

# SHELTERED HOUSING HANDBOOK

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

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# **KEY NUMBERS**

For all tenancy enquiries 01389 737 661

Reporting a repair 0800 073 8708

Reporting a repair (24 hour) 0800 197 1004

Gas heating repairs (City Technical) 0333 202 0708

# WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

On behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council, welcome to your Tenants' Handbook. As a tenant of West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) we hope that you will enjoy living in your new home.

This handbook contains important information that will help you enjoy your home. It tells you what you can expect from us, and it also tells you what we expect from you.

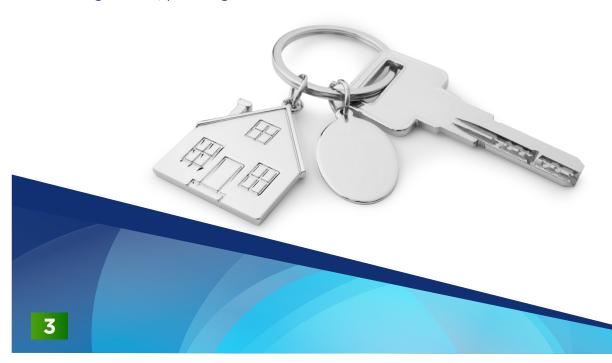
Hopefully you will find this handbook easy to use. Four times a year, we will also send you a copy of Housing News, which will keep you up to date with all housing news in West Dunbartonshire.

Each sheltered housing complex also prepares a monthly newsletter which gives information about what is going on in your complex.

If you want to get involved in improving sheltered housing, we have a Sheltered Housing Forum which meets every 3 months.

West Dunbartonshire Council has a long history of tenant involvement and perhaps you will think about becoming more involved in tenant participation. There are a range of options depending on your interests and time available, from completing satisfaction surveys to joining a local tenant group or Scrutiny Panel.

If you would like more information on any of these options or to join the Sheltered Housing Forum, please give Jane Mack a call or text on 07983 542993.



# **INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HOME**

Address and postcode:
Your housing officer is:
Contact details for housing officer:
Housing officer email:
Duty housing officer phone number: 01389 737661
Duty flousing officer priorie number. 01303 737001
Option 1 for Repairs
Ontion 2 for Allocations
Option 2 for Allocations
Option 3 for Alexandria / Dumbarton Housing Operations

Your Housing Officer can visit you in your home and you can phone the above number to arrange a visit. Housing Officers also hold surgeries in some sheltered complexes. Information on when these are held should be on your notice board or you can ask your Warden for more information.

Option 4 for Clydebank Housing Operations

# SHELTERED HOUSING COSTS, YOUR TENANCY AND YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT

All sheltered housing tenants have a Scottish Secure Tenancy. This is a legal document, which you and West Dunbartonshire Council (the landlord) sign.

Your tenancy agreement gives you important information including:

- The address of your home
- The start date of your tenancy
- The amount of rent and service charge you have to pay
- The rights and responsibilities of your landlord.
- The rights and responsibilities of you as a tenant.

The tenancy gives you the right to stay in your home for as long as you want, as long as you do not break the terms of the tenancy agreement. Your tenancy can only come to an end if you give 28 days' notice in writing to terminate the tenancy (for example if you want to move out), or if West Dunbartonshire Council gain an eviction order from the Court. If you die, other members of your household may be able to take over the tenancy, this is known as succession. However, your husband, wife, live in partner, joint tenant or other person living with you can only take over the tenancy if they meet the conditions for sheltered housing.

# **RENT**

You are responsible for the payment of rent from the date your tenancy starts, even if you do not move in on the first day. If you are claiming Housing Benefit and you need time to move, the Housing Benefit section of the Department of Work and Pension (DWP) may pay rent on both properties for up to 4 weeks. You will never get Council Tax benefit for 2 homes, so you need to budget for that.

Decorating, furnishing and carpeting your home is your responsibility.

However, we may be able to give you advice and assistance or help you in sourcing other forms of financial assistance. Your housing officer will be able to give you more information on this.

Your annual rent is charged weekly in advance, over 47 weeks and is reviewed annually. We will only review the rent after consulting tenants and registered tenant organisations, and we will give 28 days notice of any rent increases.

