

TENANTS courier

April 2020

The newsletter for
**City of Edinburgh Council
tenants**

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) special edition



Dear tenant,

Welcome to this special edition of the Tenants' Courier.

I know that this is a very difficult and uncertain time for everyone. I want you to know that we're doing our very best to keep you and everyone who works for us safe and looked after during this time.

I hope you're keeping well and following government guidance to stay at home and only leave your house for essential shopping, to exercise and if you're a key worker, to go to work. Keep yourself and others safe the best you can.

This newsletter tells you about some of the changes to Council services. A list of useful telephone numbers is also included. Please be reassured that we're doing everything we can to protect communities, especially the most vulnerable. We're also making sure our staff and contractors are safe while they are doing their work.

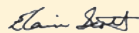
You'll appreciate that advice is changing all the time, so keep up to date by regularly checking www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus and for more updates on Council Services check out www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Please stay in touch with your housing officer, they're here to help. For the time being, contact with you will almost always be by telephone or email. If you can't get your housing officer, please call your locality office.

Please keep yourself and your families safe by following government guidance to maintain social distancing. And take the best care you can of your physical and mental health during the lockdown. You'll find plenty of tips online.

I want to thank you for your patience, understanding and cooperation at this critical time.

Kind regards



Elaine Scott
Housing Services Manager



Staying home saves lives

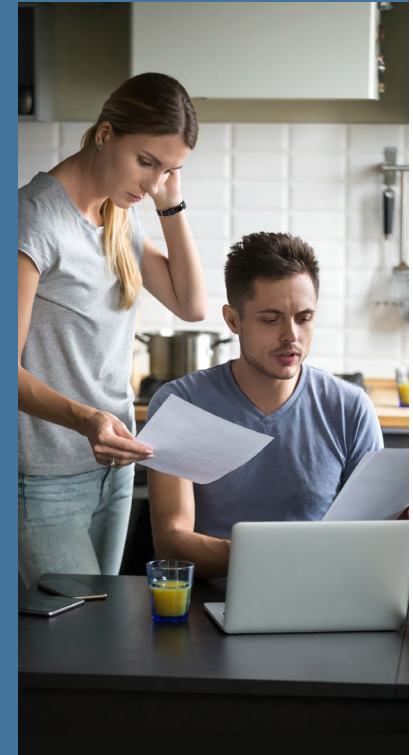
- ✓ Stay at home, **only go outside** for food, health reasons or work (but only if you can't work from home).
- ✓ If you go out, always stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people.
- ✓ Don't meet others or invite them in to your home, even friends or family; you can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.
- ✓ Wash your hands as soon as you get home.
- ✓ If you can't get out and need help, contact your housing officer or locality office.
- ✓ If you're being shielded from the virus, due to underlying health conditions and need help, please call 0800 111 4000 between 9am and 5pm.



Rent

We know this is an unsettling time. If you're concerned about being able to pay your rent during the coronavirus emergency, please let us know. We can help you to manage rent payments and refer you for advice on benefits that you may be entitled to. Please be reassured that you're not at risk of losing your home during the current emergency. But it's important that you continue to pay your rent to avoid getting into debt. There are many ways you can do this, and your housing officer will be able to help, including setting up direct debits.

Please note all our offices are closed due to the coronavirus and we can't accept cash payments currently. Payments can still be made at Paypoint outlets when you go for essential shopping if you're allowed to leave your home, but if not, there are other ways to pay your rent. Contact your housing officer to find out more or visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/waystopaycouncilrent



Reporting critical repairs

Our priority is to prevent you and our staff from becoming ill or coming to harm and so for a short time, during this coronavirus emergency, we can only do critical repairs.

Critical repairs will ensure that your building stays safe and secure. Examples include:

- you have a broken window/door
- you have no electricity, heating or hot water
- you have no shower/bathing facilities
- you have a blocked toilet
- your smoke alarm needs repaired
- you have a serious water leak.

When you report a critical repair, we'll let you know how long it will take us to come to your home, which is usually in four hours. We'll make your home safe and if more critical work is needed, we'll make another appointment with you. Any further work that's not critical won't be done until normal service resumes.

