

A photograph of a man with a beard and a young girl with curly hair, both smiling. The man is carrying the girl on his shoulders. They are outdoors, with a city skyline silhouette in the background under a warm, orange sunset sky. The man is wearing a white polo shirt and blue jeans. The girl is wearing a white sleeveless top and denim shorts. The overall mood is happy and positive.

TENANTS cour er

Summer 2022

The newsletter for
Edinburgh Council tenants

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Hello everyone,

Welcome to the summer edition of the Tenants' Courier. I hope you find it interesting and helpful. We are always pleased to receive feedback on the Courier and would welcome your suggestions on topics to include in future editions.

In light of the cost of living crisis, we have chosen to focus this edition of the Courier on getting help with household bills. Gas and electricity bills continue to rise and we know that will be a worry for many people. As we head into the warmer months, the need to heat homes should be reduced, but there are things you can do to minimise your energy usage now, and when the colder weather returns. Contact our Energy Advice Service for the best tips on saving money and energy; they can help you get the most from your heating system and ensure you keep your bills as low as possible - give them a call on 0800 870 8800 or email warmth@changeworks.org.uk

Costs of other essentials like food, clothes and fuel are also getting more expensive. Check out the Money Matters article in this edition for information on where to go for help and advice. It is crucial that you continue to pay your rent, but if you find yourself struggling at any time, please get in touch with your housing officer as soon as possible. They are there to support you and help you to avoid rent arrears.

Best wishes for the summer months

Sarah Burns
Head of Housing Operations

Money Advice

We know that the Covid-19 pandemic and rising energy costs has made it difficult for many people to manage their money, but it's very important to keep paying your rent. If you miss your rent payments, it can become harder and harder to catch up. Let us know if you're having problems paying rent and we can help you. Contact your housing officer and let them know. If you don't know who your housing officer is, email tenantandresident@edinburgh.gov.uk

Support if you're struggling

- Councillors have agreed to a £150 discount on council tax bills and this will be spread over instalments, so tenants eligible will have lower monthly council tax payments from April 2022 – March 2023
- Families who can get free school meals have received a further one-off payment of £100 per child. This was paid alongside the Easter School Holiday and Scottish Child Bridging payments.
- The Scottish Government has made more money available to the Scottish Welfare Fund to help people affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. If you can no longer work or have had your hours reduced, and do not have any savings or other money, they may be able to help. Apply online www.edinburgh.gov.uk/scottishwelfarefund or call 0131 529 5299, Monday to Thursday 10am to 4.45pm and Friday 10am to 3.40pm.

- If you're worried that you may be made homeless because you have rent arrears caused directly by the Covid-19 pandemic, then you may be able to apply for funding to help pay your rent. To apply, your rent arrears must be between 23 March 2020 and 9 August 2021. You may be at risk of homelessness if you've had an eviction notice or your case may be due in court. If you're eligible for funding a one-off payment will be paid into your rent account and you wouldn't need to pay it back. If you think you're eligible, email Edinburgh_TGF@edinburgh.gov.uk.



Council House Repairs

We carry out around 140,000 repairs, alterations and safety checks to approximately 20,000 Council homes across the Edinburgh area each year. Every repair is important to us and, of course, you.

If you need a repair in your home, please tell us by reporting it on our website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/councilhouserepairs or call 0131 200 2345.

What to do if you have an urgent or emergency repair

If you have an urgent or emergency repair, call us on 0131 200 2345. Emergency repairs are our highest priority and we'll get someone out as quickly as possible. When we're really busy, this might mean someone coming out in the evening or over the weekend.



What is the difference between an emergency and an urgent repair?

An emergency repair is something that needs to be fixed quickly because it's dangerous. We will get someone to the emergency repair as soon as possible, usually within four hours.

An urgent repair is something that needs to be fixed quickly but isn't an immediate risk to health and safety. We'll come to urgent repairs as soon as possible, usually no later than the end of the next working day.

You can find a list of what is an urgent repair and what is an emergency repair below.

