

# West Lothian tenants news

Informing and involving West Lothian's tenants



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# Don't give **COLD** a chance...

## Protect yourself and your home Inside your home:



### Frozen Pipes:

- turn off the water supply (make sure you know where this is).
- turn off the stopcock in your cold water tank, if you have one.
- protect everything around the frozen pipe to avoid damage; if it bursts, place buckets, basins and towels around the area.

### Thawing Out:

- open the tap nearest to the part of the pipe you think is frozen, so the water can flow through when it has melted.

- thaw the ice in the pipe with a hot water bottle or hairdryer (taking care to keep it well away from any water). Start from the tap end and work back toward the cold water tank. NEVER use a heat gun or blowtorch – the pipe needs to be thawed out slowly and safely!

### Try the following care tips:

- if your tank is in the loft, open the loft trap door on very cold days to let heat in.

- if you're going on holiday and your home will be empty, contact your local housing office to make arrangements to drain down the water system.
- in very cold weather, if you're going out for the day, or perhaps away for a couple of days over the Christmas period, keep your heating on, or set it to come on a couple of times a day.

Following this advice should minimise the risk of having a frozen or burst pipe. However, should this happen, please report it immediately to our Customer Service Centre on 01506 280000.

## Outside your home:

In very severe cold spells, care should be taken outside your property due to the formation of icicles, which can become dangerous when they grow large, especially if they have a long distance to fall.



### WHAT YOU SHOULDN'T DO

Don't try to knock large icicles off the gutters. Hitting icicles could cause more pressure on the guttering which in turn could cause them to collapse. Large icicles in particular are unpredictable when they fall and could cause injury or property damage.

### THE BEST THING TO DO

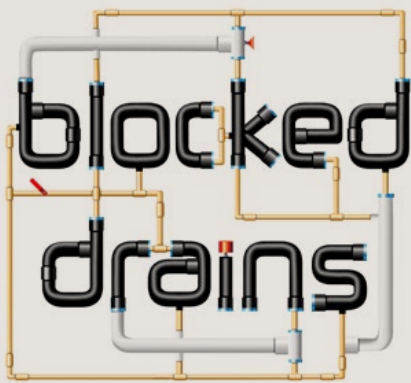
Is leave them alone and monitor them. If necessary cordon off or block the area where the icicles are hanging to prevent and deter anyone from walking directly below them.

More information and advice on being 'Winter Ready' can be found at: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter)

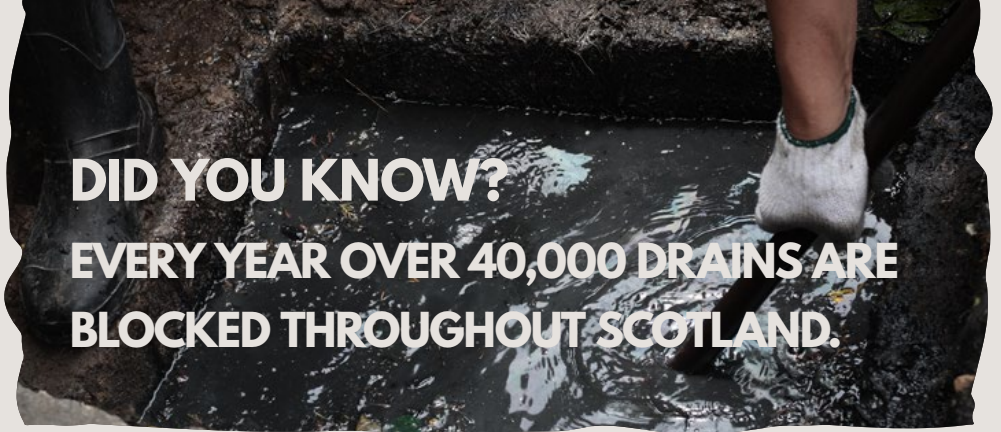
## Don't risk it, get insured today!

For more information either call **01506 282020** or Click [here](#)

More information and advice on being 'Winter Ready' can be found [here](#).



## DID YOU KNOW? EVERY YEAR OVER 40,000 DRAINS ARE BLOCKED THROUGHOUT SCOTLAND.



This can cause flooding, especially during periods of heavy rain, which affects you and your neighbours and pollutes rivers and burns in your local area. **The cost of unblocking and repairing these last year on council housing estates in West Lothian was £308,190.38.** As you can appreciate, this is money which could have been much better spent on improvements to services and council homes! Around 80% of these blockages, that clog up the drains, are caused by either inappropriate items being put down the toilet, or fat, oil and grease being put down the sink. (It is an offence under the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 to dispose of fat, grease or oil down your sink).

