

Welcome from Jacqui McKenzie

Chief Officer for Early Intervention and Community Empowerment Jacqui McKenzie welcomes you all to the winter edition of Newsbite.

Jacqui said: "I am delighted to welcome you all to our latest edition of Newsbite. We appreciate that this past year has been challenging for all our residents and I would like to thank you all for your continued patience and understanding.

"In 2023 we introduced Choice Based Lettings, the new system of applying for homes and allows our residents to select the property of their choice in their preferred area.

"We have also had a number of consultations take place throughout the year, including on potential rent increases and on eight of our city centre multi-storey buildings. We value all feedback that we have received and thank everyone who has taken the time to take part.

"Looking towards 2024, we are looking forward to more Community Led Walkabouts, which take place all over the city four times a year with Senior Officers from the Council in attendance. This is a fantastic way to get involved in the wider community and I would encourage you all to take part and help us to improve our services to you.

"I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Newsbite and extend my thanks to the Events and Communications Group for their continued support in producing this magazine. I hope you and your family and friends have a fantastic festive period and wish you all the best for 2024."

Rent Consultation Update

Thank you to the 2,009 tenants who responded to the Rent Consultation. We were proposing to consult on a one-year rent policy and to review again in 2025 with a potentially longer-term policy. As part of this, two options of rent increase were considered for 2024/25, 6.3% or 8.8%.



The results were: 1,192 for 6.3% and 817 for 8.8%

These figures were included in a report which went to a Full Council meeting on Wednesday 13 December 2023. Councillors agreed that rent would increase by 4.7% in 2024/25.

All rental changes will take effect from Monday 1st April 2024, and you will be notified of any change to the rent you currently pay.

Please note as a council we are trying to become a more sustainable organisation by using less paper and of course trying to save our tenants money. Please let your Housing and Support Officer know if you have an email address or if you have changed your email address as this will improve our communications to you. Thank you for helping us.

Supporting people to claim the benefits they're entitled to – Use our Online Benefit

Calculator!

Support and advice is available for anyone concerned about the rising cost of living through our dedicated online website:

Help with cost of living | Aberdeen City Council

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/help-cost-living

There are different types of support available, from benefit advice, council tax reduction, help with fuel costs to where to access Warm Spaces. Through our Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) project we are working in partnership to increase the uptake of unclaimed benefits across Aberdeen City by supporting people claim the benefits they're entitled to.

We're doing this through many new improvement ideas, one of which is the online benefit calculator - a free online tool where you can check what benefits you might be entitled to receive.

This is a quick and easy tool to use to make sure you're receiving all the financial support that you're entitled to and all information you provide remains anonymous.

Get started today at:

Benefits Calculator | Aberdeen City Council

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/benefits-and-advice/get-benefits-and-money-advice/benefits-calculator

lacaroni 500g looked chickpens 300g 2 kilo Apples I kilo potatoes Deli mackerel fillets Chopped tinned tomatoe Tioned sardines Tea bag x 20 Pineapple NFC orange juice White mushrooms Fairtrade bananas Cooked prawns 180g. Sweetcom Roasted pistachios 200g Free range eggs 6pk Pasta spughetri Cheese continenta

Avocado

Broccoli

a lkg

cflour 1.5kg







The Harmful Effects of Vaping





Taransay Court Sheltered Housing Garden

Taransay Court Sheltered Housing Tenants and their families have been busy this summer raising money for their garden.

The tenants have enjoyed sitting in the garden surrounded by flowers on the sunny days that there have been. A few barbecues have also been enjoyed during the warmer days with all tenants invited.

Special thanks to MARJORIE REID, TERRI ELLINGTON, KATHLEEN JOHNSTONE and EDITH GODSMAN for all their hard work.

Festive Fire Safety Tips

House fires and casualties increase during winter, with a high risk over the festive period. Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Fire & Rescue want to ensure you keep safe during the festive period and here are a few tips to help you.

FESTIVE SAFETY TIPS

- Check your smoke and heat alarms are working.
- Never place Christmas cards or decorations around any type of heater.
- Check your Christmas light plugs are fitted with the correct fuse, do not overload extension leads and ensure all electrical devices are Intertek BEAB approved. – this means they have passed a safety standard.
- ► Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed. Or when you go out.
- Never leave cooking unattended, especially when using hot oil.
 Be especially careful when taking certain medication, when tired or have consumed alcohol.

