



TENANTS' HANDBOOK 2024

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Welcome

Midlothian Council strives to provide you with the best possible level of service during your tenancy. This handbook was produced along with our Tenant Panel members to make sure the information is relevant and helpful. It contains information about the housing services we provide, useful links, contacts and your rights, and responsibilities as a tenant of Midlothian Council. It will also provide you with advice regarding any issues you may have with your tenancy and signpost you to the correct service should your issue not be resolved by using the information in the handbook.

We hope you find this handbook useful and informative. We have tried to include as much information as possible to help you with your tenancy and settling into your new home.

If you require any further information you can visit our website

www.midlothian.gov.uk/housing

or contact your Housing Officer at

housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk

| Service | Email | Search | Phone |
|--|--|---|---------------|
| Housing (Allocations & Tenancy) | housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk | Housing | 0131 271 3394 |
| Housing Repairs | contactcentre@midlothian.gov.uk | Housing repairs | 0131 663 7211 |
| Council Tax and Reduction Scheme | revenues.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk | Council Tax | 0131 271 3201 |
| Rent and other payment enquiries | enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk | Rents and payments | 0131 271 3201 |
| Rent Arrears (Help and advice for rent or arrears) | arrears@midlothian.gov.uk | Rent arrears | 0131 271 3499 |
| Scottish Welfare Fund | N/A | Scottish welfare Fund | 0131 270 7500 |
| Recycling and waste collection | contactcentre@midlothian.gov.uk | Rubbish and recycling | 0131 561 5284 |
| Homelessness (Office hours) | Homelessness.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk | Homelessness | 0131 271 3397 |
| Emergency Homelessness (out of hours) | N/A | Homelessness | 0131 201 0450 |
| Environmental Health | environmentalhealth@midlothian.gov.uk | Environmental health | 0131 271 3345 |
| Feedback and Comments (Housing Matters) | feedback@midlothian.gov.uk | Complaints and comments-Form online to complete | 0131 271 3394 |
| Adult and Social care | swccenquiries@midlothian.gov.uk | Adult and Social Care | 0131 271 3900 |
| Child Protection | cfreferrals@midlothian.gov.uk | Child Protection | 0131 271 6674 |
| Dog fouling | contactcentre@midlothian.gov.uk | Dog fouling, dog fouling can be reported online | 0131 561 5284 |
| Scottish Water Emergencies | help@scottishwater.co.uk | | 0800 0778 778 |
| Electric (power cut) | | | Call 105 |
| Gas Emergencies | | | 0800 111 999 |



SECTION 1: MOVING IN



- **Checklist**
- **What we promise – Housing Standards**
- **Housing Officer**
- **Your Tenancy Agreement**
- **Your responsibilities**
- **Gas, electricity and water**

Checklist

| ITEM | LOCATION |
|---|----------|
| Keys for main entrance door | |
| Key or fob for security door (if applicable) | |
| Access to bin store/communal bins (if applicable) | |
| Checked all keys work properly | |
| Key for gas &/or electricity meters (if applicable) | |
| Set my heating timer switch | |
| Checked the location of stopcock | |
| Mains water stopcock | |
| Consumer Unit (Fuse Box) | |
| Organised my rent payments | |



What we will promise - Housing Standards

We aim to provide you with a high quality home of the highest standard. We want to ensure the area outside of your home is also kept to a high standard and one that you can be proud of. If you feel we are not meeting this standard, then please contact the Housing Team on 0131 271 3394.

The following are standards that we encourage:

Communal areas

- We will provide, where possible, clothes drying facilities. We will ensure that drains are clear and drainage manholes are free from obstruction
- Where we provide lighting, this will be repaired
- We will ensure that gutters and downpipes are well-maintained and free from leaks or blockages
- Where we provide lighting, this will be repaired

Bin stores

- We will investigate any irresponsible use of the bin stores within 10 working days and take appropriate action
- We ask you to use appropriate bins, recycle where you can. Take out your bin on time. Request a special uplift if required
- You can find out the day your bins will be emptied or arrange a bulky uplift at www.midlothian.gov.uk or by calling 0131 561 5284

Gates and Fencing

- We will ensure that before sign-up you understand the boundary of your home
- We will ensure that upon moving into your tenancy any communal boundary gates, fences, walls or railings are in good and safe condition
- We will ensure that we will repair communal boundary broken fences

