

NEWS

WINTER NEWSLETTER



Christmas Opening Hours

- ★ **Christmas Eve**
Wednesday 24th December **9am - 12pm**
- ★ **Christmas Day**
Thursday 25th December **Closed**
- ★ **Boxing Day**
Friday 26th December **Closed**
- ★ **Monday 29th December** **Closed**
- ★ **Tuesday 30th December** **Closed**
- ★ **New Year's Eve**
Wednesday 31st December **Closed**
- ★ **New Years Day**
Thursday 1st January **Closed**
- ★ **Friday 2nd January** **Closed**

We will re-open again as usual on **Monday 5th January**. If you need an emergency repair carried out, please phone our out-of-hours Emergency number on :

01382 434343

New Staff

We would like to welcome **Gary Bell** as our Trainee Governance Officer based in Arbroath. **Gary** has worked in the third sector and local authority for around 20 years in different community learning and development roles. **Gary's** main duties are to support the Board of Management and Senior Management Team to ensure that we meet our statutory and regulatory obligations and to assist the Senior Management Team to evidence performance

delivery and areas of continuous improvement. **Gary** started with us in late June and is looking forward to supporting staff and Board in their work across the Association.



We're excited to welcome **Katie** to the Maintenance Team as our new Maintenance Assistant. **Katie** joins us from Trafalgar Housing Association, bringing a wealth of hands-on experience in property care, repairs, and resident support. **Katie** is passionate about keeping homes safe, functional, and comfortable.



We're delighted to welcome **Ben** to Angus Housing Association as our new Maintenance Operative!



Ben brings **20 years of experience** working across Scotland's East Coast and has been part of our team for the past five months. He's already enjoying working closely with

both our team and tenants.

If you see **Ben** out and about, don't hesitate to say hello!

Ben is here to help with maintenance and repairs, ensuring we can provide a faster and more efficient service to our tenants. Enjoying working closely with both our team and tenants.

Battery Safety at Christmas: Quick Tips

Stay Safe, Stay Bright

With so many battery-powered gifts and decorations around, it's vital to keep safety top of mind this festive season!

- Keep batteries—especially button cells—out of reach of children.
- Use the right size and type for your device, never mix old and new.
- Store spares in their packaging, away from heat and moisture.
- Charge rechargeables with the correct charger—never leave them unattended.
- Check decorations for battery leaks or damage before use.
- Dispose of batteries properly never throw them in the bin. Batteries can leak harmful chemicals, pollute the environment and even cause fires if damaged or short-circuited in the rubbish. Instead, take used batteries to a recycling point at your local supermarket or recycling centre. If they're leaking or damaged, handle them with care (gloves recommended) and recycle safely.

These simple steps will not only protect your family but also help keep our environment safe and Christmas merry!

Going away this winter?

If you are planning on being away from your property this winter, please see some top tips!

Frozen Pipes – If your property will be empty for a length of time over the winter months, please let us know and we can advise on how to prevent your pipes from freezing.

Legionella – Legionella bacteria, thrives in stagnant water with a temperature range of 20°C to 45°C (68°F to 113°F). If your property will be vacant over the winter months, please let us know and we can advise.

Contents Insurance – We would recommend that you contact your home insurance provider if you are going on holiday. This may prevent your contents insurance from being null and void, should anything happen, such as flooding, frozen pipes, etc.

Reporting Repairs – During the Christmas holiday period, contractors will be operating with fewer staff than normal, so please bear this in mind when reporting repairs. **01382 434343**

Roads and Gritting – Depending on where you live, Dundee City Council and Angus Council are responsible for maintaining roads and footpaths.

The Council's aim is to provide an effective and efficient winter maintenance service that helps to ensure the safe passage of vehicles and pedestrians and aims to minimise delays due to winter weather. You can find out more about gritting routes on both Councils websites.



