



# Hillcrest News

## Tenant Newsletter Summer 2023

[hillcrest.org.uk/homes](https://hillcrest.org.uk/homes)

  
**Hillcrest**  
Homes



# Hello and welcome to the summer 2023 edition of Hillcrest news.

**With winter firmly behind us and the sun starting to make an appearance, many of us will be starting to enjoy the warmer temperatures that summer brings.**

The warmer summer months, combined with the recent falls in wholesale energy prices and reduced energy price cap, will hopefully bring much needed relief in the form of lower energy bills to many households.

This newsletter includes useful updates from our Customer Service and Maintenance teams, as well as handy information on eligibility for Council Tax reductions.

We also share the results of our recent Digital Repairs Survey and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey.

I'd also like to remind you that Hillcrest has specialist teams that can advise and support you one-to-one, so don't hesitate to call us on 0300 123 2640, if you need any help or advice.

**Angela Linton**  
Hillcrest Chief Executive





# The HEAT is on!!!

**Summer is here! If you pay for your energy on a pre-payment meter, make sure you keep topping up over the warmer months so that you can afford your heating when you really need it.**

The final cost of living energy payment was made in April and if you did not receive this or any of the others, then you should contact your supplier now to make sure you get them as these are only valid for a limited time.

The Hillcrest Energy Advice Team is here to help you manage any energy issues now, and can provide advice on how to make your energy costs more affordable.

Give HEAT a call on 0300 123 2640 or contact us via the MyHillcrest app.



## Defibrillator Finder – An online resource that can save lives

**The Defibrillator (Defib) Finder - [defibfinder.uk](http://defibfinder.uk) - is a British Heart Foundation website that can pinpoint the location of defibrillators.**

The website uses information held by all 14 ambulance services in the United Kingdom and allows people to pinpoint where the nearest defib is in case of emergency.

In addition it pinpoints community owned and registered defibs. Not all defibs are registered on Defib Finder and the British Heart Foundation cannot guarantee, assume legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy of information Defib Finder.

Why don't you look up your post code and see where your nearest Defib is? It could save a life...



# Customer Service - Complaints Update

Handling customer complaints is a priority for Hillcrest, so that we can ensure our tenants and customers continuously receive a high quality service. Each complaint we receive is a chance for us to learn and make improvements, so we can prevent the same issues from arising in future.

Over the past year we have seen an increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints we have handled. We are pleased to report that the level of service we provided whilst handling these complaints has remained high and were resolved well within the targets set out to us by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsmen.

If you would like to read our Annual Complaints Report in full, please contact [customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk) or call 0300 123 2640 and we can arrange to send you a printed or electronic copy.

