

# ancho NEWS

Autumn 2021

## MY ANCHO

We have recently launched My Ancho, which has been specially designed for making life a little easier for our tenants. Use your phone, tablet or computer to log into your own tenant portal. Even if you haven't used the internet much before, you'll find it easy to access the services you need.

We've put together a range of services on My Ancho we think you'll find useful - and we're adding new features all the time.

### When you log in to your account you can:

- View your tenancy agreement and read important information before signing up for your new home
- Report routine and urgent repairs (emergency repairs should always be reported by phone)
- View your account balance and pay your rent
- View old previous transactions
- Make a complaint
- Report antisocial behaviour
- Update your contact details
- Inform us about changes to your tenancy
- Give feedback about our services

### Ready to sign up?

Registering with My Ancho is easy and will only take you a couple of minutes.

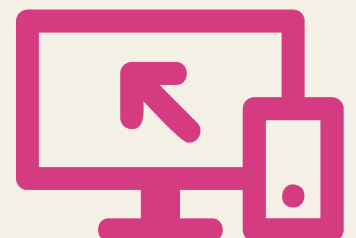
When you sign up, you'll be asked for the following information:

- Your name
- Your date of birth
- Your address
- Your email address
- Your tenancy reference number (this is the 18-digit character reference you can find on your rent statements and starts with the first few letters of your address)

Don't worry if you don't have all this information to hand. You can start the registration process online and then our contact centre team will help you complete it. Or, you can contact us, and we'll send a link to activate your account. Scan the QR code to get started.



You'll see QR codes throughout this newsletter. To use, open the camera on your phone or tablet to scan and open the web link



## ARE YOU RECEIVING OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS?

Did you know that we send out email newsletters every two months? We now only send two physical newsletters a year, so if we don't have your email address, get in touch through webchat, Facebook messenger, give us a call, or email [mail@ancho.co.uk](mailto:mail@ancho.co.uk) and we'll put you on the mailing list for next time. To send us an email, scan the QR code.



## YOUR VIEWS ON THE WORK OF OUR BOARD

In our email newsletter in August we asked you for your views on the Board and whether you'd be interested in joining.

Four people said they'd be interested in joining the Board, with the rest saying they wouldn't. When asked what puts you off joining the majority said they were too busy, have health issues or found the process of applying overwhelming.

Tenants were asked what kind of information and updates they should hear from the Board. We received a wide range of answers for this question. A lot of answers related to planned maintenance and when work will be carried out to homes.

A huge thanks goes to those who took the time to fill out the survey. We are going to follow up with tenants who expressed an interest in joining the Board. The Board are also going to take some time to reflect on what tenants have told them in this survey and how best they can incorporate these views into the work they do. If you want to read the full report, scan the QR code.



## LOW COST BROADBAND

Stay connected with BT's low-cost broadband and phone plans. Their affordable plans are available if you're on specific benefits, including Universal Credit and Pension Credit. To find out more scan the QR code or call 0800 800 150.



# EXTRA HELP FOR HEATING HOMES

## Warm Home Discount

You could get £140 off your electricity bills this winter under the Warm Home Discount scheme. The scheme opens on 18 October 2021.

The money is not paid to you – it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October and March. If you get Pension Credit you should receive the discount automatically and will be sent a letter confirming you are part of the scheme.

If you aren't on Pension Credit but claim other benefits, you can apply directly with your energy supplier. Applications are open now and you should make your claim as soon as possible as the number of discounts given is limited.

If you are worried about being able to afford heating your home this winter, please get in touch with our team for advice and support.

Scan the QR code to watch our video about the Warm Home Discount.



## Child Winter Heating Assistance

If you have a disabled child at home, the Scottish Government's Child Winter Heating Assistance are giving an extra £202 to help families with children up to the age of 18 on certain disability benefits to heat their homes during the winter months.

You do not need to apply as the payment will be automatically by Social Security Scotland. Families will receive a letter of confirmation to coincide with the payment being made.

## BEYOND LEVEL 0

Since Scotland moved beyond level 0 a couple of months ago, we have removed our detailed route map from the website.

### What restrictions remain in place?

While most of our staff continue to work from home, our preference is to carry out communications with you digitally or over the phone.

Where that is not possible, we can arrange a face-to-face meeting with you. If that meeting is held indoors, either in your home or at a Cairn office, we require you to wear a face covering unless you are exempt, and to practice social distancing.

All repairs and maintenance will be carried out as usual. Our contractors will always wear a face covering while in your home.



# REPAIRS SURVEY: HERE'S WHAT YOU SAID...

Many thanks to all the tenants who took the time to respond to our recent survey on the future of the repairs service. We received 678 responses from Cairn and Ancho tenants with lots of good feedback on what is important to you and your preferences and priorities for reporting and receiving the repairs service.

Some highlights of the feedback include:

- It is clear that people report repairs in many different ways.
- Many tenants would be happy to use digital technology to report repairs.
- The importance of information about the timing of your repairs is a clear priority – 83% of tenants feel it is important to know when someone is expected and 72% want to know how long it will take to have repairs carried out.
- Flexibility for repair appointments is also important, so we will be looking at how we can improve this.
- Top priorities are that repairs are carried out as soon as possible and that they can be reported easily.

