

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Spring 2023

MERRYLEE 70th Anniversary SPECIAL!

See
pages
8-9

2022 marked the 70th Anniversary of the building of the Merrylee Estate. To mark this occasion we have included a special double page feature on the history of Merrylee, including an article written by the daughter of one of the activists who fought to keep the new houses in public ownership.

Daughter of Merrylee Housing Activist Ned Donaldson meets Annette Gray Merrylee's longest standing resident'



Reception Upgrades

The Association would like to thank all customers for their patience as the reception area at Samaritan house is being upgraded. We expect these works to be completed by May 2023.



Rent Restructure: What you need to know

You will be aware that the association has recently completed a rent restructuring exercise, and you will have received information directly about what this means for you and your rent. In this article we will explain exactly how this has been worked out and answer some common questions about these changes.

How is my rent worked out following the rent restructure exercise?

Everyone has what is called a '**base rent**'. This means regardless of what type, size or condition of property you live in everyone's **base rent** will be the same.

The **base rent** for all of our properties is £378.96 per calendar month. This figure is based on Financial Year 2023/24.

We then look at four criteria to decide the right rent charge for your specific property. We call this your '**target rent**'

The four criteria's we consider when calculating your **target rent** are:

1. Property size
2. Property type
3. Kitchen condition – by this we mean, do you have an internal kitchen? Does the kitchen

meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) for kitchen facilities? If the kitchen is internal or does not meet the Scottish Housing Quality standard, we deduct money for kitchen condition.

4. Do you have a dining room?

Based on these four criteria we then add or deduct an amount from the **base rent**. Anything with a – symbol below means we deduct an amount.

For clarity, we deduct an amount when:

- You live in a 1apt/1 person property – we deduct £30 from the **base rent**.
- You live in a 1apt/2 person property – we deduct £20 from the **base rent**.
- You have an internal kitchen, or one that does not meet the SHQS– we deduct £20 from the **base rent**.

Criteria 1: Property Size	Add Rent
1 Apt 1 Person	-30.00
1 Apt 2 Person	-20.00
2 Apt 1 Person	20.00
2 Apt 2 Person	30.00
3 Apt 1 Person	40.00
3 Apt 2 Person	50.00
3 Apt 3 Person	60.00
3 Apt 4 Person	70.00

Criteria 1: Property Size	Add Rent
4 Apt 2 Person	90.00
4 Apt 3 Person	100.00
4 Apt 4 Person	110.00
4 Apt 5 Person	120.00
4 Apt 6 Person	130.00
5 Apt 4 Person	150.00
5 Apt 5 Person	160.00
5 Apt 6 Person	170.00

Criteria 1: Property Size	Add Rent
5 Apt 7 Person	180.00
5 Apt 8 Person	190.00
6 Apt 6 Person	215.00
6 Apt 8 Person	230.00
6 Apt 10 Person	240.00
7 Apt 8 Person	265.00
7 Apt 10 Person	280.00
8 Apt 10 Person	310.00

Criteria 2: Property Type	Add Rent
Tenement	0
Other Flat /Maisonette	15.00
4 in a block	30.00
House	45.00

Criteria 3: Kitchen Condition	Add Rent
Yes	-20.00
No	-

Criteria 4: Dining Room	SCORE
Yes	20.00
No	-

For example –

If you live in a 3apt/4 person tenement with an internal kitchen & no dining room your **target rent** charge will be:

Base rent - £378.96 + £70 - £20 = £405

1. £70 due to property size
2. £0 due to the property being a tenement
3. -£20 due to the kitchen condition
4. £0 as the property does not have a dining room

If you are unsure or have any questions about your rent charge please do not hesitate to contact a member of our rents team on one of the numbers provided on page 14 of this newsletter or email rent-team@govanhillha.org

If you think we have got any information wrong when calculating your rent charge, please get in touch at once & we will sort this out.

FAQs on rent restructure

Q. Why did you carry out this exercise?

A. We wanted to review all our rent charges and ensure they were fair across all our stock and represented value for money whilst also being affordable.

Q. Did you carry out this review to generate more money?

A. No. Absolutely not. This exercise was all about fairness, it was not about bringing anymore more into the Association. Approximately 70% of tenants will see a rent reduction from the rent they are currently paying based on the **target rent**.