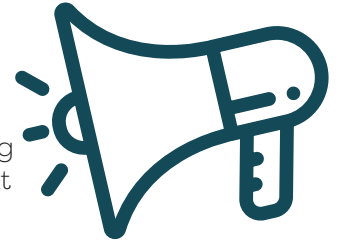
- ✓ **Garden Taps** – Help protect your property from potential leaks/floods, by switching off the inside valve to your garden tap.
- ✓ **The recommended temperatures for sitting rooms and bathrooms is 18-21 C (64-70F)**
- ✓ **Do not place large furniture items close to your radiators as it may prevent the room from heating up.**
- ✓ **Make sure all rooms are heated occasionally to reduce the risk of damp or mould forming.**
- ✓ **Use draught excluders at doors to keep the heat in the room.**
- ✓ **Close curtains and blinds when it gets dark. This will prevent heat escaping through the windows.**
- ✓ **If you are going to be away from your property for a few days, keep your heating on, set at 12-15 C (54-59F) but if you are going to be away for a few weeks, please contact the office to advise us, as well as providing emergency contact numbers.**
- ✓ **It is important that you know how to turn off the water at your property, should the worst happen, so please familiarise yourself with the location of your stopcock.**

If you are concerned that your property is using too much energy or your bills are higher than expected, contact us and our Energy Advisor can work with you to reduce your bills.

Tenant Participation Update

Since our last newsletter, there's been a change within the Tenant Engagement team. Diana Finnie, one of our part-time Tenant Engagement Assistants, has recently moved on to a new role with the Care Inspectorate. We'd like to thank Diana for her contributions and wish her all the very best in her new position.

In the meantime, Jacqui Fleming will be increasing her hours to full-time as Tenant Engagement Assistant whilst Angus Housing Association considers the next steps for the team.



Bingo Blether Continues!

Over the summer, the Tenant Engagement Team continued to deliver the popular **Bingo Blether** sessions in Russell Square. These take place on the **last**

Wednesday of every month from 2–3:30pm.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Prizes:** To be won
- **All welcome:** No need to book—just pop along for refreshments and a chance to win the full house!

Please note: **November's session may be rescheduled to early December** to make way for the **Bingo Blether Christmas Party**. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates!



Trial: Upcycling Workshop

In July, we teamed up with **Tayside Upcycling Centre** to run a fun and creative workshop where staff and tenants gave old side tables a fresh new look. With sanding, painting, and plenty of laughs, everyone left with a masterpiece to be proud of!

If you're interested in learning new skills and getting involved in future projects like this, contact the Tenant Participation team at tp@aha.org.uk or give us a call.



Have an Idea? Let's Chat!

Do you have a suggestion for a group, activity, improvement, or social gathering in your area? We'd love to hear from you! Our staff are happy to travel and work alongside tenants in different communities.



Tenants Portal & Digital Support

You may have spoken with us recently about the new **Tenants Portal**. We're working with **AbilityNet** to deliver beginner-friendly IT sessions to help tenants get online.

We'll be attending parents' evenings and door-knocking in areas across Angus and Dundee in the coming weeks to support tenants in signing up. Keep an eye out for us!

Remember: The first **1,000 tenants** to sign up will receive a **£10 voucher**—and we're already over halfway there!



Community Benefit work :

Community Collaboration in Action

A huge thank you to MPS Housing for the community benefits service they've delivered for our tenants , following completion of their kitchen and bathroom upgrades programme in Dundee. Their commitment to supporting our tenants goes beyond bricks and mortar – it's about making a real difference in our tenant's lives and helping to build

more inclusive communities.

We're truly grateful for your partnership and the positive impact you've made. Here's to continuing to work together and helping to improve the lives of our tenants and their surrounding communities.

Below is images from a couple of garden clearances that have recently been completed. These types of jobs can be challenging for our tenants, physically, mentally and costly to complete.



Play Parks: Listening to Tenants, Improving Spaces



Angus Housing Association regularly works in partnership with other services to support our tenants and improve local environments.

