



Update on your services

I hope you, your family and friends are well.

As you know, we've been able recently to resume many of the services previously suspended under Covid-19 restrictions. You can keep up to date with all that's happening – and the full range of support available to you – by:

- › contacting your housing officer, who is here to support you through these difficult times;
- › speaking to one of our customer service advisors on **0800 479 7979**;
- › going on to our website at **www.gha.org.uk**

Please be assured that in all we do the safety and wellbeing of both our customers and staff remain our number-one priority. We're here for you and your family 24/7, 365 days a year.

Jehan Weerasinghe,
GHA Managing Director

GHA offices

Although our offices remain closed, our housing officers are keeping in regular touch with customers by phone, email and online. Home visits are being carried out for lettings, providing advice and support on paying rent and managing other tenancy matters, such as anti-social behaviour. Please remember, our staff follow social distancing guidelines and take other safety precautions when visiting. If you have any welfare concerns or are worried about your rent, talk to us now: the sooner you contact us, the quicker we can help.

Repairs

We're only able at this time to carry out essential and emergency repairs. These range from attending to hazardous electrics, problems with power and heating and persistent leaks to replacing showers for vulnerable tenants or windows and doors. Gas safety checks and maintenance continue as normal.

We're unable to do repairs where staff are unable to socially distance, where the work requires more than one tradesperson or involves working in a confined space, such as an attic. All staff maintain strict health-and-safety practices and use the appropriate PPE.

Our approach to repairs is aimed at protecting the safety of customers and staff by preventing the spread of coronavirus in households.

We'll resume a full repairs service as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, if you need an emergency repair, call 0800 479 7979.

Environmental services

Our Neighbourhood Environmental Teams (NETs) are carrying out a wide range of outdoor work, including grass cutting, and are continuing to prioritise cleaning and safety patrols in multi-storey blocks. A phased resumption of close cleaning

Here to help

We're doing all we can to support our customers.

Housing officers have carried out almost 70,000 welfare calls since lockdown began, directing households to the wide range

of support we are providing through the coronavirus crisis.

For instance, over 25,000 emergency food deliveries have been made already to vulnerable Wheatley Group customers. Thousands more

have received help through our Emergency Response Fund and support to access Universal Credit.

If **YOU** need help, please speak to your housing officer, email or call us. We're here to help.

Environmental services (continued)

began on September 21. It will take between six to eight weeks for this service to return to normal, so please bear with us. We'll let you know in advance when we'll be working in your close.

Letting

This too is being re-introduced in phases for people with the highest social housing need. If you're registered with MyHousing, you can search for and note your interest in homes that:

- have Livingwell services designed for older people;
- have been specially adapted for people with disabilities;
- are for people currently overcrowded or whose home is too big for their needs;
- and for people assessed as being at risk of becoming homeless.

Housing officers are keeping in contact with customers allocated a home, advising them when they're able to view a property and complete sign-up.

Wraparound services

We and our parent group, Wheatley, are continuing to support vulnerable households through services such as EatWell (emergency food delivery) and Home Comforts (supply of free good-quality recycled furniture and white goods).

Our Emergency Response Fund, set up to alleviate hardship and isolation during the pandemic, has supported more than 1430 GHA households to date. This has included providing household goods to mobile phone and fuel top-ups and family activity packs.

Around 15,000 emergency food packages have been delivered to GHA customers struggling to put food on the table.

Wheatley's two-year traineeship programme, meanwhile, is recruiting 14 graduates this year to add to the 22 who started last year, whilst the Wheatley Foundation has increased the number of bursaries it's offering this year from 50 to 80, taking the total awarded over the past three years to 230. Recipients receive £3000 over two years towards their further-education costs.



Here to help

Finally, if you need help – perhaps you're finding it difficult to pay your rent – please get in touch. Don't be tempted to do nothing. TALK TO US – we can help in a number of ways.

Did you know GHA housing officers have made over 170,000 calls to tenants since lockdown began? Another 69,000 welfare checks have been made by telephone at GHA. Our welfare benefits advisors are on hand to help with all aspects of Universal Credit and both they and our fuel advisors are helping tenants access everything you're entitled to receive.

Please remember, you're not alone. Get in touch, we're here to help.

Get in touch

www.gha.org.uk

talk@gha.org.uk

0800 479 7979