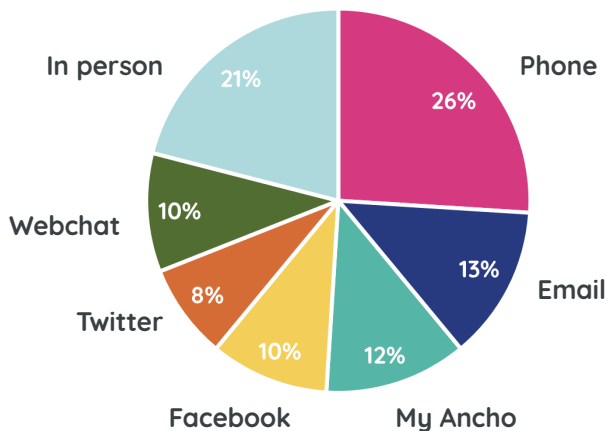
This feedback also highlights that many tenants do not have regular access to the internet or digital devices and this is something we are keen to understand, to make sure we provide accessible services, understand potential barriers, and provide support where we can.

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to review all the feedback and this will be used to help inform our service planning and identify further areas for exploration.

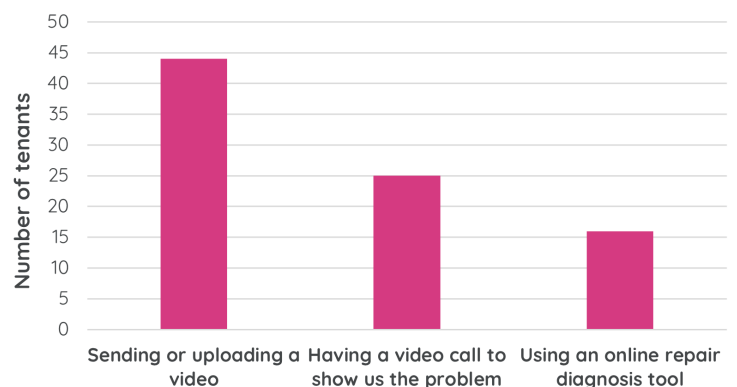
Over 200 tenants said you would like to hear about opportunities for further involvement in the future of the repairs service, and the feedback here provides a very good starting point. Over the next few months we will be getting back in touch with all those who expressed an interest to look at ways to get involved – this could include one-off focus groups or workshop sessions, Q&A sessions with the team or other ways of getting involved that suit your needs.

Thank you again to all those who took the time to share your thoughts.

Preferred way to report a repair



Use of digital media to report repairs



# PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR WINTER

As we approach the colder months, the changing weather can cause damage to your home. However, with a few easy steps you can prepare for the chillier months ahead.

## Bleed your radiators

After a few months out of action, you may find your radiators are cold at the top and hot at the bottom. To make sure you're getting the most out of your heating (and money), bleed your radiators.

Before starting, have an old cloth and a bleed key ready, and make sure the heating is off. There should be a valve on the radiator, usually at the top, and you need to turn this until you hear a hissing sound. Use the cloth to catch any liquid that comes out of the radiator and as soon as only water starts coming out, turn the valve key again.

## Find your stopcock

It's important to know where your stopcock is so you can stop water flowing into your home in the event of a burst pipe. Your stopcock is usually found under your kitchen sink. But it may also be near the boiler, under the stairs, or on an outside wall. If you have had a new kitchen installed in the last two or three years you could also have a Surestop (blue button) above your worktop that you can press to turn your your supply off or on.

## Keep your heating on a timer

If you're planning to be away and the weather is set to fall, set your heating to come on with a timer setting. This could prevent the water in your pipes freezing if it gets really cold, which could lead to burst pipes or flooding.

## How to deal with a frozen water pipe

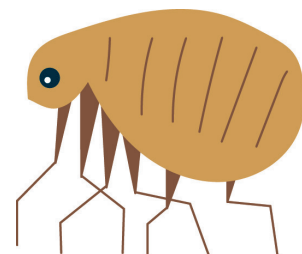
- Turn your water supply off at your stopcock
- Turn all your cold taps on to drain the system, and leave them on
- Do not open hot taps, as the hot water cylinder may be damaged if the pipes feeding it are frozen and it becomes empty whilst still switched on. To deal with hot water:
- Turn off the central heating boiler and immersion heater, if you have one, or let any solid fuel fire with a back boiler die down
- Then open the hot water taps, collecting the water in the bath for washing and flushing the toilet

If you'd like any advice or assistance on any of this, including how to find your stopcock or how to bleed your radiators, please get in touch.



## WHAT TO DO ABOUT PESTS

There may be times when you find pests in your home. We understand it's not pleasant. It's really important that we work together to try and make sure your home is free of infestations. Even the cleanest homes can become host to unwelcome visitors, no matter how careful you are.