There are five weeks in the year when you are not charged rent and if you are up to date with your rent you don't need to pay on these weeks and this can help tenants with budgeting and saving. The rent free weeks are:

- The first week in April
- Two weeks in July
- Two weeks over Christmas and New Year

Exact dates can be found online by going to the webpage **Make a rent payment I West Dunbartonshire Council** 

# WARDEN CHARGES

There is a weekly warden charge included in your rent, however this is covered by Housing Benefit or HSCP depending on your circumstances.

# SERVICE CHARGES

The service charge covers the cost of all shared facilities, cleaning the shared areas and maintaining the gardens.

# CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

We understand that your circumstances may change, you may wish to move to another property or, perhaps someone moves in with you. Please let us know if there are any changes and your housing officer can give advice on the process involved.

# **TV LICENCE**

Many Sheltered complexes qualify for what is known as a concessionary TV Licence. This entitles residents to qualify for a TV licence for the reduced sum of £7.50 per year. This scheme is administered nationally and not by the Council so may be subject to changes (for more information visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk or call 0300 790 6071).

You will qualify for the concession if your complex does, and you have retired, reached retirement age or you have a disability. You may also qualify if you have reached the retirement age and work 15 hours or less. If your complex does qualify for this concession the HSCP has to complete some paperwork.

If you are over 75 and you or any partner living with you is in receipt of Pension Credit, you can apply for a free TV licence if your complex does not have a concession. If the complex has the concession and you are over 75 you will receive a letter advising that you are exempt from payment.

# **WAYS TO PAY RENT**

You can no longer pay your rent at any West Dunbartonshire Council offices, but a range of payment options are set out below.

#### By direct debt and standing order

 You can arrange to pay by direct debit or standing order. This means that your rent is paid automatically from your bank account. You can request a form by calling our contact centre on 01389 738282. These forms are also available on the Council's website.

#### By telephone

• Call our contact centre on 01389 738 282 or call our automatic telephone service 0161 6226948. Have your rent reference number to hand.

#### By internet

 You can pay via the Council website, www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk by clicking on the option to "Pay It" or going directly to the payments page which details a number of options, West Dunbartonshire Council - Main Menu (e-paycapita.com)

#### Post Office & PayPoint

• If you wish to pay cash or in person you can visit any Post Office or one of the many PayPoint locations throughout West Dunbartonshire Council Area. Find your nearest PayPoint outlet by visiting: www.paypoint.com/en-gb/consumers/store-locator.



# MY WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

My West Dunbartonshire is an online portal where you can manage your tenancy online and track the progress of any requests you have made to us.

This online system puts you in control of your council accounts and all you need to get started is an email address.

With your My West Dunbartonshire Account you can do things such as,

- View your tenancy and property
- View your rent balance and rent payments
- Log repairs
- Make rent payments

If you would like to register, please go to **https://my.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/** and register using your Rent Reference Number - e.g. 1234567899. Ask your Housing Officer for your rent refence number if you are unsure of it.

For more information on how to use the online portal please see Appendix 1 at the end of this handbook.

# **WE CAN HELP YOU**

We know it can be hard finding enough money to go round, but please don't be tempted to skip a rent payment. We offer a range of support services which will help you manage your money and prevent you getting into debt. If you do have rent arrears we can still help, but you need to talk to us.

Your housing officer in the first instance can give you advice on;

- 1. Help with repayments; we can get you back on track with an affordable repayment plan.
- 2. You may be entitled to more benefits; you can ask your Housing Officer for more information on this.
- Perhaps you can save money by paying less for your fuel and other utilities. Working 4U can help you with this. For more information you can visit the webpage Rent arrears, benefits and debt advice | West Dunbartonshire Council or you can call 01389 738296.

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

Maintenance staff and our approved contractors are here to help you and to provide a repair service you are happy with.

As your landlord we are responsible for making sure your home is windproof and watertight, and we must maintain gas, electricity, water and drainage.

We also must maintain all common areas as well as communal garden areas around Sheltered Housing Complexes.

# AS A TENANT YOU SHOULD

- · Keep your property clean and in good decorative order.
- Report repairs promptly.
- · Repair damaged caused by you.
- Maintain appliances you have installed yourself e.g. electrical fire, shower, cooker.
- Report any criminal damage or vandalism to the Police.
- Provide an up-to-date contact number or email address to allow us to make contact with you.
- You are responsible for providing access to your home to carry out repairs and maintenance to your home. Allowing access to your home is vitally important, especially when related to your safety, for example, we are required by law to carry out a gas safety check in your home once a year and an Electrical Installation Condition Report in your home every 5 years.
- Keep any private garden tidy.



