



HEBRIDEAN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

HOMeward

DECEMBER 2024

CUSTOMER SERVICES: 0300 123 0773



Prize winners from our Tenant Events – Top (left to right): Reagan, Raffle winner at the Lewis Tenant event, Housing Officer, Fiona with Donnie in Uist.

Bottom (Left to right): Tenant Engagement Officer, Laura with Emma. Housing Officer Kevin with HHP tenant, Mrs Martin.

Tenant Engagement

During Autumn, we held tenant events in North Uist, South Uist and Barra. A number of partners were in attendance and a raffle was provided at each event. Tenants said although they were signed up to the tenant portal, it was good to speak to a member of staff face to face.

Our annual Lewis Tenant Event was held in the Stornoway Town Hall on November 13th. There was a range of partners in attendance such as TIG, Eilean Siar Foodbank, Health Promotion, DWP, FES, Action for Children and others. We also had a raffle on the day with prizes kindly donated from partners.

Tenants who attended the event said 'Brilliant staff and very informative event. I have always had a positive experience with HHP and they are always very helpful.'



We are now on Facebook

Scan the QR code and follow us for news and updates relating to your tenancy





HHP Charitable Donations 2024



Left to right: Duncan and Gordon representing our Board, Margaret and Charlie from Eilean Siar Foodbank, Donald Western Isles Kidney Association and, Ian and Kara from From Western Isles Advocacy.

Christmas Message

The end of the year is a good time to reflect on the past twelve months. There have been challenges but there are also a lot of things and people to be thankful for. I'd like to thank everyone who has been part of helping us deliver our services, particularly our staff and contractors. A big thank you to all for taking the time to provide valuable feedback, for paying your rent on time and for helping us keep your home safe by arranging for FES to carry out vital checks and maintenance.

Finally, I wish you and your families a safe and happy Christmas. May 2025 bring you more good days than sad days and I'm sure during the tough times, you will continue to support one another.

Dena



At our AGM on 28 August 2024 our Board agreed to donate £1,000 to six charities.

Our Chair, Gordon Macleod and Board Member, Duncan MacInnes presented cheques to representatives from Western Isles Advocacy, Eilean Siar Foodbank and Western Isles Kidney Patients Association on Friday 29 November 2024.

Donations to The Eilidh Macleod Memorial Trust, and Cobhair Bharraigh were made on 11 December 2024.

The Donation to Share (South Uist & Eriskay) will be made in January 2025

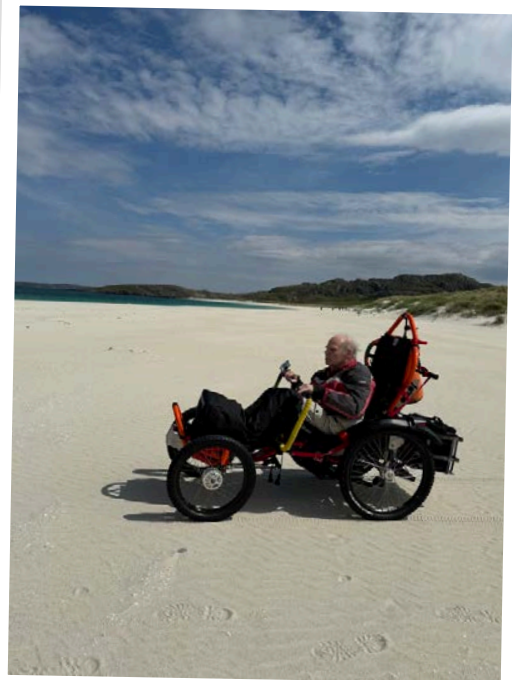
Look out for more photos in the Spring edition of Homeward.



Equal Adventures

In May & June 2024 we initiated a trial with Equal Adventure to enable tenants to understand the benefits of accessing the outdoors. We also had the use of an 'all terrain' vehicle that allowed tenants to take part in beach outings and various walks.

Some tenants stated that it was the first time they had been physically able to visit a beach in years and found the days out very enjoyable.



