tenants newsletter, I hope all readers and tenants will be able to make the most of the typically Scottish summertime weather – you certainly need to pack both an umbrella and suncream for days out!

Reflecting on the last 6 months there have been some real challenges for our tenants and the wider communities as the cost of living crisis continues to put additional and sustained pressure on all households. We were fortunate to secure £86,000 this winter from the Scottish Government Welfare Fund, enabling us to support our tenants with the extra costs they were experiencing. The staff team worked hard to reach out to our tenants and help as many households as possible, with 340 tenancies benefitting from the fund. Tenancy sustainment and promoting tenant support is a key priority for Osprey and we would encourage any tenant experiencing difficulties to engage with us for advice, support or signposting. If you wish to self refer to access housing related support then please contact the office or follow this link <https://eu.jotform.com/Ospreyh/tenant-support-referral>

Since the last newsletter there has been a notable organisational change for Osprey following the strategic decision to move away from providing Mid Market rented properties earlier this year, transferring the 88 properties we owned to another Housing Association. The key purpose of this decision being to focus solely on our social housing tenancies and meeting social need across Aberdeen City,

Aberdeenshire and Moray. On this thread of our commitment to deliver in our local authority areas - we have handed over almost 100 additional new homes since the beginning of 2022 in communities such as Alford, Lossiemouth, Inchmarlo, Sauchen, Elgin and Johnshaven. We have more new build schemes in high demand areas in the pipeline, these are available for our current tenants to apply for by registering with These Homes www.thesehomes.com

Earlier this year we made a commitment to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) by signing up to use the Social Rented Sector (SRS) framework. This involves producing a report annually to track and evidence the progress we are making on each of these core areas. We have refreshed our focus on environmental sustainability and introduced an internal working group to take this forward, reviewing both how we operate internally but also providing additional support and advice to our tenants. Our staff team undertook Carbon Literacy training to enhance the knowledge we have regarding our impact on the environment and what we can do to tackle this, supporting the Scottish Government Net Zero ambitions. Watch this space for our first ESG report being published in October 2023...

This year we have been awarded additional funding from the Scottish Government Net Zero fund, which has allowed us to improve the insulation performance of tenants' homes and install renewable heating systems accelerating our own investment programme.

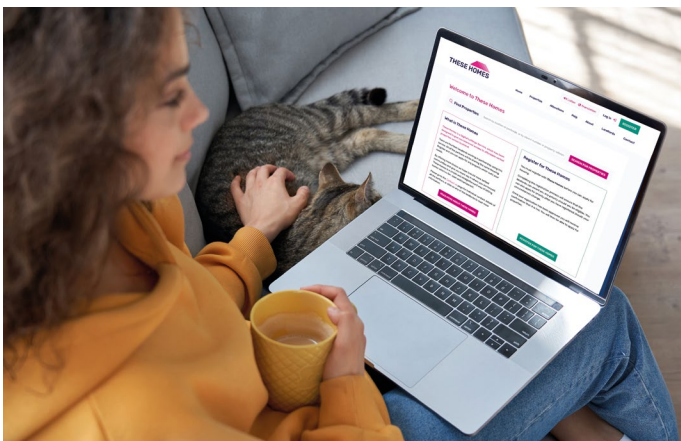
In addition to our own planned investment to improve our homes we have several projects rolling out over the next few months including a pilot of environmental sensors to assist and support tenants with issues within their home. Should you have questions or concerns regarding the performance of your home, please contact us and a member of our team will visit to inspect, discuss and support you to resolve this working together.

In Spring of 2023 the Osprey Board visited several schemes during a stock tour giving them an opportunity to spend time in the environment our tenants live in and

additionally gain a greater understanding where our priorities are needed. The tenant landlord relationship is important to us and as always I would encourage any tenants who would like to be more involved to join OTRA. There are various levels of involvement that can be tailored to suit your lifestyle commitments however our existing group of tenants are welcoming and engaging on all subjects that matter to tenants, so please do have your say, we are keen to listen.

Stacy Angus, Chief Executive

These Homes - 93% Customer Satisfaction



Osprey introduced our new allocations system These Homes in April 2022 as an alternative way for applicants to apply for our properties. We felt that tenants should be given as much choice as possible around where they wanted to live and the type of property that they would like to live in. These Homes offers a range of choice for those who are actively seeking alternative housing.