#### **REPAIRS**

#### **Repairs**

#### When will my repair be carried out?

The time taken to carry out a repair will depend on the type of repair.

### **Emergency Repair - 24 hours**

Emergency repairs will be attended to and made safe within **24 hours** of being reported. Where possible, we will carry out the full repair, however if this is not possible, we will carry out temporary repairs immediately to make the situation safe, and then return to complete any follow up repair work needed.

#### **Urgent - 5 working days**

These are repairs that are not emergencies but do need to be carried out quickly to prevent more damage to a property or undue risk to a tenant. Urgent repairs will be carried out within **5 working days** of being reported.

#### Routine Repair - 20 working days

These repairs are not emergencies or urgent but are of a routine nature and are not part of an existing cyclical maintenance programme. Routine Repairs could be due to normal wear and tear and would apply where no danger exists. Routine repairs will be carried out within **20 working days** of being reported.

### **Planned Repairs**

These are day-to-day repairs which are general maintenance repairs and are not part of an existing cyclical maintenance programme. Planned repairs may involve working at height (scaffold platforms) and could include repairs that affect more than one property. Planned repairs are likely to require a pre-inspection to fully determine the scope of work required. Whilst the length of time to complete planned repairs will vary, dependent on the volume and type of work, the aim is that these will be carried out within **60 working days** of being reported.

#### **Cyclical Maintenance**

In addition to responding to reported repairs, we have a range of cyclical maintenance programmes in place to ensure the safety of tenants. These programmes include things such as an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) carried out every 5 years and the annual gas safety checks including the boiler.



### **Appointments**

Repair appointments are either morning, afternoon or all day depending on the type of repair. Morning appointments are between 8:00 am and 12.00 pm and for afternoon appointments between 12:30 pm and 4.00 pm. All operatives will be wearing ID Badges.

It is important after you have agreed an appointment that you give us access. If the appointment is no longer suitable, please contact us as soon as possible and we will be able to re-arrange to a more convenient date.

If you are not at home when we call a card will be left and we will cancel the repair and assume you no longer require the work.

On completion of the repair, we will text or email you and ask you to complete a satisfaction survey to help us continually improve the service.

#### **Right to Repair**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives tenants the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. This is called the Right to Repair Scheme. When you report a repair, we will let you know if it qualifies as a Right to Repair.

Full details of the Right to Repair Scheme is available on our website, https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/maintenance-repairs/right-to-repair-scheme/

Some examples of repairs and expected timescales are in the table below.

1 DAY	2 DAYS	3 DAYS
Significant leaks or flooding from water/heating pipes	Partial loss of water supply	Extractor fan in kitchen or bathroom
Blocked or leaking foul drain or toilet	Loose or detached banister or handrail	
Blocked sink, bath or drain	Unsafe stair tread	
Total loss of electricity		
Insecure external window door or lock		
Only toilet in house not flushing		
Unsafe electrical socket or light fitting		

### **Medical adaptations**

Tenants who are having mobility problems or who find it difficult to make use of their kitchen or bathroom should contact The Health and Social Care Partnership at West Dunbartonshire Council.

An occupational therapist will be able to assess your need for adaptations which could help you live independently in your own home.

If you live in Dumbarton or Alexandria call 01389 776499 or if you live in Clydebank, call 01389 811760.

#### **Contents insurance**

As your landlord, WDC have arranged buildings insurance for the structure of your home, but you must insure the contents, your personal belongings and decorations.

If you don't insure your belongings, you risk having to pay the full cost of repairing or replacing them if they are damaged or stolen.

The cost of household insurance is small compared with the cost of replacing all your possessions.

Please call 01389 737867 should you need further information or wish to arrange low cost household insurance.

# GAS AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY

## **Gas Safety**

If you smell gas, think you have a gas leak or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance please call the free National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

# **Gas Appliance Servicing**

We have a legal duty to service all our gas appliances and heating systems every year. Our agent, City Technical will contact you before this service is due. It is very important for your own safety that you provide access for this.