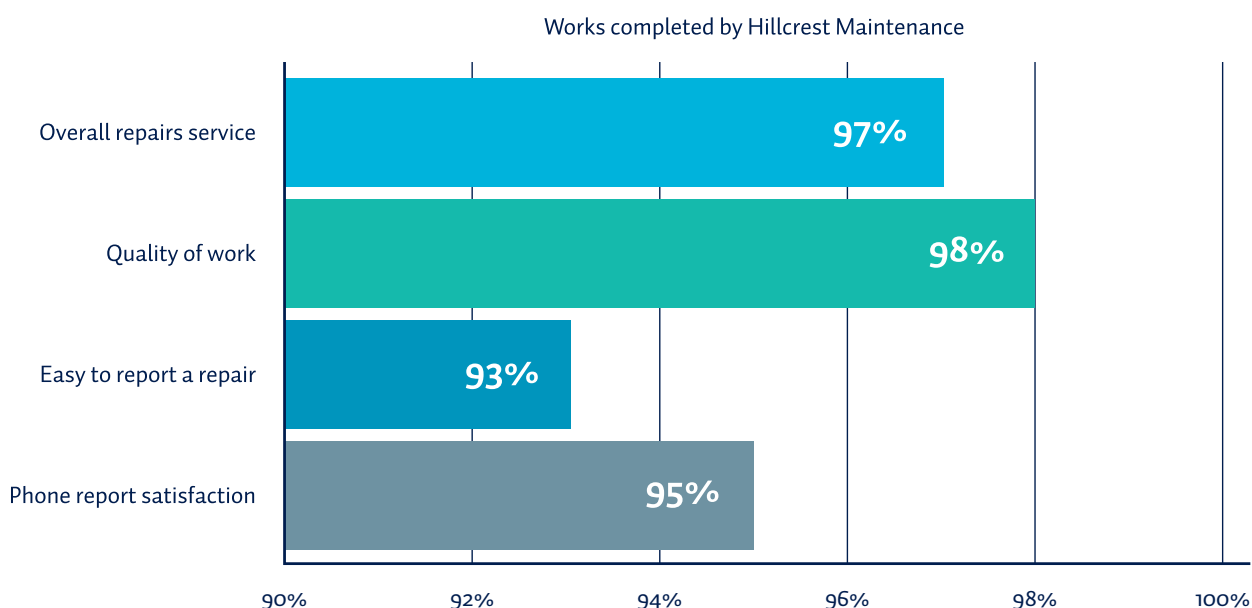


## Digital Repairs Satisfaction Survey

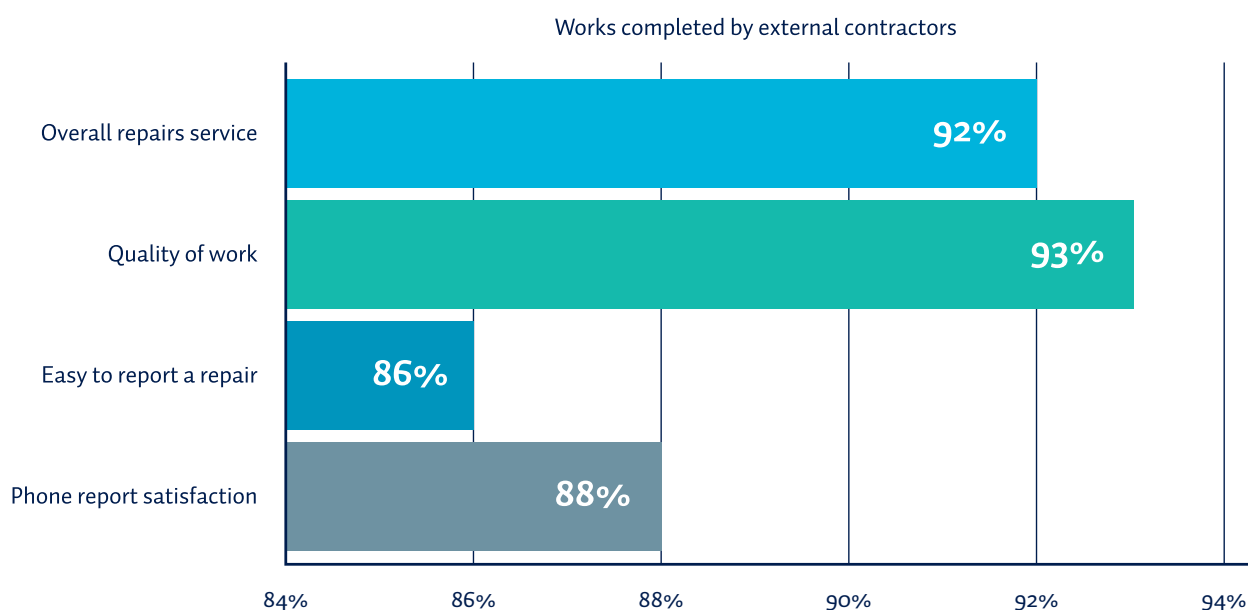
Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete our repairs satisfaction survey, which is sent by text or email after a routine repair has been completed. The response has been fantastic and we use this information to see what is working well and look at areas where we can improve.

The results for the past year are below:

### Overall satisfaction of works carried out:







### Change to our Customer Service telephone opening hours:

We want to ensure there are customer service advisors available at the times that are busiest in the day and so they can answer calls quickly. Following a review of the call volumes, we have made a slight change to the current opening times of the housing and general enquiries customer service line. Our advisors are available to talk to you between 8.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am – 4.00pm Friday.