Emergency repairs – we aim to visit within four hours

TYPE OF REPAIR	ADVICE
*Significant leaks or burst water tanks that cannot be contained	Turn off water at stopcock (usually found above the door or at kitchen sink).
*No drinking water from taps	Check the stopcock. Do your neighbours' have water? If not, call Scottish Water on 0800 0778 778. If your neighbours have water call us and we'll arrange a plumber. We'll supply bottled water if necessary while the repair is being done.
*Taps will not turn off	Turn off water at stopcock.
*No electricity at all in your home	Check if your neighbours have electricity and check trip switches/fuses in your fuse box. If your neighbours don't have power, you need to contact Scottish Power on 0800 316 3105. If your neighbours have power, call us.
*No lights at all	
*Check electrical supply if a socket or fitting has been affected by a leak	Turn off power to affected area at fuse box.
*Exposed electrical wires	Turn off power at fuse box to affected area.
*Repair/replace unusable locks on external doors	This includes where keys have been lost.
*A window that can be opened from the outside and you live on the ground floor	
*A ceiling that might fall down	
*Fire door in multi-storey will not close	
*Person trapped in lift	
*Exposed lift shaft	
*Dangerous chimney	
*Stair lighting – stair in complete darkness	

Urgent repairs – we aim to visit by the end of the next working day

TYPE OF REPAIR	ADVICE
*Total heating failure	
Total water heating failure	
Partial loss of water	Check stopcock.
Toilet not flushing	Use plunger or break up blockage if you can.
Blocked drains	
Blocked sink/bath/wash hand basin	
*Repair/replace unsafe electrical fitting	
Partial loss of lights and/or power	Check your fuse box for tripped switches.
Repair/replace unsafe banister rail	
*Kitchen and or bathroom light out	
*Lifts are not working	
Stair lighting – some lights still on	
*Blocked flue/chimney	
*Blocked refuse chute	
*Slipped roof tiles causing leaking roof	
*Storm damage	
Removal of offensive graffiti	
*A window that can be opened from the outside and you live on the first floor or above	

Out of hours repairs

We provide an emergency out of hours repair service between 5pm and 8am every day, at the weekend and bank holidays. We can carry out the repairs marked with * in the table on pages 5 and 6 between these hours. Please call 0131 200 2000.

What if I smell gas?

If you smell gas, call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999 or via textphone (minicom) on 0800 371 787.

If you have the SignLive app, you can also use this service to contact the National Gas Emergency Service. SignLive provides a free 24-hour online interpreting service for British Sign Language (BSL).

If you're concerned about gas or carbon monoxide you should open all windows, move outside and call the National Gas

Emergency Service line above.

Temporary facilities available

We can supply temporary heating and cooking facilities upon request. What we can give you will depend on availability and the nature of your repair. We'll usually collect these from you once we've fixed the repair.

Extra help

We aim to deal with all repairs consistently and fairly but sometimes there might be extra information you need us to know when you are reporting a repair; this could be as simple as needing extra time to answer the door. Make sure you let us know if you or the person you are reporting the repair for needs any extra help.



How to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' Disease

What is Legionella?

Legionella is a type of bacteria which can be found naturally in water. Although rare, it can cause Legionnaires' disease, which is a severe form of pneumonia. Legionnaires' disease is caught by inhaling tiny contaminated water droplets. You cannot catch it by drinking contaminated water or from another person with the disease.

Legionella becomes a problem when the bacteria has the right conditions to grow and if enough of the bacteria grows then it can infect a person.

Although cases of Legionnaires' disease are extremely rare, with around 300 cases reported across the UK every year, it's important to take steps to avoid it happening.

How does the bacteria infect people?

You can get Legionnaires' disease by inhaling tiny droplets of water that contain Legionella bacteria. These droplets are suspended in the air and are often created by taps, toilets, humidifiers and showers.

The disease most commonly affects older people or those with chest or lung problems. Symptoms are flu-like, including aching muscles, tiredness, headaches, a dry cough and fever. If you suspect you have been exposed to legionella bacteria, it's important to see your doctor.

How to prevent the bacteria

The bacteria grows at temperatures between 20 and 45 degrees Celsius, when it has a source of nutrients such as rust, and when the water is not constantly flowing. It's important that the water in your home (e.g. in your boiler) is stored at the correct temperature to prevent any bacteria growth.

Follow these steps to reduce the risk of Legionella in your water system.

