

CUSTOMER
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Falkirk Council
Tenant's Magazine
Autumn 2025
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Tenant Talk

Opportunities to Participate

Page 4

Results of Consultations

Page 14

Tenants Choice Funding

Page 17

Competitions

Page 18

New Playparks Open!

Page 6-7



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Editorial

We're delighted to welcome our new panel members, Lisa and Gavin—great to have you on board!

In this edition, you'll read about housing's youngest volunteer, who has proudly won the TPAS Youth Involvement Award—a fantastic achievement and a true inspiration.

We're also excited to share the results of the Tenant Talk Survey, which reflect your voices and help shape our future work.

▶ Calling all young tenants! Don't miss your chance to enter our Photography Competition—a great opportunity to showcase your creativity.

▶ Be sure to visit the Housing Volunteers Facebook page to stay connected and see what's happening in your community.

▶ We're thrilled to announce the opening of two new playparks—one in Bantaskine and another in Limerigg—bringing more fun and safe spaces for families to enjoy.



Katrina



Louise



Liz J



Sharon



Steph



John



Blooming Bairns

Over the last 10 months readers may have noticed that the town centre is starting to bloom with flowers and plants, this is all down to the Blooming Bairns - a community group of volunteers (30 and growing) committed to rejuvenating Falkirk town centre by introducing colourful flowers and creating green spaces.

The team recently secured funding from CFSLA a local payroll lottery for local authority staff in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, and Stirling, supporting charities, community groups and staff fundraising activity. This award allowed the team to purchase vital materials and resources that will directly support their community gardening efforts.

We asked Blooming Bairns what their biggest achievement was:

The impact goes beyond what you can see. This project has brought people together, helped them get out of the house, meet new people, and learn new skills. Many of our volunteers have shared how being part of the team has boosted their confidence, improved their mental wellbeing, and given them a renewed sense of purpose and connection.

We are making a real difference—not just to our local spaces, but to the lives of those involved. In less than a year, we have built a fantastic team of volunteers who have revitalised the High Street, Newmarket Street, and the Callendar Park stone planters. Every time we are out in the Town Centre or the park, we receive thanks and encouragement from the public, which reminds us how much this work is valued.

Plans for the future will be to finish the remaining planters in the High Street, plant a garden at the Antonine Wall Memorial. Complete the stone planters in Callendar Park. Create a small garden area at the high flats that includes raised planters and benches.



Blooming Bairns long-term goal is to create a network of green spaces extending from Falkirk town centre to nearby natural areas, including Callendar Park, Callendar Woods, and the canal, forming green corridors that support local wildlife and biodiversity.



To find out more email bairnsblooming@gmail.com or scan the QR code below to visit their facebook page which is packed with pictures of Falkirk in bloom.



Young Persons Blog



The panel have recruited a young person who has offered to share their housing journey with readers, this is their 3rd blog. More to follow, we hope you are inspired and learn from Kacie's experience.

So, hello again, back in Denny and life is moving along. I'm still learning about living on my own. It is starting to feel like home, and I have been gathering furniture, using the local Facebook marketplace. A new sofa for £30 was fantastic and saved people sitting on the floor. I have put up curtains instead of the cardboard boxes that were keeping the light out.

This has led to a new issue of cupboard bin being full of cardboard boxes!

Actually, rubbish has been the main topic of my housing situation. In fact, it has been a bit of an issue. my question to you is, Who Steals Bins!!

The Green bin is the main target round here and I have lost 2 in the war so far. Housing could not help me with this so I reached out to waste management, and they were able to support me with a new bin with a hole drilled in it so it can be chained up!

I was feeling a little bit lonely after coming from a busy house to my own home, so I have now got my very own cat, named Sable. She is a small and black with a massive personality in fact causing chaos is her thing, so my days have filled up nicely - next time... rent ☐

Kacie



Go Youth Trust

Go! Youth Trust supports young people aged between 10 and 25 to grow in confidence, explore new possibilities and thrive. We achieve this through a range of programme areas including universal youth work, mentoring, personal development programmes and our skills academy. In the last 12 months we have supported just over 800 young people, the majority of which are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from education, employment, and training. Working with a range of partners and a skilled team of staff and volunteers we offer young people a place where they can belong with opportunities to thrive.

Contact details:
goyouthtrust.org.uk
1 Glebe Street, Falkirk FK1 1HX
01324 628880

Join The Housing Consultation Register

If you would like to help shape service delivery within Housing Services, you might want to join the Housing Consultation Register. There are already 480 tenants on the register. Tenants are sent surveys and questionnaires about the service and are invited to provide feedback on specific areas of the service. Tenants on the register are also sent information about housing events.

New Tenants Forum

Housing Services are looking to set up a Tenants Forum, we would like to start a Tenant Forum Working Group to talk about what tenants would like this Forum to look like i.e.

- how often, where and when the Forum should meet.
- what should be on the agenda.
- how to promote the forum etc

New Young Persons Housing Forum

Like the Tenants Forum, we understand that young people may face different challenges when moving into their first property. Housing services have been working alongside Bryony O'Donnell who won the TPAS Youth Involvement Award, we have written to over 3000 tenants aged between 16 and 35 asking if they would like to be part of setting up a young person's housing forum. Members will decide on the name of the forum, where and when they will meet and what topic will be discussed. We know that sometimes young people do not feel their voice is heard, this is an opportunity to be heard. Housing will support this forum. Let's start the conversation.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please email tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk or text/phone 07803898099.