Q. How is the rent restructure being introduced?

A. The rent restructure will be phased in over a period of 5 years.

Q. Does the target rent change?

A. The four criteria used to decide your **target rent** will not change but the **base rent** charge will change yearly based on any rent increases decided by the Management Committee on a

yearly basis. The **base rent** for year 2022/23 was £355 per calendar month. The **base rent** for 2023/24 is £378.96. The reason for this increase is due to the 6.75% increase applied on 1st April 2023.

Q. I'm an ex GHA tenant how does this restructure affect me?

All tenants with a standard tenancy are part of the restructure. We are aware than many tenants who transferred to Govanhill Housing Association from GHA came over with a lower rent charge. Your rent charge will be amended in line with the four criteria and a **target rent** will be set up for you.

Q. Why are you changing the date my rent gets charged?

We are changing this to be consistent with other registered social landlords but also this links with our financial recording which runs from the 1st April to 31st March every year.

Please note you will have a 4 day rent charge in March 2023 at old rent charge then from the 1st April your new rent charge will start.

Families have an Egg-xcellent time at Easter Event

On Saturday the 1st of April the Community Garden held an Easter Fun Day for all the family. This included being able to participate in arts and crafts workshops, a scavenger hunt for the children...and of course a visit from the Easter Bunny!



Bulk Waste

The Association is reviewing how we deal with bulk waste and looking at our contracts to get the best possible service and value for money for tenants.

In the meantime we would like to remind all residents not to leave bulk waste items in the back court.



MYGLASGOW

If you have a large item to dispose of contact Glasgow City Council using their webform or the MyGlasgow app. The service costs £5 per item. Residents who cannot access the internet can phone 0141 287 9700 on Tuesday and Wednesday 9am - 3pm to place a request.

Tenant Participation: get Involved in your Association!

Govanhill Housing Association is a 'community controlled' Housing Association, which means that not only is the community at the heart of what we do, our Management Committee is made up of tenants and residents.

There are many ways to get involved in Govanhill Housing Association, from becoming a member to joining the management committee.



Opportunities to Get Involved

Environment Group

Govanhill Housing Association is looking for volunteers to join a focus group to discuss issues with the local environment. The group will look at ways that we can improve our local area, and work with the housing Association to tackle persistent environmental issues. This is an ideal opportunity to meet your Neighbours and make a difference. The group will look at everything from bulk waste to stair cleaning arrangements, as well as other aspects of the local environment.



Allocations Policy Review

The Association is currently reviewing our allocations policy: this is our guide to how we allocate housing to ensure our system is fair and consistent. We are looking for volunteers to be involved in this review.

To be involved in either of these working groups email **checkin@govanhillha.org** with your contact details and 'tenant participation' in the subject heading.

Issues with Household Pests? How to get support.

Unwanted visitors are increasingly common in homes across Glasgow, including Govanhill and Merrylee. Finding that you have an infestation can be distressing, however there is action that you can take to address the problem.

Rodents

Mice and Rats are the most frequently reported household pests in Glasgow. Rats and mice seek out warm places with a ready supply of food and will often make nests inside walls and other dark areas.

Cleanliness alone may not be enough to prevent a mouse infestation however, the presence of crumbs and other food can attract rodents.

Rodents are generally nocturnal so you are more likely to see mice in your home at night. You may hear noises such as scratching inside walls or behind furniture.

You may notice small droppings that look like black pellets.



What to do if I have a Rodent Infestation?

Glasgow City Council provides a free pest control service. You can report a pest control issue online or using the My Glasgow App. Alternatively you can call 0141 287 1059

If you have a rodent infestation an important step is to block as many gaps as possible so that any mice present in the walls of a tenement are not able to enter your home. If you think your home has any such gaps that may need filling, please contact the Association for support.

Bed Bugs and Cockroaches

Bed bugs are increasingly common, they do not discriminate between any particular kind of property and have been found everywhere from family homes to five star hotels in New York. They are spread by the movement of people and can be found in every area of the home, not just the bedroom.

To reduce the risk of bedbugs in the home do not take any furniture in from the street

or allow children to play in furniture that may be lying in back courts.