Landscaping

- We will ensure that before sign up, if you have a garden area we will have brought it up to an acceptable standard
- Unless you reside in a property with gardening services, we ask you to cut back shrubs, overgrown trees, hedges and maintain lawn as required
- We will ask you to uplift and dispose of garden waste appropriately

Stair condition

- Unless you reside in a property with cleaning services, we ask you to sweep and wash stairs and landings at least once per fortnight
- We can assist you and your neighbours with a cleaning rota to show you when stair/close has been cleaned
- For safety and security we ask all residents to please ensure the main door is closed at all times
- Keep the stairwell free of all items
- If a replacement main door is required, we will let you know and provide key/fob

Alterations/improvements

- You must request in writing prior to making any alterations or improvements to your home
- We will update you on our decision within 28 days

Graffiti

- We will remove offensive or racist graffiti within 24 hrs
- We will remove other graffiti as soon as reasonably possible

Fly-tipping

- We will try to identify who has dumped unwanted items
- If items are not removed by the person responsible, we will remove them within 10 working days and recharge the cost of this where possible

Pet nuisance

- We will work with Midlothian Council environmental health wardens and remind tenants of their pet responsibility
- We ask all pet owners to pick up any animal waste

Unauthorised vehicles

- We will investigate cars abandoned on our housing revenue account. We will work with Police and the DVLA to have them removed
- We will investigate any motor propelled cycle in the house, common stair, pathway or pends
- You must get our written permission if you want to park any other vehicle in your garden, for example a trailer, caravan or boat



Health and Safety

- We will remove any chemicals or hazards that are of a health and safety nature within 24 hours
- We will carry out annual inspections of estates and take appropriate action on any health and safety issues that arise
- You must not store replacement gas cylinders within the property, garden, common staircase or communal area
- You must advise the council of the proposed use of oxygen cylinders within your home and keep to the safety conditions covering their use

Neighbourhood Walkabouts

- We will hold a minimum of 12 housing walkabouts per year across Midlothian Council housing estates
- Where possible, we encourage you to attend neighbourhood walkabouts with staff. Alternatively speak to officers on issues of concern

Housing Officer

A Housing Officer will make contact with you approximately 4-6 weeks after you sign your tenancy agreement.

This is to arrange a visit to discuss any problems you have experienced while settling into your new home. You can contact your Housing Officer at any time if you have any queries about your tenancy or your estate.

Some of their duties include:

- Changes to tenancy
- Permission requests
- Investigating neighbour complaints and antisocial behaviour
- Ensuring the upkeep of communal areas.

Current list of Housing Officers can be found on our website under Housing Officer

[Your Housing Officer | Midlothian Council](#)

or call 0131 271 3394



Your Tenancy Agreement

The Tenancy Agreement that you have signed is a legal document that sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and our duties as a landlord. **It is the most important document you have for your new home so please keep it in a safe place.**

The topics covered within the Tenancy Agreement are:

- Details of your rent charge and the importance of paying your rent
- Use of the house and the common parts
- Respect for others-being a good neighbour
- Sub-letting, assignation and exchange of your tenancy*
- Repairs, maintenance improvement and alterations
- Information and consultation
- Complaints
- Ending the tenancy

* Please ensure that you notify the Housing Service directly of any changes to the people living in your home. Failure to do so can affect assignations, sub-letting, succession and joint tenancies.

Data Protection

Midlothian Council uses the personal data you provide for purposes associated with the delivery of our services. For more information see:

www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200285/access_to_information/338/privacy_and_cookies

Personal data will be retained in line with Midlothian Council retention policies.



Your Responsibilities

As a tenant you have a number of rights and responsibilities. These are detailed in your Tenancy Agreement and are to do with the care you take of your home, your neighbours and your neighbourhood.

Please read it carefully so you understand your rights and responsibilities.

Our responsibilities are to provide you with a home that is wind and watertight and habitable, keep your property in good repair and make sure that repairs we are responsible for are carried out within the timescales. We can also take appropriate action regarding your tenancy in certain circumstances, for example if there has been evidence of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

Home contents insurance: pay as you go

We do not insure your furniture, belongings or decoration against theft, fire, vandalism and burst pipes.