Opportunities To Participate

Scrutiny Panel

We are looking to recruit new members for our Service Improvement Scrutiny Group; this group looks at service provision and makes recommendation on how services could be improved from a customer's perspective. The group are about to start a new exercise, so now would be a good time to express interest.

The benefits of being part of a group like this include:

- Full training
- Improving services for tenants and customers
- Learning about how rent money is spent on delivering services

Meetings typically take place on a Monday evening, we can provide transport to and from the venue, and we also provide refreshments.



Housing Volunteers Facebook Page

Some of our volunteers have set up a housing volunteers facebook page - tenants on the page share information about housing events/panels they are part of. Information about local events and services is also shared. If you would like to join the page, please scan the QR Code below. You will need to answer a few moderator questions. If you would like to help manage the page, please let the current admin know.



Housing Services How can you get involved?

- **Tenants' Voices Get-together** (run by tenants)
- **Open days**
- **Questionnaires and surveys**
- **Exhibitions**
- **Comment cards**
- **Housing Consultation Register**
- **Service Improvement Scrutiny Group**
- **Tenants' Choice**
- **Registered Tenants and Residents Organisations**
- **Editorial Panel for Tenant Talk magazine**
- **Tenant-led Estate Walkabouts**
- **Housing Online portal**
- **HAMP Group** (Housing Asset Management Plan)
- **Setting up a Registered Tenants' Organisation**



For more information on how you can be involved, please email tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk or call 01324 590796. You can also scan the QR code with your phone. www.falkirk.gov.uk/housing

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Emergency Repairs - Why Access Matters

What your Tenancy Agreement Says About Gaining Access for Repairs and Maintenance

We have the right to come into your house to inspect it and its fixtures and fittings or carry out repairs to it, or adjoining property, during reasonable times of the day. We will give you at least 24 hours' notice in writing. If you refuse us entry, we will have the right to make forcible entry provided we have given you every reasonable opportunity to let us in voluntarily. If we must make forcible entry, in this situation, you are liable for the costs of any damage reasonably caused. In an emergency, we have the right to make forcible entry to your house without notice.



When you report an emergency repair, it is understood it is because something urgent needs fixing. That is why the repairs service aim to attend within 3 hours-but please remember, access to your home is essential.

If trades arrive and cannot get in, you may be recharged for the costs incurred. Missed appointments do not just waste resources, they can also delay help for other tenants who need urgent repairs.

To help the service run smoothly:

- Be available when you have reported an emergency
- Let us know if your plans change
- Make sure we can get in to carry out the repair

The emergency repairs service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This service is for emergency repairs only. If the repair is not an emergency, you may be asked to pay for the work carried out. Emergency repairs will be made where there is a risk to the tenant, the public or the environment if the work is not carried out immediately.

For an emergency repair please contact 01324 506070

Together, we can make sure emergency repairs are dealt with quickly, efficiently, and fairly.

Using Housing Online To Report A Repair

If you are reporting a repair, we are excited to share that our new Housing Online (HOL) Repairs Portal is now live and ready for tenants to use.

Through the HOL Repairs Portal, you can:

- Report and schedule non-emergency repairs at any time, day or night
- Track the progress of your repair requests
- View your full repair history in one easy-to-access place

You will need a housing online account to be able to report repairs online. You can sign up for housing online and access the repairs portal by scanning the QR Code below:



This new service is part of our ongoing commitment to improving tenant self-service and making the repairs process quicker and more convenient.

Tenants Handbook



We are pleased to introduce our new Tenants Handbook, your go-to guide for the essential information about living in your home. While your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement includes the full details of your rights and responsibilities, this handbook highlights the key points.



If you have any questions about your agreement or the handbook, feel free to call us on 01324 506070 or email housingservices@falkirk.gov.uk, we're always happy to help.

You can access the Tenant Handbook by scanning this QR Code with your phone.

Playparks have been around since mid-1800s, as people realised, they needed to create space for children to play rather than have them play on streets where it was dangerous. Today, the playpark is a permanent part of many towns and villages. Kids need somewhere safe to play. Although those of us of a certain age can remember playparks that had no safety measures and built on concrete!

Two New Playparks for the Bairns of Falkirk

Aiden Joyce Community Playpark

The Bantaskine Residents Association secured funding for the new Aiden Joyce Community Park from Falkirk Councils Community Choices funding scheme, there was overwhelming support from the community. It has taken almost 4 years for the park to be unveiled, the Committee worked tirelessly on planning applications, consultation and to negotiate suitable land. The roundabout is wheelchair accessible.

This playpark is important to the community and dedicated to PC Aiden Joyce who sadly passed away at an early age. PC Joyce was a well-known face in the community and will be missed. Police Scotland made a financial contribution to the park; there is a special piece of equipment in the park in memory PC Joyce who always wanted to see a playpark built in Bantaskine. PC Joyces family and co-workers attended the unveiling. The Committee are planning the have a mural painted in the future and have installed CCTV to protect the equipment.