If you suspect that you have bedbugs or cockroaches please contact Glasgow City Council either online or using the My Glasgow App. Alternatively you can call 0141 287 1059.



Lifelink Offer free Counselling Sessions for Govanhill Residents

GCDT are working in partnership with Lifelink to offer blocks of up to 10 free counselling sessions to Govanhill residents. Sessions can be face to face, online or over the phone and are available to those living in the G42 7 or G42 8 postcode areas. Beyond making the initial referral, GCDT have no further involvement and your information will only be shared with Lifelink. For a confidential referral email GCDTadmin@govanhillha.org.



Close Cleaning Under Review

When the Association consulted on close cleaning, most tenants wanted close cleaning included as part of the service we offer. The Association is currently reviewing how we best deliver this service. Further details will be given in the summer newsletter.





Merrylee and Me

By Anni Donaldson

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Website: www.glasgowanni.com

On 1 March 2023 I visited Merrylee for the first time. Tucked away in the Glasgow's leafy south side, Merrylee's terraced houses and flats resembles many other city suburbs. Quiet and peaceful on that school strike day morning, it would have looked very different in 1951. Back then it was a noisy, muddy building site, busy with bricklayers, joiners, plumbers, plasterers and painters building much needed council houses for Glasgow Corporation. By the autumn of 1951 however Merrylee was at the centre of a scandal that grew into one of

Glasgow's biggest housing protests since the 1915 rent strikes.

The story is told in the book, 'The Merrylee housing scandal of 1951' by Ned Donaldson (my Dad) and his friend Les Forster - key figures in the protest. This connection to Merrylee's history led to an invitation from Govanhill Housing Association to pay my first visit and meet one of the original tenants, Annette Gray. Annette lives in the house her parents moved into when the scheme was new.

Merrylee in 1951



In 1951, post-war Glasgow continued to struggle with its historic legacy of sub-standard housing and shortages - no houses were built during the war. In 1949, the Conservatives took control of the Corporation and opposed the construction of municipal housing. They planned to demolish 169,000 existing houses and build only 17,000 new ones. The homelessness, over-crowding, insanitary conditions and sub-letting by unscrupulous landlords were persistent



problems which exacerbated class tensions in the city.

In 1951, the Corporation proposed to sell the 622 houses being built in Merrylee. Workers in the Corporation's Direct Labour Department were incensed and planned direct action against the proposal. On 6 December, on the day of the Merrylee vote in the City Chambers, a one-day city-wide strike and demonstration took place at George Square involving an estimated 1000+ people.

Although the Corporation motion passed, the campaign grew stronger and Merrylee became a key issue in the May 1952 municipal elections. When the Labour Party subsequently gained control of Glasgow Corporation the planned sale was shelved.



Merrylee in 2023

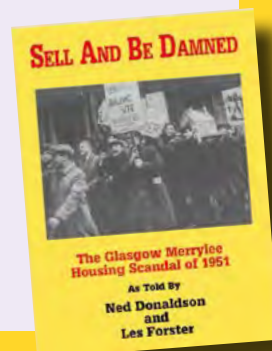
My Merrylee visit in March 2023 felt bitter sweet. It was wonderful to walk around and hear of the area's strong community spirit. Those quiet streets, spacious family homes, with their back and front doors and lovely gardens would have been the dream home for many of the 1951 Merrylee protesters and their families.

In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher successfully introduced the right to buy council houses and Glasgow's housing stock was vastly reduced. The 'For Sale' signs, were evidence of her legacy and of the desirability of the Merrylee homes which the 1951 workers fought to keep in public ownership. However, I was delighted by Merrylee's green spaces, quiet streets, traffic calming, shops, playgrounds, and amenities. I was also cheered to know that Merrylee's social housing is managed by Govanhill Housing



Association and to see that well-designed modern housing continues to be built for rent in Merrylee. 'Homes for the needy not the greedy' was the 1951 protesters' slogans. 70 years on, perhaps some of Ned, Les' vision survives in Merrylee today.

Copies of 'Sell and be damned' are available from the Scottish Labour History Society. Or direct from: **annidonaldson@gmail.com**



70 years in Merrylee and Counting

Annette Gray and her family moved to Merrylee in 1952 from the East End of Glasgow and were among of the first tenants to move into the estate following a successful campaign to keep the homes in public ownership.