You will need to take out home contents insurance, this can be your own or the council insurance.

For council tenants the cost of the insurance is payable weekly along with your rent.

To request an application form please email housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk or call 0131 271 3394.

Garden

If you have a garden, you must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming over-grown, untidy or causing a nuisance.

If you fail to do this, you are breaching your agreement and we will decide what work requires to be done. If you do not undertake this work, we may do it ourselves and charge you for it.

Stair Cleaning

If you live in a flat within a common stair then you will be responsible to take your turn to brush and clean the stair. You are responsible for the area outside your door down to the next floor tenant or main door. A rota system may be in place to make sure that every tenant takes a turn and is responsible for keeping the area clean. If there is no rota in place in your stair your Housing Officer can help you set this up.

It is the responsibility of all tenants in the common stair to keep the area clear of all belongings.

Keeping Pets

You are given automatic permission to keep one domestic pet. However you require permission to keep more than one domestic pet and any non-domestic pets.

If you have a pet your tenancy agreement requires you to be considerate and keep your animal under control. You should take all reasonable steps to prevent excessive noise, fouling in gardens and public places. You are responsible for any clean up after your pet, otherwise this is a breach of tenancy.

We can withdraw the permission for your pet should there be a concern, we would communicate this with you directly.

Waste and recycling

You are responsible for putting your own bins/ recycling box out for collection at the correct time and bringing them back in.

For more information please look up our website www.midlothian.gov.uk > bins and recycling

[Bin collection days | Midlothian Council](#)

Organising the gas, electricity and water supply

You must contact the current supplier to notify them that you are the new tenant and provide the meter readings. The contract is between yourself and the supplier and so you can choose to use a different supplier. Please phone the numbers below to establish who is currently supplying the property with gas and electricity.

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Gas | 0870 608 1524 |
| Electricity | 0330 101 0300 |

If you do not do this your supply may be disconnected.

If the property has a quantum/card meter, the keys/cards will be obtained by the Housing Officer and you must contact the supplier to get new keys/cards.

Water supply

If you are moving to your property in the winter, the water system will have been drained down to avoid water tank or pipe bursts. You will need to call us on 0131 663 7211 or email contactcentre@midlothian.gov.uk to arrange for the water system to be turned on.



Who you should update about your new home:

Change of address list

Midlothian Council
Council Tax
Housing benefit/Universal Credit
Schools/nursery
Library account
Tone zone membership
Any other service provided by Midlothian Council

Services

Electoral Register
Telephone (landline/mobile)
Satellite/internet provider
Post office-redirect
Club cards

Motoring

Vehicle registration -DVLA
Vehicle insurance
Driving license - DVLA

Health

Doctor
Dentist
Optician

Financial

Bank/building society
House contents insurance
Credit card
Loans
HM Revenue and Customs (tax credit/child benefit)
Rental/hire purchase
Pension companies
Savings/bonds
Employer
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)



SECTION 2: DURING YOUR TENANCY



- **Paying your rent and Council Tax**
- **Help to pay your rent and Council Tax**
- **Repairs**
- **Safety in your home**
- **Permissions**
- **Waste and Recycling**
- **Antisocial behaviour**
- **Helping you stay in your home**
- **Tenant Participation**
- **Moving house**



Paying your rent and Council Tax

The rent for your council house is charged on a weekly basis and the amount will show on your Tenancy Agreement.

You will receive a rent payment card shortly which has your unique nine-digit reference number on it. A direct debit form will also be enclosed with your rent payment card.



Please take a note of this number as you will need this when paying over the phone and online.

How can I pay and where?

We offer a variety of payment methods in addition to the cash and cheque method. If you are unable to pay by direct debit you must pay your rent on a weekly basis or monthly in advance otherwise you will be in arrears.

- Direct debit – we recommend direct debit as the most efficient and cost effective way to pay your rent. Payments are taken directly from your bank account on either the 1st, 15th, the end of the month, or weekly instalments every Monday.
- Debit card or credit card- you can pay your rent 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Call our automated telephone system on 0131 660 1845 and follow the step-by-step instructions or visit our website www.midlothian.gov.uk/pay then click housing rent payments.
- Payment card - you can pay your rent using your rent payment card at the post office or any shop that displays the Paypoint or Payzone sign.