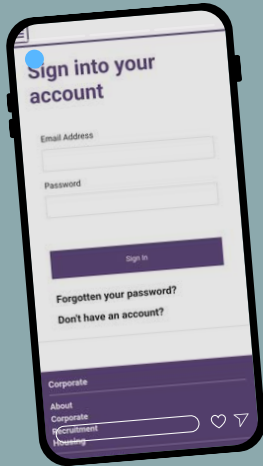
Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund (ICCEF)

We have been awarded £20,007 from the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund. The fund is provided by the Scottish Government and Comhairle nan Eilan Siar. Our project will help those most in need.

We are also a referral partner to Western Isles Citizens Advice Service, who are able to distribute vouchers for assistance with costs. If you are struggling with food and fuel costs, please contact your Housing Officer, who will be able to give advice and assistance.



Tenant Portal



We're pleased to share that 522 tenants are now using our Tenant Portal. If you've not signed up yet, it's quick and easy to get started. Simply visit www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk/tenant-portal/ to:

- Manage your rent account
- Report repairs
- Access services at a time that suits you, on your preferred device
- Join the growing number of tenants enjoying the convenience of our portal today.



Other Ways To Pay Your Rent

- **Cash payment at your local HHP Office**
- **Allpay Payment Card - at any Post Office or Paypoint location**
- **Allpay Phone Payment - 0844 557 8321**
- **Online payment - www.allpayments.net**
- **Direct Debit/Standing Order - forms on request**
- **Universal Credit/Housing Benefit**



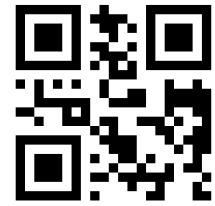
CLEAR RENT ACCOUNT DRAW

Ensure your rent account is clear by 1 January 2025, and you will be entered into a random draw to win a £100 supermarket voucher.

Additionally, there will be two runner-up prizes of £50.



Rent Consultation



We are currently running a consultation on the annual rent review for 2025/26.

Your rent pays for all the services you receive from HHP, including the 24 hour emergency repair Service, repairs appointments, investment in your home and tenancy support & advice.

To access the consultation survey, please scan the QR code and complete the survey by 15 January 2025.

Completed responses will be entered into a prize draw. There will be four prizes of £100 to be won which will be randomly drawn and allocated to the winner's rent account.



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MAKE

RENT

A PRIORITY AT CHRISTMAS

We know that Christmas can be a busy and expensive time with the cost of celebrations adding up.

However, to protect the roof over your head and make sure you aren't left out in the cold, you must keep paying your rent.

You are at risk of losing your home if you do not keep up with your rent payments. If you are having difficulty paying don't let your spending at Christmas get out of control, contact your Housing Officer on 0300 123 0773





We'd like to hear from you



Throughout the year we offer a range of opportunities to participate in our decision-making processes and keep you up to date about our services via our website, social media and in person.

We are in the process of creating our tenant calendar of events for 2025 and would like to know your answers to a few question that you can find out at this link.

<https://forms.office.com/e/J5T4WSHC0z>

Your responses will remain confidential and should only take a few minutes of your time. You can also call our customer service team on 03001230773 who can complete the survey with you.

Investment Update

Following our successful bid for external wall insulation works at 1-50 Plasterfield. These works are now underway and should be completed well ahead of schedule.

The £367,500 of Scottish Government funding has enabled us to transform the 1950's detached houses bringing them up to date in terms of thermal efficiency. We have also installed new air source heat pumps and ventilation systems to improve the air quality within these popular homes.

The photos show the original house (top) and how it has been transformed after the insulation works.





Development

Barra

A second phase at *Rathad na Ceardaich*, Barra has now been contracted with Macinnes Bros Limited. They are working through planning and building warrant applications before starting on site early 2025. We recognise this might be a period of disruption for the existing tenants and your patience is much appreciated.



Stornoway

Work is progressing well on the 72 home site named *An Allt Dubh* at **Blackwater** by Calmax with the first phase of 33 homes completed in October 2024.

As part of the masterplan process for **Melbost West**, we are conducting 2 public consultation events in Sandwick Hall on 16 December 2024 and 17 January 2025 from 1pm to 7pm.