## WIPE OUT BLOCKED DRAINS

The waste water drain which runs from your house to the public sewer is usually about four inches wide.

This drain is designed to only take used water from sinks, showers and baths and pee, poo and toilet paper from the toilet. Even though other things may seem to flush or pour away, they could be causing your drains to block.

Flushing things like wipes, nappies or cotton buds down the toilet can cause drains to block, flooding you and your neighbours. It's easy in the bathroom just follow our Three P's rule and only flush pee, poo and toilet paper.

**Everything else should go in the bin, not down your toilet - check out the bathroom checklist of 'never flush' items right:**

### BATHROOM CHECKLIST (ITEMS THAT MUST NEVER BE FLUSHED):

- All wipes (baby, personal cleansing, toilet and household cleaning) - even if the pack says 'flushable'
- Sanitary items (sanitary towels, tampons, liners, applicators and backing strips;
- Cotton wool, cotton buds, disposable nappies and nappy liners
- Condoms, incontinence pads, colostomy bags, used bandages and contact lenses

### NEVER POUR DOWN THE SINK

Fat, oil and grease in liquid form may not appear to be harmful as they don't get stuck in the plughole, but as they cool, they congeal, harden and stick to the inside of drains and sewers, which can cause drains to block, flooding you and your neighbours.

### KITCHEN CHECKLIST (ITEMS THAT MUST NEVER BE Poured DOWN THE SINK):

- Fat, oil and grease - leave to cool. If it hardens put it in your brown bin if you have one, but if it's still liquid put it in a container and then put in your grey bin
- Give plates, pots, utensils and containers a quick scrape or wipe with some kitchen towel before washing and use a sink strainer in the plughole to prevent any bits of leftover food going down the sink; put this in your grey bin
- Believe it or not soup, stocks and milk products all contain fat, which can also congeal and harden in your drains - leave these to cool. Again hardened material can go in the brown bin, the rest can be scraped into your grey bin
- Peelings - put any waste food and peelings into your brown bin.

### Never flush down the toilet:



### Never pour down the sink:



If you have a blocked external drain, contact the Customer Service Centre for advice on whose responsibility this is, as in certain circumstances it may be Scottish Water who need to come out.

**T: 01506 280000**

**Contact us [here](#)**

**For more information on recycling in West Lothian [click here](#)**



# Winter Fuel & Cold Weather Payments 2021/2022

## Winter Fuel

If you were born on or before 26 September 1955 you may be eligible to receive between £100 and £300 to help with your bills in the winter of 2021-2022. The Winter Fuel Payment is usually automatic if you are eligible.

To check if you are eligible or to download an application, take a look at the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) or telephone the Winter Fuel Payment helpline on 0800 731 0160. Have your National Insurance Number

and your bank or building society details to hand as you will be asked for these.

If you have claimed before, don't worry, you only need to claim once. After this, you should automatically receive a payment every year, as long as your circumstances don't change. The DWP will have the correct information and payment details for you.

*The DWP will accept claims until 31 March 2022*

## Cold Weather

You may be entitled to get a Cold Weather Payment if you're getting certain benefits. You could get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees celsius or below over seven consecutive days.

You could get £25 for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March. For more information take a look [here](#).



## Scottish legislation for fire and smoke alarms - are you compliant?

### Scottish legislation changed in February 2019 and now all homes in Scotland are required to meet the new legislation by February 2022.

This new Scottish legislation states that an interlinked Fire and Smoke Alarm System must be fitted in a property and that there should be adequate Carbon Monoxide protection.

All homes in Scotland will be covered by the new legislation, which has come about as a direct result of recent fire tragedies; it is important that all homes

should be safe for occupants, both in the private and social housing sectors.

If you already have Fire and Smoke alarms installed in your property, check that they are interlinked. If you have an alarm system but you're not sure if it meets the new requirements, please contact us so we can check and upgrade your system if required.

By having an interlinked system, the whole alarm system will be triggered if one alarm is activated, meaning you are alerted immediately in the event of a fire.

**Please note:** If you are contacted by the Council to have your fire and smoke alarms checked, you must allow us into your property to carry this out.

**For more information or to check if you are due an upgrade, give us a call on 01506 280000 or [contact us](#).**

Scammers and rogue traders may try to take advantage of those who are unsure about how to comply with the new legislation or worried about meeting the installation deadline. As a WLC tenant, the council will contact you to arrange the installation.

## What Might Scammers Say?



Cold callers may tell you that you are eligible for financial support to install new fire alarms or that they are offering special deals.

If you get a cold call about the new fire alarms legislation, do not provide any details or agree to purchase any products.



You may get a leaflet through the door from a company selling fire alarms that implies that they have been endorsed by the Government.

