



**The Disabled Persons Housing Service (Fife) Wish all Our Readers  
A Happy and Prosperous New Year  
in 2010**



**Locked out of a disabled toilet?  
Use a RADAR key, Keys cost £3.50 each  
Who can apply for a key?**



The key can be purchased by anyone with a permanent disability. You will need to provide evidence to support this. Examples may include evidence you are receiving a Disability Allowance or Benefit; Blue Parking Badge; letter from your GP/Hospital.

### Where can you buy a key?

Keys can be purchased in person, or by someone on your behalf, at any of the locations below. Or contact RADAR direct [www.radar.org](http://www.radar.org)

If someone is coming on your behalf, they will need to bring your evidence with them to show that they are acting for you.

Fife Independent Disability Network	West Bridge Mill, Bridge Street, Kirkcaldy E-mail: <a href="mailto:enquiries@fidn.co.uk">enquiries@fidn.co.uk</a> Tel: 01592 203993 Open Tuesday to Thursday 9.30 am to 13.00 pm	
<i>Keys are also available by visiting one of the following Fife Council locations</i>		
Cowdenbeath Library	41 High Street, Cowdenbeath, KY4 9QA.	Tel: 01383 602363
Cupar Library	33 Crossgate, Cupar, KY15 5AS.	Tel: 01334 659367
Dunfermline Carnegie Library	Abbot Street, Dunfermline, Y12 7NL.	Tel: 01383 602365
Inverkeithing Library	Civic Centre, 10 Queen Street, Inverkeithing, KY11 1PA. Tel: 01383 602471	
Kirkcaldy Central Library	War Memorial Gardens, Abbotshall Road, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1YG. Tel: 01592 583206	
Methil Library	Wellesley Road, Methil, Leven, KY8 3PA.	Tel: 01334 659374
Roths Halls Library	Roths Halls Library, Roths Square, Glenrothes, KY7 5NX.	Tel: 01592 583387
St Andrews Museum	Kinburn Park, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DP.	Tel: 01334 659380

*If you would prefer this Newsletter sent to you by e-mail*



*send us your e-mail Address or you can download it from our Website*



<b>Telephone: 01592 223905</b>	<b><a href="http://www.dphsfife.org.uk">www.dphsfife.org.uk</a></b>	<b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:enquiries@dphsfife.org.uk">enquiries@dphsfife.org.uk</a></b>
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## The Credit Crunch – Xmas And The Credit Unions In Fife!

We all know the feeling...what was I thinking?! Spent too much this Christmas? Struggling with your finances? If things are serious then perhaps it's a good time to get some Money Advice. How about planning ahead for next year? Did you know that there is a Credit Union in Fife? A credit to good financial planning THEY offer an easy way to save and borrow at a low cost, can bring a community together and can even be a way to learn new skills.

What are they? Credit unions - and they're going from strength to strength in Fife.

There are now six covering the whole of the region with around 2,000 members, an increase of 40 per cent in the last two years. In simple terms, a credit union is a co-operative, owned and managed by its members, which encourages members to save regularly, provides loans at very low rates of interest, gives members help and support on managing their money.

Fife's credit unions, for example, were quick to respond to the collapse of Farepak shortly before last Christmas, giving immediate loans of around £20,000 in total. Each credit union has a 'common bond' which determines who can join. For example, this can be people living in the same area or working for the same employer.

"Credit unions are a great way to manage your financial affairs, especially if you have limited or no access to banking services, they are also keen to welcome new members and also volunteers to help develop new collection points and other aspects of the business," said Susan Dryburgh, Credit Union Development Worker. To find out more about a credit union in your area and for more information contact

Susan Dryburgh, Credit Union Development Officer Tel: 0800 085 5803 Fax: 01592 583527

By Post: Fife Council, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT

## AGM & OPEN HOUSING EVENT

Many thanks to everyone who joined us in November at St Bryce Kirk when we looked back over the past year at what DPHS(F) has achieved. We had some fantastic presentations on the day and they included our own Housing Advisor, Wendy Riveiro, who shared stories from customers which showed just what a difference appropriate housing can make to someone's life. Fiona MacGregor joined us from Fife Council to speak about how the local authority is looking to improve the work they do in providing housing for specific needs and assisting people. Interestingly Fiona mentioned that Fife Council are now looking to the example of how DPHS(F) works by starting with the person and not the property – this will be for people who have specific housing needs not met by general stock types. We all felt just a little bit proud to hear Fiona acknowledge the good person centred work that DPHS(F) does!