It is vital that this service is carried out to ensure your appliances are safe and to reduce the risk of breakdown.

If you have any concerns about your gas appliance, please call City Technical direct on 0800 073 0341 or 0333 202 0708.

#### **Electricity**

If your electricity goes off, first check if other houses in your area are affected. If you smell burning or unusual smells coming from your appliances or the fuse box, switch off the appliance immediately and call emergency repairs available 24 hours on 0800 197 1004.

We also have a statutory requirement to carry out an electrical check (EICR) to every property on a 5 yearly basis. Very much like gas safety checks, it is imperative that we



# FIRE SAFETY

Everybody's home is at risk of fire, so it is important to know how to protect yourself if a fire starts in your home:

- Have an emergency plan on how you would leave your house in the event of fire.
- Keep low as the air is cleaner and cooler near the floor.
- Never open a door if it is warm to touch.
- If there is a lift, never use in the event of a fire.
- If your clothing catches fire, stop, drop and roll.
- Do not stop for valuables.
- Remember get out, stay out and dial 999.

To book a free home safety visit call the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on 0800 0731 999 or visit **Home fire safety visits | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service** 

## **Mobility Scooter Guidance**

All tenants of sheltered housing, multi-storey flats or other communal accommodation must not store or charge scooters in communal areas unless this area has been specifically designated by WDC as safe and permission has been given. The Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Specialised Housing has identified Mobility Scooters as a risk indoors if they are stored on escape routes. If there was a fire there is a likelihood that escape routes would become impassable due to smoke and heat given off from them putting residents at significant risk.

This guidance therefore sets out where mobility scooters can and can't be stored. You can read the full guidance on the website:

https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/sq2gai0b/wdc-mobility-scooter-guidanc e-final-august-2024.docx

# **KEEPING YOUR HOME SECURE**

Home security is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled. Here are some safety tips to keep your home secure:

- Make sure all doors are locked even when you are in the house or garden.
- Use your security chain when you answer the door, only letting in visitors you are expecting.
- Keep all keys in a safe place and make sure family members know where they are.
- Close and lock all windows and doors when you go out.
- Fit a timer to a light if you are away from your home overnight or during holiday periods.
- Fit a security chain.
- Fit a spy hole.
- Tell the warden if you are going away.
- To protect against identity fraud, shred all correspondence which includes your personal information.



# SERVICE STANDARDS WE ARE COMMITTED TO

- 1. Provide a daily visit or call from your sheltered housing supervisor and full access to the community alarm service.
- 2. Provide a weekly visit or call from your sheltered housing supervisor and full access to the community alarm service.
- 3. Cover the day shift in your sheltered housing complex whilst the back and night shift may be a shared service with other complexes in your area.
- 4. We will ensure you are told when there is no supervisor on duty.
- 5. Always deliver 24 hour back-up service from the mobile attendant service and other service within the Care at Home Team.
- 6. Keep you up to date with what is happening and keep involved in the way we deliver our services by providing a monthly complex newsletter and quarterly Housing News.
- 7. Agree a support plan with you and review this every six months or more frequently if there are any changes in your circumstances.
- 8. Help with social activities throughout the year.
- 9. Do a monthly test of the alarm system & pendant in use by tenant, or sooner if system errors occur.

# VISITS TO YOUR COMPLEX

#### We will

- Invite you to any meetings organised to discuss how we run your complex and how we could improve our services.
- Arrange and publicise joint walkabouts with Housing, HSCP staff and tenants to inspect each complex and give feedback to tenants on outcomes.
- Ensure you can ask your housing officer to visit you or phone you so that you can raise any housing issues you have.
- Display adequate information on your Housing Officer's contact details, their role and any planned visits to the complex or walkabouts.
- Ensure Sheltered Housing Forum meetings take place every 3 months. Any unresolved issues can be raised with Senior Housing Managers or HSCP managers.

# STANDARDS IN YOUR COMPLEX

#### We will

- Treat you fairly, professionally and with respect.
- Be polite and listen to what you have to say.
- Provide a service which has dignity and right to privacy at its centre.
- Make sure that all tenants are kept informed by ensuring current, relevant information is displayed on complex noticeboards.
- Encourage and assist your independence.
- Not tolerate threatening behaviour, nor verbal or physical abuse to our staff, colleagues, fellow residents or damage to our property.