Operatives have been trained to keep you and themselves safe during the work and will follow robust protocols when in your home, including always keeping two-metres apart from you. Please make sure you also

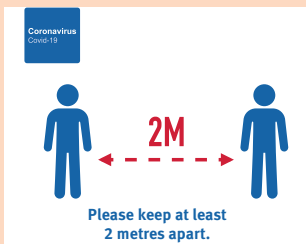
respect the two-metre rule and move to a different room if you can.

If you need a critical repair, please call 0131 200 2345. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We must focus on the most urgent repairs for now. If your repair isn't urgent it won't be logged and you'll be asked to call back once the coronavirus emergency is over.

Thank you for your help, support and understanding.



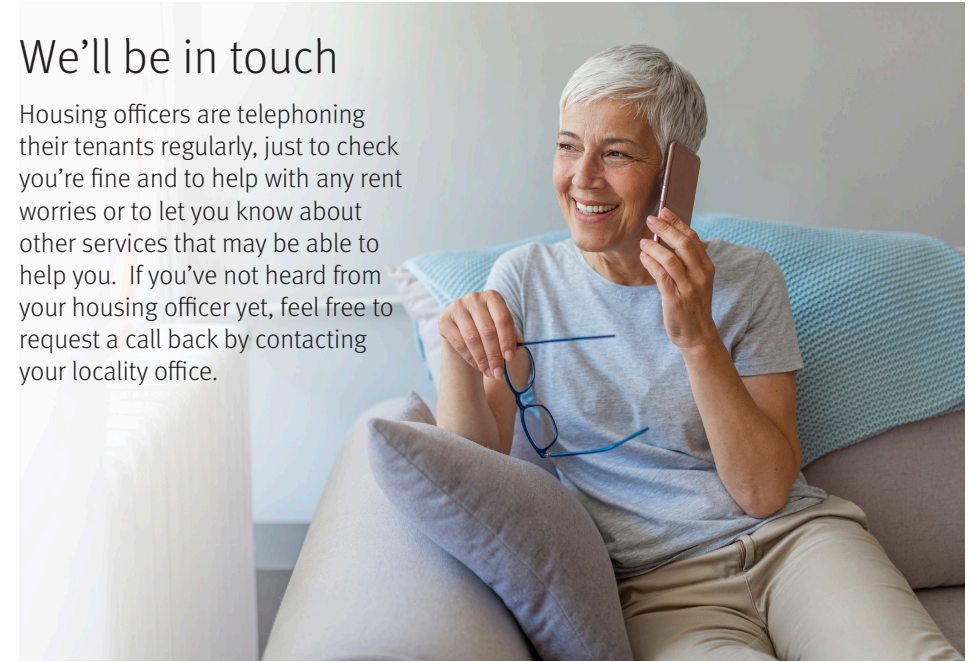
Keep your distance



We're doing everything we can to protect communities. All our staff and contractors will follow social distancing guidance when visiting your home and will be observing good hygiene standards, in line with national guidance. Please keep a safe distance when they are working to help them focus on their work and keep you safe. It's very important that you do not approach them.

We'll be in touch

Housing officers are telephoning their tenants regularly, just to check you're fine and to help with any rent worries or to let you know about other services that may be able to help you. If you've not heard from your housing officer yet, feel free to request a call back by contacting your locality office.



Locality offices

All our offices are closed currently due to the coronavirus, but you can still contact us through our website www.edinburgh.gov.uk and by email and telephone. The best way to get in touch is to use your housing officer's direct contact telephone number, if you have it. If not, please contact your locality office:

northeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk
northwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk
southeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk
southwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

If you don't have access to email and don't know how to get in touch with your housing officers directly, please call 0131 200 2000.

Benefits advice

We appreciate that many of you are facing uncertainty with your income. We're offering support and advice to tenants who need benefits and other financial help. Contact our Income Maximisation Team: call 0131 529 7905 or email IncomeMaximisation@edinburgh.gov.uk



Help with food

If you're struggling to feed yourself or your family, help is still available. Due to coronavirus, most foodbanks are closed, however there's now an online system being used to refer people for home delivery. If you've a paper voucher to use, the Tollcross Foodbank at Central Hall, 2 West Tollcross, EH3 9BP is open on Mondays from 2pm to 4pm and Thursdays from 10am to 12 noon. As always, you must have a referral to use the foodbank. Please contact your usual support agency or, if this is your first time using this service, speak to your housing officer. Edinburgh Food Project is unable to accept self-referrals.

