



Renfrewshire Council Scheme of Assistance for Private Homeowners

May 2024

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk



Renfrewshire
Council

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1. Introduction

Renfrewshire Council's Scheme of Assistance sets out the information and advice available to private homeowners about the repair, maintenance and adaptation of their homes. It details the circumstances in which the Council will provide practical support and financial assistance.

The Scheme is co-ordinated by the Owners Services Team within the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure.

Owner Services Team

Email: ownerservices.hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 300 0300

1.1 Legislative Framework

Section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) 2006 Act requires local authorities to produce a statement to explain to the public the circumstances in which they will provide assistance in relation to repairs, maintenance, improvements and adaptations in private homes, and what form this assistance will take. This statement is called the Scheme of Assistance.

1.2 Scheme of Assistance – Purpose

The overarching purpose of this Scheme of Assistance is the provision of a range of advice and assistance to help homeowners invest in and maintain their houses, with a view to improving housing conditions. This does not necessarily mean providing financial assistance.

This Scheme of Assistance has been prepared in the context of [Renfrewshire's Local Housing Strategy 2023-2027](#). The strategy sets out six strategic priorities, three of which are directly relevant to this Scheme of Assistance.

- Strategic Priority 2 - people live in high quality, well managed homes in sustainable neighbourhoods
- Strategic Priority 3 - address the challenges of the climate emergency, delivering homes that are warm, energy efficient and fuel poverty is minimized

- Strategic Priority 5 - people can live independently for as long as possible in their own home and the different housing needs of people across Renfrewshire are being met.

Through a range of actions set out in the Local Housing Strategy, the Council and partners will work to:

- encourage owners to take responsibility for the repair and maintenance of their homes
- support owners in mixed tenure blocks to secure common repairs
- bring empty homes back into use
- improve the energy efficiency of homes and reduce fuel poverty
- provide assistance to enable older and disable people to live independently and for longer, in their own home
- improve management and maintenance issues in the private rented sector.

This Scheme of Assistance supports [Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership "Shaping our Future – Strategic Plan 2022-2025"](#) and the accompanying [Housing Contribution statement](#), a key theme of which is to support people to live longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting. The provision of adaptations and Care and Repair Services plays a role in enabling people to stay safely in their homes.

2. Types of Assistance

In the main, advice and assistance will be non-financial in nature.

Information and Advice

Information and advice are key components of this Scheme of Assistance. Advice and information is delivered through a number of Council departments, partner organisations and local and national advice agencies. You can find more relevant contact emails, phone number and weblinks under each topic heading.

Practical Assistance

Practical assistance is provided directly by the Council or partners in some limited circumstances:

- [supporting older and disabled people to live safely in their homes](#)
- [owners of empty homes](#)
- [missing shares pilot scheme for tenement repairs](#)
- [co-ordination of energy efficiency programmes](#)
- [common repairs in mixed tenure blocks with Council properties.](#)

Financial Assistance

As resources are limited, grant assistance will be directed towards where the Council has a statutory responsibility and where strategic objective are being met.

Financial Grant Assistance will therefore be limited to:

- the statutory requirement to provide grant for [essential adaptations for disabled homeowners/member of household](#) assessed and referred by Renfrewshire Health and Social Care partnership
- [grant support to flat owners being asked to participate in mixed tenure capital investment programmes](#) to common parts in blocks where the Council or RSL has an interest
- [grant support to flat owners in mixed tenure blocks being asked to participate in Council housing regeneration programmes.](#)

Funding for grants is limited and will only be made available subject to continuing resources being available and where grant support meets the delivery of strategic objectives or statutory requirements. No application for retrospective grants will be considered.

Matters regarding financial assistance

For each grant awarded the Council will complete and register a Notice of Grant in the Land Register. A registration fee, currently £80, will be deducted from the final grant payment.

There may be times when situations arise that have not been covered in the Scheme of Assistance or where there are special mitigating circumstances. In such exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given as to whether alternative options are available under the Council's Scheme of Delegations and Financial Regulations.