Council Tax

You are responsible for paying the Council Tax, water and waste water rates for your home.

For further information on Council Tax visit our Revenues service by email

revenues.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk or call 0131 271 3201.



Paying Council Tax

You can set up a direct debit in 2 ways:

- Go to our website to download an application form, please write your 9 digit Council Tax account in the reference number box.

<https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/606/council-tax/159/set-up-a-direct-debit-to-pay-council-tax>

- Or telephone us on 0131 271 3201 and have this information ready:
- Your 9 digit Council Tax account number (at the top of your bill)
- Your bank or building society account number and sort code.

Our lines are open:

- 09.00am -5.00pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
- 10.00am -5.00pm Wednesday
- 09.00am -3.00pm Friday



Alternatively you can pay:

- By phoning 0131 660 1845 (automated Service)–You will need your Council Tax reference number.
- In person at a post office or Pay Point outlet.

If you have any queries about paying your Council Tax and rent, or struggling to make payments, call us on 0131 271 3499.

What if I lose my rent and Council Tax Card?

You can request a new card by visiting our website www.midlothian.gov.uk and searching “request a new payment card”, or calling 0131 271 3201.



Council Tax Reduction

To qualify you will need to make an application and meet the relevant conditions. If you are a care leaver you may qualify for an exemption or discount in your Council Tax bill. Please get in touch for more information on 0131 271 3201 or visit

www.midlothian.gov.uk/helptopaytax

Housing Benefit

In most circumstances if you are of *working age* and need help with your housing costs, you must claim this through Universal Credit from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

You must apply online for this at

www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit



Problems paying your rent/ rent arrears

We understand that people can find themselves in rent arrears for all kinds of reasons. If you are struggling to pay the rent, you can talk to a member of our rent arrears staff in confidence by calling 0131 271 3499.

We can also arrange to meet in your own home.

We will make every effort to help you deal with your rent arrears, but if you do fall behind with the rent, the council has a procedure that it will follow to recover the arrears.

| | |
|--|--|
| Universal Credit | 0800 328 5644 |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | Penicuik 01968 675 259 Dalkeith 0131 660 1636 |
| Midlothian Council Welfare Rights Officer | 0131 271 3781 |

Repairs

We are responsible for repairing and maintaining the structure of your home. This includes all the external parts, any internal fixtures and fittings originally fitted by us, wiring, pipes, fixtures and fittings for heating, drainage, power and lighting. This includes the maintenance and repair of communal areas.

Reporting a repair

When you contact Midlothian Council to report a repair, it is essential that you give accurate and honest details of what is wrong so that your repair can be carried out satisfactorily and on time.

You will also need to provide the information below:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number
- The times when you are usually available to allow access

Call the repairs line on 0131 663 7211 for any repair enquiries.

If the repair is not an emergency, please call during office hours.

You can also email

contactcentre@midlothian.gov.uk with a non-urgent repair.



What is an Emergency Repair?

Issues which put the health, safety or security of you or others at immediate risk or which affects or is likely to adversely affect the structure of the building should be reported immediately by calling 0131 663 7211.

Whenever possible we aim to respond within four hours of you reporting them.. When you phone us to report an emergency repair we will give you advice to eliminate or reduce any risk of danger.



Emergencies

It is important to know where the following items are in your home. By locating these items you will be prepared for a home emergency.

You should ensure that you know where the mains gas handle and the consumer unit/fuse box are located. It is beneficial in case of power cuts to have a torch kept in a safe place within your home.

Dealing with a burst pipe

- Turn off the water at the stopcock
- Turn off your heating system
- Turn off your electricity
(DO NOT TOUCH ELECTRICS IF THEY ARE WET)
- Open every tap to drain the system
- Report the burst pipe by calling 0131 663 7211

If your pipes freeze:

- Turn off the water at the stop valve
- Open all the sinks and bath taps
- Call emergency repairs: 0131 663 7211

Dealing with a smell of gas or gas leak

These simple steps should be followed if you smell gas or suspect a gas leak:

- Open windows and doors to allow fresh air in.
- Do not smoke or use anything electrical until you know it is safe to do so
- Turn off the gas at the mains tap, which is usually near the meter
- Phone the free National Gas Emergency line immediately on 0800 111 999 from a telephone outside your home
- Follow the advice given by the emergency adviser
- Wait outside for a gas engineer to arrive
- Finally you must also report gas leaks to the council on 0131 663 7211.