Neither the Scottish Government nor Scottish Ministers have endorsed any particular suppliers, products or services.

## Where Can I Find Trusted Information?

The best way to avoid scams is to use trusted sources of information. Don't deal with cold callers and be wary of any company that says their products or services have been endorsed by the Scottish Government.



### Scottish Government

[www.mygov.scot/home-fire-safety](https://www.mygov.scot/home-fire-safety)

Detailed information about the new legislation, what you need to do and what to look for when choosing an alarm

### West Lothian Council

For more information or to check if you are due an upgrade, give us a call on 01506 280000 or [contact us](#).



# Talking to tenants

In the last edition of Tenants News, we introduced you to the Housing, Customer & Building Services Customer Experience (CX) team. Our CX team have been extremely busy speaking to our tenants about:

CX Calendar\*

\*may be subject to change.

August	September	October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Your Home</li> <li>Contact Preferences and Participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Customer, Contact Support and Advice.</li> <li>Homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>The Neighbourhood</li> <li>Repair Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Financial Profile</li> <li>Anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> </ul>

If you are interested in taking part in any of these discussions, please feel free to contact the CX team by calling 01506 280434 or by email [HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk)

## Interesting Facts

To date the CX Team called **900** tenants.

By December we aim to speak with **300**

additional tenants to gather their experiences on accessing Housing, Customer & Building Services.

**28%** of tenants provided us with an insight of their lived experiences.

## Findings

We have picked just a few statistics that have been identified in our latest surveys that you may find interesting.

- 70% of customers find their rent affordable.
- 95% of tenants are satisfied that HCBS provides a home that is safe and secure.
- 31% of customers expressed they would be interested in engaging with Tenant Participation activity

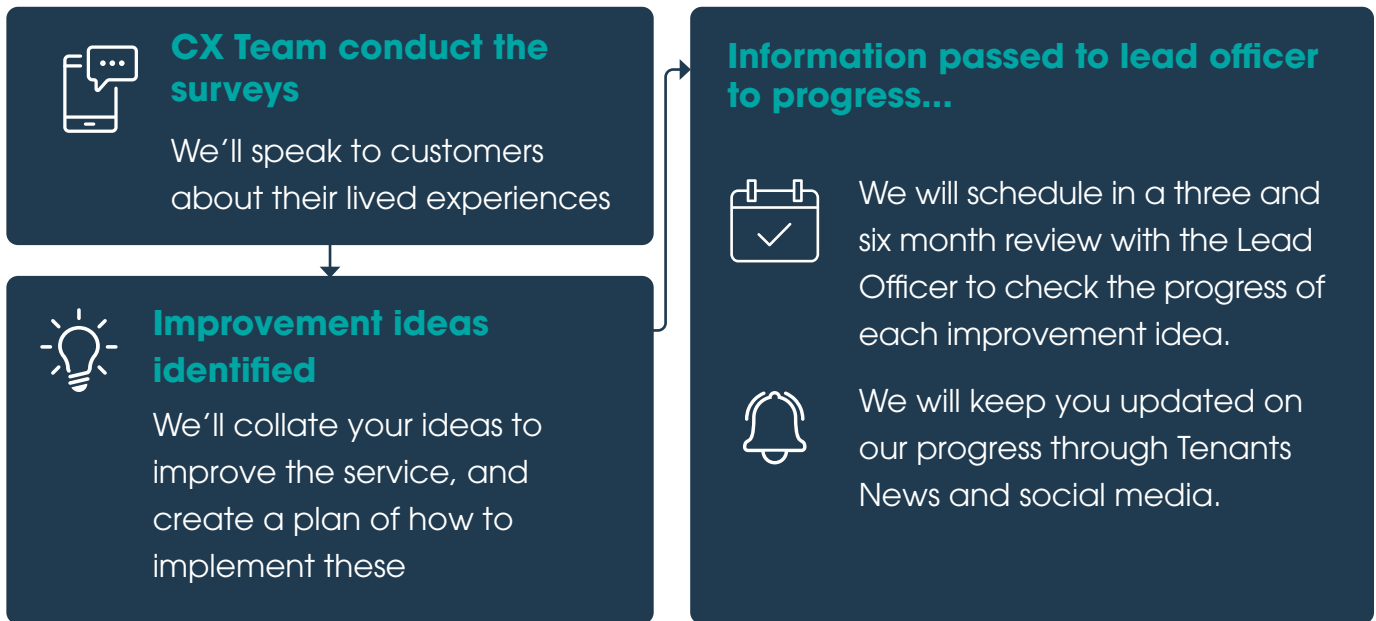
## Improvements

From your lived experiences we have been able to recommend one quick fix improvement, and three long term improvements.