We hope the children enjoy the much-needed playpark.



Limerigg Playpark ...and More

Limerigg, a small village in the upper braes has a very active action group. The idea to upgrade their play park originally came from the survey and action plan that was done in 2017. Upgrading the park was one of the top priorities. Limerigg had a great deal of feedback from community consultations, and it was high on the wish list. However, "actions speak louder than words." Playparks are not cheap and with a cost of £115K it meant applying for grants to bring it to fruition. Limerigg Action Group applied for and secured £40k from EDF Renewables through Foundation Scotland, and Falkirk Council paid £75k through the Scottish Government Play Renewal Fund (this included the land purchase and legal fees).

Limerigg Action Group wanted to make sure that the playpark would be built in accordance with what the children and residents of Limerigg wanted. Therefore, children from the school visited existing playparks to help shape what they would most like to see in their own playpark. All the information was gathered and put out to tender. Three companies tendered for the contract and working with the priorities put forward by the children they got three different designs. These were published on Facebook for feedback, and a public meeting held to consult with the whole community. The designs were voted on and the playpark now in operation was the clear winner.

It was a lengthy process from start to finish, COVID being one of the reasons that the plan was put on hold. But Limerigg Action group, continued to push forward and with support from CVS Falkirk and the Estates and Development Officer at Falkirk Council, the playpark was eventually finished in February 2025. It was opened officially at Limerigg's Party in the Park celebrations in May 2025.

Article Written by Sharon Mercado

In addition to the playpark, the Limerigg Action Group also secured funding to install a new kitchen. Preparation work for the new kitchen started in February but was held up because water ingress was discovered when the ceiling was removed. Work started on installing the new kitchen in March.

Funding for the kitchen came from various sources including the National Lottery, Falkirk Council and Rural Community Led Local Development Fund and Kelvin Valley and Falkirk, which covered the building work, equipment and crockery, smaller equipment etc.



'We are now able to cater our own events, and we are exploring the possible uses including a community cafe, supper club and the possibility of it being hired by local businesses, either on its own or along with other parts of the hall. Having a professional kitchen has opened many new possibilities to making our hall an attractive, practical, and flexible space for hire.'

Stuart Henderson Limerigg Action Group



Want to find services, groups and activities for health and wellbeing across Falkirk?

ALISS is a national digital programme enabling people and professionals to find and share information on health and wellbeing resources, services, groups, and support in their local communities and online.

ALISS can help you find information about resources like:

- services that provide support for managing long term conditions
- groups that support social and community connection (e.g., local choirs, book groups, befriending)
- activities that offer opportunities for getting more active and for getting outdoors (e.g., badminton clubs, community gardens)
- practical, legal, and financial support (e.g., money advice, advocacy services)
- digital technology that can support health and social care (e.g., online forums, health related mobile apps).

ALISS aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the right information, at the right time, about resources that are available to help them live well and stay connected to their community.



Please scan the QR code to access the ALISS directory of local services.

Thinking Of Starting Your Own Business?

Here's How The Business Gateway Can Help!

If you have ever dreamed of being your own boss, turning a passion into a business, or exploring self-employment, you are not alone - and you do not have to go it alone either. That is where Business Gateway in Falkirk comes in.

Business Gateway is a free, friendly service that supports people in Falkirk who are thinking about starting their own business or becoming self-employed. Whether you are at the very beginning of your journey or already have an idea in mind, they offer practical help to turn your ambitions into reality.

Here is how they can support you:

- **Expert Advice:** You will get access to experienced business advisers who understand the local market. They will help you explore your idea, answer questions, and give you honest feedback.
- **Workshops & Webinars:** From writing a business plan to managing finances and digital marketing, Business Gateway runs free events that build your confidence and skills.
- **One-to-One Support:** Every business idea is different, and Business Gateway offers tailored support to suit your goals, whether it is side-hustling or going full-time.
- **Online Resources:** Prefer to learn in your own time? Their website is packed with helpful guides, templates, and tools to help you plan, launch, and grow.
- **Connections:** Need legal advice, funding, or help with bookkeeping? Business Gateway can connect you with the right people and services to support your journey.

Starting your own business might feel overwhelming, but with the right guidance, it becomes exciting and achievable. Business Gateway is here to walk alongside you every step of the way.

Thinking about taking that leap? Contact Business Gateway today - you never know where it might take you!

To find out more:
Visit: www.bgateway.com
Email: business@falkirk.gov.uk
Call: 01324 804168



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ADHD support group

MEETING ONCE PER MONTH

All ages welcome
children & adults

GRANGEMOUTH

Come along to our group chat, socialise help each other out
no need for a diagnosis in our group!

8 Tenant Talk Issue 29 FIND US ON FACEBOOK
[@ADHDSUPPORTGROUPGRANGEMOUTH](https://www.facebook.com/ADHDSUPPORTGROUPGRANGEMOUTH)

TAI CHI

New Beginners Class
8pm, Tuesday 26th August 2025
The Guide Hall,
Pleasance Square,
Booth Place, Falkirk FK1 1QB.
Come along and try it out,
the first class is free!