| Repair category | Description | Response within |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| Emergency | Overflowing toilets, roof leaks, no heating or hot water, doors or windows cannot be secured | 24 hours |
| Priority repair | No heat in a radiator, faulty electric sock or light | 7 days |
| Planned/routine | Internal doors-damaged kitchen units -faulty | 28 days |

Before and during a repair

We would expect you to:

- If you are told the repair is classed as an emergency stay in your home or make sure there is a responsible adult (over 16) who will wait until someone comes to carry out the repair.
- Report criminal damage or vandalism to the police and get an incident number.
- Act to prevent further damage once a fault has been identified
- Clear the area around the repair before we arrive. This may include lifting carpets, floor coverings including laminate flooring, clearing cupboards, moving furniture (if we have to do this we may charge you)
- Keep children and pets away from the repair area
- Refrain from smoking when our staff are in the property
- Be at home at the time of the agreed appointment to provide access

If you are not home the job will be cancelled and you will have to report it again.

Right to Repair

The Right to Repair Scheme means we will pay you compensation if we don't meet the required timescales for some repairs. Right to Repair scheme repairs must:

- Have an estimated value of £350 or less
- Be a "Qualifying Repair"

You can find more information on the "Right to Repair Scheme" page on our website

[Right to Repair | Council housing repairs | Midlothian Council](#)

What repairs/maintenance am I responsible for?

In your home, you are responsible for:

- The fittings you have installed or accepted at the start of the tenancy such as laminate flooring, carpets, shelves, built-in furniture etc
- Fitting additional locks and their repair
- Bleeding radiators
- Resetting tripped switches
- All internal decoration
- Repairing of minor cracks and holes in walls and ceilings that can be filled before decoration
- Repair of handles and locks on the internal doors
- Television aerials and reception equipment except where it is fitted by us
- Plugs and chains to baths, sinks and basins



Outside your home, you are responsible for:

- Grounds and garden area designated to the property
- Dividing fences, gates, driveways and garden structures not erected by the council - you could have a shared responsibility.

Repairs in communal areas

You should report it in the same way that you would report a repair in your home, and advise us that it is in the area you share with your neighbours. We may not own all the properties in your block. Before we carry out any priority or routine work we may need to consult and obtain the agreement of the other owners.

Modernisation programme

When your home is due for modernisation, we will write to let you know what is proposed, and when the work is likely to be carried out.

We may delay some repair requests if we know the component is due to be replaced, and will let you know. Typical modernisation work involves replacing kitchens and heating systems. We will liaise with you while this work is planned and carried out, to keep any disruption to a minimum.

What should I do if I go on holiday in the winter?

Many people leave their home during the winter months, particularly at Christmas, to go to visit family and friends. If you have any plans to stay away overnight during cold weather it is important that you keep the heating on- preferably on a timer, so that the property never gets too cold. This will help to prevent burst pipes and damage to your personal property. It's always good to know in case of any water bursts where the stop tap is located, usually it is normally under the kitchen sink, but can be found in other locations within the home.

If you are going away for a number of weeks in the winter months and would like your heating system drained please contact the repairs line on 0131 663 7211. You should be aware that you will be charged for work arising from burst pipes if precautions have not been taken.



Safety in your home

Annual Gas Safety Check

The council has a legal requirement, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, to ensure that all gas appliances and flues in your home are checked and certified as being “safe” every year.

We access all homes with gas appliances to carry out a service and safety check every year. Your smoke detectors will also be checked while the engineer is in your home.

If access is refused after two attempts, the council will force entry and change the lock to your home. If this happens you will be charged for the additional costs. The keys for the new locks will be available at Dalkeith Police station.

If you have installed a gas cooker or other appliance, you are responsible for ensuring it operates properly. If during the check we find this is the source of a fault we will advise you, have the supply to the appliance capped and charge you for doing so.

Smoke detector

If the alarm keeps sounding continuously:

- Identify the source of the smoke as quickly as possible.
- Take action to turn off or extinguish the source.
- If this is because of fire, close your doors and windows if you can and leave the house along with everybody else as quickly as possible.
- Call the emergency services on 999.