Conditions of Grant

To receive financial assistance, the applicant must give their consent to be bound by the following conditions for ten years from the date on which, in the Council's opinion, the applicable work is satisfactorily completed:

- the house must be used as a private dwelling; but that does not prevent the use of part of the house as a shop or office, or for business, trade or professional purposes.
- the house must not be occupied by the owner or a member of the owner's family, except as that person's only or main residence.
- the owner of the land or premises must take all practicable steps to keep it in a good state of repair
- the owner of the land or premises must, if required to do so by the local authority, certify that the above conditions are, in so far as they apply, being observed.

If any of the conditions detailed in Section 83 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 are breached, the Council may demand repayment, as specified in Sections 86 and 87 of the Act.

3. Supporting older and disabled people to live safely in their homes

Older and disabled people can be vulnerable and face more obstacles in maintaining and investing in their property. We therefore give priority to providing help to these groups.

3.1. Care and Repair Renfrewshire

[Care and Repair Renfrewshire](#) provide free and confidential information, advice and practical assistance to older and disabled owners. The aim is to enable repairs and adaptations to be carried out to allow people to maintain their independence and remain in their homes comfortably, safely and securely.

Care and Repair Services include:

- co-ordinating the adaptations for disabled homeowners and private tenants
- delivering a [Small Repairs Service](#) (there is no charge for labour or travel costs, charges for material may apply).

The service is open to owners and private tenants in the following groups

- people aged 60 and over;
- disabled persons or the parents or guardians of disabled children and adults; and
- other vulnerable people referred on an ad hoc basis by the Council and/or NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.

Contact Care and Repair Renfrewshire at:

Phone: 0141 812 4111

Email: enquiries@bridgewaterha.org.uk

<https://www.carerepairrenfrewshire.org.uk/>

3.2. Housing Adaptations for Disabled People

If you are an owner who is disabled or have a disabled member of your household, and you have difficulty using and/or getting around your home, you may be entitled to a grant for an adaptation, subject to an assessment by an Occupational Therapist.

In the first instance, contact the Adult Services Referral Team

Phone: 0300 300 1380

E-mail: adultservicesreferral.sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk

[The Adult Services Referral Team](#) will arrange for an assessment of your circumstances by one of the Health and Social Care Partnerships' Occupational Therapists

When an adaptation is identified as the best way to meet your need, you can apply for financial help. You can get help with a range of adaptations - that is, permanent changes to your home that involve building work, for example replacing the bath with an accessible shower.

Renfrewshire Care and Repair will co-ordinate all aspects of the adaptation in conjunction with you and the Occupational Therapist, and they will also help you to apply for a grant from the Council.

If you are eligible for a grant, it will cover 80% of the cost of the work you have been assessed as requiring. However, the grant will cover 100% of the cost of the work if you receive one of these welfare benefits.

- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (guarantee element)
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit

You must wait until your grant is approved in writing before asking your contractor to start the work. The Council will not approve a grant on work which has already been carried out.

Adaptations for Private tenants

If you rent your home privately, you will need to get the agreement of your landlord for you to carry out the adaptation that you need. However, the landlord cannot refuse to give consent without a good reason. The same grant process applies for private tenants.

4. House Conditions

4.1. The Tolerable Standard

The Tolerable Standard is a **minimum standard** and applies to all residential dwellings including social and privately rented homes and owner-occupied properties.

The Tolerable Standard is detailed in the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#). The Act list the criteria that a dwelling house must satisfy in order to meet this standard. It focuses mainly on the building itself, and does not extend to internal decoration, furniture and household appliances. Housing that falls below this standard is not considered fit for human habitation. As this is a condemnatory standard, a house will be considered below the Tolerable Standard where at least one element is not complied with.

Tolerable Standard Criteria

A house meets the Tolerable Standard if it complies with all these criteria:

- it is structurally stable
- it is substantially free from rising or penetrating damp
- it has satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating
- it has satisfactory thermal insulation
- it has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house
- it has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house
- it has a water closet or waterless closet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house
- it has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitably located within the house
- it has an effective system for the drainage and disposal of foul and surface water
- in the case of a house having a supply of electricity, it complies with the relevant requirements in relation to the electrical installations for the purposes of that supply
- it has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house
- it has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings
- it has satisfactory equipment installed for detecting, and for giving warning of, fire or suspected fire
- it has satisfactory equipment installed for detecting, and for giving warning of, carbon monoxide present in a concentration that is hazardous to health

The Council also has [powers](#) to issue a closing order or demolition order on below Tolerable Standard homes in the area.