Regular classes
Tuesday and Thursday evenings
For more info,
Google @lrtcscs,
text or call Gordon.

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WELCOME

Our Bryony Wins A TPAS Award



Bryony O'Donnell from Denny, one of the youngest members of Falkirk Council's Housing Service Improvement Scrutiny Group, picked up the Youth Involvement Award at this year's Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) Scottish awards. The awards celebrate significant achievements in tenant participation and engagement across Scotland.

Bryony was recognised for her commitment to making housing services more accessible and inclusive for younger tenants. Since joining the Group earlier this year, she has helped shape tenant surveys, supported tenant training, and raised important accessibility issues.

Bryony also helped the Council connect directly with young tenants through Forth Valley College, where she chaired informal lunchtime sessions to hear from students about their housing experiences.

The conversations helped identify issues and encouraged several young people to get involved further with tenant participation at Falkirk Council.

Sharon Mercado was shortlisted for the Tenant of the Year Award, along with the Editorial Panel who were shortlisted for the Best Practice in Communicating with Tenants Award.

Bryony said:

"I felt it was important for there to be a younger voice at the table. Of all my friends and colleagues who are under 30, none of them have ever attended meetings or given input on council decisions."

This means all the meetings and input the council receives is skewed towards an older more settled demographic who are understandably concerned about their already established homes.

Unfortunately, this leaves behind others like me who are in the position of looking for a home they can be proud of while navigating these tumultuous times. Giving space for them to figure out their future whether that be working towards a career whilst having affordable housing or a place they can start a family and look forward to their future.



I've always wanted to help others and make a difference, and I feel like going down this path I am able to be the voice for those in my generation who are struggling to find their place and get a start."

Housing services sent three tenants to the TPAS Conference; here is what they had to say about it.

Sharon

Every year TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) hold a conference for its members. This year TPAS was celebrating 45 years of promoting good practice in tenant participation and collaborating with social landlords and tenants to improve housing conditions and services at local levels.



The conference is a mixture of workshops interactive sessions and networking. They have an awards ceremony to congratulate tenants and landlords who have promoted good practice in tenant participation.

This year the focus was celebrating how far we have progressed in 45 years of tenant engagement from slum tenements to adapted housing for disabled tenants. It was interesting to listen to how social housing has changed over the years and going back to the 1980s with music and fashion from that era.

The conference gave delegates an opportunity to network with each other, visit exhibitions, often giving out freebies, (pens, keyrings, notepads etc) and learning new ideas and good practice.

There was some lively discussion in the last plenary session. Tenants were noticing that repairs to housing and satisfaction with services had decreased over the last few years, rents are increasing at an all-time high, and shortage of suitable housing is an issue for all local authorities. It is now, more important than ever that social landlords engage with their tenants.

Liz

I enjoyed networking with other tenants and seeing Bryony win the award



With support from the Community Engagement Team Bryony would like to start a Young Persons Housing Forum. If you are interested and aged between 16 and 35, please email tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk with text your contact details to 07803898099. We hope to start the Young Persons Housing Forum by the end of the year.

Transition to uPVC Windows in Response to Evolving Environmental Standards



We are making a strategic shift in our window specification, moving from aluclad windows to high-performance uPVC alternatives. This change follows a comprehensive review of environmental impacts, lifecycle performance, and cost-effectiveness associated with both materials.

Recent advancements in uPVC manufacturing and recycling processes have significantly improved the material's environmental profile. Modern uPVC now offers a lower carbon footprint over its lifecycle, particularly when factoring in recyclability and reduced energy consumption during production.

The new uPVC windows will retain triple-glazed panes, ensuring excellent insulation and energy efficiency. The move also supports the Council's broader goals around affordability and maintainability. Importantly,

the change does not compromise on thermal performance or tenant comfort.

This change marks another step in our commitment to delivering environmentally responsible, cost-effective, and high-performing homes for our communities.

Participatory Budgeting to be expanded with Pilot Scheme for Render Colour Choice

We are expanding our commitment to participatory budgeting through a new pilot scheme that places tenants at the heart

of decision-making. As part of ongoing investment in council housing, the initiative will give residents a collective voice in selecting the colour of external render applied to their homes during improvement works.

Participatory budgeting is a democratic process that allows communities to influence how public funds are spent. Housing are now exploring how the approach can be embedded more deeply into housing investment programmes.

The pilot scheme will focus on council-owned homes scheduled to receive new external render as part of planned maintenance and energy efficiency upgrades. Rather than applying a standard finish, tenants will be invited to participate in a group decision-making process to choose from a range of colour options. This collaborative approach aims to foster a sense of ownership, pride, and community identity.

Importantly, while the render colour will be tenant-led, the technical specification of the works remains unchanged.

The pilot will be supported by housing officers, who will facilitate tenant engagement and ensure that all voices are heard.

This initiative reflects our commitment to tenant empowerment, sustainable investment, and community-led regeneration.

Fly Tipping - Doesn't Solve the Problem it Creates the Problem

Fly tipping is not just about irresponsible people dumping their waste in a layby or in the middle of a busy road. Dumping waste in a close or outside a block of flats is also considered fly tipping – unless the person has requested a bulky uplift. Fly tipped waste in general will be things like black bin bags, white goods, and household furniture. Fly tipping can create obstruction to emergency exits, attract vermin and be hazardous to wildlife, pets, and tenants.