We were also joined by Lyndsey Maricic from Fife Community Safety Partnership who spoke about Hate Crime in Fife – how to report it and how people are supported. Self reporting forms are available from Fife Independent Disability Network and if you want to know more, please just contact our office.

We were joined by some housing providers and other agencies on the day – and in addition to information from housing providers we were also joined by Circles Network (advocacy) and Digital Switchover (getting our TVs ready!).

We can't believe how much has been achieved in the past year – but importantly, we also know there is still so much more needs to be done. We take this opportunity to thank everyone who supports us with our work – not just our funders but our staff, volunteers and Directors who volunteer their time to steer the business. If you would like a copy of the Annual Report it can be downloaded from our website, or we will send one out to you if you contact the office.

## PRIVATE LANDLORDS

Currently there is no housing register of private landlord properties in Fife. Adverts can be seen in the local press (e.g. Fife Free Press, Courier on a weekly basis) or via the website [www.lettings247.com](http://www.lettings247.com). Once a customer has identified a property/landlord that meets their needs they can search to see if they are a registered landlord. Registration means the landlord is a "fit" person to be a landlord and it has no bearing on the quality of the property. You can search this at [www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk) -enter public search and put in the address of the property or the name of the landlord. Guidance on prices charged for private lets are available via Fife Council's website or give DPHS(F) a ring for guidance.

## **Could you benefit from the Glenrothes befriending service? - LinkLiving Fife - RealLiving Befriending Scheme.**

The Real Living Befriending Service aims to help people with mental health issues become more independent and improve their quality of life. The service operates in Glenrothes and places are still available for people who could benefit from spending time with a befriender.

Service co-ordinator Scott Robertson said: "Befriending is about someone who may be isolated due to mental health issues meeting up with another person on a regular basis. The befriender can help to build the person's confidence and help them access activities or services locally. Having that informal support can make a big difference to a person's life." Contact: Scott Robertson, LinkLiving, West Bridge Mill, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1TE

Phone: 01592 644048

Email: [srob@linkhalt.co.uk](mailto:srob@linkhalt.co.uk)

## **HATE CRIME IN FIFE**

Fife Community Safety Partnership launched an innovative DVD to highlight different types of hate crime and its affects on diverse communities throughout Fife.

I attended the launch on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in the Rothes Halls Glenrothes. The event was well presented with numerous organisations attending including Frontlinefife; Elderly Forum; Fife Independent Disability Network; Community Wardens to name but a few.

Fife Constabulary Superintendent Ian Bease co-hosted the event and Councillor George Kay, Chair of Fife Police, Fire and Safety Committee gave a speech acknowledging the need for the service.

The DVD was shown which reenacted real incidents of hate crime in Fife. I was absolutely shocked at some of the real incidents of hate crime. I welcome the confidential way that people can report these crimes and the tailored support and advice offered to victims from the safety partnership. This may lead to changing attitudes and behaviours and give the message to perpetrators that hate crime in Fife will not be tolerated.

Fife Police realise that members of the community may be reluctant to approach the Police directly. They have introduced self-referral forms for race and homophobic incidents and we have a stock of these self-referral forms.

**Should anyone not want to be identified through reporting hate crime it can be done anonymously. It is important that this crime is reported as it will be recorded and will contribute to an overall police awareness of the occurrence of race and hate crime. If you feel you are on the receiving end of hate crime then give us a ring and we will tell you how to take this forward. Fife Independent Disability Network have self reporting forms and are keeping records of incidents, as are Fife**

## **House Types, "I don't seem to be receiving any offers of housing?"**

At DPHS (F) we hear this quite often and will usually take it as an opportunity to carry out a review of your housing application – we will look carefully at the house type choices you have made and also the areas of choice.

As you are aware the amount of Wheelchair Barrier Free Bungalow properties that are in Fife at the moment and the planned new builds does not yet meet the need in Fife. If you only have bungalow ticked on your FHR application this is all you will be considered for and you may wait a very long time to be offered housing to meet your needs especially if your area/s of choice are in an area with poor stock, or if you have low points. Current systems on the FHR mean that even if a suitable ground floor flat or amenity style became available in one of your areas of choice, you will not come up as a match if you have not indicated this house type on your housing application.

