

Summer Today

Tenant's Newsletter Summer 2021



Welcome

Improving housing services

Tenants Day

Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

Landlord Report to Tenants 2019/20

Are your household details up to date?

Garden Competition

Meeting housing need

Keeping yourself safe in these times

Council Tax reduction- make sure you claim

New Project Helping Pension Age Tenants

Home working

Smoke alarms installation-changes coming

Breathing Space in Scotland

Welcome

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues into 2021, we are all having to do more online. If you need information about council services, please check out the Midlothian Council website at www.midlothian.gov.uk. There is a search bar to help you look for the service or information you require.

Improving Housing Services

You might have taken part in some of our tenant consultation activity over the last few years including surveys, tenant meetings, feedback forms or estate walkabouts. Hearing from tenants and customers is always very important in helping us develop and improve our services to you. We're looking at different ways to keep in touch with you, particularly while opportunities for face-to-face engagement are restricted. If you're interested in getting involved in tenant participation please email us at tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk or call 07785 382170.

Tenants Day

The Annual Tenants Day will be held online on Friday 3 September from 11.00am.

To make sure everyone is kept safe the event will be held online this year. We would encourage all tenants to take part. All you need is an email address and a smart phone, tablet or laptop. There will be a variety of speakers attending this event and we welcome questions and feedback at this event.

If you would like to attend this online event please contact tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk or call 07785 382170.

You don't have to participate in this online event, you can just listen if you want to - it's totally up to you how much you want to get involved. Please take part if you can. It's vital that tenants' voices are heard in decision-making processes about your housing services.

Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

This was approved at the July Council meeting. The Strategy sets out an action plan to maximize tenant and customer involvement in influencing and scrutinizing housing services:

[Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy | \(midlothian.gov.uk\)](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk)

Landlord Report to Tenants 2019/20

We previously updated on this report which provides information on our progress towards meeting the performance requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

We have published our Landlord Report on our website:

[Housing strategy and performance | Landlord report to Tenants 2019-20 \(midlothian.gov.uk\)](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk)

You can also view and compare Midlothian Council performance against other landlords on the Scottish Housing Regulators website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Are your household details up to date?

To ensure that your tenancy rights are protected it is very important that you advise us of any changes to your household.

This includes telling us about anyone who moves in or out of the property.

If you need to let us know about any changes to your household or if you are unsure if you had already told us about changes, please enquire by:

Via email housing.enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk

Writing to us at Midlothian House, 40-46 Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1DN

Garden Competition

Vouchers for the winners

Just a reminder it's not too late to enter our annual garden competition if you are a Midlothian Council tenant. This year we are doing things differently and we ask that you send in three photos of your garden. Members of our Tenant Panel will be the judges. The closing date for this competition is 17 September 2021. Please email your entry to tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk or post to:

Tenant's Garden Competition, Buccleuch House, 1 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 1AE



Good luck to everyone!

Here's a picture of the previous winning garden in Bonnyrigg.

Meeting Housing Need

We are pleased to let you know that 35 new council housing developments were recently completed at Roslin, Danderhall and Pathhead. The allocations were prioritised using a Local Lettings Initiatives. Work is underway to deliver further new council properties in Bilston, Newtongrange, Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Danderhall.

Keeping yourself safe in these times

General Trading Standard's advice

If you receive a suspicious text, forward it to 7726. This is a free reporting service run by Ofcom.

If you receive a scam email, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk this is run by the National Cyber Security Centre.

If you get approached by cold-callers, for example for roofing, driveways, gardening etc. in Midlothian, please contact the council's Trading Standards section on 0131 271 3549.

More security tips

With the warmer weather it is tempting to keep your home cool by leaving your door open. However we would kindly request everyone to ensure that doors are not left or jammed open. By leaving the doors open you are leaving yourself and neighbours open to theft, vandalism or more serious a fire risk.

Council Tax reduction - make sure you claim yours

Tenants are being reminded to check if they are entitled to a discount on Council Tax, especially if they receive Universal Credit.

Council Tax reduction is a means tested entitlement based on household income, circumstances, savings and investments. Many people think because they have applied for Universal Credit they will automatically receive a reduction on their Council Tax, but this isn't the case- you must apply for it separately to the council. You may also be entitled to a reduction if you live on your own or if someone in the household is substantially and permanently disabled, severely mentally impaired, including people with dementia and their carers – or a student.

If you are struggling to keep up to date with your Council Tax bill please get in touch as soon as possible. We can discuss reductions, and discounts that you may be eligible for or

signpost you to a range of external money advice services. Please contact us by phone on 0131 271 3499 or email arrears@midlothian.gov.uk



New project helping pension age tenants

Extra cash in your pocket is a new project to help people over pension age make sure they are claiming the benefits to which they are entitled.

Run by the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership, the project is being led by the Council and Citizens Advice (CAB) and will help any resident of Midlothian who's over pension age. If you are a pensioner, you may be contacted by someone from Welfare Rights or CAB to see if you would like an income check.

What types of support are available?

Support is available in the form of one-to-one advice sessions which can help with:

Pension Credit

Free TV licences

Help with heating bills

Attendance Allowance

Housing Benefit

Council Tax Reduction

Can I get help?

To get help you can call:

Midlothian Council on 0131 270 8922

Dalkeith Citizens Advice on 0131 660 1636

Penicuik Citizens Advice on 01968 675 259

If you have an elderly relative or friend living outside Midlothian, Age Scotland have a helpline on 0800 12 44 222 which also offers an entitlement check and access to their wide range of free information guides about social security.

Home working - some challenges

Depending on the circumstances, working from home right now can for some be a lonely job. Good relationships are important to our wellbeing.

Quick tip: Create a home workstation

It's important to try create boundaries if your home is your office and having a dedicated area of the house or your room for you to work from can help delineate your work time from your leisure time.

Try joining morning or evening online exercise classes or trying a new hobby might be beneficial to your own wellbeing.

Smoke alarm installation-changes coming

New legislation is coming into force in February 2022 that requires the council to improve home safety for our tenants. This legislation does not only apply to council tenants it applies to all homes in Scotland, including privately owned and rented. We have already started an installation programme, and a number of our properties already comply with this legislation.

The new standard requires:

One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes.

One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways.

One heat alarm installed in every kitchen.

All alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked.

Where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance such as boilers, fires (including open fires and heaters) or a flue, a carbon monoxide detector is also required. This does not need to be linked to the fire alarms.

If you require further information below link has a question and answer section relating to this new legislation coming into force this February 2022.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/>

Breathing Space in Scotland

Breathing Space is a free confidential service for anyone over the age of 16 in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. Open up when you're feeling down by calling 0800 83 85 87.

Opening hours:

Weekdays: Monday - Thursday 6.00pm to 2.00am

Weekend: Friday 6.00pm-Monday 6.00am

[Breathing Space Scotland Website](#)

Useful Numbers

Police Scotland Non-Emergency 101

Scottish Water Enquiries 0845 601 8855

Gas Emergencies 0800 111 999

Electric (power cut) 105 or 0800 31 63 105

Citizens Advice Bureau (Penicuik) 01968 675259

Citizens Advice Bureau (Dalkeith) 0131 660 1636

Scottish Women's Aid 0800 027 1234

Age Scotland Helpline 0800 12 44 222

Samaritans Support Line 116 123