- Take time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas as they are at greater risk from fire, particularly if they suffer from ill health or disability.
- Check fairy lights are in good working order and replace any bulbs that have blown.
- ► Bulbs can get very hot, do not let them touch materials that can scorch or burn easily, such as paper or fabrics.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed. Never leave a burning candle unattended especially in a bedroom.
- Keep candles, matches and cigarette lighters out of reach of children and never place lit candles where they can be knocked over by children.

- Always put candles on a heat resistant surface/ holder. Be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which can get hot enough to melt plastic or ignite combustible Christmas decorations.
- Position candles away from objects that may catch fire, like Christmas trees, greeting cards, ribbons, and other decorations.
- Never move lit candles.
- Always use a candle snuffer or a spoon to extinguish candles or tea lights.

To request a free Home Fire Safety Visit, call **0800 0731 999** Text **'FIRE'** to **80800** or visit **www.firescotland.gov.uk** for further information.

Christmas in Aberdeen 2023

Aberdeen will sparkle this festive season as Christmas celebrations return to the city!



Residents and visitors alike can enjoy the Aberdeen Christmas Village, which will be open on Broad Street until Sunday 31 December. There's something for the whole family to enjoy, including a spectacular outdoor ice rink, local Christmas Market, food and drinks and a wonderful festive fairground with new and returning attractions!

New for this year includes a Ferris Wheel, and younger visitors can enjoy the Helter Skelter, Candy Cane Bungee Trampoline and the fantastic new Ice Fun House.

This year will also feature the new 'Village Square', which will be located at the heart of the Aberdeen Christmas Village and draws on inspiration from European Christmas markets. This includes an outdoor area with covered seating where families and friends can come together and enjoy a selection of quality street food and tasty treats from local producers.

The popular open-air Curated in the Quad will also return to Marischal College Quadrangle each Friday to Sunday in the lead up to Christmas. Curated by Charlie House, the market will showcase a unique line up each week of locally produced crafts, arts and gifts, along with gourmet food and drink.

Also new for this year will be festive lighting in Union Terrace Gardens, which will be the setting for the Nativity Scene. The Nativity will be open daily until 5th January 2024.

Find out more about all the festive events taking place across the city here: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/leisure-culture-and-parks/major-events-aberdeen/christmas-aberdeen-2023

Get into the festive spirit at Aberdeen Art Gallery!

We have lots on offer at the Art Gallery in the coming weeks to help you get into the festive spirit.

From Saturday 25 November, choirs from around the North-East of Scotland will bring music into the Art Gallery every Saturday at 12:30pm and 2:30pm. These free performances will take place in the Sculpture Court, under the warm glow of our Christmas tree. The line-up includes unmissable performances from Aberdeen Gaelic Choir, Albacapella, Granite City Chorus and the University of Aberdeen Chamber Choir. These are not to be missed!

Our Lunchbreak Concerts run in Cowdray Hall, part of the Art Gallery, every Thursday from 12:45-1:30pm. After a short Christmas break, our Lunchbreak Concerts resume on Thursday 18 January 2024 as the Corten Quintet take us on a musical tour across Europe.

In preparation to welcome in the new year, Arthur Watson and friends present a very special performance based around the installation 'A Year-end Drinking Coat'. Join us on the top floor of the Art Gallery at 2:45pm on Saturday 30 December as we look at the traditions of song among the weaving community. All these events are free and drop-in. No need to pre-book, just turn up! We look forward to seeing you there! Check out our website **www.aagm.co.uk** to see our full programme.





Home Contents Insurance

Aberdeen City Council has arranged a new home contents insurance scheme specifically for council tenants.¹

Did you know we only cover your buildings and not your contents? We would encourage all council tenants to take out insurance to protect your furniture, belongings and internal decorations (such as wallpaper) against fire, theft, water damage and other risks, either through this scheme or by making your own arrangements.

Benefits include:

- No excess to pay if you make a claim
- ▶ Sums insured starting from £6,000²
- Pay weekly or monthly along with your rent
- Garages, sheds & greenhouses, now included as part of the standard cover.