If the alarm bleeps from time to time

There is likely to be a fault with the unit and you should report this as an emergency repair on 0131 663 7211. Do not tamper with the unit.

Asbestos

Asbestos was widely used across Scotland for many years, and is found in a variety of products.

Asbestos can be found in:

- Floor tiles
- Artex finishes or textured coatings
- Some plaster finishes and wall boards
- Internal window-sill boards
- Corrugated cement roofing sheets (often found on garages)

There is no danger to your health and safety as long as you do not disturb the asbestos. It is extremely important that you do not saw, drill, sand or break up any material that might contain asbestos. If you think you have found asbestos in your property and you are carrying out work please stop work and seek advice from our repairs service on 0131 663 7211.

Condensation & dampness

Condensation occurs when moist air contacts a cold surface. For example, you can see it on windows and mirrors as tiny droplets of water when you have a shower or bath.

To prevent this from occurring you can:

- Open windows when showering.
- Vent tumble dryers directly to the outside.
- Turn on extractor fans where fitted.

Excessive condensation can lead to dampness and mould growth on walls, furniture and mildew on clothes.

What will I do if I have damp or mould?

- If you have mould on walls make a solution of chlorine bleach and water-usually 1 part bleach to 3 parts water.
- Using a stiff bristled brush, scrub the blackened area.
- Rinse thoroughly and dry.

If the mould and dampness keeps returning, and you have done all of the above, then report it as a repair.



Fire prevention

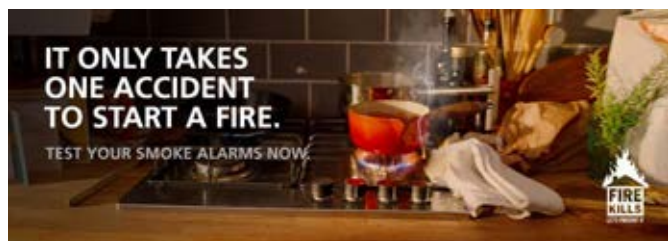
To prevent fire in your home follow these simple steps:

- Test your smoke detectors weekly
- Never leave candles unattended
- Take extra care in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended
- Do not overload electrical sockets and watch out for faulty and over-heating electrical equipment and wiring/cables
- Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully

In the event of a fire in your home you should:

- Close the door of the room where the fire is to stop flames and fumes spreading if you can
- Get everyone out of the house
- Call 999 for the fire brigade, and
- Do not go back into the house

If you use oxygen in your property, please inform your Housing Officer. You must not store replacement gas cylinders, petrol, any other flammable liquid or any materials which may pose a risk to health and safety in your home, garden, common staircase or communal area.



Home Fire Safety visits

The Fire and Rescue Service will come and visit your home, completely free of charge, at a time that suits you. They will advise you on any aspect of fire safety within your home and help you devise an escape plan, if you do not already have one.

To arrange a visit, please contact the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on 0800 0731 999 or visit: www.firescotland.gov.uk to download an application form.

What can I do if I am the victim of domestic abuse?

There are local and national specialist support for anyone who has experienced domestic abuse, and for those who are causing harm to others and would like help to change their behaviour.

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing abuse or causing harm please ask for help, so that you can get the right support.

[Get help for domestic violence | Domestic abuse | Midlothian Council](#)

We will also offer a personal discussion within a reasonable time scale. Where possible this will be within 24 hours.

Door step crime

Some criminals will impersonate other people in order to enter your home. This could be someone for example pretending to be on official business from a utility company. If in doubt, keep them out.

If you feel threatened, unsafe or suspicious of a caller call the Police immediately on 999.

If you would like more advice on doorstep crime, contact our Trading Standards team on 0131 271 3549. Alternatively you can call the Police non-emergency number, 101.

Pest Control

Information can be found on our website [Pest control | Midlothian Council](#)

Call us on 0131 561 5284 or email contactcentre@midlothian.gov.uk



Permissions

If you want to carry out any improvements or alterations to your home and garden you must get our written permission first. We will not unreasonably refuse permission.