In the photo Annette shows us the tree her father planted in the garden all those years ago.

Get involved with your Community Council

Cathcart Community Council restarted last year, and is made up of twelve elected local volunteers, all of whom live in and around Merrylee, Cathcart and Muirend. We meet on the second Wednesday of every month (except July, August and December) from 7-9pm in Cathcart Baptist Church 96 Merrylee Rd, Glasgow G43 2RA. You can also join us online by getting in touch and requesting a zoom link.

Get in touch at **cathcartdcc@gmail.com**, visit our website at **cathcartdistrict.org.uk** or follow us on Twitter (@Cathcart_DCC), Facebook and Instagram.



Preventing Damp

What you need

In Scotland, the latest Scottish House Condition Survey (2019), showed that 99% of social homes were free from damp and 86% per cent were free from any sign of mould. Glasgow's cold and wet climate contributes to the problem, but building fabric also plays a part.

When it comes to Damp and Mould prevention is better than cure. This article will outline the steps the Association is taking to prevent and treat damp and mould, as well as ways that you can limit the buildup of condensation in your home.

What is Damp and Mould?

Damp is a general term which means excess moisture. When properties are damp, they are harder to heat because some of the heat is being used to dry out the house.

Damp often leads to the growth of mould.

Mould is a type of fungus that thrives in damp and humid conditions.

Mould grows rapidly and will continue to spread over walls, ceilings, and furniture if it is left untreated. It can be a serious health risk so it is important to contact the Association as soon you spot the first patches of mould forming.

Rising Damp and Penetrating Damp

These kinds of damp are caused by issues with the building. Signs of rising damp include damage to skirting boards or paintwork. If you have penetrating damp, you may notice dark patches on your walls that grow darker when it is wet outside. If you notice either of these types of damp contact the Association as soon as possible.

Taking Action on Damp

If you notice damp in your home, it is useful to identify the type of damp to solve the problem.

Damp from a Leakage

If you have damp from a leakage, such as loose pipe or faulty plumbing you will see a concentrated patch of damp in one area close to the source of the problem. It is important to contact the Association as soon as possible if you notice this kind of dampness.

Condensation Damp

Condensation is the most common type of damp. It is caused by a combination of excess moisture in the air and poor ventilation. It could start from something simple, such as steam from the kettle, running the hot water or boiling water on the hob.

Condensation damp can easily be remedied without it causing lasting damage or leading to mould.

p and Mould: to know

Dealing with Mould

Condensation and damp issues, if left untreated, could result in mould growing on the walls of your home. Mould is an aggressive type of fungus.

Typically black or green in appearance, not only does mould look unsightly and smell unpleasant, but it can also release toxins if left untreated. If you spot mould in your home ideally clean the area as soon as possible.

Mould can be a serious health risk, so action should be taken as soon as it has been spotted that the first mould patches are forming. Contact the Association as soon as you notice patches of mould.

If you have any respiratory problems you think are caused by damp or mould contact your GP as soon as possible.

Top Tips to Reduce Condensation and Prevent Mould

Taking these steps to reduce moisture in your home can help prevent mould and damp.

- Keep lids on pans when cooking
- Dry clothes outside when possible
- Ventilate so the moist air leaves the house – always use the extractor fan when you're cooking, showering or bathing.
- Shut the doors when you are cooking/ bathing and open windows.
- Make sure air can circulate by leaving gaps between furniture and the wall.
- Heat your home more where possible, keeping the heat on at a low level is better than rapid changes in temperature.
- Open windows when you can.
- If you notice condensation droplets of liquid water on your windows wipe them away as soon as possible.

Tenancy Services Take a New Approach to Anti-Social Behaviour

Following feedback from residents and tenants the Association is improving its response to Anti Social Behaviour by enlisting the support of the Community Relations Unit (CRU) of Glasgow City Council.

The CRU are a specialised team whose focus is to resolve ASB through support and early intervention. For the next year staff at the CRU will support Housing Officers to resolve Anti Social Behaviour cases on a trial basis.

More information about the Community Relations Unit can be found on the Glasgow City Council website.

What this means for you

If you wish to report an instance of anti-social behaviour contact your housing officer as you normally would. The Association will decide whether to draw on the support of the Community Relations Unit.