Fly tipped waste is not only illegal, but also an unattractive addition to our local communities. Housing have become increasingly aware of fly tipping on land owned by housing, rent money is used to meet the cost of clearing these areas, we are sure readers will agree that this money could be better spent.

There have been approx. 980 requests for uplift/removal of dumped/fly tipped items on housing land account since 1st April 2025. Requests to have items cleared are made primarily by Community Estate Officers and Housing officers. The Estates Team have received 336 complaints since 1st April relating specifically to fly tipping or side waste.

Community Estate Officers patrol all Housing land within Falkirk Council

boundaries. Their role is to try to keep all council housing estates as clean and free of side waste, litter, and dog fouling as possible. They do have enforcement powers, but these are used as a last resort.

Do not dump your waste, consider the following

- Waste Services operates a bulky uplift service to dispose of larger items of household waste – if you receive certain benefits this cost of a bulky uplift may be less than expected.
- You can also recycle a wide variety of materials at Recycling Centres – you can book an appointment online or contact 01324 50 60 70
- Please consider charity shops and clothing banks for textiles



Some households will need additional help to dispose of disposable nappies and incontinence products. To help householders an additional collection service for Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) has been introduced.

To find out more please email wasteservices@falkirk.gov.uk or phone 01324 506070.



To report fly tipping in your area please scan the QR Code which will take you directly to the reporting page.



Keeping You Safe: Why We Need Access for Your 5-Year Electrical Safety Check

Every five years, your home is due an important safety check called an EICR – Electrical Installation Condition Report. It's not just a legal requirement – it's a vital part of keeping you and your family safe.

An EICR checks the electrical wiring, sockets, fuse boards and other fixed electrical parts in your home. Over time, these can wear out or become unsafe, even if you haven't noticed any problems. The check helps to:

- ⚡ Prevent electric shocks and fires
- ⚡ Identify potential hazards before they become serious
- ⚡ Ensure your home meets safety standards

What we need from you: When your EICR is due, we or an approved contractor will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment. It's important you allow access to your home so they can carry out the inspection. The visit usually takes 1-2 hours and causes minimal disruption.

If we identify any issues following the electrical inspection, we may need further access to carry out any required works and make your home safe.

No Access = Safety Risk We must complete regular electrical safety checks to ensure your home is safe. If we can't access your property, we cannot confirm it's safe – putting you and others at risk.

If we are unable to gain access: You will receive a final reminder.

If there is still no response, we may need to use our powers of forced access to carry out the inspection.

You will be charged for the cost of forced access.

Help us keep you safe Please don't ignore safety check appointments. If you need to rearrange or have concerns, contact us as soon as possible – we're here to help.

Contact us as soon as possible on 01324 506070

Keeping An Eye On

75.3%

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.

The Scottish Housing Regulator requires us to carry out a large-scale survey at least every three years.



For more information of how your Housing Service performs please scan the QR code below with your phone.

Complaints Procedure

Falkirk Council values complaints and uses the information to improve services.

Housing complaints are dealt with in line with the Council procedure.

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- council policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff

• disagreement with a decision where you cannot use an appeal procedure to resolve the matter

• our failure to follow proper procedure

• Scottish Housing Regulator

If you want to find out more about how to make a complaint, please scan the QR code below, which will take you straight to the Falkirk Council Complaints Procedure page, you will also be able to access reports on performance in relation to complaints.



Tenant Talk

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey and want readers to know that all feedback has been taken onboard, and we hope you will see your feedback come to life in future editions of Tenant Talk.



Participants expressed a desire for Tenant Talk to cover more real-life tenant issues and problems. There were suggestions for greater transparency about council operations, such as how council tax and rent increase money is spent. Some respondents want more practical information, such as how to access or apply for council services, and details about what different departments and community groups do.

There were suggestions for content focused on community improvement and involvement, such as articles on affordable family activities, arts and crafts, home DIY, and gardening. Other suggestions included adding a health column on current health issues.

88% of participants felt the number of articles were just right

87% felt the number of pictures was just right

77% felt the number of pages were just right

83% felt there was a good balance between Council and Community articles

76% preferred a hard copy of Tenant Talk



Feedback On Housing Consultations Landlord Report To Tenants

Every year Housing Services produces a Landlord Report to Tenants, this report focuses on the performance of the services and lists all the performance indicators. We thought we would ask tenants what performance indicators were most important to them. We asked them to list their top ten.

Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	89.4%
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	85.1%
Overall satisfaction with housing service	83%
Rent increase	78.7%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	72.3%
Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year	68.1%
Average length of time to re-let properties in the last year	63.8%
Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year	63.8%
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	63.8%
Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	63.8%

The Landlord Report to Tenants 2025 will include this information, we also invited tenants to talk to us about how they would like this information presented. A short-term working group will get together soon to talk about the report layout and graphics etc. If you would like to join this group, please email us at tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk we can meet in person and on TEAMS at a time that suits you.