By paying extra, you can also include:3

- Full accidental damage cover within the home.
- Personal belongings cover including mobiles– anywhere in the UK.
- Cover for wheelchairs and hearing aids.

Applications can be made via the Council's website or you can request an application pack, which includes a handy checklist that will help you work out how much insurance cover you need.

Please call us on 01224 522052 for further information or visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/insurance

- Subject to satisfactory application. Acceptance restrictions may apply for conviction and claims experience.
- 2. Price includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) charged at the appropriate rate.
- *Additional covers are available at an additional cost.
 You can choose to add any of these covers to your insurance for additional premiums.

The policy is underwritten by Aviva Insurance Limited.

Aviva Insurance Limited, Registered in Scotland Number 2116.

Registered Office: Pitheavlis, Perth PH2 0NH. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. FP.ENT.683.SEC





A lack of safe and secure bicycle storage facilities was an important issue for residents wishing to cycle for leisure or commuting purposes.

Findings from other cities, including Glasgow and Edinburgh, indicated that the provision of safe and secure bicycle storage facilities at multi-storey residential accommodation has been shown to increase the ownership and use of cycles by residents.

Aberdeen City Council's Transportation Strategy and Programmes team were then prompted to investigate introducing secure bicycle storage facilities for residents across the city and were able to identify areas were demand was high.

The largest demands were found to be around multi-storey housing blocks and work has begun to introduce secure bicycle units at Kings Court, St Machar Court, Donside Court, Inverdon Court, St Ninian Court and Balgownie Court. There is access for twenty bicycles to be stored at a time, and it is free to use on a first come first serve basis. These blocks were selected as they represented areas of demand, the land surrounding them is relatively flat, making the storage facilities easier to install, and because they are not within easy walking distance of significant retail or leisure and recreation facilities.

It is anticipated that if these initial six bicycle storage units prove to be popular, then more will be rolled out across the city.

2022/2023 Scottish Social Housing **Charter Performance Report**

Facts and figures about your landlord

We have continued in our ongoing journey of improvement to ensure that we maintain a high standard of tenant satisfaction and remain committed to delivering a high-quality service to all our tenants and customers. This has included the provision of accommodation and repairs.

If you would like to contribute to and influence decisions relating to your home and community, why not get involved and take part in one of our tenant and resident groups.

For more information please visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/tenantparticipation **Aberdeen City Council has**

22,772 properties



20,159 tenancies









Tenants service satisfaction







New builds



more than a year

We fully rewired:



We installed:



hard wired smoke detectors





crime check doors

We replaced:







5 A 626 A 309 kitchens bathrooms



Emergency repairs carried out with an average of 3 hours 41 minutes



92.03% repairs completed right first time



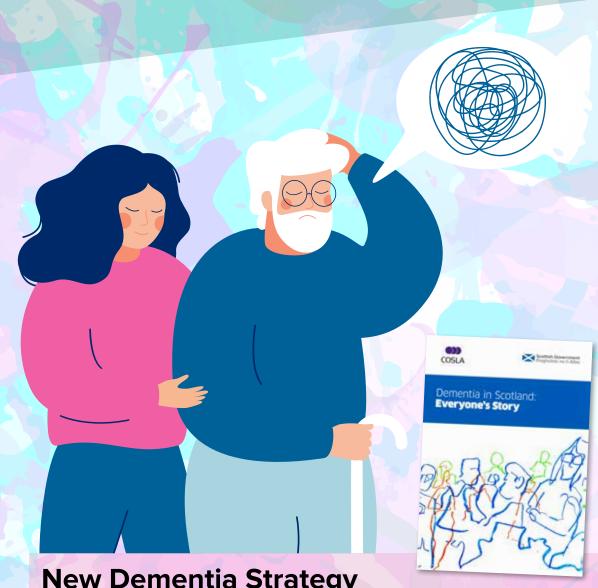




of anti-social behaviour cases resolved







New Dementia Strategy

A new dementia strategy was released in May 2023, called "Everyone's Story", a 10 year vision for change.