Last year, we highlighted Longhaugh Play Park in Whitfield, which sits among tenants'

homes and should be a valuable space for families. However, the park hadn't been updated since the 1980s and had become underused and neglected.



In collaboration with Dundee City Council, we carried out a consultation with tenants living nearby to gather feedback and ideas for potential improvements. Comments included:

"The whole park needs upgraded."

"It's a bit old and not inviting."

"Nothing in it other than the swings that we can use."

Tenants also shared suggestions for the future:

"It's definitely in need of a revamp. It's in the perfect place for all the homes surrounding the area. As a parent, I hate to have to trek to another park when this one is on our doorstep! Bright colours would be amazing."

"Give the children a park to be proud of."

Thanks to this input, proposals were submitted to Dundee City Council, and funding was secured for upgrades. By Summer 2025, the park had been refurbished and is now more actively used by local families. This project shows how tenant feedback can influence improvements.



Exciting Improvements Coming to Ormiston Play Park!

We're thrilled to share that following consultation with tenants, our funding application to the Neighbourhood Capital Fund was successful—securing approximately £60,000 to improve Ormiston Play Park!

Thanks to your input, a new design has been selected and we're eagerly awaiting the start of works. The upgraded play park will offer a

more inclusive, engaging, and fun space for children and families in the community.

We'll continue to share updates as the project progresses—watch this space!

The design put forward for the play park is pictured below and we can't wait for work to begin improvements.



**Your Community
Your Voice
Your Choice**

Vote Now

Have your say in how funds are spent in your community.

To access the online vote please scan the QR Code or go to

<https://dundeecoalitionvoice.comunitieschoices.scot/budgets/17>



If you require any further information or would like help to vote, please contact the Tenant Participation at tp.aha.org.uk or call the office to chat 03451 772244

The vote is now OPEN for improvements to Ormiston Park – and your voice matters!

If you'd love to see upgrades to the play park, it's super easy to vote! You can use:

- ✓ Your Facebook account
- ✓ Your MyGovScot account
- ✓ Or your Google account

👤 Anyone aged 12 and over can vote – and everyone in your household can take part if they have one of the accounts above. The more votes, the better!

🗳️ Vote now and spread the word!

🍀 Fingers crossed for a fantastic upgrade!



If you have ideas or suggestions about your local area, we encourage you to contact the **Tenant Participation Team** on **03451 772244** or email **tp@aha.org.uk**.

Development and Improvement Update

Angus Housing Developments



We have now completed our development of new build properties at Crudie Farm in Arbroath. Working in partnership with Scotia Homes, we have built Patricia Millar Mains & Alex King Way, 29 social rented properties in total.

We held an official opening of the site in September where we welcomed some tenants and representatives from the Association, Angus Council and the Developer together with two of the local residents who the roads were named after.



We have also seen the completion of 9 properties at Brechin. This brings our total number of houses in the Dubton Development to 23.



Our development at Edzel is now almost complete with only 4 Bungalows remaining to be handed over. Total number of Social rented properties built on this site will be 10 once works are complete.

Works at Whitfield Drive continue to make progress. In September a number of properties were lost to a major fire on the site. Works to clear the damage and rebuild are underway which has caused a significant delay for property handovers.

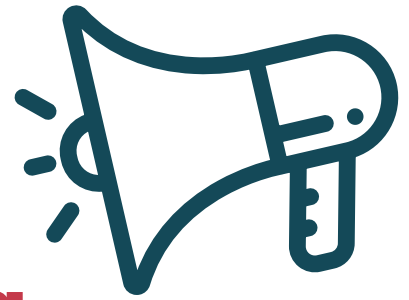


Future developments are planned in both Dundee and Angus over the coming years.



New Build Financing

The Association's Board of Management is committed to continuing to build new properties at a steady and sustainable pace.



FAQ: Funding and Loans for New Homes

1. How does the Association pay for building new homes?

The Association receives a grant from the Scottish Government for each new build. The rest of the cost is covered by loans, which work similarly to a mortgage.