In order that your chances of being offered housing to meet your needs are met I would advise that customers consider adding amenity style housing and ground floor flat to their FHR application, where this is appropriate to their needs. Obviously some customers do require a wheelchair accessible, barrier free property but many people may be able to manage very well in a level access ground floor flat, or amenity property. All new build ground floor flats are built to a visitable standard, doorways are wider and adaptations required can be applied for through stage 3 adaptations e.g. a wet floor shower. New amenity style property is also built to new standards.

Ore Valley Housing association, Kingdom Housing Association and Fife Housing Association do have amenity flats in some areas and previous customers have been allocated this type of property and manage very well. Obviously the ground floor flats would meet the needs of customer's who have limited mobility but we also previously have had Ctd success with customers who are wheelchair users accepting an amenity flat.

Depending on your area of choice there are also other housing providers to apply to, such as Cairn Housing, Horizon, Margaret Blackwood, Hillcrest and Servite who all have amenity style flats in areas of Fife. Cairn Housing particularly have amenity flats in Cowdenbeath where there is a lift installed in the building therefore you are not limited to ground floor only. If you'd like to discuss your housing options, and you have not received a recent review call, then please contact the office.

**Wendy Riveiro DPHS (F) Housing**

## Help Scheme is at hand for you to switch to digital TV

Older and disabled people living north and central Scotland are being offered help to switch to digital with the Switchover Help Scheme.

The Switchover Help Scheme has been set up to help eligible older and disabled people to make the change to digital on one of their TV sets in their home. People living in Angus, Dundee, Perth and parts of Fife served by the Angus transmitter will begin to switch on 4 August 2010. Those living in Lothian, parts of Edinburgh and parts of Fife served by the Craigkelly transmitter will begin to switch in April 2011. Who's eligible? People are eligible if:

1. They are aged 75 or over, or
2. They have lived in a care home for six months or more, or
3. They get (or could get) disability living allowance, or attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement, or
4. They are registered blind or partially sighted



Eligible people will be written to directly and will get help in plenty of time before switchover. The letters will explain how they can get extra help to convert one TV in their home to digital. Details about how to apply, an explanation of all of the available options and prices are clearly set out in the pack. Most people will be asked to pay £40 towards the standard offer of help. For eligible people who are also on pension credit, income support, income based jobseeker's allowance or employment and support allowance, it's free.

The Help Scheme is run by the BBC and has been designed around the needs of older and disabled people. Equipment has been chosen to be easy to use, and contact centre, delivery staff and installers have all been trained to understand and respect older and disabled people. All installers are vetted, carry identification and will never call without having made an appointment. For more information, please call us free on 0800 408 7654 or visit [helpscheme.co.uk](http://helpscheme.co.uk), or to find out when your area switches, log onto: [www.digitaluk.co.uk/postcodechecker](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/postcodechecker)

## Energy Assistance Package. What is the Energy Assistance Package?

The Energy Assistance Package provides advice and support to help people maximise their income, cut fuel bills and make their homes warmer and more comfortable. It offers an integrated and flexible approach to helping the fuel poor.

The new scheme is funded by the Scottish Government and is being delivered by the Energy Saving Scotland advice network and partner organisations. To access all parts of the Energy Assistance Package, call the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre free of charge on 0800 512 012. A call back service is available by texting 'warm' to 81025. A trained advisor will take enquirers through a series of questions about their home, including their current heating system. The questions will help advisors give the best energy advice possible and may lead to other forms of support including:

Income maximisation through tax credit/benefit checks

Signposting to energy providers for social tariffs if eligible

Loft and cavity wall insulation for those eligible

Other measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes such as a new central heating system if eligible.

## Spotting and Stopping Scams and Rogue Traders

### How to beat the bogus callers

Fife Rights Forum presented this at Fife House on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010 with speakers including Janice Russell, Fife Council Consumer Education; Katherine Hart, Scottish Scambusters'; Adam Gaunt, Fife Council Trading Standards and PC Mark Anderson, Fife Constabulary.

Scams that are used were highlighted and the fact that the highest proportion of people targeted are over the age of 65 and is on their own doorstep. Advice is .....if it is too good to be true then it is! Do not invite anyone in to your home before checking credentials. Following on this evidence Fife Constabulary are planning to visit every elderly resident in Fife to give advise on keeping safe. Letters are being sent out prior to the visits which are commencing in the Glenrothes area.