Photographed below at the opening of *Ionad Dotair MacLeoid* in Lochmaddy Left to right: Left to Right: Donna Smith (TIG), Medi Sharpe, Dena Macleod (HHP), Theresa Macdonald (TIG), David Wood, Ronan Macphee, Rhoda Cameron, Emily (Official Opener), Uisdean Robertson (Cllr), John Paul Buchannan (HHP), Lachina MacVicar, Catriona Wright, Iain A Macneil (Cllr) Revd Alen McCulloch, Linda Johnson (HHP), Alana Macinnes.

Uist

Following the completion of 8 new homes at **Lochmaddy** Hospital site which was named *Ionad Dotair MacLeòid*, the official opening of the site was held on 29th November 2024 and was well attended (pictured below).

We are working to progress 8 homes in **Grimsay**, Uist. A planning application for 8 homes. A planning application should be submitted before Christmas.

Harris

Alex Murray Construction continues work on site in **Leverburgh**. Following a public consultation, this scheme will be named *Lèana an t-Sruith* which translates to "meadow of the stream." This is the local name for the area. The site is challenging but is making steady progress.

We are also working on a site in **Scott Road** and are preparing a planning application. However, before we progress with this, we have engaged with consultants to carry out a hydrology study in response to local concerns.





Mould, Damp and Condensation



It is important to ventilate and heat homes adequately to avoid damp and mould. However, sometimes the problem will persist. If so, you should report the problem immediately.

If we are not aware of the issue, we cannot work with you to fix it. Please do not let any of these issues persist for a long time as they could affect your health and become a bigger problem.

Early treatment of any mould which occurs is the best solution. Treat the area immediately with an anti-fungal spray. These can be bought at local hardware shops. Please make sure it is a 2-part spray, one that treats the mould and the other to prevent it returning.

Christmas Opening Hours

We will close at 5pm on Monday 23 December and re-open at 9am on Friday 3 January 2025

Our Tenant Portal will still be available to check your rent balance and pay your rent.

Please note that you may still use the portal to report non-urgent repairs, request permission for pets and alterations, however these will not be processed until our return to work

Any emergencies during this period should be reported to Faire on 0300 123 0773.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms



Please remember that you have a responsibility to check your smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they are working and **to keep you and your family safe.**

Press and hold the test button for 10 seconds to ensure that it sounds.

Check that any interconnected alarms also sound within this period.



Colder weather and heat pump

Temperatures have recently dropped to zero degrees so heat pumps, like all heating systems, will be working harder to maintain the desired temperature in your home. This will cost noticeably more this will be the same for any heating system whether gas, coal or electricity for storage heating.

The Outer Hebrides generally has warmer winter temperatures than the mainland so hopefully the current issue will not last long and temperatures will increase, which in turn will lower the running costs

We advise tenants to switch to direct debit as this spreads the costs evenly across the year

If you have not been able to do this and the costs are a real issue, then the following may help:

- Turn the radiator valves to '1' in any rooms not being used.
- Turn down bedroom radiator valves to '3'
- Turn down the temperature at the wireless thermostat by a degree each day to see what difference that makes to overall cost without making the house cold
- Wear additional layers of clothing

Legionella

Legionella is not an issue in the vast majority of our houses. Where you have air source heating, the system includes a legionella cycle to keep your water safe and where you have gas, there is no stored water so the chance of legionella is very, very low.

However, there are other systems that tenants need to be aware of to reduce the risk of legionella.

If you have storage heating, you need to ensure that the hot water is set at 60 degrees. We have done this for you so you only need to ensure that you leave the settings as they are and contact us if the water is not heating up as it should.

The advice is the same for those with solid fuel, but you will need to make sure that you use the immerser each week as there is no guarantee that the fire may not be hot enough to heat the water to over 60 degrees. Most of our tenants with solid fuel have previously refused air source heating. Anyone who now wishes to change their heating, please get in touch so that we can include you in future programmes.

Ways to save on your Energy Bills

1. Showers/baths

Showers use significantly less hot water than baths do. Even spending one minute less in the shower will save you money.