- Run showers and taps for at least five minutes if you have not used them for seven days or longer.
- Make sure all shower heads and taps are kept clean and free from lime scale and mould. Showerheads and shower hoses should be cleaned once every three months.
- If you are using your boiler every day for hot water this should be enough to make sure that it is reaching a high enough temperature – if there is a problem with your boiler, let us know.
- If warm water is coming out of your cold water taps or your shower, please let us know.
- Tell us right away if you see rust or anything unusual flowing from your water outlets.

Further information

If you have any concerns please get in touch with us by reporting it on our website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/councilhouserepairs or by phoning 0131 200 2345..



Don't miss your repairs appointment

If you've arranged a repair appointment and something crops up which means you'll not be in, please let us know as soon as possible. We'll be able to arrange a new time that suits you and give your original appointment time to someone else who needs it.

If your appointment is for servicing your gas boiler, it's really important that you let us know if you need to re-arrange the time. Scottish Government laws mean that we need to service your boiler and check your gas appliances once a year to keep your home safe.

We want to provide the highest quality service, so if our repairs person or one of our contractors doesn't turn up at the correct time please let us know as soon as possible so we can look into it and re-schedule.

You can let us know by phoning 0131 200 2345 or emailing repairsdirect@edinburgh.gov.uk

If your appointment is an emergency, such as a serious water leak or something that is a health and safety risk for you and your neighbours, we may need to force entry to your home if you're not in.

Keeping our staff safe

We're committed to providing excellent customer care and a high-quality service, and our promise to you is to treat you with respect. Unfortunately, on rare occasions, our team members suffer from abuse, violence and threats. We are, of course, sympathetic to your needs, but we operate a zero-tolerance approach to abuse on the phone, online or in person.

If anyone in our team is visiting you at home, for example to carry out a repair, and feels threatened or intimidated they will leave and the police may be informed.

Please help us by treating our staff with respect. If you want to report an incident or provide us with any feedback please contact us via our website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/complaints



Safety measures save lives

You may have heard that the Scottish Government has made it a legal requirement for all homes to be fitted with interlinked smoke and heat alarms, as well as carbon monoxide detectors. We want to make sure that Council homes are as safe as possible for tenants, so we are upgrading these types of alarms in Council homes across the city.

We've appointed Belac Group and Maclin Electric to put the new alarms in your home and the companies will send an electrician to carry out the work. To install the alarms, the electrician will need access to your fuse box, so please make sure that they can get to it easily.

The work will take from two to four hours and the electrician will explain what they're doing as they go. They'll ask you to stay in another room while they are working and may ask you to ventilate the area, by opening a door or window.

One of the two contractors mentioned will be in touch with you about your appointment. We want to make sure your home is as safe as it can be and so it's very important that alarms are put in as soon as possible.



Who lives with you?

It's very important that you keep us up to date on who lives in your home. This is because of changes to your tenancy that were introduced as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, which came in to effect on 1 November 2019.

From November 2019, anyone taking on your tenancy must have been registered with the Council as living with you for at least 12 months before this date. This includes your partner, your family and anyone who moved in to provide any care (not your husband, wife or a civil partner who can automatically take on the tenancy).

This 12-month period does not start until we know that someone is living with you so it's very important that you tell us who is living in your home, including children and other family members over the age of 15 (to make sure they could be eligible to take on the tenancy when they reach 16).

Before someone can apply to be added as a joint tenant to your tenancy, they must now have lived with you (as their main home) for 12 months. This also applies to assignation (transfer of a

tenancy). The Act also introduces a 12-month qualifying period before tenants can apply to sublet their tenancies.

It's your responsibility to keep these details up to date and we cannot backdate any information provided. To make sure your details are up to date, please email, call or write to your locality office today to let us know who is living with you in your home.

- North East Locality Office, 101 Niddrie Mains Road. EH16 4DS northeast. locality@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 3111
- North West Locality Office, 8 West Pilton Gardens. EH4 4DP northwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 5050
- South East Locality Office, 40 Captain's Road, Edinburgh. EH17 8QF southeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 529 5151
- South West Locality Office, 10 Westside Plaza, Edinburgh. EH14 2ST southwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 527 3800



EDINBURGH TENANTS
FEDERATION

Update from Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Everyone at Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF) was shocked and saddened at the passing of the Federation's Vice Convenor Maud Wylie in January. A dedicated community activist and an ETF stalwart, Maud served on the Federation's Executive Committee for many years, firstly as an ordinary member, then as Secretary and most recently Vice Convenor. Maud will be greatly missed by everyone involved who knew her.