If you believe your home does not meet the Tolerable Standard then contact Environmental Health who can give advice on how the property can be brought up to an acceptable standard.

Environmental Health

Email: e-prot.es@renfrewshire.gov.uk

phone: 0300 300 0380

4.2. Fire and Carbon Monoxide Detection

In 2022 the requirement for an interlinked system of fire and smoke alarms and adequate carbon monoxide alarms was introduced to the Tolerable Standard.

The [Scottish Government Guidance](#) on this aspect of the standard sets out the requirements for every home to have:

- one smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes (normally the living room/lounge)
- one smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- one heat alarm installed in every kitchen
- all smoke and heat alarms to be ceiling mounted
- all smoke and heat alarms to be interlinked

If you have a carbon-fuelled appliance – like a boiler, fire, heater or flue – in any room, you must also have a carbon monoxide detector in that room, but this does **not** need to be linked to the fire alarms.

Visit mygov.scot for further information on home fire safety and [fire and smoke alarms in Scottish homes](#).

Scottish Fire and Rescue offer:

- [free home fire safety visits](#) for every resident
- a useful [online home fire safety checker](#)

4.3. Trusted Trader Scheme

One of the major barriers to getting work done to homes is the lack of information on suitable and reliable contractors. [Renfrewshire's Trusted Trader](#) scheme helps local residents choose a reliable local trader by publishing a directory of businesses that have been checked by Trading Standards and allow previous customers to comment and rate their work.

4.4. Energy Advice and Energy Efficiency Improvement Schemes

[Home Energy Scotland](#) provide information on grants, funding and loans to make your home more energy efficient. Home Energy Scotland also administer a Scottish Government interest free loan scheme to assist private owners with the costs of a range of insulation and heating measures.

[Energy Savings Trust](#) has useful tips on how to make your home more energy efficient, reduce you carbon emissions and lower your energy bills.

[Changeworks](#) provides energy saving tips, advice on how to retrofit your home and ways to reduce your energy bills.

[Renfrewshire Council's Energy Advice Team](#) can provide advice about managing your energy bills.

The Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland Area Based Schemes: (EES:abs) is an area-based scheme designed and delivered by councils and local delivery partners. It aims to provide energy efficiency measures in fuel-poor areas or areas with hard-to-treat housing. Renfrewshire Council act as coordinating agents for all EES:abs programmes in the area. Recent programmes have focussed on mixed tenure blocks of flats with solid wall construction. If you are an owner in an area where a programme is planned, the Council will contact you.

4.5. Owners of Empty Homes

Long term empty properties can have a detrimental effect on the community and can contribute to issues such as fly tipping, vandalism and loss of community well-being.

Renfrewshire Council has a dedicated 'More Homes Officer' who can provide [advice on the options](#) available to help bring empty homes back into use.

The More Homes Officer provides support that may include:

- Property Matchmaking Scheme – matching up owners of empty properties who want to sell, with buyers.
- Information on VAT and merchant discounts

- Investigating reports of empty homes, including tracing the owner
- General advice on empty properties

For further information contact:

Allana McLuskey, More Homes Officer,

Email: allana.mcluskey@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Phone: 07811 055 016.

4.6. Flat Owners – Common Repairs

Rights and Responsibilities

When you buy a flat you take on rights and responsibilities for the common structure of the whole building. These common parts are jointly owned with other owners in the building and could include for example the close and stair, door entry etc

Your title deeds normally tell you about your rights and responsibilities for your own property and for your shared responsibility for the whole building.

The Council recommends that all flat owners use the [underoneroof](#) website, which contains impartial comprehensive advice for owners of flats including:

- responsibilities for repair and maintenance of common areas
- understanding your title deeds
- common repairs issues
- working with other owners in your building
- finding and appointing a factor
- organising and paying for repairs.

Shelter Scotland also provide a useful [guide to repairs in communal areas](#)

4.7. Missing Shares for Tenement Property Repairs

If you are an owner or a group of owners in a tenement block trying to undertake an essential repair but cannot get all owners to pay, then the [Council's Missing Shares pilot scheme](#) may be able to assist you.