Scottish Welfare Fund

If you need financial help, you can apply for a crisis grant from the Social Welfare Fund. The grant is tax free and you don't have to pay it back. You must be:

- 16 or over
- on a low income or receiving benefits (Universal Credit, Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, or Pension Credit).

Email: welfarefundteam@edinburgh.gov.uk or call 0131 529 5299.



Stair Cleaning

We won't be doing the usual stair cleaning, but you'll still see the cleaners out working as they're carrying out emergency cleans to remove hazardous waste like bodily fluids or fire risk materials. They're also helping some of the more vulnerable residents in the city. The cleaners have the correct protective clothing and are following safe working practices, making sure they follow government guidance. If you need to report an emergency stair clean, call 0131 529 7484 or email stair.cleaning2@edinburgh.gov.uk



Help with energy

The UK Government has agreed emergency measures with energy suppliers to support you if you're using a prepayment meter or if you're struggling financially.

Options may include (on a case by case basis)

- reviewing bill payment plans, including debt repayment plans
- payment breaks or reductions giving you more time to pay
- access to hardship funds (in some cases).

No credit meters will be disconnected during the coronavirus outbreak.

Visit your supplier's website or contact them for specific advice.

If you have an energy problem, such as a gas leak or faulty meter, contact your supplier straightaway. Tell them if you're ill or self-isolating. If you experience a power cut, call freephone 105 or visit www.powercut105.com If there's a serious immediate emergency risk, call the emergency services too.

If you or someone you know is vulnerable, of pensionable age, has children under 5, a disability or long-term medical condition, it's important to let your energy supplier know. Each energy supplier keeps a Priority Services Register of people who may need additional assistance, such as in a power cut or in dealing with supplier representatives. It's free to be added to the list.

If you live in a multi-storey

Waste

There's more rubbish now that people are staying at home. Please don't leave it on the landing or in the chute rooms - keep your waste at home until there's space to put it down the chute (small items) or take it downstairs to the bin room (black bags/bulky items).

Lift

It's very important that you use the lifts one at a time unless you're travelling with people from your own household. This will take longer but please be patient with each other - your health matters.

Coronavirus Covid-19

To protect yourselves and others, please practice social distancing. This means only one person in the lift at a time, unless you are part of the same household.

Keep at least 2 metres apart

Non household Only one passenger in a lift at a time

Household Household members can ride together

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus

EDINBURGH THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Moving House

During this coronavirus emergency, we'll not be advertising homes to let on Key to Choice. We've made this decision because it's vital that we do everything we can to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Homes won't be advertised, and any moves will be for essential needs only until the

coronavirus outbreak is over. If you've any questions, please email edindex@edinburgh.gov.uk Please note: teams are very short of staff due to ill health and other measures put in place to reduce the risk of infection so you may not receive a reply within the usual timescales.

House Exchange

House Exchange is still up and running and queries are being responded to as soon as possible. You can't exchange your home at the moment, but you could use this time to add some photos to your advert, improve your property description and start conversations with people who are looking

for a swap. House Exchange strongly advises you to follow government advice on social distancing and not arrange any visits until it's safe to do so. For more information, visit www.houseexchange.org.uk

Worried about domestic abuse?

If you're in danger call 999, Police Scotland will help.

Support services are available if you are experiencing abuse in your home:

Scottish Women's Aid

0800 027 1234
or email helpline@sdafmh.org.uk

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre

Text 077537410027 or call 08088010302
(both 6pm to midnight)

Shakti Women's Aid

0131 475 2399
or email info@shaktiedinburgh.co.uk

FearFree

0131 624 7270
or email FearFreeInfo@sacro.org.uk

It's not your fault, don't be afraid to get help.



Waste

We're working hard to keep most waste services running and we've had to make some changes to help us do this. We're prioritising bin collections to protect our workers and have suspended some of our collection services. We've also closed our recycling centres.

Please help us to keep Edinburgh clean by taking your litter home and keep our workers safe by:

Staying at a safe distance

If you see our crews in the street, please keep a safe distance from them (at least 2 metres) to protect them and you.