It's been a very busy few months for ETF. As restrictions have eased, ETF staff are working some of the time in our new office, which is helping everyone to adjust to a more flexible way of working, from home as well as in the office.

Here's a flavour of what ETF representatives have been involved in over the past couple of months

- ETF representatives were happy that the Council agreed to a rent freeze for all Council tenants for the coming year. ETF's Convenor, Betty Stone, had previously met online with representatives from each of the political parties to explain the Federation's issues and

concerns. We are pleased that the Council has put this measure in place to help tenants most in need.

- 'An Update on the Council's Repairs Service and future plans' was the topic at ETF's Members' Meeting held in March. Willie Gilhooly, Acting Housing Property Manager, gave an update on the current work being carried out by the Council's Repairs Service, including future plans.
- ETF representatives continue to meet regularly with Council officers to discuss topics such as:
 - stair cleaning
 - repairs
 - review of neighbourhood environment projects
- ETF responded to the Scottish Government's 'A New Deal for Tenants'.

You can find out more about the work of ETF on our website www.edinburghtenants.org.uk



The Good Neighbour Award

Last year we asked you to tell us about people in your neighbourhood who had gone that extra mile for you. We heard some amazing stories about neighbours who had helped to collect shopping, looked after pets, taken over gardening duties and stepped in to help a family move house - and that's just some of the examples.

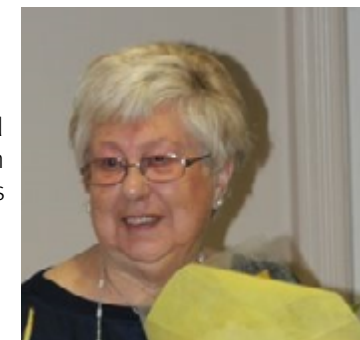
It was a challenge to choose the winner of the award, so much so that we ended up awarding it jointly to Mags Minty and

Satnam Singh for the support they had given to their neighbours during 2021.

On a rare sunny day in December, Councillor Kate Campbell, the then Housing, Homelessness and Fair work Convenor, presented Mags and Satnam with their certificates; she also unveiled a new plaque, placed on one of the new trees in Craigmillar town centre, to mark their well-deserved win. We would like to congratulate them both once again.

Maud Wylie

Housing officers also wish to pay tribute to Maud and pass on their condolences to her family. Maud has been representing tenants' views in Edinburgh for longer than many of us can remember. She was determined and persistent but always kind and respectful to others. She will be remembered for her commitment to improving the lives of tenants in the city, her sense of humour and her dignity.





Equality and rights for everyone

Did you know that the Equality Act is a law that protects anyone experiencing discrimination, harassment or disadvantage? To put this into practice, we have created a new Equality Framework (2021-2025) – a set of guidelines to help make Edinburgh fairer and safer for everyone.

A fairer society means that

- everyone has access to safe, welcoming communities where the most vulnerable are protected and supported
- neighbourhoods will have more affordable, accessible and easy to heat

homes that really meet people's needs

- we work to improve the health, wellbeing and chances for young people, both at home and in school
- we encourage more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

To build on this exciting work, we, with our partners at the Equality and Rights Network in Edinburgh, are planning a summer engagement programme of online and in-person events. We'd love to hear from you if you'd like to get involved. Please email communityplanning@edinburgh.gov.uk to find out more.

A cleaner place is a safer place

Help us to help you to keep the common areas in and around your homes clean and safe. It's very important for the safety of everyone that these areas are kept clear, especially stairwells and landings.

Personal items, like prams, buggies and bikes, should not be stored in stairs where they cause an obstruction and might be a fire hazard. Please store your personal items safely.

Rubbish, including bulky items, such as sofas and fridges, should also not be dumped in stairs. You can arrange a bulky

uplift on our website. There's a charge of £5 for each individual item and up to five items can be collected per uplift. www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycle

If you see anyone dumping things, please email waste@edinburgh.gov.uk or call 0131 200 2000 providing a description of what has been dumped; any information you may have on who left the items and the registration number of the vehicle involved. The Council can issue fixed penalty notices of £200 for fly tipping. Courts can impose a penalty of up to £40,000 or imprisonment.