You can still report non urgent queries at any time through the MyHillcrest app or by email to [customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk)

There is no change to our repairs opening times and you can still phone to report repairs from 8am.

(Please bear with us as it may take a bit of time to update our phone messages and documents with the new hours).

Key highlights of the customer service team from 1 April 2022 to 30 March 2023:

- > Total telephone calls answered – 72,385
- > Housing and general enquiry calls answered – 38,151
- > Repair related calls answered – 34,234
- > Average time to answer calls – 14 seconds housing; 54 seconds repairs
- > MyHillcrest app repair appointments booked – approx 1,800
- > MyHillcrest app registered users – 3,193

You can contact your customer service team through the MyHillcrest app, by email to [customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk) or by phone 0300 123 2640 (option 2) or for repair enquiries email [repair@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:repair@hillcrest.org.uk)

Reminder: our customer service team has a monthly meeting and is not available to answer your calls on the last Thursday of the month from 2pm. Repairs are not affected during this time.

### Compliments

We love to read and share all the positive comments and compliments about our customer service advisors and trades staff. These are shared with the staff who answered the calls or carried out the works and it certainly gives them a boost. Please keep them coming – some of our recent compliments include:

- > The telephone operator was very helpful and the gas engineers were friendly and efficient
- > Very happy and impressed by how nice and knowledgeable the advisor was
- > Nice friendly joiner
- > Very competent and well-mannered tradesmen

### Insects and Bugs

It is that time of year again when the insects and bugs are out in force and it results in an increase in calls or enquiries about what we can help you deal with. In last summer's newsletter, we included an article on how to deal with and prevent bugs in your home. You can read this article in the newsletter on our website: [www.hillcrest.org.uk/about-us/resources](http://www.hillcrest.org.uk/about-us/resources)





# Dundee's Ellengowan regeneration formally opened by family members of Jack Robertson

**Close family members of the late Thorntons chair and Hillcrest Enterprises board member, Jack Robertson, attended the formal opening of the Ellengowan regeneration in Dundee, marking the completion of the first phase of the development.**

A special event attended by 82 external stakeholders, tenants and staff, was held in Craigie Bowling Club, which sits adjacent to Ellengowan, to mark the special occasion.

The new development includes Jack Robertson Walk, which commemorates the much-loved and well-known Dundee native, who was instrumental in growing Thorntons into one of the top law firms in Scotland. Mr Robertson's wife Fiona, son Colin and daughters Linda Keir, Carolyn Brown and Alison Leslie formally opened the pedestrianised thoroughfare on what would have been Mr Robertson's birthday.

The regeneration, which is being carried out by Campion Homes on behalf of Hillcrest, is replacing 128 old terraced properties that no longer adhere to modern quality and energy efficiency standards, with high quality, modern, energy efficient homes.

The new development offers a range of homes, including apartments, terraced houses, cottage flats and townhouses. The completion of this first phase of the development marks the halfway point in the wider £22 million regeneration project.

The second phase of the regeneration will begin this summer, starting with the demolition of the old white homes at the bottom of the site, to be replaced with a second phase of modern, energy-efficient homes, bringing the total number of properties at Ellengowan to 130.

The regeneration project aims to retain the welcoming, community feel that Ellengowan residents previously cherished, and offers a range of homes to suit different households.

Colin Robertson said: "A proud native of Dundee, my father made a huge contribution to the business and wider community in the local area.

"Having this commemorated as part of this landmark development is something very special indeed for everyone who knew him."

Angela Linton, Hillcrest chief executive, added: "Ellengowan has always been a very special area of Dundee for those who lived there, with a strong sense of community."

"During the redevelopment, we've endeavoured to respect and retain these elements, providing new good quality and energy-efficient homes for tenants to make memories in, and continue that sense of community for many years to come."

Photo: Jack Robertson's wife Fiona (centre), with son Colin and daughters Carolyn, Alison and Linda.





## Hillcrest Interested Tenants' Register

**We would like to use your experience and knowledge to continue to improve the housing services we deliver to tenants.**

Working together can help us look after your home and the community where you live. It also lets us to focus on the topics that are important to you.