The strategy sets out a positive, shared vision for dementia in Scotland over the next 10 years and was developed in collaboration with people with lived experience of dementia. This makes clear the importance of a shared vision of all of us working together to deliver a better experience for people living with dementia, their families and carers.

It is estimated that there are around 90,000 people living with Dementia in Scotland. With these figures and the release of the new strategy, Bon Accord Care have entered in to a partnership project with tenants across Aberdeen who attend the Sheltered Housing Strategic Committee Group to select four test sites to create "Compassionate living buildings".

The start of this project will focus on "Living with Dementia". In this project tenants will be sign posted to education resources, information across the city on preventative measures, supportive measures and safe living by raising awareness of Dementia. Tenants will be involved on a monthly basis evaluating the project as we go and feeding back through the Sheltered Housing Strategic Group.

For more information visit:

www.gov.scot/publications/new-dementia-strategy-scotland-everyones-story/documents/

To join a tenant and resident group, visit:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/tenant-and-resident-participation

Tips to prevent Condensation, Damp and Mould

Condensation is perhaps the most common form of damp that can appear in your home. It occurs when warm air meets a colder surface, such as a wall or window. Things like washing, cooking, tumble driers, steam mops and people breathing can put moisture into the air inside your home.

If left untreated, condensation can lead to mould growth, which can be potentially harmful to people and properties.

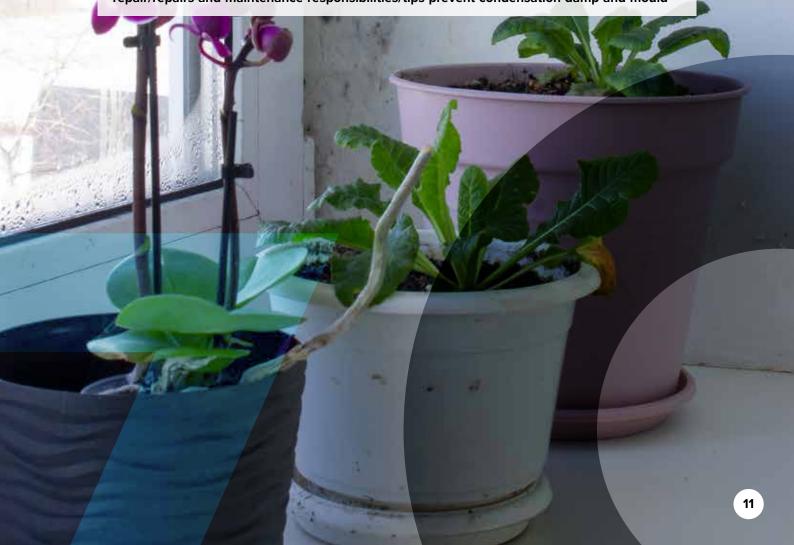
Adequate ventilation is essential to allow moisture to escape before it turns into condensation.

If damp is an issue in your home, a dehumidifier may help to dry out the affected areas.

Follow these handy hints to ensure that condensation, damp and mould will be reduced and not cause you or your family any problems.

- Let air circulate by keeping internal doors open whilst sleeping
- Ensure window trickle vents are open
- Make sure aquariums are covered to prevent excess moisture
- Move house plants outdoors for a while
- Avoid using paraffin or bottled gas heaters
- Try not to block permanent ventilators
- Limit the use of steam mops for cleaning laminate flooring or ensure that the room is well ventilated when doing so.

For more helpful tips on how to prevent condensation, mould and damp forming in your home, visit our helpful guide at: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/request-council-house-repair/repairs-and-maintenance-responsibilities/tips-prevent-condensation-damp-and-mould



Success at Tenant Virtual Session



North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together

Two tenant participation groups, North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and the newly established Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP), joined forces to host their first interactive virtual session centred around the theme of "Working in Partnership." The event targeted tenants, residents, community groups and staff across Scotland, bringing together a diverse range of voices and experiences.

The virtual gathering showcased good practice and insights on tenant and community involvement through a series of engaging presentations, videos, and discussions. The spirit of partnership echoed throughout the event, with tenants and staff both contributing to its success. Colin Stewart, a Castlehill tenant and NETRALT member, acted as the event's host and provided the technical know-how to provide a digital platform for the event to take place.