What is anti-social behaviour

- A course of conduct that causes alarm or distress to someone of a different household
- For example regular very loud music, regular noisy parties, threats and harassment, vandalism

The following behaviour is unlikely to be viewed as 'Anti Social Behaviour'

- Noise from children playing
- Noise from walking on laminate floors,
- Disputes about parking.

Development Update

It's been a difficult period to deliver development activities due to the legacy of the Covid Pandemic coupled with construction costs rising well above what is currently one of the highest inflation rates in recent years.

Despite these challenges, we are committed to investing in our homes to keep them to a modern standard, safe and to improve their energy efficiency.

This year we have successfully completed the latest phases of our kitchen and window renewal programme along with installing energy efficient central heating systems. We also have contracts in place which will move on site in the next few months with the next phase of our window renewal programme and carry out kitchen, window, and bathroom renewals to four closes.

The Association continues its work to complete the upgrading of the flats it has acquired through its successful South West Govanhill Acquisition Programme along with carrying out essential common repairs to seven closes. We expect a further four closes to start their common repair works this summer.

Our planned development of 24 units at 159 Butterbiggins Road was unfortunately delayed due to the high costs we received last year in

our pricing exercise. The committee is keen to move forward with this development to supply more social housing to our community and we are preparing to retender the project with the hope of a more acceptable price.

We are also happy to confirm that we are in the final stages of negotiation with Link Housing Association who are currently building on the former Larkfield Bus Garage Site in Butterbiggins Road to acquire 60 new build homes for social rent which we hope will be available to let in 2024.