All tenants on the Interested Tenants' Register will receive regular information about opportunities to get involved as they arise throughout the year. This may include invites to participate in surveys, events, focus groups, consultations and service reviews, just to name a few.

We understand that many tenants have busy lives so there is no obligation to get involved in everything. It's your choice how

often you participate - you can do this as much or as little as you would like to, and participating tenants may also be entered into prize draws.

If you would like to get involved, please call the Tenant Participation Team on 0300 123 2640, or email [customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk) or via the MyHillcrest app.



# We're going fully digital!

**With sustainability firmly in our spotlight, we're moving our Hillcrest News tenant newsletter fully online.**

Currently, our newsletter is issued in printed hard copy, as well as being sent out via email to those of you we have email addresses for. The printed version is costly and non-environmentally friendly, and we are therefore keen to produce it solely as a digital document. This will not only help to reduce our environmental impact, it will also reduce unnecessary costs too.

This newsletter will be the last issued in a printed format, with the Winter 2023 Hillcrest News anticipated to be the first fully digital edition.

## What does this mean for you?

If you currently receive the email version of our newsletter, you will experience no change at all.

For those of you who still receive the paper copy, we'd like to ask you to contact our customer service team on 0300 123 2640, or at [customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk) to let us know what your email address is. This will ensure you can continue to stay up to

date with important news such as currently available benefits, energy saving tips, Hillcrest Homes updates, new initiatives and much more.

If you would like to continue to receive a paper version of Hillcrest News, please get in touch with our customer service team to let us know.

As well as being environmentally friendly, the digital newsletter has a wide range of benefits over the paper copy. For those who may be visually impaired or have difficulty reading printed text, viewing the articles digitally allows you to use a number of accessibility functions such as enlarged text, read-aloud and coloured screen overlays. The digital newsletter can also host more engaging content such as videos, polls, and direct clickable links.



# Hillcrest Maintenance Update

## Hillcrest Maintenance form Aberdeen based team

Hillcrest Maintenance has started to form an in-house Maintenance team in the Aberdeen area, where we now have one Joiner and one Plumber. We will continue to grow the team over the coming year, and new job opportunities will be coming up. If you have a trade background and are interested in joining our team, or have family or friends that might also be interested, please keep an eye on the Hillcrest Careers site at: [www.hillcrest.org.uk/careers](http://www.hillcrest.org.uk/careers)

## New plasterer joins Hillcrest Maintenance team

At the end of last year, Hillcrest Maintenance introduced a plasterer to the Maintenance team. This is the first plasterer we have employed, and are delighted that the addition of this new skill set will provide a more streamlined service to our tenants over the coming years.





# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in our first tenant equality survey which was organised by our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group.