The event commenced with a keynote speech by George Walker, Chairperson of the Board of the Scottish Housing Regulator, and set the tone for the day. A selection of topics was covered during the session, including youth involvement, scrutiny, community growing initiatives, participatory budgeting and Regional Networks.

With NETRALT 's membership covering Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, and Moray, and NTP spanning the Highlands & Islands, Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides, the collaboration provided attendees with insights from a wide array of tenants, community groups, and landlords. The event concluded with an interactive online quiz, with a tenant delegate from Aberdeen City Council winning the star prize of £100 in vouchers.

Catherine Coutts, Co-Chair of NETRALT and Castlehill's Tenant Participation Officer, explained,

"We were thrilled to partner

with Northern Tenants
Partnership to share the
amazing work taking place
in our communities.
This event provided a
unique opportunity for
tenants to inspire one
another, furthering our aims
of sharing good practice,
creating a valuable support
network, and promoting
tenant engagement far
and wide."

Suzy Boardman, Principal Tenant & Customer Engagement Officer at Highland Council, said,

"Friday's event really highlighted what can be achieved when we pool our resources and work collaboratively.

It was inspiring to hear about the great work happening all across our region and come away with lots of ideas for future partnership projects.'

The success of this collaborative event highlights the commitment of tenant participation groups to foster meaningful partnerships, share knowledge and enhance the tenant experience across Scotland.

To find out more about both groups, visit **ntp.netralt.org.uk**





Tenant of the Year

Congratulations to LEWIS MCGILL, a Seaton Tenant, who was awarded the Frances Nelson Tenant of the Year at the Tenant Information Service Conference in Glasgow on Thursday 9 November.

This award recognises an inspiring, individual tenant who has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to driving tenant participation practices forward.

It also recognises those who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to adding value to their local area and improving community spirit.

Lewis participates in his local community, being a member of the Seaton Community Council. Lewis is also an active member in the Citywide Multi Storey Group, having set up the Multi Storey Facebook pages which has over 1,400 members.

Lewis is also involved in reviewing services that tenants and residents receive, as well as attending various events to promote tenant and resident engagement.

Well done Lewis!

The Waste Team shall be collecting waste and ensuring Multi Stories are a priority throughout the festive period. If there are any cleaning emergencies in your building, on these dates there will be an out of hours service available, please phone the Contact Centre on 03000200292.

We will now be providing a service in our Multi Storey blocks for 358 days per year, with no service on the public holiday days that Aberdeen City Council grant. Therefore, from this year staff working in the multi storey buildings will now be off on all the public holiday days throughout the year.

The dates which are still to come for this year are:

CHRISTMAS DAY Monday 25th December 2023

BOXING DAY Tuesday 26th December 2023

Friday 29th December 2023

For next year 2024 Public Holiday dates are:

NEW YEARS DAY Monday 1st January 2024

Tuesday 2nd January 2024

GOOD FRIDAY 29th March 2024

MAY DAY Monday 6th May 2024

CHRISTMAS DAY Wednesday 25th December 2024

BOXING DAY Thursday 26th December 2024

HOGMANAY Tuesday 31st December 2024





On 9 November 2022, a meeting was held at the Douglas Hotel to discuss the demise of Union Street. Over 170 people attended and discussions took place on what needs to happen.

Local businessman, Bob Keiller, witnessed the tables of people debating the issues.

The following day he shared his observation with the Chair of Aberdeen Inspired, Allan Henderson. A few days later, Allan returned with the CEO of Aberdeen Inspired, Adrian Watson, and Russell Borthwick, the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce. They asked Bob if he would be prepared to lead a community-based effort to improve Union Street – and do it full time for no pay and potentially for several years. After some thinking time and a few more discussions, he agreed, and on 22 March 2023 "Our Union Street" was announced.

By this time, Bob had secured the support of Aberdeen City Council, Opportunity North East, Shell UK as well as Aberdeen Inspired and Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. To get the ball rolling, Bob committed his own funds to secure an office space and hire two members of staff.

Accompanied by fellow volunteer Derrick Thomson, Bob met over 70 groups and individuals to listen to their concerns and ideas. They asked for people's views online and captured comments and responses to social media posts and collected 10,000 suggestions! The ideas suggested were then collated into 17 themes.