2. Clever cooking

Cook with the lids on the pans, consider one pot dishes



3. Room thermostats

Should be set between 18c – 21c, slightly higher if there are elderly people or very young children turning your appliances off standby mode.



4. Close curtains in the evening

This helps keep the heat in and the cold out.

5. Arrange your furniture

Avoid having your furniture directly in front of radiators as this reduces the temperature in the room.

6. Switch off light

Turn off the lights in the rooms that are not in use.



7. Fill your washing machine

Wait until you have a full load before using your machine and try lowering the temperature to 30c for lightly soiled goods.



8. Switch of Standby

You can save around £65 per year by turning your appliances off standby mode.



WATCH OUT FOR WINTER

Although our houses have central heating, there is still the risk of frozen or burst pipes during periods of heavy frost. Following the few simple steps below should help you to avoid any damage to your home:

Keep cosy in your home

- If possible set your heating to 21°C whilst you are up and about and 15-18°C (64°F) at night when you go to bed.
- Eat at least one hot meal a day and take plenty hot drinks.
- Wear warm layers of clothing especially when you go out.
- Keep active and wrap up warm if you go outside
- If it's really cold, set your heating to come on (or increase in temperature) earlier and turn off (or decrease in temperature) later rather than just turning up the thermostat.
- Always try to keep your home heated to at least 15°C
- Remember to keep your home well ventilated when possible to avoid condensation as this can lead to mould. Opening your windows for just 5 minutes will allow enough fresh air into your home for the rest of the day.
- Draw your curtains in the evening and keep doors closed to block out draughts
- Find out where your main stopcock or tap is. If you have a Surestop switch fitted then make sure you know where it is.
- Report any dripping taps or running overflows to HHP so that they can be fixed
- If you are going to be away from home then, if possible, leave your heating to come on at least once a day for a couple of hours. If you have air source heating press the suitcase button on your controller or turn down the temperature if you have another controller. Those with infra red heating should turn down the temperature on their controller.
- If you are going away from home for any length of time during winter ask HHP to drain down your water supply. We will do this at no charge.

If your Pipes Freeze

- Turn off the water at the stop cock or tap or Surestop switch if you have one
- Switch off your immersion heater if you have one
- Turn on taps at sink, bath, etc.
- If you have a gas combi boiler, storage heating or air source heating then keep your heating on if possible
- Call HHP on 0300 123 0773 to report the problem

If you have a Burst Pipe

- Turn off the water at the stop cock or tap
- Switch off your immersion heater or boiler
- Turn on all taps to empty your tank
- If water could come into contact with electrical fittings then switch off the electricity at the mains if safe to do so
- Call HHP on 0300 123 0773 to report the problem

Remember burst pipes can cause a lot of damage. HHP will repair your house but we are not responsible for damage to decoration or to your furniture, carpets or other belongings. This should be covered by your own insurance.

Calling all Western Isles Growers
Your community needs you!

To find out more, please email Ruth Miller:
rmiller@tshebrides.org.uk
www.souperfoodorg.uk

SOUPERFOOD
Initiative

Helping Communities
across The Western Isles





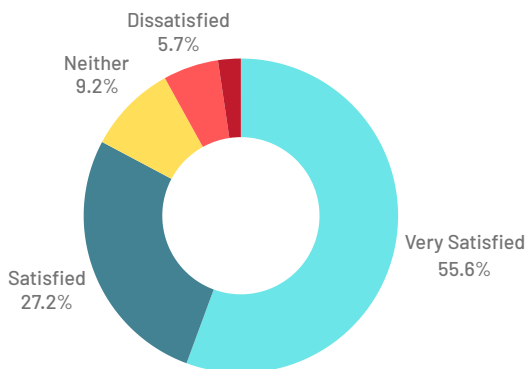
Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024. Nearly 700 agreed to assist the survey team and give your view on our services.