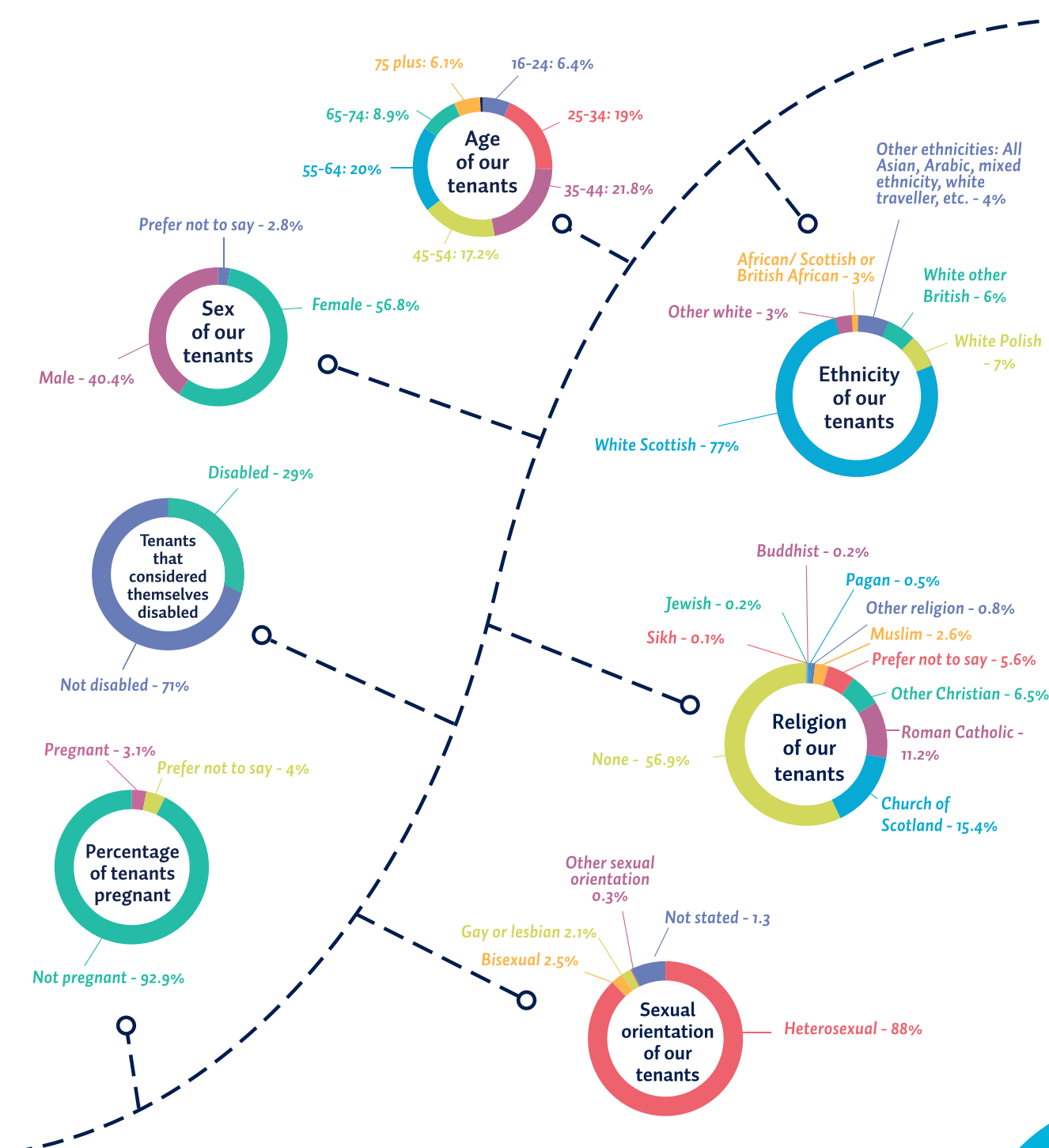
The information we collected does not contain any information that could identify a tenant but it has enabled us to create a Hillcrest tenant profile below. We have compared our results with the equality data from each of the local authorities you live in. We did this to find out if we have a similar profile to the general public in your area and this has shown that we do.

We asked you for certain information, such as your race, religion, and sexuality as this will help us understand more about our tenants and their needs.

It is also useful because it helps us:

- > Check for and prevent discrimination
- > Plan our new homes and understand if we need to adapt existing homes
- > Support our community work to meet tenants' needs

We will continue to analyse this information and put actions in place. These actions will help Hillcrest to become a more inclusive organisation.





# Could you be entitled to a Council Tax reduction?

Did you know that many people, depending on their circumstances, are entitled to reductions on their Council Tax? There are many reasons why you could be eligible for a discount, exemption, or reduction, as explained below...

## You can apply for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) if you're liable for the Council Tax bill and you:

- > Are working and have a low income and capital below £16,000
- > Not working i.e. retired and on a low income
- > Guarantee credit part of Pension Credit. You can apply for full CTR even if your weekly entitlement to the guarantee credit is too small to be payable
- > Universal Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment Support Allowance
- > If another adult who is not your partner lives with you, your maximum Council Tax Reduction might be less because they are expected to contribute to the Council Tax bill. This is called a 'non-dependent deduction'

## Second Adult Rebate

If you live with another adult who is not your partner or joint tenant you might be able to claim Second Adult Rebate.

The other person must:

- > Have income below a certain amount
- > Be 18 or over
- > Not be someone who would be exempt if they lived on their own, for example, a student or care leaver

If you would like any advice on claiming help with Council Tax or any other benefits, please contact our specialist team on 0300 123 2640 or via MyHillcrest app.