### Whose responsibility is it?

Dealing with a pest infestation is usually your responsibility as a tenant.

As a landlord, it is our responsibility to deal with any infestation where pests have gained access through a defect in the fabric of the building, or if the infestation is within a communal area, where the tenant is unable to take appropriate steps to treat the issue themselves.

If it is your responsibility, but the infestation is so severe that you cannot reasonably be expected to manage the issue yourself, we may assist you and pass on the cost for treatment to you as a rechargeable repair. We will always advise you if this is the case before arranging treatment.

### What can you do?

It is important to take preventative action to discourage pests in your home. Ensure your home, including common areas, are kept clean and tidy. To deter pests, it is essential that you:

- Avoid feeding birds around your home
- Clean all surfaces thoroughly to remove crumbs
- Make sure waste bins are covered, emptied and cleaned regularly
- Make sure gaps behind kitchen appliances, such as cookers and fridges, are cleaned regularly
- Do not store food on the floor and keep all food stored in sealed containers
- Keep your home free from clutter
- Wash and dry your bed sheets on the hottest temperature you can
- If you buy second-hand furniture or clothing, inspect them carefully before bringing them into your home
- Block up any small gaps that a pest could access. Replace any damaged or poorly fitting finishings and neatly seal any gaps with an expanding foam or a silicone sealant
- If you are a cat or dog owner, regularly treat your pet with a suitable flea treatment. You can ask your vet for more information about this

We have detailed information on how to deal with the following creatures on our website:

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • Mice and rats  | • Squirrels            |
| • Bees and wasps | • Fleas                |
| • Ants           | • Bedbugs / dust mites |
| • Birds          |                        |

To have a read, scan the QR code.



## WORRIED ABOUT MONEY?

With the end of furlough and the £20 weekly uplift to Universal Credit due to come to an end this month, it's understandable that you may be particularly worried about how to manage your money.

If you are concerned about your finances, please get in touch. Our dedicated team are here to help. The sooner we know you are struggling, the sooner we can help you, even if you are already in debt.

We know that money may be tight but paying your rent should remain a priority to keep the roof over your head. Don't risk losing your home because you've not paid your rent.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER GOES BUST

You'll likely have seen in the news that the price of energy has increased dramatically, and this has led to many smaller companies going bust. It can be worrying to hear your energy supplier has gone out of business. But don't panic, your gas and electricity supply won't be cut off. Follow these steps to help you out.

**Take a meter reading.** You'll need this to give to your new energy supplier. Take a photo if possible.

**Ofgem will give you a new supplier.** As the energy regulator, Ofgem is responsible for finding you a new provider. Your electricity and gas supply won't be cut off and you'll be switched to a new provider within a few days.

**Don't switch until you're with the new supplier.** If you want to switch to a different provider, wait until you're set up properly with the Ofgem appointed supplier. This will make your switch much simpler and smoother.

**Wait for the new supplier to get in touch.** Once Ofgem has chosen a new provider, they will be in contact with you to explain your new tariff and how to manage your balance if you're in debt or credit. At this point you can ask to be put on a cheaper tariff or look to switch providers.

## COVID TESTING AT HOME

Did you know you can test yourself for covid-19 twice a week by ordering lateral flow tests?

Up to 1 in 3 people have no symptoms of Covid-19, so to help put your mind at rest and stop the spread of the virus, you can order test kits online by scanning the QR code.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can pick up tests from participating local pharmacies or phone 119

To order online you'll need your name, an email address (you can use someone else's if you don't have your own, your date of birth, and your address.



## HOW DO WE MEASURE UP?

You will have noticed our Annual Report has been included with your newsletter. This report gives some highlight figures from the last financial year and reflects on some of the hardships we've all encountered so far this year. To see our full performance, including trends, comparisons with the Scottish average and analysis, scan the QR code.



## SERVICE PLUS WINNERS

Our Service Plus scheme is a reward scheme for tenants.

To be eligible for Service Plus, you must, at the end of each quarter, have owed now debt to Ancho and have had no warnings during the previous six months. The Service Plus winners for the last quarter are:

Miss Carruthers, Irvine **£150**

Ms Milne, Kilwinning **£75**

Mr McGarry, Irvine **£50**

Mr Reid, Irvine  
Ms Cunningham, Dreghorn  
Miss Bennett, Dreghorn **£25**



Our mission is to create  
neighbourhoods where  
people want to live

**Our head office:**  
Ancho  
Sovereign House,  
Academy Road,  
Irvine KA12 8RL

**Our website:**  
[www.ancho.co.uk](http://www.ancho.co.uk)

**Our phone number:**  
01294 313 121

**Our email:**  
[mail@ancho.co.uk](mailto:mail@ancho.co.uk)

Part of the

**cairn**  
HOUSING GROUP

This newsletter is available on CD, in braille, in large print and in community languages.

Ancho is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014, registered number 2559R(S). Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator, registered number 306. Recognised as a Scottish Charity, registered number SCO36082. Registered Property Factor, registered number PF000346.