# **CONSULTATION IN YOUR COMPLEX**

#### We will

- Consult with you by asking you to complete an annual questionnaire.
- Tell you how we have performed each year.
- Meet the Sheltered Housing Forum every three months to ask what you think of our services and use what you tell us to help improve services for the future.
- Ensure that minutes from the Sheltered Housing Forum meetings are shared with all tenants.
- Review these standards every 2 years with the members of the Sheltered Housing Forum.

# **COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS**

We aim to get things right first time, however, despite our best intentions and efforts, problems may arise from time to time. We want to know when this happens in order for us to put it right and help to ensure it does not happen again. If you are dissatisfied with our services, you may want to make a complaint.

In the first instance, you can raise a complaint with any member of staff, who will try to resolve your complaint straight away. If for some reason you are not happy with the outcome, please ask and we will advise you how to complain to a senior manager.

If you do not wish to complain to the Service Area, you may feel more comfortable calling the Citizens Relations Team on 01389 738 273 or fill in an online complaint form, which you can find on West Dunbartonshire website. **Complaints Procedure | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)** 

Or you can email: customer.relations@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Or write to: Citizen Relations Team

West Dunbartonshire Council

16 Church Street Dumbarton G82 1QL

If you are still unhappy, you can complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, who would be happy to receive and investigate complaints by phone, post or email.

Phone: 0800 377 7330

Email: www.spso.org.uk/contact-us

# **Compliments/Customer Feedback**

If you wish to submit a compliment or citizen feedback to a staff member or service area who has assisted you please, complete the citizen feedback form below.

Citizen feedback | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

#### **ACHIEVE Awards**

If you have had exceptional service from any West Dunbartonshire Council staff, you can nominate any of our staff, project or team for an ACHIEVE award. For further information you can visit the following webpage:

https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/kjwmarbi/achieve-awards-categories-criteria-2425.pdf or call the Citizen Relations Team on 01389 738 273.

# USEFUL WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL PHONE NUMBERS

<b>West Dunbartonshire Contac</b>	t Centre 01389 738282	
<b>General Housing Enquiries</b>	01389 737 661	
<b>Homeless Emergency</b>	0800 197 1004 (Out of hours)	
Reporting a Repair	0800 073 8708 (8.30-4.30pm Mon-Thurs, 8.30-4pm Fri)	
Reporting a Repair	0800 197 1004 (Out of hours)	
Gas Heating Repairs (City Ted	chnical) 0141 646 5091	
Council Tax	01389 737 444	
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour Team</b>	01389 772 048 (Mon - Fri 08.45am-2.00am,	
	Sat & Sun 3.00pm - 2.00am)	
<b>Environmental Health</b>	01389 738 290	
Litter Control	01389 772 059	
Pest Control	01389 737 282	
<b>Caretaking Service</b>	01389 738 282	
Cleansing (uplifts)	01389 738 282	
Care of Garden Scheme	01389 772 059	
Welfare Fund	01389 737 640	
<b>Home from Home</b>	01389 733 733	
Report Fly Tipping	0300 777 2292	
<b>Corporate Debt Team</b>	01389 737 788	
Occupational Therapist Self-Referral 01389 811 760		
<b>Medical Adaptations</b>	Alexandria 01389 776499, Clydebank 01389 811760	

Lomond & Clyde Care & Repair call 01389 734188 or visit www.care-repair.co.uk for a full list of jobs they can assist with.

For information on your bin day, garden waste permits and recycling you can visit the website at Recycling and Waste | West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

# **ADVICE CONTACT NUMBERS**

#### West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau

Telephone advice, and by appointment only in office, call 0800 4840136 Opening hours 8.30 am - 4.30pm Monday - Friday

#### **Shelter**

Shelter offers housing advice for everyone. Phone an advisor on 0808 800 4444 9am - 5pm Monday - Friday