The Council has powers under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 to pay ‘missing shares’ for an owner when the majority of owners in a tenement block agree to carry out work to repair or maintain their property, and

- an owner is unable or unwilling to pay
- it is unreasonable to require that an owner deposit the sum in question
- an owner cannot be identified or found, by reasonable inquiry.

The “missing share” will be the owner’s share of the estimated costs.

Where the Council pays a “missing share” it will try and recover the costs from the owner whose share was paid, including administrative and interest charges.

The Council must be satisfied that use of Missing Shares powers is the most appropriate solution to progress the outstanding repair(s), the work proposed is reasonable, and that the proportioning of shares is correct.

The minimum share is £500 and the maximum share available is £10,000.

There are certain procedures that owners will need to follow detailed in the link above.

Email [Owner Services Team](#)

Phone: 0300 300 0300

4.8. Factoring

Routine, regular maintenance to shared common areas is fundamental to preventing building decline and can help to prevent future larger bills for expensive repair work.

One of the best ways to achieve regular ongoing maintenance is to have a factoring arrangement in your building.

Owners may choose to appoint their own factor or self-factor their building.

[The Property Managers Association of Scotland](#) provides a list of their member firms.

Before appointing a factor, you should check that the factor is registered in the [Scottish Property Factors Register](#). The register is held and maintained by the Scottish Government. It is an offence to operate as a factor without being registered.

Property Factors must meet certain standards as set out in the [Property Factors Code of Conduct](#). This includes providing homeowners with a “written statement of services” which must include as a minimum:

- The main services the factor will provide
- The cost of their service, billing and how they will deal with homeowners who do not pay their share
- Complaints handling
- How to end the agreement
- Debt collection procedure.

The Council acts as a [Factor](#) for around 2,500 properties, including 900 owners in mixed tenure blocks.

Homeowners who have a complaint about their factor, or believe their factor is not meeting their factoring duties, can apply to the [First Tier Tribunal for Scotland \(Housing and Property Chamber\)](#) for assistance in resolving these matters.

The Tribunal requires that the homeowner **must** first notify their property factor in writing of the reasons why they consider that the factor has failed to carry out their duties or failed to comply with the Code. The property factor must also have refused to resolve the homeowner’s concern or have unreasonably delayed attempting to resolve them.

4.9. Common Repairs in Mixed Tenure Blocks

Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords have a duty to maintain their stock at the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and to achieve the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 (ESSH2) and any future standards as determined by the Scottish Government.

A high proportion of council stock is in mixed- tenure buildings (public and private) ownership. The co-operation and participation of owners is therefore essential in securing common repair and improvements in these buildings. The council will provide practical assistance and financial assistance in the circumstances outlined below.

Upgrading/Capital Improvement Works to Common Parts

Where the Council or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), as owner of some properties in the building, undertakes capital upgrading projects to common parts, and requires recharging other owners for their share of the cost, the Council will offer grant assistance on the following basis:

- 50% for owner occupiers in receipt of Income Support or other similar benefits
- 35% for other owner-occupiers
- 25% for non-resident owner - for example registered landlords or those exempt from landlord registration. Unregistered landlords will not be entitled to any grant support.

Owners in mixed tenure blocks where an RSL is undertaking work, should liaise with that RSL in the first instance in relation to grants.

Essential Common Repairs in property that is jointly owned with the Council

Where the Council has an ownership interest in a block, it will provide advice and practical assistance to private homeowners to help organise and complete common repairs. This could include apportioning costs and getting agreement from the other owners in the building.

Find further information on [common repairs in property that is jointly owned with the council](#).

Flat Owners in Mixed Tenure Blocks in Council Housing Led Housing Regeneration areas

Owners in mixed tenure blocks covered by the [Council's Housing Led Housing Regeneration and Renewal Programme](#), who are being asked to pay their share of common costs will be offered grant assistance on the following basis

75% for owner occupiers in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (guarantee element)
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance

- Universal Credit

50% for other owner-occupiers

25% for non-resident owner - for example registered landlords or those exempt from landlord registration. Unregistered landlords will not be entitled to any grant support.

