

# Temporary Times



## Information for Midlothian Tenants in temporary accommodation

### Welcome

Welcome to this latest edition of Temporary Times. I hope that now we are in the “new normal” that all Midlothian Council tenants are keeping safe and well This is still an unsettling time for many.

Our tenant newsletters are just one of the ways we can keep in touch with you. Important news updates are also be available on our website, in the local media and on social media. Of course we will write to you if there’s anything it’s absolutely essential for you to know. 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.

## 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 is always very important in helping us develop and improve our housing services. We're looking at different ways to keep in touch with you, particularly while opportunities for face-to-face engagement can vary depending on current restrictions at any given time. If you're interested in getting involved in tenant participation please email us at [tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk) or call 077853 82170.

## Tenant Day

We recently held our annual Tenants Day on 3 September. This was the first year we have held this event online and we encouraged all tenants to participate. There was a number of guest speakers at this online event and we welcomed questions and feedback from all tenants attending. Tenants who attended, reported back to say that they enjoyed taking part and welcomed the chance to participate in the event from the comfort of their own home. We would like to thank everyone for attending and making this event a success.

## Garden Competition

We recently held our annual Tenants Garden Competition with winners receiving shopping vouchers. Winners were announced at the Tenants Day event. A big thank you to our Tenant Panel who were the judges for the competition.

## *Tenant Participation Online*



Tenant Participation has managed to continue throughout the Covid restrictions through online tenants meetings. We would like more tenants to get involved by joining our new **Coffee and Chat** sessions which will be held on the Microsoft Teams platform. These fortnightly sessions will have no agenda, with general chat, help and advice being the main subjects to be discussed. We are hoping those of you feeling socially isolated will feel able to take part and gain new interests in the coming months.

If anyone would like to join in our coffee and chat meetings then please don't hesitate to get in contact with our Tenant Participation Officer at [tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk) or call 077853 82170.

## Safety within your Home

At night when you go to bed



Ensure white goods such as washing machine, dishwashers or tumble dryers are switched off and never used while sleeping or away from the property.

Switch off all electrical appliances not designed to be left on overnight for example, gaming consoles.

Don't leave chargeable items like mobile phones, tablets and e-cigarettes charging overnight.

Turn off portable heaters and put a fire-guard around the fire place.

Keep mobility aids and any methods of calling for help accessible.

Before going to bed, check any candles and cigarettes are fully extinguished and do not empty ashtrays into waste bins until morning.

Make sure the main door keys are accessible and in a safe place.

Close all the internal doors before going to bed.

Make sure you have working smoke alarms, and remember to test them once a week.



## How Can I Protect Myself from Doorstep Crime

Here are some tips to follow to protect yourself.

Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly

Keep front and back doors locked

Use the door viewer or nearby window when answering the door

Fit a door chain or bar - use it and keep it on when talking to callers at the door

Don't feel embarrassed - genuine callers expect you to be careful

Only let callers in if they have an appointment - confirm they are genuine

Always ask for identification badges, but don't rely on them

Identity cards can be faked - phone the company to verify their identity

Some companies offer a password system - ask if this can be used

If you have a password with a company make sure the caller uses it

Never let people persuade you to let them into your home - they may not be genuine. If someone is persistent, ask them to call at another time and get a friend or family member to be with you

Never agree to pay for goods or give money to strangers who arrive at your door

Don't keep large amounts of money in your home

Remember, it's your home, there's no reason why anyone should ever enter your home against your wishes

If you're not sure, don't answer the door



## Energy Advice Service

If you're a council tenant and struggling with the cost of keeping your home warm, or are worried about your heating and electricity costs, the Energy Advice Service can help.

The Energy Advice Service for council tenants is provided by Changeworks, a Scottish environmental charity which has been giving expert advice and support to people across Scotland for over 30 years. Their advice is free, confidential and independent and helps, our tenants reduce energy bills and have warmer homes.

Changeworks advisors can help you:

Check if you're eligible and apply for the £140 Warm Home Discount which starts again in October 2021

Understand and check your gas and/or electricity bills

Negotiate with energy suppliers on your behalf to resolve billing problems, including incorrect bills

Agree repayment options if you owe money to your gas and/or electricity supplier

Get the most out of your heating and hot water system

How to get in touch with Changeworks

If you'd like to find out more about the Energy Advice Service you can visit:

[changeworks.org.uk](http://changeworks.org.uk)

Email [warmth@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:warmth@changeworks.org.uk)

Or call Changeworks on 0800 870 8800 (free)

## Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

The new Local Housing Strategy for Midlothian Council embeds equality issues into addressing homelessness, procurement, housing advice, new build and refurbishment, specialist housing services and fuel poverty.

Please see link below for a copy of this Strategy.

[https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/4206/midlothian local housing strategy 2021-2026](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/4206/midlothian_local_housing_strategy_2021-2026)

## Meeting Housing Need

We are pleased to let you know that 39 new council housing developments were recently completed at Roslin, Danderhall and Pathhead providing 39 new affordable homes. 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.

## 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

## Useful Numbers



Police Scotland non-emergency - 101

Citizens Advice Bureau (Penicuik) - 01968 675259

Citizens Advice bureau (Dalkeith) - 0131 660 1636

Scottish Women's Aid - 0800 027 1234

Samaritans Support Line - 116 123

Age Scotland Helpline - 0800 12 44 222 (available Monday-Friday 9-5pm)