2. Why can't new homes be paid for from existing cash reserves?

Existing cash reserves are used for day-to-day running costs and maintaining current properties. Building new homes requires much more funding than these reserves can provide.

3. What is a loan, and how does it work for the Association?

A loan is money borrowed from a bank or lender that must be paid back over time, with interest. The Association chooses loans that best suit its needs, considering factors like interest rate and repayment period.

4. Who provides these loans?

Current lenders include the Royal Bank of Scotland, Nationwide Building Society, and the Scottish Government (through a charitable bond).

5. How does the Association choose which loan to accept?

The Association prepares a tender (an invitation for lenders to offer their best deals). It reviews all offers, looking at the length of the loan, type of loan, and interest rate, then selects the most suitable option.

6. Will there be more lenders in the future?

Yes. As the Association seeks funding for new homes up to 2030, it may work with additional lenders.

7. Does taking out loans affect tenants' rents?

Yes. Loans are and always have been part of how we fund our work. The Association aims to manage its finances carefully so that rents remain fair and services are maintained.

8. Why is it important to secure funding for new builds?

With a waiting list of over 5'000, we want to keep building to meet local need and demand. Securing funding allows the Association to continue providing new homes for people who need them, supporting the community's growth and wellbeing.

Improvement Works



We continue to deliver a busy programme of planned improvements across our properties. Works include:

- Kitchen & Bathroom replacements
- Window improvements

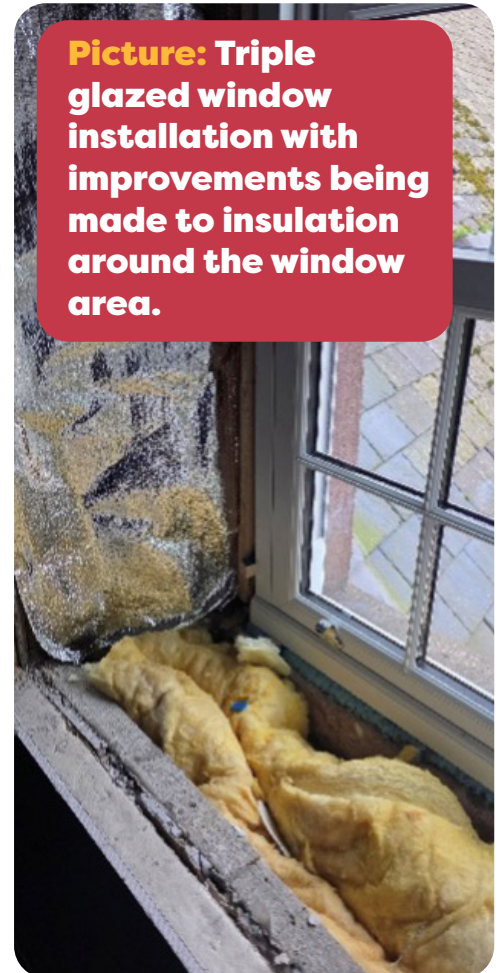
With many properties now getting:

- Triple glazed windows
- Improvements to extractor fans
- Electric Storage heaters
- Hot water cylinder replacements
- Annual Gas Boiler replacement contracts.

The programme for next financial year will see very similar types of works. Tenants at Kirkbank in Auchmithie, Stracathro Terrace & Fettercairn Drive in Barnhill and Leonard St in Arbroath will shortly be hearing from our Capital Works Team to arrange surveys for planned Kitchens and Bathroom works which will kick start our programme for April 26 onwards.



Picture:
Kitchen Installation in progress.



Picture: Triple glazed window installation with improvements being made to insulation around the window area.

Could Medical Adaptations Make Life Easier at Home?

Have you ever thought that a small change in your home could make a big difference to your daily life?

We receive funding from the Scottish Government to help tenants with medical adaptations that make homes safer, more accessible, and easier to live in. These adaptations can improve your quality of life by helping you move around more easily, complete everyday tasks, and enjoy greater independence—without having to rely so much on others.