Changes To The Housing Allocations Policy



Falkirk Council has a housing stock of almost 17,000 properties. Each year, around 1,200 of these properties become vacant and can be let to applicants.

However, we currently have over 11,000 people who have a live housing application with us. This includes over 700 homeless applicants with whom the Council has a legal duty to rehouse. Each month, we receive around 300 new housing applications.

Demand for Council housing far outweighs supply, particularly for certain sizes and types. Unfortunately, this means, we are unable to meet the housing needs of every applicant on our waiting list.

Applications must be prioritised based on housing need, in line with our Allocations Policy. We introduced a new Allocations Policy on 1 April 2025, following a public consultation with communities, stakeholders, staff, and elected members. This includes several changes, to help us support those with the most urgent housing needs. These include:

- Automatic Bidding for Home Seekers: We have implemented automatic bidding for our homeless applicants presenting as homeless from 1 April 2025.
- New Build Council Houses: To make the best use of available housing resources, new build properties will be advertised for Home Movers. This helps to free up existing homes for other applicants, thereby increasing the overall availability of housing. This will not apply to adapted new

build properties, to ensure those with a disability can access suitable housing that meet their needs.

- Mental Health: The allocation policy gives high priority to applicants whose mental health is being seriously affected by trauma directly linked to their current property. This includes incidents such as domestic abuse or violence that occurred at the address.
- Complex Health Needs: Falkirk Council's Allocations Policy supports applicants with exceptional housing needs, including those diagnosed with degenerative or life-limiting conditions, such as Motor Neurone Disease, where their current home no longer meets their needs. We will require medical evidence to support this. Our aim is to provide safe, suitable housing as early as possible to support health and well-being.
- Domestic Abuse: Falkirk Council is committed to supporting those experiencing domestic abuse by offering specialist advice and help to access safe, secure housing. To further protect survivors, we also restrict housing allocations to individuals with domestic abuse convictions.

Further information on our Allocations Policy is available on our website - <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/council-housing/housing-allocations>

Reduction In Children Living in Temporary Accommodation

Scottish Government figures published recently show that the number of children in temporary accommodation fell from 263 at the end of March 2024 to 197 at the end of March 2025. This has now dropped further, to 152 at the end of August 2025. This has been due to targeted support provided by the service, and initiatives such as the suspension of non-emergency repairs at the start of 2025, to help focus on repairs works to empty properties.

We have also reduced the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. On average, the Council had 27 households in B&Bs at the end of both 2023 and 2024. By the end of March 2025 this had reduced to 11 placements. However, while we wish to decrease the use of unsuitable accommodation such as B&B, the use may fluctuate in future to meet demand.

There has also been a small decrease in the number of people presenting as homeless with a total of 1,057 homelessness applications received in 2024/25, down from 1,163 the year before. From April to August 2025, we received 465 homeless applications, compared to 501 over the same period in 2024.

Further information on these figures is available at the Scottish Government website, www.gov.scot/collections/homelessness-statistics/ This outlines some of the progress made since Scottish Government declared a housing emergency in May 2024.

In its most recent Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO) report, Falkirk moved from 'red' to 'amber' status in two temporary accommodation performance categories - the only council in Scotland to report an improvement. However, these figures will remain under scrutiny by the service, as while we wish to continually improve, performance may change to meet the number of people presenting as homeless.

Scottish Government Open Market Shared Equity (Omse) Scheme 2025 - 2026

The OMSE scheme has returned for another year to help eligible buyers purchase a home. Link Housing Group administers the scheme.

Link LIFT Open Market Shared Equity.

Who can access?

- The Scheme is open to:
- Social Renters (Council or RSL)
 - First time buyers
 - People with a disability in housing need
 - Members of the Armed Forces
 - Veterans who have left the armed forces within the past two years.
 - Widows/Widowers/partners of armed force members who have lost their life while serving within the last two years
 - People who are 60+ in housing need, who do not need to take out a mortgage.

What does the scheme provide?

The scheme can help you to fund the purchase your home, providing between 10% & 40%. You will own the property outright & the Scottish Government will retain their percentage share. When you sell your property this % is returned.



Get a LIFT onto the property ladder in Falkirk

Get up to 40% towards the cost of a home with the Scottish Government's LIFT OMSE scheme.*

*Eligibility criteria apply.

The properties you can purchase

Properties require to be on the open market. The Scottish Government has set a threshold price per bedroom size.

How to apply for the Scheme and what do you need?

You will need to arrange the following:

- Deposit for a property – a mortgage lender will expect you to have at least a 5% deposit.
- Mortgage in Principle – this will determine what is affordable and sustainable (unless over sixty, in housing need and do not require mortgage)
- Financial information – pay slips, current account, saving statements and benefit information from the last three months
- Proof of current accommodation

The above list is not exhaustive, you may require you to provide additional information. It is best to speak to a financial or mortgage advisor.

If interested and want to know more, please contact Link Housing Group directly. Email lift@linksharedequity.co.uk or 0330 303 0125. Or you can scan the QR code below with your phone.



Tenants Choice Fund

Your Money > Your Choice

Housing services have launched the new Tenants Choice fund. £35 000 has been made available to fund projects that benefit Falkirk Council tenants and or the area they live in. Organisations can apply for up to £5000.