During the past twelve months we have made nearly 8000 applications live on the system, we had anticipated having around 6000 live applications in the first year. Customer satisfaction is very high with 93% of applicants finding the application process 'easy' or 'fairly easy'.

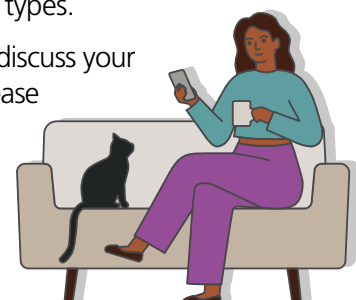
These Homes has replaced our previously held Internal Transfer List. In order to obtain a transfer, it is essential that you have registered an application on These Homes. If you require any help or guidance on completing an application,

please get in touch. Once completed you will have your application assessed and awarded any relevant priority passes. We will also flag you as being an Osprey Housing Tenant so that if you apply for a property where we have earmarked this for an existing tenant, then you will receive a higher priority than other general applicants. We aim to allocate 25% of all vacancies via internal transfer. If your circumstances have changed and you feel that you require alternative accommodation, please speak to your Housing Officer about your needs and we may be able to help you seek an internal transfer.

We have now let over seventy properties through These Homes since April 2022 with an average of 75 applications per advert which we consider to be high demand across our vacant properties. One of our new build homes in Portlethen received over 450 applications which demonstrates the demand for high quality family housing.

These Homes has helped to modernise and streamline our allocations processes, bringing a range of efficiencies and additional options to assist us when allocating homes. The system also allows us to monitor demand and tailor our approach around future development as we identify high demand areas and property types.

If you require any help or wish to discuss your own housing options, then please get in touch with us and we will be able to guide you through the options available to you.










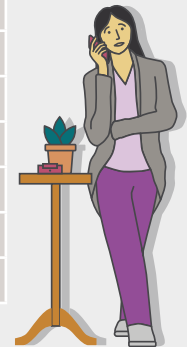
Housing Officer Area Changes

Due to our ongoing development program and commitment to tenancy support & sustainment, we have added additional resource to our Housing team to ensure that we are able to offer you the best possible service.

This has led so some changes within the patches each of the Housing Officers cover.

Details of the Housing Officer areas and contact information can be found below. There has also been a further update for Area 02 as Lisa Munro has now taken over maternity cover for Rhiannon over the next few months.

Area 01	Area 02	Area 03	Area 04	Area 05	Area 06	Area 07
						
Gavin	Catriona & Lisa	Elaine S	Megan	Leisha	Jamie	Elaine B
Elgin	Burghead	Aberchirder	Buckie	Auchenblae	Balmedie	Aboyne
	Duffton	Alford	Banff	Beechgrove Terrace	Blackdog	Ballater
	Forres	Cuminestown	Fetterangus	Blackburn	Crimond	Banchory
	Fochabers	Daviot	Findochty	Countesswells	Crudenbay	Inchmarlo
	Huntly	Dunecht	Fraserburgh	Cloverleaf	Ellon	Kincardine O'Neil
	Keith	Fyvie	Garmouth	Fordoun	Hatton	Kirkton of Skene
	Lhanbryde	Insch	Inverallochy	Johnshaven	Longside	Tarland
	Lossiemouth	Inverurie	Macduff	Kingseat	Mintlaw	Torphins
		Kemnay	Portgordon	Marykirk	Newburgh	
		Kintore	Portsoy	Newmachar	Peterhead	
		Methlick	Rosehearty	Newtonhill	Pitmedden	
		Monymusk	Strichen	Portlethen	St Fergus	
		Oldmeldrum		St Cyrus	Stuartfield	
		Port Elphinstone		Stonehaven	Tipperty	
		Sauchen			Westhill	
		Turriff				



Housing Officer contact details

Gavin Farquhar – 07748 843473
gfarquhar@ospreyhousing.org.uk

Catriona Leggat & Lisa Munro –
 07976 722157
cleggat@ospreyhousing.org.uk,
 07772 222103
lmunro@ospreyhousing.org.uk
 07801 746396