Key examples include:

- Any alterations to your home other than internal decoration
- Adding new fixtures or fittings – for example fitting of satellite dishes, installation of new kitchen and bathroom, laminate flooring, light fittings and internal/external doors
- Any work to the garden i.e. erecting a garage, shed, greenhouse, driveways, pigeon loft, fence, dog kennels, walls or other structure
- Running a business from your home
- Take in lodgers, sublet, assign your Tenancy Agreement, mutual exchange and adding or changing a joint tenant
- Keeping more than one domestic pet or any other non-domestic pet within your home or garden
- Parking large vehicles such as a caravan or boat in your garden or in a communal area

How do I apply for permission?

Detail your request in writing to:

**Midlothian Council, Permission request,
PO Box 28974, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1WX**

What happens next?

Once we have received your application a member of staff may visit you at the property to discuss your request. We will give you our decision in writing within one month of receiving your request.

If you are making alterations to your home, you will have to notify us when the work is complete so that we can check that is acceptable.

You will be responsible for all the costs and for obtaining Planning Approval and a Building Warrant where necessary.

Where written permission has been given for any of the permission requests, you must keep to the conditions detailed in the permission letter or permission may be withdrawn.

Antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour is any behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, alarm or distress to others. We promote tolerance and the right of every resident to enjoy peace and quiet in their home with respect for and from their neighbour. Antisocial behaviour can include loud music, shouting, swearing, verbal abuse, vandalism and physical violence.

Our Housing Team work with Police Scotland and other partners in responding to antisocial behaviour complaints. We continue to address and resolve antisocial behaviour whilst considering the needs of those impacted by such behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour is a breach of your tenancy.

Please don't suffer in silence

To report any acts of criminality that require an emergency response you should call Police Scotland on 999. Non-emergency reports can be made via 101.

Adapt your home for disability

You can:

- Apply to move house to one which is more suited to your household needs by emailing housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk or calling 0131 271 3248.
- Have your home adapted to meet your needs. [Adapt your home for disability | Midlothian Council](#)

Tenancy support

Can help if you require help with tasks such as:

- Setting-up home
- Managing your home better
- Dealing with any debts or rents arrears
- Filling in forms to apply for benefits or jobs
- Accessing other local services
- Handling any difficult situations

If you feel you would benefit from tenancy support, contact housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk or call 0131 271 3394.

Changeworks

Changeworks can help with energy advice Energy Advice - Changeworks.

Welfare advice

The Welfare Rights Service in Midlothian offer assistance to the general public regarding problems with the complexity of the benefit system.

[Welfare Rights Service](#) | [Benefits advice](#) | [Midlothian Council](#)

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

The Citizens Advice Bureau provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice on welfare benefits, money and debt.

For further information contact CAB, by calling 01968 675 259(Penicuik), 0131 660 1636(Dalkeith) or by visiting their website www.cas.org.uk

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)

The Scottish Welfare Fund helps families and people in Scotland who are on low incomes.

You can apply for a:

- Crisis Grant – If you're in crisis because of a disaster (like a fire or flood) , or an emergency (like losing your money or job, or an unexpected expense)
- Community Care Grant – to help you or someone you care for to start to live, or to carry on living, a settled life in the community.

You must be 16 or older and on a low income, or getting certain benefits, to apply for these grants.

How do I apply?

The simplest and quickest way to make your application is by visiting our website www.midlothian.gov.uk and search Scottish Welfare Grant. There is further information on our website and we provide an online application form. You may apply by phone on 0131 270 5600 and lines are open Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm, and Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm.

Tenant Participation

What is Tenant Participation?

Tenant Participation gives Midlothian Council Tenants a voice to influence decisions made in the Housing Service. Tenant Participation can take many forms such as getting involved in your local Tenants and Residents group to becoming a Tenant Panel Member and attending meetings with council officers online.

Have your say...

... and make your voice heard

Why Get Involved

Tenant Participation is a great way to influence changes that directly affect you, but it also lets you meet new people, learn new skills and further your knowledge of the Housing Service and what we do as a council.



How to get involved

We have a range of tenant groups that you can become involved in. The meetings are either face to face or can be online and are attended by officers and involved tenants covering a wide range of topics and interests.

We are always looking for tenants to become involved from a range of diverse backgrounds. You don't need to have any previous experience and training can be provided if required.