- Keep your cars at a safe distance too by parking close to the kerb and more than 10 metres (32 feet) from junctions. Please don't park in front of communal bins, so crews don't get blocked and can safely access bins.
- Wash your hands before and after putting your bin out.

Securing your waste if you have symptoms

- If you have symptoms of coronavirus, or if you live with someone who does, you must store personal waste, like tissues, in disposable plastic bags.
- Securely tie and double bag this waste, keeping it separate from the rest of your rubbish for at least 72 hours, then put it in your bin.

Keeping bulky waste at home and staying up to date with service changes

- Keep unwanted large items, like furniture, at home. Don't fly tip or put them in the communal bins, which are for day to day waste only.
- Visit our website and Twitter account regularly for updates about service changes (including service suspensions and advice).
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/binupdates



Thank you for your help at this challenging time.



Garden Aid

The Garden Aid service has been suspended during the coronavirus emergency. The service will be resumed as soon as possible.



Gas checks

During this coronavirus emergency, we're continuing with statutory gas servicing in line with national industry guidance. It's vitally important that we make sure your gas supply is safe and working properly.

Operatives have been trained to keep you and themselves safe during the check and will follow robust protocols when in your home, including always keeping two-metres distant from you. If possible, please can you stay in a different room.

If you've been advised by the government that you fall in to the extremely vulnerable

(shielded) category, email gasrepairs@edinburgh.gov.uk or call 07523 943 155 to tell us that you're medically vulnerable and don't want an engineer in your home. We'll then rearrange your gas safety check when you've stopped isolating.

But, if you smell gas, or if you've any concerns about the safety of your appliances, switch everything off and call the gas emergency service on 0800 111 999. Don't use your appliances again until the gas emergency supplier or a registered gas engineer has attended and told you they are safe to use.



Think Local Act Local

Many people have been volunteering to help during this emergency and we'd like to thank everyone who has been in touch to offer their skills and time. Your kindness and generosity reflect all that is best about this city.

As a rule, right now, the best thing that most people can do is

- stay at home
- limit social contact
- follow NHS guidelines.

If you're able to help others, then 'think local and act local'. Where you can, offer support to your

- wider family
- friends
- neighbours

to help make sure that they receive the essential supplies and medicine that they may need.

Many people will already have made plans for support which are expected to

continue but for those of you offering to help, Volunteer Edinburgh has some guidance on how to be a good neighbour safely. Visit www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk or call 0131 561 8300.

If you're the one receiving voluntary help, don't share your financial details or any personal information with anyone. If someone you don't know calls at your home, always ask for ID. Don't feel pressured into providing information and report any serious suspicious behaviour to the police. Remember that genuine volunteers have been instructed not to enter your home.

If you're concerned about any of your neighbours:

- if the crisis is life threatening, call 999
- if you are worried about someone who is ill, call NHS 24 on 111
- if someone needs urgent social care or you think an adult or child needs protection call Social Care Direct on 0131 200 2324.



Other useful telephone numbers

Emergency housing (out of hours)
0800 032 5968

Social care services (out of hours)
0800 731 6969 (freephone)
or 0044 131 553 8286 (from outside
the UK)

**Scottish Government coronavirus
helpline** 0800 111 4000 (9am to 5pm).
This helpline is for people at home with
nobody around to help them and with no
other way of seeking local assistance. It
will allow them to immediately access the
essential help they need.

Electricity 0800 40 40 90

Power cut 105

Gas leaks 0800 111 999

Scottish Water 0800 0778 778

Floodline 0345 988 1188

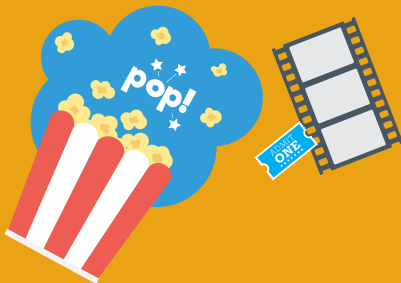
Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Alcoholics Anonymous 0800 9177 650

The Samaritans 116 123

Kids' Corner

For a chance to win a £20 Vue Cinema
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 June 2020. You must be under
16 and live in a Council tenancy. Don't
forget to provide your contact details
(name, age, address).



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ALL	WILL	BECOME
FINE	TAKE	CARE
EVERY	ONE	SUPPORT



Telephone 242 8181
Reference 20-6157