Elaine Sutherland – 07801 746397
esutherland@ospreyhousing.org.uk

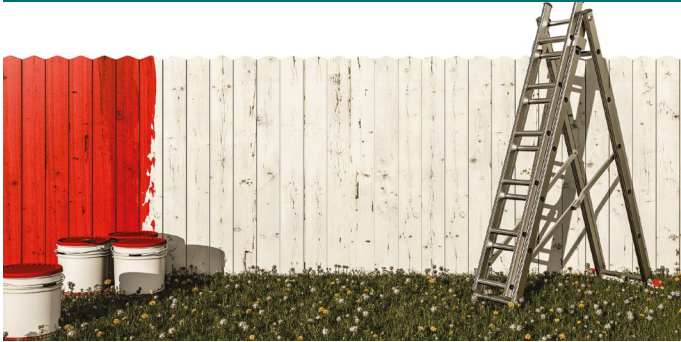
Megan Beattie – 07867 454802
mbeattie@ospreyhousing.org.uk

Leisha Bishop – 07485 378081
lbishop@ospreyhousing.org.uk

Jamie Brown – 07880 700579
jbrown@ospreyhousing.org.uk

Elaine Bowie (part time Tuesday –
 Thursday)
 – 07485 320692
ebowie@ospreyhousing.org.uk

Tenant permissions article



Permission can be requested electronically by completing this link <https://eu.jotform.com/Ospreyhgc/Alteration-Form>. Or we can post a paper form to you.

Please note that work should not commence until written permission is granted. The Asset Team have up to 28 days from the receipt of the form to grant or refuse permission. If permission is not granted, you could be asked to take down/reinstate the house or garden to its original state.

With the lovely weather upon us we are seeing more tenants making the most of it to undertake improvements to their homes and gardens. Whilst we welcome people improving the look of the house and gardens, we would like to remind all tenants that permission should be gained from Osprey Housing before any alterations are made. For example, the following list are all alterations/additions that require permission:

- Painting your fence
- Putting up a shed
- Installing a CCTV doorbell or CCTV (please see guidance advice below)
- Adding decking or paving
- Removing grass and laying stones/chuckies
- Putting up or heightening fences



CCTV DOORBELLS



With the advancement of technology and in home safety being more affordable, CCTV devices, such as Ring doorbells are popular choices and more and more of our tenants are installing them. Please be aware that as the recorded images are often outside of the boundary of the property, the recordings are subject to data protection laws and you must comply with them. You can find useful information on the internet relating to this but they key points are:

- Any videos are stored securely.
 - Recordings should only be kept for as long as absolutely needed and should be deleted regularly.
 - When applying for CCTV you must provide a written statement as to why CCTV and the recording of images is required and for what purpose.
 - Do not share recordings online without robust justification.
- Signs must be displayed in prominent places clearly stating images are being recorded.

If you have any queries in relation to improvements that you intend to make please contact us to discuss.

Osprey tenants benefit from £87,500 in hardship support.

Osprey Housing tenants across the north-east of Scotland are benefitting from funding totalling more than £87,500 made available by the Scottish government to help alleviate financial hardship driven by rising living costs.

Managed by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and distributed by Osprey, support from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund and the Winter Hardship Fund was spread across a range of needs.

The social landlord currently owns and manages more than 1,800 properties across Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City, and Moray.

Osprey Director of Housing Services Dan Thompson said: 'The cost of living crisis has had a significant impact on many of our tenants and we welcome this funding from the Scottish Government which has enabled us assist those most in need. Through a series of mailshots, personal letters, email and social media posts we were able to contact a wide and diverse range of our tenant base to make them aware of the available funding and how to access it.'

What quickly emerged was the number of tenants eligible for Winter Hardship Fund energy efficiency support and Osprey was able to deliver £10,000-worth of flooring — carpets and vinyl — as well as a further £7,000-worth of thermal curtains, duvets, bedding sets, and even onesies.

'Requests for flooring were particularly high with many applicants having no floor coverings at all within their properties. We focussed additional resources in this area as the need was so great'.

said Mr Thompson. A further £5,000 of Osprey's own 2022-23 flooring fund was used to complete this project.

He added: 'We used local fitters in four different areas for the flooring installation, so helping support the local economy as well.'

Fuel funding top-ups and gas and electricity smart vouchers accounted for £42,000 from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund, with those in rural oil-heated Osprey properties together receiving a further £15,000.