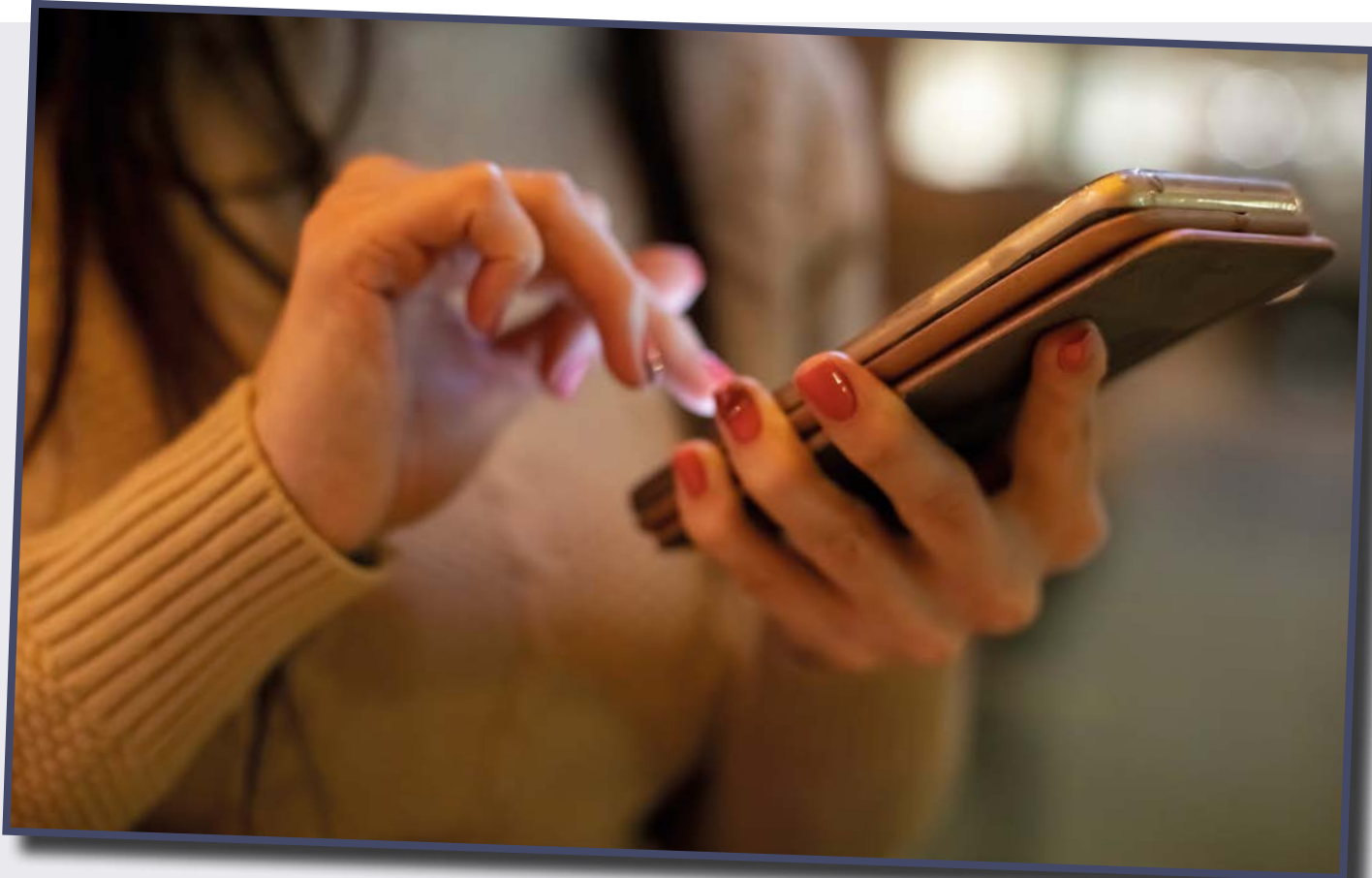


Free Indoor Bicycle Storage

We are delighted that tenants have taken up our offer of free internal bicycle storage. If you have a bicycle that you are struggling to store, please get in touch. Mears will install either a pulley system or wall rack in a location that works for your property.

For more information contact
Lhiddleston@govanhillha.org





Cost of Living Crisis: *Talk to us if you need help*

With the cost-of-living crisis ongoing this is a particularly tough time for many in our community. We care deeply about our tenants and have delivered a number of initiatives over the winter to mitigate some of the worst impacts of the current crisis.

This has included crisis support funding, providing money for new winter coats and continuing our ongoing welfare rights support. We will continue to seek funding to maximise tenant income wherever we can.

If you find yourself in crisis, please speak to your housing officer or a member of our rents team.

Support with Rent and Housing Costs

If you are struggling to pay your rent please contact our rents team as soon as possible.

- Judith Christie: 0141 - 636 - 3624
- Avril White: 0141 - 636 - 3662
- Loraine Jennings: 0141- 636- 3672
- Sandra Murray: 0141 - 433 - 2141
- Lesley McSkimming: 0141 - 636 - 3647

To make sure you are receiving any benefits you are entitled to contact our welfare rights team on

- Shaneela Afzal 0141 - 636 - 3651
- Julie Brooks 0141 - 636 - 3686
- Shamim Ahmad 0141 - 636 - 3627 (Working days Tue. / Wed. / Thurs).

Gas Servicing and Electrical Inspections

As your landlord we have a legal duty to carry out gas servicing, safety and electrical inspections in your home.

The table opposite gives more information about what will happen at these visits.



	Gas Servicing and Safety Checks	Electrical Inspections
When?	Once per calendar year	Every 5 years
What?	We will service and check your boiler and controls and check the flues. We will also check that your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working properly.	The test involves working at your main circuit board or consumer unit. Access will also be required to check a few sockets and switches to make sure the wiring is in good condition.
Who?	Our contractor, City Technical Services carries out the annual gas servicing on our behalf.	These tests are carried out by MEARS, SDA and Rodgers Electrical.

What do we need from you?

All we need from you is access to do these tests when requested. We will do our best to call at a date and time that is convenient for you. We will write and give you plenty of notice before we visit. It is part of your tenancy agreement that you give us access for essential repairs and maintenance. As these tests are a legal requirement, we have the right to access your property to carry out this work after we have given at least 24 hours' notice of our intention to do so.





Glasgow

CARE & REPAIR

FREE Handyperson Service

Available to Govanhill Housing Association tenants where all members of the household are aged 65 & over or have a disability.

Contact us:

📞 0141 433 2749

✉ careandrepair
@southside-ha.co.uk

🌐 www.southside-ha.org

🏠 135 Fifty Pitches Road
Glasgow, G51 4EB



The Handyperson Service is FREE OF CHARGE -
payment is only required for materials