## Check if you can get Council Tax bands E to H relief

You will usually be eligible for bands E to H relief if all of the following apply:

- > Your home is in band E, F, G or H - this will be stated on your Council Tax bill
- > You live in the property as your main home
- > Your income is below a certain amount
- > Your capital is below £16,000

## Single Person Discount

If you are the only adult living in a property and it's your sole or main home, a council tax discount of 25% may apply

Student Discount/Exemption

- > If you live on your own or with other students, you may be exempt from Council Tax if all full time student
- > If you live with only one other person let the local authority know as your household will be eligible for a 25% council tax discount

## Apprentice, Youth Trainee

If a member of your household is undergoing a training course as an Apprentice or Youth Trainee, you may be eligible for a discount on your council tax bill.

To qualify, the trainee must be:

- > Aged under 25
- > Undergoing a recognised course of training

- > Paid no more than £237 per week gross

To qualify, the apprentice must be:

- > Paid no more than £237 per week gross
- > And the training must lead to a qualification recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation or the Scottish Vocational Education Council

## Young People Leaving Care

An exemption or discount from Council Tax can apply where a young person is no longer under Local Authority care.

The person must:

- > Have been looked after by a Local Authority on or after their 16th birthday
- > Be under 26
- > No longer be looked after by a Local Authority

## Carers Discount

If you're a carer, you may be eligible for a discount if you're living with the person you care for and they are not your partner or a child under 18. You must be providing care for at least 35 hours per week and the person being cared for must be in receipt of the highest rate of Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (Care) or enhanced rate of Personal Independence Payment (Daily Living Component) or Enhanced rate of Adult Disability Payment (Daily Living Component).

## Disablement Relief

If there is someone (an adult or child) living in your home who is substantially and permanently disabled, you could be entitled to a reduction. The reduction is made by charging council tax at the valuation band below the one the property is in. For example, if your property is in band D, the council tax bill will be worked out as if it were in band C. This reduction also applies if your home is in band A.

The property must have one of the features shown below and this must be essential or of major importance to the disabled person's wellbeing.

- > An extra kitchen or bathroom for the particular needs of the disabled person
- > Any other room which is not a bathroom, kitchen or toilet and is mainly used by the disabled person
- > Enough indoor space for the disabled person to use their wheelchair (the wheelchair must be needed by the disabled person for day to day living)

## Mentally Impaired

An exemption or discount on your Council Tax bill:

- > If every adult in the house is severely mentally impaired, an exemption can apply
- > If all but one adult in the house are severely mentally impaired, a 25% discount can apply

## Persons from Ukraine Exemption/Discount

- > An exemption or discount from Council Tax may apply where persons from Ukraine resident in a property



# Useful numbers and contacts

## Customer service general enquiries (including rent payments):

0300 123 2640 | [customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@hillcrest.org.uk)

**Non-emergency repairs:** Use the MyHillcrest app, call 0300 123 2640 or email [repair@hillcrest.org.uk](mailto:repair@hillcrest.org.uk)

**Emergency repairs:** 08000 324 888

## Local Authorities (for waste management, homelessness, anti-social behaviour and more):

> Angus Council	03452 777 778	<a href="http://www.angus.gov.uk">www.angus.gov.uk</a>
> Dundee City Council	01382 434 000	<a href="http://www.dundee.gov.uk">www.dundee.gov.uk</a>
> Fife Council	03451 550 000	<a href="http://www.fifedirect.org.uk">www.fifedirect.org.uk</a>
> Perth and Kinross Council	01738 475 000	<a href="http://www.pkc.gov.uk">www.pkc.gov.uk</a>
> City of Edinburgh Council	0131 200 2000	<a href="http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk">www.edinburgh.gov.uk</a>
> Aberdeen City Council	03000 200 292	<a href="http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk">www.aberdeencity.gov.uk</a>
> Police (non-emergency)	101	

## Support organisations:

> Shelter Scotland	0808 800 4444
> Aberdeen Foodbank	01224 596 156
> Angus Foodbank	01307 466 841
> Dundee Foodbank	01382 698 020
> Edinburgh Foodbank	0131 444 0030
> Perth Foodbank	01738 626 799

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