Perhaps you've considered something that might help but weren't sure how to go about it,

or worried about the cost.

We're here to help.

Simply speak to your Maintenance or Housing Officer. If we think we can assist, we'll advise on how to arrange an Occupational Health Assessment to review your needs. If the Occupational Therapist recommends changes, we'll source the equipment and carry out the work for you.

If this sounds helpful, why not give us a call today? Let's have a chat and see how we can make your home work better for you.

Mutual Exchanges

Mutual Exchanges can be a good way to resolve your housing needs without having to wait for rehousing through the waiting list. Please remember though that you must have permission from all landlords involved before proceeding with a swap. If you carry out an illegal exchange the Association can and will take steps to either make you move back or take action to remove an illegal occupant from our property.

Prior to any Mutual Exchange being considered your rent and recharge accounts must be up to

date and we will expect a month's rent to be paid at the start of your new tenancy. Your home must also pass an inspection to ensure there are no outstanding repairs and is in a good decorative order.

If you wish to be considered for a mutual exchange all parties must complete an application form. Please visit our website or call our Customer Service Team for an application form.

Looking Out for Our Neighbours This Winter

Small Acts of Kindness Make a Big Difference

As the crisp winter air settles in and the nights grow longer, it's more important than ever to look out for those around us, especially our elderly neighbours. Winter can be a challenging time, with icy pavements, chilly homes, and darker afternoons making everyday tasks a little trickier for some.

Whether you live in a bustling area or a quiet cul-de-sac, a quick knock on the door or a friendly

wave over the hedge might be just what someone needs. Sometimes, it's the little things—a helping hand with the shopping, clearing a slippery path, or simply checking in with a warm cup of tea—that can make all the difference to someone's day.

If you haven't seen your neighbour recently, why not pop by to say hello? Even a short chat can lift spirits and help tackle feelings of isolation. Keep an eye out for signs

that someone may be struggling: unopened post, lights that aren't usually on, or a driveway that's not been cleared could all be gentle prompts to reach out.

This winter, let's embrace the true spirit of community. Together, we can ensure that no one is left out in the cold. A little kindness goes a long way—let's all do our bit to make winter warmer for everyone.

TESTING YOUR ALARMS

It is important you make sure you have working smoke alarms in your home.

You can help be in control of this by carrying out a regular test, perhaps once a month.

If you live with others, remember and let them know you are testing the alarms, so you don't unnecessarily panic them.

If the smoke detector is working, the alarm will sound, along with all other smoke detectors in your property that are linked to it.

To do this press and hold the test button on the smoke detector. It can take a few seconds to begin, and you will hear a loud, ear-piercing siren from the smoke detector while the button is pressed.

You can also use an Ei450 Controller:



1. Test your alarms weekly by pressing the central button.



2. The Fire or CO light will illuminate to show you which type of alarm has activated.



3. If the alarms in your home are sounding, press to locate - this will silence all alarms except the one which activated the system.



4. Silence a false alarm by again pressing the central button. CO is clear and odourless. Alarm activations should never be dismissed as a false alarm.



Top Tips for Budgeting Over Christmas

- ✓ **Set a Realistic Budget:** Work out your essential bills—including rent—before planning your Christmas spending. Allocate what's left for gifts, food, and celebrations.
- ✓ **Housing Perks:** If you haven't already done so, sign up to Housing Perks which provides Association tenants access to discounts in supermarkets and high street stores. For further information please visit www.angusha.uk/news/housing-perks
- ✓ **Shop Savvy:** Look out for special offers, discounts, and sales. Consider sharing the cost of festive meals and events with family or friends.
- ✓ **Limit Impulse Buys:** Make a list before you shop and stick to it. Avoid last-minute purchases that weren't part of your plan.
- ✓ **Consider Homemade Gifts:** Thoughtful, homemade presents can be more meaningful and budget-friendly than expensive store-bought items.
- ✓ **Monitor Your Spending:** Use banking apps or free budgeting tools to keep an eye on your outgoings and make sure you don't overspend.



