

Stage 2: An Important notice on Pentland's proposed transfer to Cairn

A good offer for tenants...

At the end of July we wrote to all tenants with the plan for our proposed transfer to Cairn Housing Association. In that formal consultation document we explained the reasons why our Board believe that a transfer to Cairn will provide the best possible outcome and future for our homes and services. We are writing to you to update you on the consultation and the next steps towards a transfer to Cairn.

Throughout August we have been knocking on tenants' doors in our communities to talk about the transfer promises. We also welcomed your feedback in writing, invited you to fun days in Wick and Thurso, and invited you to six online video meetings where you could meet with Pentland and Cairn staff to ask your questions. At the end of the consultation period we had heard from 276 tenants, which is 57% of all Pentland households. This was your opportunity to influence any big changes to the promises, if we were learning that the deal on the table from Cairn did not meet your priorities.

Why are we proposing a transfer of our homes and services to Cairn?

For a few reasons. You told us that the most important thing to you is increased investment in your homes, and Cairn has guaranteed almost £2m more in spending over the next five years than can be offered by a standalone Pentland. This would mean that hundreds of your homes will benefit from improvements including new kitchens, bathrooms, energy efficiency upgrades and new heating systems.

We also received very positive feedback on Cairn's affordable rent guarantee, which locks in a rent freeze in the first year after the transfer and lower increases over the following four years than could be set by Pentland. For a family paying £400 a month in rent, this would mean an initial monthly saving of £14.10 for the first year and a total saving over five years of £1,661.

We also learned that you really value local services from the Pentland team in Thurso. The offer from Cairn protects jobs and a local office from where a new combined Cairn and Pentland team will continue to manage our homes, services and repairs.

Cairn can guarantee security for the future because they can spread their costs over more homes, which means more affordable rent increases and significantly more investment in our homes, while protecting jobs and your local services.

So what happens next?

The offer from Cairn has been many months in the making and was based on your priorities. After weeks of speaking to tenants online, over the phone and on their doorsteps, answering your questions and inviting your feedback, we are very confident that we have an offer from Cairn that strikes the right balance between keeping future rent increases affordable, while investing more in improvements to our homes and communities. A large majority of feedback has been in favour of the proposed transfer, so our Board has decided to move to the next stage without any changes to the offer set out in your Stage 1 Notice.

When the ballot opens, vote YES for the transfer to Cairn

You will receive a ballot paper in the post from Civica, an entirely independent provider of election and voting services. You will be able to vote online, by post, by text, by phone and by popping your ballot paper in sealed ballot boxes. Your vote will be anonymous. The ballot will run for 28 days and will start in early October. If you have a joint tenancy, then each individual on the tenancy will receive their own ballot paper to return, so please do remember to use each and every vote.

If a majority of tenants vote YES for the transfer, you will become Cairn tenants on 1 April 2022.

A reminder of our transfer promises

We believe this transfer could bring considerable benefits for you, as a tenant of Pentland. If tenants vote yes in the secret ballot in October, these are Cairn's promises to you:

- Cairn will **FREEZE** rents in the first year of the transfer and provide an affordable rent guarantee for the following four years, with lower rent increases than proposed by a stand-alone Pentland
- Cairn will **invest £6.3 million** in your homes and communities over the next five years, with hundreds of new kitchens and other home improvements guaranteed
- Local services from a new combined Cairn and Pentland team, with new options for getting in touch online. **Existing Pentland staff will be protected** and will transfer to Cairn
- Cairn will provide **financial security** and opportunities for new services to Pentland's tenants by being part of the larger Cairn Housing Group

If you would like another copy of the Stage 1 Notice please contact us and we will post one out to you. You can also download the document from our website by scanning the QR code below.

Any questions, concerns or feedback? Get in touch

Please contact us if you have any questions about the transfer proposal. You can contact Neil Golightly, Cairn's Business Services Manager, by emailing neil.golightly@cairnha.com or calling 0800 990 3405. Or you can contact Pentland by emailing pha@pentlandhousing.co.uk or calling 01847 892507.

You can also contact your independent tenant advisors, TPAS Scotland, by calling 0800 049 5761 or emailing lesley.baird@tpasscotland.org.uk. TPAS Scotland also have a Pentland tab on their Facebook page.

Any final feedback received by **21st September** will be considered by our Board when they meet later in September.

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