An application for funding should aim to meet all or some of the following criteria:

- Benefit Falkirk Council tenants
- Help improve the quality of a community where tenants live
- Enhance the environment and or improve the appearance of a housing estate which includes Falkirk Council tenants
- Help solve a problem identified by a group which will assist tenants.

Applications are assessed by a panel of tenants and staff. If your group would like to apply for funding, please scan the QR code below with your phone which will take you directly to the Tenants Choice page.



Good Neighbour Award

A Housing Officer nominated a Tenant, because she was impressed with the work he done in the communal area, planting flowers along the building. This tenant has encouraged other

neighbours to do the same and the area is looking bright and colourful. The tenant has used his own money to do this – so we thought we would help him along. Lisa, our new Editorial Panel member, the Housing Officer and the Community Engagement Officer visited the tenant to present him with gift vouchers for B and Q. This tenant also helps other neighbours look after their gardens and cuts the grass in the communal areas. We want to encourage more tenants to brighten up communal areas and balconies. If you are not sure what you are permitted to do, please speak to your Housing Officer.



Nominate A Neighbour

If you have a neighbour that you think deserves recognition for their efforts in helping you and or your neighbours, please ping us an email at tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk or text 07803 898099

What You Need to Know About Our Device Lending Library



1

Is there a charge to borrow a device?
No, borrowing a device, including the MiFis (which provides Internet access via a SIM card), is completely free.



2

How long can I borrow a device for?
Devices can be borrowed for up to 3 months, it may be possible to extend this if there is no waiting list.

3

What if I don't have Internet access at home?
Connecting Scotland have provided some MiFis which can be borrowed, providing free unlimited data, allowing you to connect your devices to the Internet

4

What if I'm not confident using technology?
Don't worry, our library staff will help you get set up and offer advice and support.



5

Will the device hold my data?
No, when the device is returned staff will perform a factory reset, this will remove all of your information.



For more information speak to a member of library staff or contact: Gavin Johnstone (Digital Services Librarian) LibrariesIT@falkirk.gov.uk



FALKIRK COUNCIL



HEAT STRUGGLING WITH FUEL PRICES?

Are you struggling with fuel prices and need some advice?

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with their energy bills, we may be able to help

Our dedicated mentors can provide advice by visiting you at home and continue support through further visits or remote assistance to help you save money on your energy.

We may be able to help speak to your supplier about any questions you may have regarding billing issues or outstanding debt.



We can support you with:

ENERGY CRISIS & ADVOCACY SUPPORT

ENERGY SAVING AWARENESS

INCOME MAXIMISATION

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE

PLEASE CONTACT OUR HOME ENERGY ADVICE TEAM TODAY!

HEAT@THEWISEGROUP.CO.UK
0800 092 9002

Competition Page

Childrens

For this edition of Tenant Talk we are changing the Childrens competition. Please send us in your best drawing, remember to put your name/ address/contact number/age on the back of your entry. This competition is open to all aged between 3 and 11. There will be 3 age categories, winners from each category will be presented with a £50 Smyths Toys voucher.

Adult

3 winners will be presented with £50 Asda vouchers.

Photography

We would like to see pictures of your favourite animal - this can be a cat, dog, swan, or even a monkey if you have taken the picture. Our Editorial Panel will pick three winners who will be presented with £30 Cineworld vouchers. This competition closes on the 9th December. This competition is open to all tenants aged 17 - 30.

You can email your entries for all our competition to tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk or send to

Community Engagement Team
Housing Services
The Foundry
4 Central Boulevard
Larbert
FK5 4RU

The Editorial Panel will pick the winners for all competitions.

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL ENTRIES IS 9th DECEMBER 2025

Wordsearch

P	C	Q	A	M	I	B	G	S	N	O	H	R	Y	N	I	K	P
E	S	N	O	C	T	O	B	E	R	U	J	V	E	T	C	U	L
D	R	T	G	D	H	P	K	W	S	L	B	P	F	H	M	D	U
U	J	B	E	W	B	O	C	D	K	M	A	I	H	P	O	L	S
O	T	A	S	Z	I	S	N	W	E	E	N	G	K	X	N	F	V
B	A	Y	L	X	C	B	U	F	L	S	C	I	F	C	S	O	K
H	E	D	V	E	D	N	R	L	E	E	N	R	T	B	T	Y	P
T	R	G	Q	P	J	M	B	O	T	P	D	U	N	H	E	S	N
F	T	K	C	R	H	E	N	H	O	C	K	F	W	O	R	H	O
H	C	M	U	S	T	O	J	K	N	M	I	S	Q	C	N	T	W
X	A	D	I	O	R	F	S	E	W	H	S	B	J	G	L	P	B
W	U	L	V	D	F	T	I	B	O	R	N	T	C	P	O	E	L
O	J	B	L	T	G	P	J	F	O	M	T	R	I	C	K	N	U
S	Z	U	N	O	H	C	Y	B	H	R	G	M	E	C	Z	S	K
E	A	G	K	I	W	D	N	X	S	L	U	E	W	A	K	D	I
C	L	R	F	C	V	E	R	I	F	N	O	B	G	P	X	I	T
A	S	H	Q	A	G	L	E	T	D	S	G	H	O	S	T	B	D
G	T	N	O	P	B	J	I	N	C	U	L	S	M	K	U	V	R

