



GDPR & Fair Processing

A simple guide to the new data protection law, and how it affects you. *More on page 2*

New Faces

Introducing some new additions to the Almond family.
Meet them on pages 2 and 3



You are invited to **afternoon tea** with Almond
See back page for details



GDPR & The Fair Processing Notice

This edition of Almond View comes with a copy of the Fair Processing Notice, which by law has to be provided to every tenant as part of GDPR. Here's what it's all about, and how it affects you.

What is GDPR?

The General Data Protection Regulation which came into force on May 25. This gives you more control over how organisations use your personal information. It replaces the Data Protection Act 1998.

What is the Fair Processing Notice?

It provides information about the data we hold on you and why we hold it, as well as your rights, and how we safeguard your information.

Why does Almond Housing Association need my data?

We hold records on tenants and members to meet housing requirements and provide all of the services we offer. We also need to contact you about other schemes and events – including our AGM, Christmas

events, free digital classes and cookery classes, and our Imagination Library scheme.

If we don't have your details, you could miss out on some great opportunities!

What is Almond Housing Association doing to comply with GDPR?

We employ a Data Protection Officer, who monitors data protection rules and policies, particularly getting consent for any personal information we hold.

What are my rights?

You can ask for a copy of the information we hold about you. You may require us to correct inaccuracies, and you can even ask us to delete some or all of the information we hold on you. See the enclosed Fair Processing Notice for more details.

I still don't understand...

Contact us on **01506 439 291** and ask to speak to the Data Protection Officer.

New Faces at Almond

Introducing **Barbara Boertien**, Almond's new



Community Engagement Officer.

What does a Community Engagement Officer do?

My job is about building relationships in the areas where Almond tenants live. I help to shape and influence how community services can

be improved to meet the needs of tenants.

What's on your agenda?

We have a Digital Base in our reception with free Wi-Fi access, and I want to promote that more. The Imagination Library is also an inspiring project to be part of, providing every child under the age of 5 with a free book every month.

Tell us something which would surprise people

I used to live in Borneo – not quite in the jungle but in a house built on stilts to protect us from the monsoon rain. My Dad worked for an oil company, so we travelled

a lot. I learned to fish in the massive ditches which filled with water and sea creatures in the rainy season.

Best advice you've ever received?

Surround yourself with people who push you to do and be better.

So what now?

Almond tenants with ideas or feedback on how we can better serve our communities can contact me on **01506 439 291** or email enquiries@almondha.org.uk Follow us on Facebook [@almondhousingassociation](https://www.facebook.com/almondhousingassociation) or on Twitter [@AlmondHousing](https://twitter.com/AlmondHousing) for news of services and events.



Also introducing **Donna White**, our Communications Officer, who has joined the team to provide maternity leave cover. She is a Geordie with a nose for a good story – she spent many years working as a journalist. If you are an

Almond tenant with a tale to tell, call her at the office or email via enquiries@almondha.org.uk

Still confused by **Universal Credit**?

Universal Credit has now come into force and will change the way you receive your benefits. Here's some information if you are struggling to understand the new system.

Universal Credit is for people out of work or on a low income. It has replaced many benefits, including:

- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

How to claim

Applications must be done online and in one sitting, taking around 20-40 minutes. Our Digital Hub in

reception has laptops and free Wi-Fi. If you need any help, come in and ask.

You must provide

- personal info (including National Insurance and contact no)
- landlord details (Almond Housing, 44 Etive Walk, Livingston, EH54 5AB)
- rent information
- details of income
- bank account details

When it arrives

Universal Credit takes at least five weeks to come through, and then you are usually paid monthly.

When will Universal Credit affect me? I don't seem to be on it yet

The aim is for everyone to switch by 2022. Your current benefits will remain in place until either your circumstances change – if you find/change jobs for example – or the DWP contact you to advise you are going on to Universal Credit.

I'm not good at budgeting, and I'm worried how I'll manage the new payment

Speak to your Housing Officer, who can advise you or refer you to one of our support staff. Or call our office and ask to speak to our Welfare Rights & Money Advisor.

I don't have an email address, or access to a computer

Pop into our reception during office hours and ask for help – our Digital Hub is there for your use and someone will be around to help.

How will I cope financially while waiting for my claim to go through?

You can apply for an advanced payment – but be aware this will be deducted in instalments from future benefit payments.

This is all so confusing and I'm still worried

Talk to us. We've been preparing for Universal Credit and we're aware of the effects on our tenants during the changeover. We're here to help.

Our team is **here to help**



Drew McLellan, Welfare Rights and Money Advisor, can assist with financial or benefits-related issues.

Our **Housing Officers** are also fully qualified advise you. Call us on **01506 439 291**.



Vivienne Eadie, Tenancy Sustainment Officer, can help with completing forms and making appointments.

Don't struggle on your own. We can make the changeover easier.

We have a winner!

Congratulations to Claire Nichols of Ash Grove, who has won our Almond Award for this quarter! Claire was delighted to be presented with **£250 worth of vouchers** for Almondvale Shopping centre and Asda. And so was her Border Collie Luna.



The draw is our way of thanking folks for keeping on top of their rent payments, taking care of their home and generally being a good tenant!

Our next Almond Award will be run in Autumn 2018. All you need to do in order to be entered for the draw to win £250 worth of vouchers is to:

- 1** Have maintained a clear rent account for a minimum period of three months immediately prior to the draw
- 2** Not be involved in any anti-social behaviour in your area
- 3** Maintain your tenancy and any garden area to a satisfactory standard
- 4** Have allowed our contractor to gain access to your home to complete the annual gas check

Well done to Claire Nichols and a big thanks to all our tenants!

Join Almond for afternoon tea

Come and meet the team, have some fun, and find out about all the services and initiatives we offer to tenants.

We're holding an afternoon tea for all ages on **Monday, June 11** from **2-4pm** at our office in **Etive Walk**.

There will be:

- Information stalls with advice workers on hand

- Help with CV writing, interview tips and jobsearches
- Digital skills information and free Wi-Fi access
- A children's activity corner
- Fantastic prizes to win

*And of course,
plenty of tea and cake!*



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY "OUT OF HOURS" REPAIRS: 0845 038 0040

Almond Housing Association	01506 439 291	Homeless Persons	0800 032 3450	Scottish Power (General)	0845 270 0700
Gas Leaks	0800 111 999	Howden Health Centre	01506 423 800	(Emergency)	0845 272 7999
Citizens Advice Bureau	01506 432 977	Litter Hotline	0800 616 446	St John's Hospital	01506 523 000
Craigshill Health Centre	01506 432 621	Police	101	Street Lighting	01506 280 000
Energy Advice	0808 808 2282	Refuse Collection	01506 280 000	West Lothian Council	01506 280 000