



TENANTS
courier
June 2021

The newsletter for
City of Edinburgh Council
tenants

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Dear Tenant

Welcome to the spring/summer edition of the Tenants' Courier.

More than a year on from the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, I'm delighted to see the first signs of a return to normal. It's been such an unprecedented time for everyone.

I want to thank you all for your patience in dealing with the changes to Council services, which we had to do to ensure the safety of tenants, staff and members of the public.

I am pleased to say that, despite the challenges, we've managed to continue to work towards delivering much needed homes across the city. Over 1,000 new affordable homes built by the Council and our housing association partners have now been finished and a further 1,300 homes have been approved for site start.

We've also been working hard on a Housing Service Improvement Plan and you can expect to see the benefits of this over the coming months, particularly an improved experience of booking and managing repairs in your home.

I wish you all a happy and healthy summer.

Your faithfully
Elaine Scott

Housing Services Manager

Repairs Update

Carrying out repairs safely

As we go to press, it looks as though lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease. The safety of our tenants and staff remains our top priority and that means some restrictions are likely to remain in place for the repairs service. Staff have been trained to keep you and themselves safe and will follow careful guidelines at all times when working in your home. Before starting work, they will let you know how they will do this and what you can do to help. Government guidelines are changing in response to Covid-19 infections, so please keep an eye on our website for the latest service updates. You can find the most up to date information at edinburgh.gov.uk/councilhouserepairs

Improving your repairs service

We want every tenant to receive a high standard of service when they book a repair. We know that some of you have experienced service that falls below the standards we aim to provide and we're working hard to continually improve. We're improving how issues and complaints are managed, to speed up the process, and we are making it easier for you to book a repair.

We have recently introduced an improved process for managing issues of dampness, mould and condensation. This focuses on an end to end process to make sure the immediate effects are treated, as well as tackling the root cause. You will now be given a named person who is there to keep updated and make sure your issues are fully resolved. If you are concerned about dampness, mould or condensation in your

home, please get in touch using the details below.

Booking your repair

We're here to help and want to fix any repair issues you have in your homes as quickly as possible. There are a number of ways to get in touch with us to arrange a repairs appointment:

- edinburgh.gov.uk/repairsdirect
- [email RepairsDirect@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:email.RepairsDirect@edinburgh.gov.uk)
- [phone 0131 200 2345](tel:01312002345).

We've introduced text message reminders for repairs and we'll now be in touch with you again before your appointment. We'll make sure we have your mobile number when you book a repair and you'll receive text messages keeping you updated:

- *when your appointment is booked*
- *the day before to remind you of the date/time of your appointment*
- *when someone is on their way. If you've booked an appointment and you don't receive these text messages from us, please get in touch by emailing us your reference number so we can check your contact details are correct.*

Look out for a further update on repairs improvements in the next Tenants' Courier. In the meantime, we want to hear from you so please keep in touch with feedback on how we can continue to improve our services: HSIP@edinburgh.gov.uk

Paying your rent and keeping your home is important

All tenants are responsible for paying the rent for their home. It's very important that you get the right advice and help to make your rent payments.

Let us know if you're finding it difficult to manage your Universal Credit (UC) claim online, use your journal or even understand exactly what money you're receiving. If you're having problems paying your rent or have benefit issues, please speak to us.

Help is at hand to assist you to make your UC claim manageable and claim other benefits you might be able to get. If you don't have a smart phone or email we'll make an appointment to see you at one of our offices. Contact the Advice Shop on 0131 200 2360.

You should also contact your patch housing officer who'll provide advice and assistance to avoid any debt action being taken against you due to unpaid rent. They can also help you to set up easier ways to pay your rent through Direct Debit on a date that suits you. The earlier you contact us for advice, the more we can help you. If you don't know the name of your patch housing officer, contact your local office.

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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



Your 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, our 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*
- *understand and check your gas and/or electricity bills*
- *choose a gas and/or 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 gas and/or electricity supplier*
- *read your meters*
- *get the most out of your heating and hot water system*
- *deal with condensation in your home.*

How to get in touch

If you'd like to find out more about the Energy Advice Service, ask your housing officer or:

visit changeworks.org.uk

email warmth@changeworks.org.uk

call Changeworks on 0800 870 8800 (free).

Keeping your home safe

Legionnaires' disease is a serious type of pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria. Cases are extremely rare with only around 300 cases reported across the UK every year.

Legionnaires' disease is not contagious and you can't get it from drinking water. People can become ill if they inhale water droplets from a contaminated water supply. Any water supply can become contaminated if conditions allow the bacteria to reproduce.