The Financial Inclusion Team Is Here to Help

If you're worried about managing your money or keeping up with rent over Christmas, don't struggle alone. The Association's Financial Inclusion Team is on hand to offer tenants support and advice, from budgeting guidance to help accessing benefits or emergency funds. Reach out early to get the help you need and enjoy a stress-free festive season.



Secure Your Home, Enjoy Christmas with Confidence

Christmas should be a time of joy, not worry. By prioritising your rent payments, planning your spending, and seeking support if you need it, you'll set yourself up for a brighter New Year. Remember, the Association is here to help—don't hesitate to get in touch.





3 Simple steps to help save money on your energy bills:

1. Lower Your Heating Bills

Set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature—typically between 18°C and 21°C for most households. Lowering the thermostat by just one degree, from 22°C to 21°C, could save you around £90 per year.

Important tip:

You don't need to increase the thermostat when it's colder outside. Your home will still reach the set temperature—it might just take a bit longer. To stay warm without extra cost, consider setting your heating to come on earlier during colder months.

2. Switch Appliances Off Standby

You can save around £45 a year simply by turning your appliances off standby mode. Many devices continue to use electricity even when not in active use, so switching them off completely can help reduce your energy bills.

3. Compare Tariffs

Use price comparison websites to find the best energy deal based on your specific usage.

Need help?

If you're unsure how to compare tariffs or where to find your usage details, you can speak with our Energy Advisor for support. Call 0345 177 2244 or email energyadvice@aha.org.uk.

Warm Home Discount

Warm homes discount is a government led scheme offering support to households who are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. This is normally a one off payment of £150 towards your electricity. This is automatically added to your account if



you are eligible. If you require more information/ or support to make an application to the Warm Homes Discount Scheme, Please contact our Energy Advisor on: **0345 177 2244**, or email energyadvice@aha.org.uk

You will need your electricity account number to make an application.



The Importance of Paying Your Rent Over Christmas

Festive Spending and Staying on Track: Advice for Tenants



Don't Let the Festive Period Expenses Derail Your Rent Payments

Christmas and New year period is a time for celebration, giving, and making memories with loved ones. However, it's no secret that the Christmas season can also be quite expensive, with presents, food, travel, and social events quickly adding up. While it's tempting to

splash out, it's essential not to lose sight of your financial responsibilities—especially when it comes to paying your rent. It's vital to maintain your rent payments to avoid falling into arrears and risking your home. Rent is a priority bill, and keeping up with payments ensures your security and peace of mind into the New Year.

During the festive period you can continue to make

payments Allpay Payments at Pay Point, through the Association's Website or the Tenant Portal. If you haven't yet signed up for the portal don't delay sign up today using the QR Code below.



Angus Housing Association recognised for Pet friendly housing policies.

We're proud to announce that we have become one of the first Housing Associations in the UK to be officially accredited by **Dogs Trust** for our pet friendly policies and practices.

Over the past year, we've worked closely with **Dogs Trust** to review how we support tenants who own pets. Our

staff have taken part in specialist training delivered by Dogs Trust, helping them feel more confident and better equipped when interacting with dogs during home visits.

This work has now been formally recognised through **Dogs Trust's** pet friendly housing accreditation - a milestone that reflects our commitment to creating inclusive, supportive communities for all tenants.

We know how important pets are to many of our residents. By working with **Dogs Trust**, we've been able to strengthen our approach in a way that supports pet owners while also considering the needs

of neighbours and the wider community.

The project has been made possible thanks to funding raised by players of **People's Postcode Lottery**, and aims

to improve access to pet friendly housing for those who need it most.

Learn more about Dogs

Trust's Pet Friendly Housing project: **Our Pet Friendly Housing Pilot - Lets with Pets Development**



If you would like further information and advice about keeping pets, please scan the following QR code which will take you to the pets section of our website.