The groups we have:

- Many tenants make their views known through a tenants group and these groups can register with the council as a "Registered Tenants Organisation" (RTO). Registering as a RTO allows the group to apply for funding, which can be used for administration costs and training.
- There are localised tenants groups.
- Register with the "Register of Interested Tenants" and you will be sent information by email or by post with housing related information and invites to housing events.
- Walkabouts give tenants the opportunity to raise any concerns about problems that exist on their estate, particularly with regards to the physical environment. They are held on a monthly basis in different areas of the county.

For further information on tenant participation and to find out how you can get involved contact the tenant participation officer by emailing: tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk

The Annual Return of the Social Housing Charter

By law, the council must report on how well we are doing in comparison to other similar sized local authorities in Scotland. This yearly report is called the "Annual Return of the Social Housing Charter" (ARC). We rely on evidence from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey for our return, which is why it is important that you complete the survey and return it back to us.

Our most recent report can be viewed online at www.midlothian.gov.uk search "ARC".

If you wish to see the full reports go to www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

Landlord Report to Tenants

This report tells tenants and service users how we performed as their landlord during the year. This report get published on our website and social media each year. It reports on issues that are important to tenants, like repairs, rents, energy efficiency and improvements. This report helps to show how we are meeting the requirements of the Social Housing Charter. We highlight parts of the service where things are working well and identify areas where we need to improve.

We always welcome your views on the report and you can contact the tenant participation officer by emailing: tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk

Incentive to move scheme

The council offers grants to Midlothian Council tenants who move to a smaller property owned by the council through normal letting or by a mutual exchange, this grant payment is designed to encourage Midlothian Council tenants living in under-occupied situations to downsize and release family sized housing.

Any tenants with an outstanding debt owed to the council will have this offset against the grant before any payment is made.

There are certain criteria and eligibility for this scheme.

Mutual exchange

A mutual exchange is when tenants agree to swap their houses. This must be agreed by both parties' landlords.

You can exchange your home with another Midlothian Council tenant, a housing association tenant or a tenant from another council area.

Mutual exchange is co-ordinated through House Exchange. For further information and to register visit houseexchange.org.uk



SECTION 3: ENDING YOUR TENANCY



- **Moving out**
- **Abandonment**
- **Death of a tenant**
- **Eviction**
- **Complaints, compliments and comments**



Moving out

If you wish to end your tenancy, you must give us 28 days' notice in writing which should include an ink signature, with your name, contact details-tenancy address, new address and email also telephone number. There is a termination of tenancy form online which can be found by visiting our website and searching for "termination of tenancy"

What happens next?

Your Housing Officer may arrange to come and visit the property to check that the property is in a good condition. We will let you know if the property/ garden requires any work before you leave. If you are required to carry out any work and fail to do so, we will do the repairs and charge you.

Abandonment

If we have reasonable grounds to think that you have left the property without telling us and do not intend returning, we can take action to end your tenancy, by serving a "notice of abandonment" to your property.

Eviction

Your tenancy will end through the eviction process if we obtain a court order to repossess your home. Breaches of your Tenancy Agreement can result in eviction from your property.

Compliments, complaints and comments

In the first instance please contact your Housing Officer in order to address any concerns.

We are committed to providing quality services for the people of Midlothian. We follow the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's standard complaints handling procedures. If you have a concern, we will do our best to resolve it. We will keep your complaint confidential – only those who need to know about it in order to investigate will see the details.

Positive feedback is also very important for us, so please compliment us on services you think we are getting right.

How do I make a compliment, complaint or comment?

You can fill in our online complaints form by visiting our website and searching for "complaints and comments" or pop into any council building and ask for a feedback form.

What happens next?

Our complaints procedure has two stages.

Stage 1 – Frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next.

Stage 2- Investigation

When using Stage 2 we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- Discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- Give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I am still not satisfied with the outcome?

If you feel the issue is not resolved you can take your appeal to an adjudicator and ask for the matter to be investigated. In our response we will tell you who the relevant adjudicator is.

Significant Performance Failures

The Scottish Housing Regulator has published a leaflet for tenants who may wish to report a significant performance failure. A significant performance failure is something that your landlord does, or fails to do, that puts the interests of its tenants at risk- for example, it fails to carry out health and safety requirements, such as annual gas safety checks.

This is something that does, or could, affect all of your landlord's tenants. For more information, visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website and download a copy of their Significant Performance Failure Factsheet at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/are-you-tenant-or-service-user