#### Women's Aid

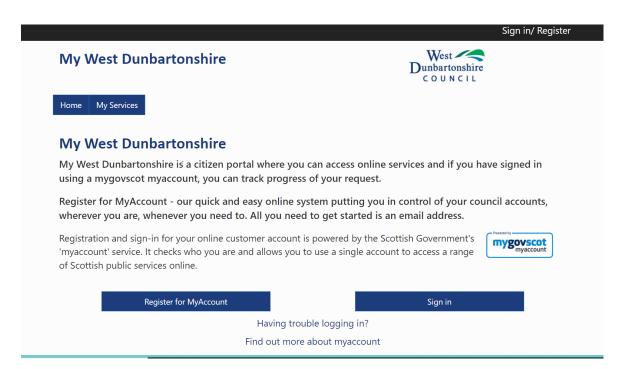
Local office: Dumbarton 01389 751036 Clydebank 0141 9528118 Domestic abuse helpline 0800 027 1234

#### **Police Scotland**

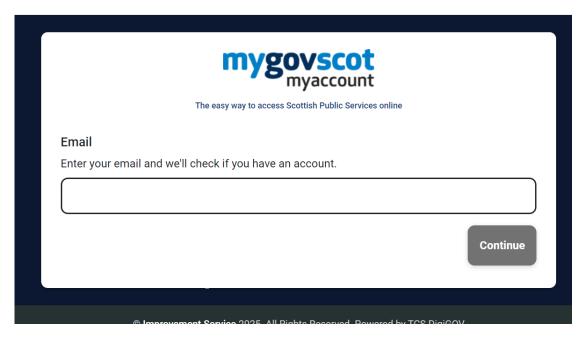
Non-emergencies 101 Emergency 999

# **APPENDIX 1 - SELF SERVICE PORTAL**

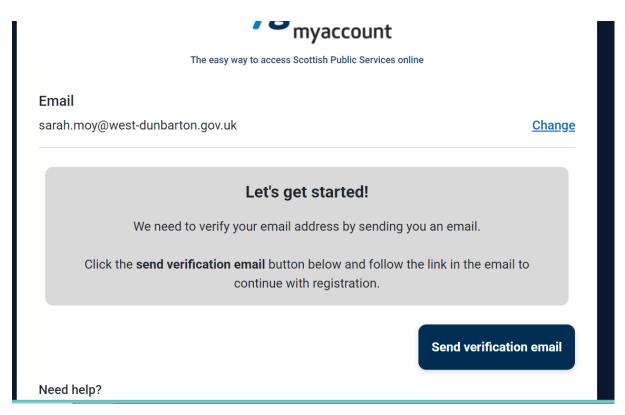
How to get started on the My West Dunbartonshire Self Service Portal.



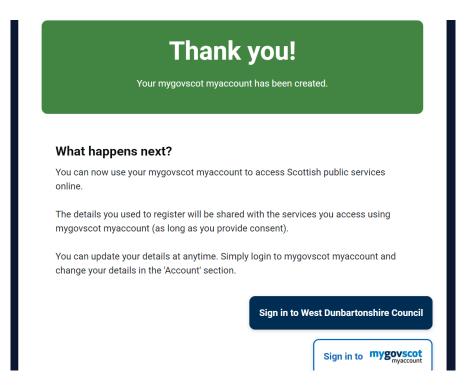
First, create your account by logging in on the homepage at https://my.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/



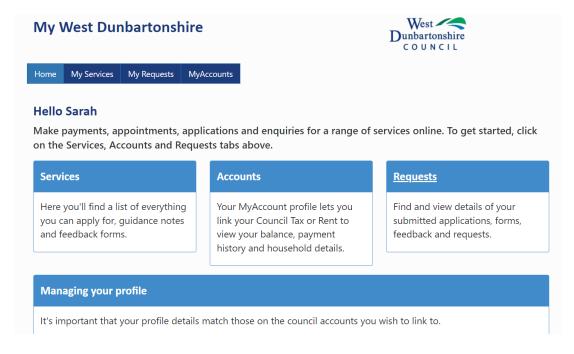
Enter your email address and select "Send verification email"



Open your personal email inbox and follow the instructions in the sent email to complete your registration.



Once complete, you may sign in using your email address and new password.



This is your My West Dunbartonshire portal home page. From here you can view your Services, Accounts, and Requests.

To pay your rent via the portal, select Accounts and follow the instructions to add your rent account. Once completed, you will be able to pay rent, view your balance, payment history and other details.

To raise a repair, you click on My Services and then you would select the relevant option 'Housing Repairs' under H as shown below.

For a Council Tax query, you would go to the Council Tax section and again select the relevant option listed by clicking on it.