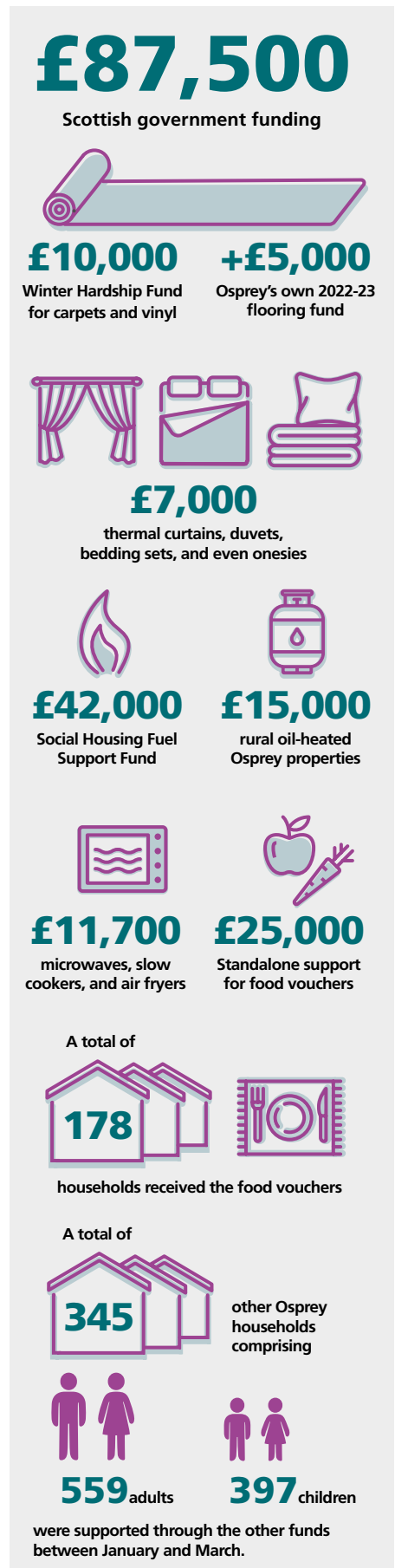
Osprey also supplied microwaves, slow cookers, and air fryers in a further funding allocation worth £11,700 to help tenants reduce the cost of preparing meals.

Standalone support for food vouchers was also awarded — with just four weeks in which to redeem it. Mr Thompson said: 'In that very tight window, we were able to distribute all of the nearly £25,000 received.'

A total of 178 households received the food vouchers, while a total of 345 other Osprey households comprising 559 adults and 397 children were supported through the other funds between January and March.

Mr Thompson said: 'Our teams worked tirelessly to first ensure tenants knew this much-needed funding was available and then to distribute it within the timeframes we were given, and we have had incredibly positive feedback from tenants.'

'Through the distribution of these funds we have gained a better understanding of our tenant's particular needs and where we can focus resources in the future, be that through grant funding or internal budgets.'



Osprey New Development Update Spring / Summer 2023

It's been another busy time at Osprey as we continue to deliver high quality new affordable homes to supplement and enhance our existing stock throughout Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Moray.

Since our last newsletter Osprey have taken ownership on a total of 33 properties over five new developments two of which are in Moray and three in Aberdeenshire:

Moray:

- Hamilton Drive: 4 number 1 bed 2 person cottage style flats built by Morlich homes and delivered in December 2022 with tenants now very settled and happy with their new homes.
- Kinneddar Lossiemouth; 1 number 5 bed detached house, 2 no 3 bed and 2 no 4 bed semi-detached houses built by Tulloch of Cummingston and delivered from January through to July 2023. A beautiful development on the outskirts of Lossiemouth.

Aberdeenshire:

- Portlethen; 2 number 3 bed semi-detached houses and 1 number 4 bed detached house delivered January and February 2023 built by Stuart Milne Homes. The final three properties for Osprey on this lovely development on outskirts of Portlethen close to the local primary school

- Johnshaven; Early March saw the completion of Johnshaven for Osprey with the delivery of eight new properties built by Fotheringham Homes. These were 4 number 3 bed terraced houses and 4 number 1 bed semi-detached bungalows. A beautiful development in a beautiful coastal community.
- Alford: Finally, Osprey's early 2023 developments were completed with a two-phase delivery on 13 new affordable homes in the peaceful rural location of Alford built by Kirkwood Homes. Early June saw 8 number new properties; 4 number 1 bed cottage flats, 4 number 3 bed semi detached houses with the final 5 coming late June and comprised of 1 number 4 bed detached, 2 number 4 bed semi-detached and 2 number 3 bed semi-detached houses.

