



# Midlothian Council Tenants' Newsletter

## Autumn 2022

**Welcome to your latest tenant newsletter**, just one of the ways we keep in touch. This issue explains how our housing services operate, how you can contact us and offers advice if you are struggling financially.

### Cost of Living Crisis drop-in session

**There is a drop-in session open to all residents living in Midlothian taking place in Dalkeith Art Centre on 3 November starting at 1.30 – 4pm. Everyone is welcome, no matter where you live in Midlothian.**

We are all experiencing the ever rising cost of living with food prices and energy bills increasing in the last few years. There will be free independent advice from a selection of organisations at this drop-in session. Among the help on offer is advice on energy, debt, benefits and help to apply for extra assistance to maximise your income.

We realise that some people's health may be impacted with concern around heating and eating so a mental health advisor will be on hand if you need to speak with them and get some further information on support which may be available to you.

There will also be council staff in attendance to help with enquiries regarding downsizing and grants that could be on offer if you choose to move to a smaller property.

If you cannot make this drop-in session but you would like to raise an issue before this event please contact the Tenant Participation Officer on **07785382170** or email [tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk)

### Midlothian Good Neighbour Award

**Communities across Midlothian have come together over the last few years to make sure our neighbours, friends and family were kept safe and secure through the most difficult of times.**

So, we're asking residents of Midlothian to nominate a "Good Neighbour" – someone who has gone that extra mile to help people in their community and made a positive difference to people's lives. If you would like to put someone forward please tell us briefly why you think they deserve an award.

A judging panel made up from our Tenant Panel and Housing Service staff will pick two winners who will each receive a **£50 supermarket shopping voucher and a certificate.**

Please email details to [tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk) or call **077853 82170** for further details.

Nominations close on 31 October 2022 and winners will be announced in our Christmas Tenant Newsletter.



### New homes for Midlothian

**Midlothian Council's first new build homes heated by Air Source Heat Pumps were welcomed by their first tenants in August.**

A total of 44 homes at Dalhousie, Bonnyrigg, have been handed over to tenants so far. The two, three and four bedroom homes are heated using the clever technology that is better for the environment as it reduces our reliance on gas boilers.

There are also a few other sites currently being developed within Midlothian. This includes our Passivhaus development at Buccleuch Street in Dalkeith. The previous Dalkeith High School and sites in both Easthouses and Bonnyrigg.

### Wheelchair Accessible homes

Midlothian Council has recently agreed a target of 20 wheelchair accessible homes to be built annually.

Half would be social housing delivered by either the council or its partners while the other ten would be private sector homes. Councillors have also asked officers to look at how that target figure can be increased.

For more information on wheelchair accessible homes visit: [www.midlothian.gov.uk/accessible-homes](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/accessible-homes)

### Nomination Agreement – Veterans Housing Scotland and Midlothian Council

At a recent council cabinet meeting local councillors approved a new nominations agreement with Veterans Housing Scotland. This agreement would guarantee two properties allocated each year on a permanent basis using a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement to veterans. It increases housing options for veteran households who may potentially be experiencing homelessness.

## Get help with your electricity and heating bills

Many of us are spending more time at home and lots of people are homeworking. This means using more heating, hot water and electricity, and for some a decrease in income too.



Changeworks' Affordable Warmth Advisors can help you keep your home warm and your heating and electricity bills low.

They can help you:

- Understand your heating and electricity bills
- Switch to different suppliers
- Talk to your energy company on your behalf
- Access energy efficient grants
- Keep your bills down

Call Changeworks Affordable Warmth Services team on **0800 870 8800** (free) to speak with one of their advisors or email [warmth@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:warmth@changeworks.org.uk).  
Office hours: 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday.

## Cold Weather Payment is changing for people in Scotland



Beginning in February 2023, a new benefit, **Low Income Winter Heating Assistance** will replace the **Cold Weather Payment** in Scotland.

DWP will no longer make any Cold Weather Payments to clients in Scotland.

If you're currently eligible for Cold Weather Payment from DWP and your circumstances have not changed, you'll be eligible for a Low Income Winter Heating Assistance payment.

### You do not need to do anything.

Low Income Winter Heating Assistance will provide a reliable, annual £50 payment, automatically through Social Security Scotland, to anyone who qualifies.

Low Income Winter Heating Assistance will provide support to people irrespective of weather conditions or temperature levels where they live. Low Income Winter Heating Assistance will not affect:

- the payment of any other benefits you're currently receiving from DWP or Social Security Scotland
- Winter Fuel Payment from DWP

### Why this change is happening

Social Security Scotland is taking control of some benefits that used to belong to DWP. This is because the Scotland Act 2016 gave the Scottish Government new powers relating to social security and certain benefits.

## What is Working from Home (WFH) tax relief?



If you have been told by your employer to work from home, even for a few days a week you might be able to claim tax relief.

In most cases the amount is around £6 per week.

To claim tax relief, you cannot have just chosen to work from home. For more information and to check if previous years can be back dated visit:

<https://bit.ly/3SmRhq1>

## Equally Safe delivery plan update

The Equally Safe Delivery Plan has been refreshed.

This outlines the joint commitment of the Scottish Government and COSLA to preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls and tackling the underpinning attitudes that perpetuate it. This Strategy was first launched in 2014 and revised in 2016

To see this full new updated plan please use link below.

Equally Safe - short life delivery plan: Summer 2022 to Autumn 2023 - gov.scot

<https://bit.ly/3Cwk05G>

## New Youth Group in Midlothian

A new **LGBTQ+ Youth Group** is running every **Thursday** at the **Croft Street hub** (18 Croft Street, Dalkeith EH22 3BA).

The group is for 16-24-year-olds and is on from 6pm to 8pm. It offers games, snacks and a safe space for all for more information email [CLL@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:CLL@midlothian.gov.uk)



## Voluntary Opportunities

**Do you have spare time for a new challenge?**

**Consider volunteering to help your local community.**

Please use the link below for more details of Voluntary and paid vacancies:

[www.midlothian.gov.uk/vacancies](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/vacancies)

## Useful numbers

- Emergency repairs 0131 663 7211
- Police Scotland Non-Emergency 101
- Scottish Women's Aid 0800 027 1234
- Age Scotland Friendship line 0800 12 44222
- Gas Emergencies 0800 111 999
- Electric (power cut) 105 or 0800 3163105
- LGBT Helpline Scotland 0300 123 2523
- Samaritans 116 123