Over 300 volunteers were invited to investigate the themes. They self-selected into groups and set about their investigations. They studied what had happened in other communities, counted the number of car-parking spaces and became proficient on the rules of business rates and exemptions.

The set of 17 themes were then broken down into five action areas:

- BRIGHTEN THE STREET;
- FILL THE UNITS;
- USE THE SPACE;
- TELL THE STORY: AND
- ENGAGE THE CITY

New teams of volunteers are now being set up to address each of these areas.

The "Our Union Street" teams are connecting with the local universities, colleges and schools across multiple projects – and it is driven by volunteers who care.

Union Street isn't perfect. It's not what it could be. It's not what it should be.

But perhaps, the collective efforts of so many people will allow it be a street we can be proud of again.



Working Together to Provide Vaccinations

The Citywide Sheltered Housing Group suggested that the Covid and Flu vaccinations could be carried out in the sheltered housing complexes. This would mean the tenants would not have to travel.

This year for the first time the NHS, Bon Accord Care and Aberdeen City Council's Housing team all worked together to ensure that many tenants received their vaccinations in their home or common room. The feedback from the sheltered housing tenants has

It was great to go there in my slippers.

Saved me a long bus journey.

been very positive:

I did not have to take a taxi.

A great idea.



If you have not received your vaccinations for whatever reason, please contact:

ABERDEEN CITY CALL CENTRE on 0800 030 4713.

Alternatively from Monday 11th December you can walk into any of the following Vaccination Centres to get your vaccination - no appointment necessary:

ABERDEEN CITY VACCINATION CENTRE.

Bon Accord Centre, Monday - Saturday from 9.15 - 4.30pm

AIRYHALL VACCINATION CENTRE.

Springfield Road, Monday - Friday 9.15 - 4.30pm

BRIDGE OF DON VACCINATION CENTRE,

Cairnfold Road, Monday - Friday 9.15 - 4.30pm

Playing our part in Protecting Vulnerable Adults

These are very challenging times, with the many ongoing impacts of the pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis.

On top of that, winter will be here before we know it, bringing additional pressures. Many adults in our community are vulnerable and at risk, and the vulnerability of some adults will have increased because of the additional pressures on families and communities. This may mean that some adults could be at risk of harm and neglect, where that would not otherwise have been the case.



Vulnerable adults are at risk of a range of harms such as those in the diagram above. Harm may be caused by a wide range of people, and can take place anywhere.

Partners have a shared statutory and moral responsibility to support and safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults. Aberdeen's Adult Protection Committee (APC) is a statutory, inter-agency forum which takes the lead in coordinating and developing local responses to adult support and protection issues.

If you are concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm and needs support, please do not ignore it.

IF IN DOUBT, CHECK IT OUT.

Better to be safe than sorry.

Please contact Aberdeen City Council's Adult Protection Social Work Team:

Tel 0800 731 5520 (24 hours)

Where there is immediate danger / harm, call the relevant emergency services.

Help & Support

Help and support is available to anyone concerned about the rising cost of living via our dedicated website: -

HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/help-cost-living

TIMES AND PLACES TO COLLECT EMERGENCY FOOD

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/homelessness/times-and-places-collect-emergency-food

WARM SPACES

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/warm-spaces

FREE PERIOD PRODUCTS

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/access-period-products/free-period-products

Customer Service, Repairs, Housing and Support Officers

Please telephone the Customer Contact Centre. Telephone: 03000 200 292

Our new and improving

HOUSING ONLINE PORTAL

Have you signed up for Housing Online yet? This is the easiest way for you to manage many aspects of your tenancy online at a time that suits you.

Find out more and sign up today here:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/housing-online



This document is available in various formats and languages Please call 01224 522839.

ادا حنت بود الحصول على هذه الوبيهه بالحظ العريض او البريار او الأشرطة الصوتية المدمجة أو كنت تود ترجمتها الى لغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال بنا على الهاتف أدناه.

আপনি যদি এই দলিলটি রেইলে, বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে বা শোনার জন্য সিডি, অখবা দলিলটি অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুদিত চান তবে অনুগ্রহ করে নীচের টেলিফোন নম্বরে ফোন করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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