Top Tips to Keep Warm at Home This Winter

Practical Advice for Staying Cosy and Reducing Energy Bills



Stay Toasty: Simple Ways to Beat the Chill

As the winter months close in and temperatures start to drop, keeping warm at home becomes a top priority. Not only is it important for your comfort, but staying warm also helps to protect your health and well-being. Here are some practical and cost-effective tips to help you stay cosy indoors this season.

1. Layer Up and Stay Snug

Wearing several thin layers traps heat better than one thick jumper. Opt for thermal vests, long-sleeved tops and cosy socks. Don't forget a warm dressing gown or blanket for extra comfort when relaxing at home.

2. Make the Most of Curtains and Blinds

Open your curtains during the day to let sunlight naturally warm your rooms. As soon as dusk falls, draw your curtains to keep the heat in and the cold out. Consider using thermal or lined curtains for even better insulation.

3. Block Out Draughts

Cold air can sneak in through gaps under doors, around windows and even letterboxes. Use draught excluders, rolled-up towels or self-adhesive strips to seal these gaps and keep warm air where it belongs – inside your home.

4. Set Your Heating Controls Wisely

If you have central heating, set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature – around

18–21°C for living areas. Use timers to heat rooms only when needed and close doors to keep the warmth in occupied spaces.

5. Keep Active

Moving about generates body heat. Try to get up and walk around regularly, even if it's just doing a few chores or having a gentle stretch. It's a great way to stay warm and boost your mood during the darker months.

6. Warm Up Your Bed

Hot water bottles, electric blankets (used safely), and flannel sheets can transform your bed into a cosy haven. Layer up with extra blankets or a duvet with a higher tog rating for chilly nights.

7. Make the Most of Hot Meals and Drinks

Cooking a hearty soup or a cuppa not only provides warmth from the inside out, but also helps to heat your kitchen. Try to eat regular hot meals and stay hydrated with warm drinks throughout the day.

Need Extra Help?

We understand that keeping your home warm isn't always straightforward, especially if you're struggling to work your heating system or you're having trouble with your energy provider. That's why the Association has an Energy Advisor, Casey Malone, who is on hand to offer tailored advice and practical assistance. If you're experiencing

difficulties or want to find out how to make your home more energy efficient, don't hesitate to get in touch with Casey – we're here to help you stay warm this winter.

Stay warm, stay safe, and remember – a bit of preparation now can make all the difference when winter is at its coldest!



If you are calling to report an emergency repair you should phone our **Out of Hours Emergency Number** which is **01382 434343**.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Dundee City Council	01382 434000	Angus Council	03452 777 778
Dundee North Law Centre	01382 918230	Angus Woman's Aid	01241 439437
Dundee Woman's Aid	01382 207099	Citizens Advice Arbroath	01241 870661
Citizens Advice Dundee	01382 214633	Citizens Advice Montrose	01674 673263
Citizens Advice Forfar	01307 467096	Angus Credit Union	01307 463388
Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership	01382 438300	Dundee City Council (Lettings)	0300 1239023 01382 307400
Dundee Credit Union	01382 431572	Bield Housing	01382 228911
Home In Scotland	01382 313400	Sanctuary Housing	01382 823050
Abertay Housing	01382 903545	Hillcrest Housing	01382 313400
Caledonia Housing	0800 6781228	Community Wardens Dundee	01382 436421
Animal Control Dundee	01382 436285	Housing Benefits DCC	01382 431205
Special Uplifts DCC	01382 436238	Angus Furniture Project	01241 437438
Anti Social Behaviour Team Dundee	01382 307342	Who is my energy supplier	0870 608 1524
Shelter	0344 515 2527	Police Non Emergency	101
Police Emergency	999	Child Protection Team	01382 307999
NHS 24	111	Dundee Community Alarm	01382 432260
Dundee Cleansing Dept	01382 433710	Dundee Energy Advice Project	01382 434840
Street Lighting Faults	0800 232 323 01382 433063		