In addition to all of these fantastic new homes, Osprey will continue to deliver new affordable homes with current development underway on the final phase at Kinneddar Lossiemouth (4 x 1 bed bungalows) and St Fergus (3 x 3 bed and 2 x 2 bed Terraced houses). Following this Osprey have also already committed to developments commencing in 2023 at Buckie in Moray and Bridge of Don in Aberdeen City and plans underway for more new homes through 2024.

The importance of contents Insurance for tenants

It is important that you have contents insurance to protect your personal contents and belongings in the event of a fire, flood or any other incident which could damage your floor coverings, television, furniture and any other items within your property. Osprey Housing insure the structure of your home but it is your responsibility as a tenant to ensure your possessions and personal belongings are suitably covered.

Having insurance can give you peace of mind and protection against fire, flood, theft and much more. We know when living on a budget contents insurance is often overlooked. But can you afford to replace your flooring, or your soft furnishings, or your appliances if there was a flood or fire in your home? Contents insurance can often be found for less money than you would think, depending on the value of your belongings.

There are many contents insurance policies available and some price comparison sites that will let you find the best deal that suits your needs.

We had a look and found some information here:

<https://www.gocompare.com/home-insurance/tenants-insurance/>

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/insurance/renters-contents-insurance/>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/insurance/insurance/types-of-insurance/household-contents-insurance/#:~:text=It%20is%20a%20good%20idea,money%20to%20replace%20these%20items>

A popular choice for tenant is Thistle Tenant Risks which is designed specifically for tenants -

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

They have an online enquiry form and will give you a call back or you can email tenantscontents@thistleinsurance.co.uk and they will call you back at a time that suits you

Or you can phone them on 0345 450 7286

Whichever policy you choose, be sure to check you have the cover that best suits your needs.

Cycling Scotland's Social Housing Partnership fund

New bike stores have recently been installed at Pinegrove in Elgin, and Broadshade Drive in Westhill, after a successful application to Cycling Scotland's Social Housing Partnership fund.

These are both locations with flats that previously had no suitable outdoor space for storing bikes, and it was clear there was a demand. Irene Madden, Asset officer for the Elgin area said: "Residents had been storing their bikes in stairwells, which is unsafe, or in their homes, which is inconvenient. We hope that providing secure storage for bikes will encourage active and sustainable travel."

The new stores have a key code for access, and Osprey recommend the use of a bike lock to secure your bike to the stand within the bike

store. You may want to check your bike is covered under your home contents insurance also.

Cycling Scotland have lots of great resources on their website if you're thinking about getting into cycling, or just want to improve your knowledge. Their 'Essential Cycling Skills Guide' is an ideal place to start, and is available in several languages – visit www.cycling.scot/resources/leisure.

"Ensuring all our properties support and allow tenants to make sustainable travel choices aligns with our current environmental priorities as an organisation.

Each alteration like this has a positive ripple effect and we should not underestimate the impact of small changes in the right direction



to make a bigger difference." – Stacy Angus, Osprey CEO.

Active travel maps, which have information on safe walking and cycling routes, are available for both Westhill and Elgin. Please email enquiries@ospreyhousing.org.uk if you'd like us to send you a copy.

Online Tenant Portal

Our online tenant portal has been live since February and is being used regularly by a number of our tenants. The Portal allows you to check your rent balance, pay your rent via Allpay, update personal details, report non-emergency property issues and engage in tenant satisfaction surveys. The Portal can also be used to download various forms at your own convenience including, for example, permission forms.

In order to access the portal, we require an up-to-date email address recorded on our system. As more of our services become digital, we would like to encourage all tenants to provide us with a contact email address, however, please note that you can still request to receive any important communications via post if you wish.

Please contact our customer services team either by calling 01224 548000 or by emailing enquiries@ospreyhousing.org.uk to provide us with your email address to enable you to access our online services including the tenant portal.

If you are experiencing any difficulties with our digital services, then you can contact IT@ospreyhousing.org.uk who will be able to help you.

Garden competition



We are looking for the best gardens in our homes, so whether you're proud of your patch, growing your own veggies, or hanging baskets of blooms, we want to see them. Better yet, we have three £20 supermarket vouchers up for grabs and we will select the best gardens to be voted on by our tenants through the Osprey Facebook page. If you haven't already followed us on Facebook, then head over to www.facebook.com/OspreyHousingLtd and drop us a follow. To take part in the garden competition please send any pictures to info@ospreyhousing.org.uk and mark the title of your email as 'garden competition'. Please make sure to include your name and address. Good luck!