4.10. House Conditions – Enforcement Action

This scheme of assistance emphasises that owners are responsible for the repair of maintenance of their property. We aim to work with owners and to provide advice and assistance to help them to maintain their property on a voluntary basis.

Where the Council has provided advice and assistance, but the owner does not repair or maintain their property and it is affecting surrounding properties or the local environment, or is potentially dangerous, the Council will consider using powers from various pieces of legislation. The main types of enforcement action open to the Council are:

- Works Notice
- Maintenance Order
- Housing Renewal Area
- Demolition Order
- Closing Order
- Statutory Nuisance Abatement Notices
- Defective and Dangerous Building notices

Shelter Scotland website has a short summary of each of these [local authority powers to tackle disrepair](#).

5. Improving Quality and Management in the private rented sector

This Scheme of Assistance aims to help improve the quality and management in the private rented sector by providing information, advice, and practical assistance in the first instance. This will be backed up by enforcement action where necessary.

5.1 Landlord Registration

All private landlords operating in Renfrewshire must be [registered](#) in the [Scottish Landlord Register](#). The aim of landlord registration is to make sure that all private landlords in Scotland are 'fit and proper' people to be letting residential property and landlord registration should help landlords reach the standard required by legislation to privately let properties.

Renting out property without being registered with the council is a criminal offence and you can be served with a Rent Penalty Notice (which prevents you from charging your tenant rent) or fined. Those landlords who are unwilling or unable to achieve these standards may be subject to possible removal from the Register by the Council's Regulatory Functions Board.

Email: privatelandlordteam@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 300 0300

5.2 Landlord Responsibilities

It is for landlords to ensure that they meet the full range of legal responsibilities in letting out property. There are various sources of advice for landlords about their legal responsibilities in relation to letting out a property. You can also take your own legal advice.

The Scottish Government provide a range of useful information for landlords on the requirements for letting out a property including:

[guide on the private residential tenancy agreement](#)

[model tenancy agreement](#)

[prescribed forms and notices](#)

[short video guide.](#)

If you need more advice, [visit mygov.scot's guidance for landlords.](#)

You can also get advice from:

[Shelter Scotland](#)

[Landlord Accreditation Scotland](#)

[Scottish Association of Landlords](#)

5.3 Private Rented Homes – housing standards and repairs

A landlord in the private rented sector has a duty to ensure that the house they rent out meets the “Repairing Standard” as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

The Scottish Government’s guidance on the [Repairing Standard](#) includes all the elements of the standard which private landlords are required to comply with from 1 March 2024. The aim is to equip private landlords with a full picture of what they should do to ensure compliance.

[The Housing and Property Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal](#) deals with issues relating to rent or repairs in private sector housing. Their website has a wealth of information on landlord’s responsibilities, including that for [repairs](#).

If a tenant or third party (for example the Council) does not believe a property meets the Repairing Standard, they should, in the first instance, ask the landlord to undertake the required repairs. If the landlord does not undertake the required work, the tenant, or the Council, can make an application to the Housing and Property Chamber First Tier Tribunal for a decision by a tribunal on whether the landlord has complied with that duty. The Tribunal can then order the landlord to carry out the necessary repairs.

[Housing and Property Chamber
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland](#)

Glasgow Tribunals Centre
20 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8GT

Phone: 0141 302 5900

5.4 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a house or a flat where three or more unrelated tenants live and share facilities such as a toilet, washing facilities or cooking facilities.

It can include a house, bed-sit, lodgings, student accommodation, hostel or a shared flat.

HMOs have to be licensed unless they qualify for exemption.

Prior to the granting or renewal of a house in multiple occupation (“HMO”) licence, all newly constructed, altered, converted or extended premises intended to be used as a HMO living accommodation will be inspected by Council Officers to ensure the HMO living accommodation complies with building standards applicable to the building as provided in the Buildings (Scotland) Act 2003 (as amended), the Buildings (Scotland) Regulations Act 2004 (as amended) or any successor legislation, other relevant housing/ environmental legislation and the HMO licensing policies from time to time agreed by the Council.

See more [information on the HMO license application](#).

This document can be made available in braille, large print or audio.

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

Place Strategy Team

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