Find the following TWELVE HALLOWEEN words:

BROOMSTICK	MONSTER
CAULDRON	OCTOBER
COBWEB	PUMPKIN
BONFIRE	SKELETON
GHOST	TRICK
HALLOWEEN	TREAT

Once you've found them simply draw a ring round them, fill in the form below and post us your entry. Wordsearch Competition winners will receive £50 Asda Vouchers and £25 for runners up. **Closing date is 9th December.**

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Daytime Tel No:

Post to: Tenant Talk Wordsearch, Community Engagement Team (Housing Services), The Foundry, 4 Central Boulevard, Larbert FK5 4RU.

Or take a picture of your entry and send to tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk

Employees of Falkirk Council are not eligible to enter. The Editor's decision is final.

Adult Wordsearch Winners

Elizabeth from Falkirk

Anne from Boness

John from Dennyloanhead

Job Start Payment



One young person who received the payment said:

“ I think it is really incredible, that it's open to you spending it. It feels like it is rewarding you for doing a good job for getting a job. And sometimes that is what some people need. Because I know it is incredibly difficult to get a job. ”

Another said:

“ First impressions are everything, and I didn't want to walk up the jobs in some skinny jeans. I always like to dress smart to give a good first impression. And not only did I give a good impression, but I felt confident and smart. ”

A Fresh Start

Starting a new job is exciting, but it can also be expensive. Whether it is buying clothes, sorting childcare, or getting to work, those first few weeks can be financially tough. If you are a young person who is starting work, Job Start Payment could help. It is a one-off payment from Social Security Scotland of £319.80, or £511.65 if you have a child, to support with the costs of starting work. You can apply if you are aged 16 to 24, or up to 25 if you've been in care, and have been on certain benefits like Universal Credit.

You can use the money for things like:

- travel
- lunch costs
- clothes
- childcare

Job Start Payment.



You must apply within 3 months of your job offer and the job must be for 12 hours or more per week. The payment does not need to be paid back. To apply or find out more, visit: mygov.scot/job-start-payment or call 0800 182 2222 or scan the QR code with your phone.



Children's Competition Winners

Reece from Falkirk

Ada from Grangemouth

Eli from Falkirk





Settling in Visits

Moving into a new home can feel overwhelming — but you do not have to do it alone. Our Housing team at Falkirk Council is here to support you every step of the way.

A couple of weeks after your tenancy begins, your Housing Officer will pop by for a Settling-In Visit. The date and time will be agreed during the sign-up process.

The Settling in visit is a friendly check-in to see how you are getting on, help with any questions, and make sure everything is going smoothly. Whether you need advice about benefits, rent, repairs, or other services, we are here to help.

We will also ask you to complete a quick Settling-In Visit survey to get your thoughts on the move-in process, the condition of your home, and your overall experience so far. Your feedback helps us improve the service and support we give to all tenants.

If the date does not suit you, or if you would prefer to arrange the visit sooner, just get in touch. You can call us on 01324 506070 or email housingservices@falkirk.gov.uk, we're always happy to help.

Tenancy Support Visits (Every Two Years)

As part of our ongoing commitment to tenant welfare and improving our services, we aim to visit every tenant in their home every two years. These Tenancy Support Visits are a chance for us to catch up, talk through any concerns you might have, and offer support if you need it.

It is also an opportunity for us to make sure everything is in good shape, and your tenancy is working well for you. You will get a letter around two weeks before the visit, so you know when to expect us.

If the date does not suit you, or if you would prefer to arrange the visit sooner, just get in touch. You can call us on 01324 506070 or email housingservices@falkirk.gov.uk, we're always happy to help.



Louise's Wildlife and Petcare Tips

Pet care in the winter

- To protect your pets this winter, here are some tips.
- Provide a comfortable bed and extra blanket, if you can raise the bed off the floor so it keeps them off the cold floor.
- You might want to consider using a heated pet bed or pan for cat dog or rabbits.
- If you take your dog outside for a walk, put coat on them you can also consider paw protection boots.
- Do not leave your dog unattended outside at any time, limit your time outside for cold conditions.
- Get some toys for indoor cat to keep them active this will help with body heat.
- If your cat goes outside, make sure they have access to dry insulation shelter like a shed.
- Cats may seek warmth under car bonnets or wheels arches please check your car before going inside for any small animals.
- Make sure your pets are microchip details are up to date in case they get lost.

Useful Contacts

The Debt Helpline
01324 506735
debtadvice@falkirk.gov.uk

Housing
housingservices@falkirk.gov.uk
01324 506070

Debt Management Team
revenues.dr@falkirk.gov.uk

Welfare Benefits Team
1324 506070
cas@falkirk.gov.uk
www.falkirk.gov.uk/benefithelp

Scottish Welfare Fund
Tel No: 01324 506070
scottishwelfarefund@falkirk.gov.uk

Contact Us

One Number: 01324 506070

Email Housing Services: housingservices@falkirk.gov.uk

Please email tenant.participation@falkirk.gov.uk if this publication is required in another language or format.