

Temporary Times Newsletter

Spring Edition 2022



Information for Midlothian Tenants in temporary accommodation

Welcome

Welcome to this latest edition of Temporary Times. Our tenant newsletters are just one of the ways we can keep in touch with you. In this issue, you will find information on how our housing services are continuing to operate and how you can get in touch with us.



Tenant Participation Online

Tenant Participation has continued over the last two years through online meetings. We would like more tenants to get involved by joining our new Coffee and Chat sessions which are held on the Microsoft Teams platform. These meetings have no agenda, with general chat, help and advice being offered. There are a range of ways you can get involved - from joining the new mail surveys group or becoming a member of the Tenant Panel.

How you want to take part and how much time you put in is entirely up to you. We also offer the chance of winning vouchers to tenants taking part in our email survey group.

You can contact the Tenant Participation Officer by email on:

Tenant.participation@midlothian.gov.uk or by calling 07785 382170 for further details.

Rent freeze

We are pleased to let you know that tenant's rents will be frozen for another year following the decision by councillors at the December 2021 council meeting.

It is hoped that the announcement will bring some much needed relief to the many tenants who have suffered financially because of Covid-19. This freeze will also apply to service charges and management fees for temporary accommodation.



Repair Backlog

As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and to ensure the safety of all our staff and customers, over the past two years the Building Maintenance Service has had to change the way we worked. During the lock down period, the service had to move to undertake work which was categorised as an emergency. This change has meant that new work or repairs is taking longer to complete than before, or has had to be rescheduled. As a result of this, there is now a backlog of outstanding work.

As the COVID-19 restrictions are now in the process of being lifted, we expect to be able to catch up on the repair backlog.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their patience and understanding, and for bearing with us as we process the repair backlog as swiftly as we possibly can.

New Pilot Project –Summer 2022

Midlothian Council is to fund four full-time wardens to crack down on flytipping, dog fouling, littering and other offences as part of a new, dedicated environmental crime team.

Other planned measures include making it easier for people to dispose of their DIY waste by setting up a trusted trader type scheme. The council's website would list approved and vetted traders who legally dispose of waste from work such as installing a new kitchen. As part of a pilot project, the council plans to also issue one tonne bags for disposing of specific domestic waste that can't go in household bins and to hire a vehicle to remove those for householders.

Click below for further details on this year long pilot:

[Environmental team to crack down on flytipping and other offences | Midlothian Council](#)

New Independent Advocacy Service opens - Support available for disabled people to access Scottish Social Security.

People with disabilities are now able to access a new advocacy service to get help applying for Scottish social security benefits.

The support is available to those applying for any Social Security Scotland's current and future benefits including Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.

It also covers advocacy support for people with disabilities to access payments for families with children, who need help to pay for a funeral, carers and young people entering the workplace.

This service will be delivered by the charity VoiceAbility and is entirely independent of the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland. It will provide free and independent advocacy to anyone who identifies as disabled and requires support to communicate. This may include people with a sensory disability, mental health condition or learning disability.

This support can be accessed by calling Social Security Scotland Freephone 0800 182 2222 and asking to be referred to the Independent Advocacy Service or contacting VoiceAbility directly Freephone 0300 303 1660 or visiting

helpline@voiceability.org

Warm and Well for Midlothian Council tenants



Midlothian Council is working with Changeworks to support tenants to be warmer in their homes and reduce energy bills.

- Changeworks advisors can help you
- check if you're eligible and apply for the [£140 Warm Home Discount](#)
- understand and check your gas / electricity bills
- choose a gas / electricity supplier, tariff, and payment option
- negotiate with energy suppliers on your behalf to resolve gas and electricity billing problems, including incorrect bills
- agree repayment options if you owe money to your supplier
- read your meters
- get the most out of your heating and hot water system
- deal with condensation in your home.
- access grants to ease financial stress

Energy saving tips

[Top ten tips to help you avoid wasting energy in your home](#)

We know it's a challenging and worrying time right now, with bills going up and uncertainty over what the future holds. [We're here to help](#) and try and put your mind at ease. Get in touch for help with any issue related to your fuel bills and we can help keep you warm.

Request a call back or find out more at:

www.changeworks.org.uk/referral

warmth@changeworks.org.uk

The Warm and Well service for tenants is provided by Changeworks, a leading charity which has been giving expert advice and support to people across Scotland for over 30 years. Their advice is free, confidential, impartial and helps our tenants reduce energy bills and have warmer homes.

Freephone 0800 870 8800 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm



Useful Numbers

NHS24 - 111

Non-Emergency Police - 101

Electric (Power Cut) - 105 or 0800 3163 105

Age Scotland Helpline - 0800 1244 222

Samaritans Support Line- 116 123

Midlothian Waste & Recycling- 0131 561 5284