New Council homes for Edinburgh

As part of our plan to build more social rent homes in Edinburgh, we have completed 40 new homes in Bingham. These homes are a mixture of one, two and three bedroom properties, with four properties suitable for people using wheelchairs.

The Bingham design includes traditional Edinburgh colony style homes, which are very popular with tenants. And there's plenty of greenspace for tenants and their families to enjoy within the new development.

Tenants moved in between November 2021 and February 2022. Local housing officers, Malcolm Forsyth and Craig Watson, have done a great job on allocating the new homes, getting tenants moved in and setting them up in their new homes.

Bingham has been shortlisted for the 'Homes for Scotland Award' under the Development of the Year (Medium). The contractor was CCG (Scotland Ltd), appointed via the Design and Build framework and the architects were Anderson Bell Christie.



Craigmillar community clean up

Step into summer and join the Craigmillar community clean up from 27 June -1 July.

Join your local community, the Council and volunteer associations during a week of action to help give Craigmillar, Niddrie House and Greendykes a makeover.

Grounds maintenance, street cleansing, and a range of volunteer companies will join forces to tackle flytipping, overflowing bins, graffiti and more.

We're inviting local residents to get involved with picking litter in your local area. We'll provide all the equipment you need such as pickers, gloves and bags.

There will also be access to a number of skips if you need to get rid of any large household waste items.

To round off the week, and thank residents, volunteers and contractors for their hard work, there will be a breakfast event on Friday 1 July. Breakfast will be served at Castle Rock Edinvar Community Hub, 1 Hay Avenue EH16 4RW.

We hope to see you there. You can find out more by emailing tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk

Have your say

Your opinion matters. We would love all tenants and those who use housing services to get involved so you can influence your housing services. We can help and support you in a number of ways

- put you in touch with Edinburgh Tenants' Federation who support tenants' groups in the city
- help you with funding to set up a tenants' group

- let you know how you can become involved in checking services (tenant scrutiny)
- sign you up to the Tenants' Panel so you are kept updated on activities you can choose to become involved with.

Email tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk for more information.



Kids' corner

For a chance to win a £20 shopping voucher, find the words and return this puzzle to Tenant and Resident Services, G5, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh. EH8 8BG by 30 August 2022. Alternatively you can email a photo of your completed puzzle to tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk

You must be under 16 and live in a Council tenancy. Please remember to give us your contact details (name, age, address).

- Words can go in any direction
- Words can share letters as they cross over each other

And congratulations to Sophia who won the last Kids' Corner competition

TELL	US	WHO	LIVES	IN	YOUR	HOME								
b	h	k	y	b	a	v	v	t	g	c	j	r	s	z
k	f	f	p	o	u	d	n	l	z	a	c	w	o	a
s	k	s	x	m	y	a	b	w	g	n	j	n	d	k
t	e	l	l	h	t	n	i	k	y	l	q	c	w	d
l	e	k	j	r	a	d	a	c	l	t	a	h	w	a
r	z	n	o	d	e	w	t	i	y	m	k	w	p	q
s	x	p	y	m	c	z	v	s	o	f	s	u	x	u
h	m	u	m	c	b	e	z	z	w	k	y	s	u	g
i	h	e	s	z	s	b	y	w	c	d	a	r	f	r
n	j	v	r	h	i	c	h	t	t	r	x	e	d	j
h	u	h	j	b	w	w	w	f	z	a	q	m	s	s
z	g	j	c	u	h	i	o	l	w	r	n	o	r	h
j	f	e	w	w	o	p	b	l	z	d	u	h	q	d
w	i	g	b	l	j	c	r	a	k	i	u	o	g	y
b	r	c	x	f	a	h	x	j	c	s	v	a	y	v



Useful contacts

North East Locality Office

101 Niddrie Mains Road

EH16 4DS

northeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

0131 529 3111

South East Locality Office

40 Captain's Road Edinburgh

EH17 8QF

southeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

0131 529 5151

North West Locality Office

8 West Pilton Gardens

EH4 4DP

northwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

0131 529 5050

South West Locality Office

10 Westside Plaza Edinburgh

EH14 2ST

southwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

0131 527 3800



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