It's very unusual to be exposed to legionella bacteria at home but taking these simple important steps will help you keep your home safe:

- *run showers and taps for five minutes if you've not used them for some time*

- *clean shower heads and hoses regularly, at least every three months*
- *keep the water in your hot water tank at 60°C, at least once a day, for an hour (WARNING: BE AWARE OF SCALDING)*
- *tell us right away if you see any discoloured water flowing from your taps or shower.*

Legionnaires' disease most commonly affects older people or those with chest or lung problems. If you think you've been exposed to legionella bacteria, it's important to see your doctor. If you've any concerns, or want to know more, please contact Repairs Direct on 0131 200 2345. It's our job to help you keep your home safe.



Utilita Energy

Utilita is a pay as you go energy supplier that works with social landlords across the UK. As part of its work with the City of Edinburgh Council, Utilita is providing funding for community-based projects.

One of the first projects included planting trees in a green space at Firrhill Crescent, in South West Edinburgh. Three birch trees and three cherry trees were funded by Utilita and planted by the Council to benefit current residents and future generations to come.

Plans are also underway to provide new tablets to sheltered housing residents and event equipment to a community group in North East Edinburgh. What

about your area? Do you have ideas for a community project that would benefit tenants? Email tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk

(Photo caption: Graham and Craig from The City of Edinburgh Council planting trees thanks to the Utilita Community Fund)



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Tenants' Courier online

Don't forget you can have the latest edition of the Tenants' Courier delivered directly to your email inbox as soon as it's available. Why not save paper and sign up online? Just email tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk

Looking to move home?

The way you view and bid for available homes has changed. You now need to create a new log-in with Housing Online to place a bid through Key to Choice.

It's easy to create a log-in for Housing Online. You just need to:

- **know your EdIndex number**
- **have an e-mail address.**

If you don't know your EdIndex number, please email your full name, date of birth and address to housingonlineregistration@edinburgh.gov.uk and we'll email it to you.

Once you have this information to hand visit www.edindexhousing.co.uk then click the Key to Choice Link and follow the instructions.



Move to a smaller home

Did you know that if you're living in a Council home that is too large for you, you may be awarded a priority for a move to a smaller home to help families who are overcrowded? You'll also be helped with the costs of decorating your new home. To find out more, speak to your patch housing officer or email tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk



Borrow wisely

Covid-19 has put extra financial pressures on families and sometimes people need to take out credit. If you do, it's really important that you make sure that you borrow from a reputable lender to avoid high extra costs.

Your local credit union can help and there are several in Edinburgh.

The Capital Credit Union is open to anyone who lives or works in the East of Scotland and is a member owned, community based, financial organisation.

Globally credit unions operate in hundreds of countries, serving millions of members. No matter their size however, all credit unions share the same 'people helping people' ethos.

Contacts

Phone:
0131 225 9901

Email:
enquiries@capitalcreditunion.com

Address:
Capital Credit Union
62 Hamilton Place
Edinburgh
EH3 5AZ



Update from Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF)

We may still be in lockdown but that hasn't stopped ETF keeping busy and continuing to represent tenants in Edinburgh during these difficult times. Here's a snapshot of what ETF representatives have been involved in over the past couple of months:

ETF has continued to respond well to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff continue to work from home facilitating meetings online to protect the health of staff members and service users whilst providing support to tenants as and when required.

The Federation submitted a written deputation to councillors asking for a rent and council tax freeze for 2021/2022. Due to the current circumstances, we were unable to take, in person, a deputation to full Council regarding proposed rent increases. ETF's Convenor held online meetings with representatives from each of the political parties to highlight ETF's concerns and how tenants' rent money could be better spent. ETF representatives are glad that the Council has agreed a rent and council tax freeze for 2021/2022.



The Federation Meeting took place in March. Key points were:

- *Information about the Council's new house building programme*
- *An update on the Build Scotland's Future Campaign.*

Tenants Voice was produced in March. You can read a copy of Tenants Voice at <https://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/tenants-voice-march-2021/>

A Membership Survey was sent to all ETF Member Groups and individual tenants involved with the Federation. The feedback from the surveys allows ETF to plan the future work of the Federation;

A review of ETF's Policies and Procedures is currently taking place. As part of the review, a Handbook will be produced for both Executive Committee members and staff.

You can find out more about the work of the Federation at www.edinburghtenants.org.uk.

Kids' Corner



For a chance to win a £20 shopping voucher, find the words and return this puzzle to Tenant and Resident Service, G5, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh. EH8 8BG by 30 September 2021. 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 provide your contact details (name, age, address).

EVERYONE THINGS ARE GOING TO GET BETTER

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C	T	N	I	E	I	E	R	O
T	E	G	N	F	C	O	T	T
T	B	S	G	C	O	E	R	H



Useful contacts

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0131 529 3111

North West Locality Office
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40 Captain's Road, Edinburgh.
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