Overall satisfaction is still high but an increasing number reported being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. **What can we do to move you to the satisfied column?** We are particularly interested in hearing what opportunities to participate you feel you are missing. Let our Tenant Engagement Officer Laura know by calling 0300 123 0773 or emailing tenantengagement@hebrideanhousing.co.uk

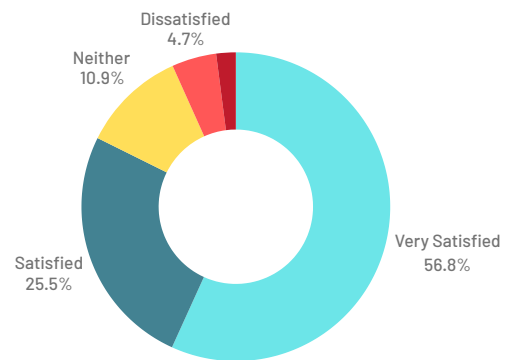
Quality of Home

80.2% Satisfied



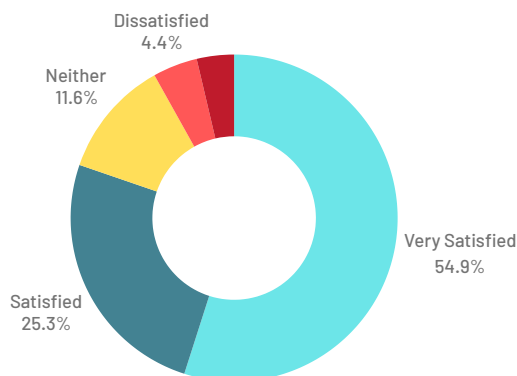
Informed About Services

82.3% Satisfied



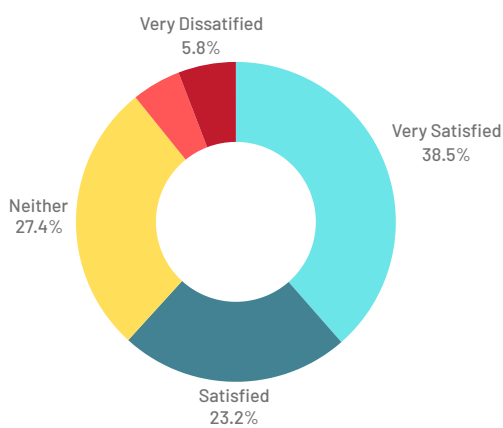
Overall Satisfaction

83% Satisfied



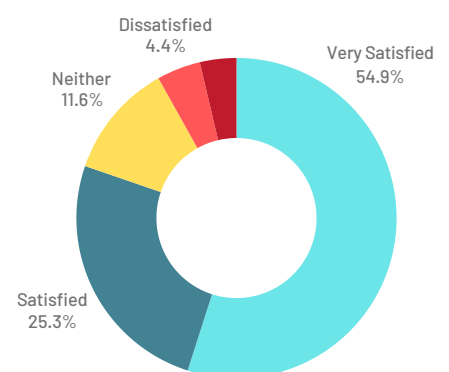
Participation opportunities

61.7% Satisfied



Repairs Service

87.6% Satisfied





Don't miss out on Pension Credit

Pension Credit is a weekly means tested benefit to boost your income for those over State Pension age and on a low income. You can apply online, by phone or by completing a form.

Winter heating benefits for older people

The UK Government recently announced that they are changing the eligibility for Winter Fuel Payment. From this year, only people getting certain qualifying benefits, like Pension Credit will get the Payment.

If you are entitled to Pension Credit other benefits include a budgeting loan, free glasses and free NHS dental treatment. You may be entitled to a Council Tax reduction; this is dependent upon other people living in your home.

Don't miss out!

Check if you are entitled to Pension Credit using the calculator below.

If you have savings, you may still be eligible.

Pension Credit calculator - GOV.UK

Help is available to carry out an income maximisation check.

Western Isles Citizens Advice Bureau telephone numbers

Lewis 01851 705727

Harris 01859 502431

Uist 01870 602421

Barra 01871 810 608

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar Financial Inclusion Officers

Telephone numbers

Lewis and Harris 07970 724 048

Uist and Barra is 07970 724 395

Email address - inclusion@cne-siar.gov.uk