- A quick fix improvement can be implemented with very little cost and use of resource.
- A long-term improvement is a more complex improvement that may involve changes to systems and processes, there will be a cost associated with this and a higher usage of resource.



The following process will be used to keep each improvement on track and we will be able to provide a more in-depth update by the three month review, this update will include approval status, and project progressions.



We will keep you fully updated on the progress of this in Tenants News, West Lothian Council Tenant Participation Facebook page and in the very near future our internet page.

Do you agree with these findings? Do you feel you could suggest an improvement to the service? We would love to hear from you, please contact CX team by calling 01506 280434 or by email [HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk)

**If you find that you are struggling to pay your rent, we can help:**

- ensure you maximise your income and check that you are claiming all benefits you may be entitled to
- you to prioritise debts to ensure the most important are paid first
- work out realistic repayment plans, taking into account your income and expenses.

**If you do fall into rent arrears we will contact you in a variety of ways such as:**

**Text message**

**Telephone**

**Letter**

**It is important you address any rent arrears as soon as possible by contacting your Housing Officer on 01506 280000.**

**As a tenant of West Lothian Council, you are responsible for paying your rent and managing any arrears you may have. We can help you if you are struggling if you talk to us – don't struggle alone.**



# SPOTLIGHT

## THE ROLE OF A HOUSING OFFICER

The Housing, Customer & Building Services Customer Experience Team has conducted numerous surveys over the past few months. The tenants they had spoken with voiced that they did not know or understand the role of their housing officer. Therefore, we have pulled together some key points that you may find interesting.

### Our Housing Officers. . .

We have just under 14,000 houses in West Lothian, and housing officers manage the properties by splitting them into geographical areas or 'patches' working within the nine Council Ward areas. The average 'patch' size has up to 400 properties. We have 36 housing officers who are there to help West Lothian council tenants, they can:

- provide advice, support, and assistance to all tenants experiencing financial hardship that may impact their ability to sustain or access a tenancy.

- ensure that all relevant debt recovery processes are implemented.
- support applicants through the letting and sign up process when an applicant is matched to a tenancy and signposting for additional support where appropriate.
- provide a wide range of ongoing support and assistance to tenants
- throughout the lifetime of their tenancy to help maintain and sustain their home or if required to move home to a more suitable location or property type.

- responsible for managing the council's tenancies and enforcement of the relevant elements of the tenancy agreement. Including working with our Legal Services when required.
- work with wide range of council services and external agencies such as Police Scotland, Scottish Fire Rescue Service and third sector organisations.
- work with the Safer Neighbourhood Team to seek a positive resolution to neighbour complaints and tackling antisocial behaviour.

### It's about teamwork.

Our Housing Officers work under a service area called Housing Operations; they work alongside Community Estate Officers, Housing Assistants, and are managed by five Housing Managers.

Housing operations manage the council's housing stock and tenancies to ensure that the housing stock is used efficiently and effectively. The aim is to improve the quality of life for tenants, assist individual households and play an essential role in promoting sustainable communities.

### Housing Operations and the pandemic!

Over the last year or so, we have all had to make changes to how we live and work; our whole housing team and officers have put in place safeguarding measures to ensure the safety of our tenants and staff. Our housing officers are currently working a hybrid approach working from between home, the office, and out in the community to ensure the essential housing services to tenants is still being delivered across West Lothian.

## CONTACT US

If you would like to contact your Housing Officer, please contact us by emailing your local housing office or alternatively by calling our customer service centre on **01506 280000**.

### Armada Ward

ArmadaAHO@westlothian.gov.uk

### Bathgate Ward

BathgateAHO@westlothian.gov.uk

### Whitburn/Blackburn Ward

WhitburnAHO@westlothian.gov.uk

### Livingston Wards

LivingstonAHO@westlothian.gov.uk

### Broxburn/Linlithgow/East Livingston Wards

BroxburnAHO@westlothian.gov.uk

### Breich Valley Ward

BreichValleyAHO@westlothian.gov.uk

You can also check out the Tenant Portal to look at your rent and check repair statuses etc.

# Housing Applications Information – CASS report

With council housing in higher demand than ever, HCBS receives hundreds of requests from those who have applied for housing each month.



There are two very common queries:

*Where am I on the 'housing list?'*

*I have seen an empty house, can I have it?'*

The service has carried out some work to provide much clearer information to help our applicants understand our policy on how we allocate properties and how we match people to properties.

## Housing List

Traditionally housing providers had a list of applicants and people moved up that list the longer they waited on it. This has not been practice for some time.

The very high demand for social housing that all housing providers see from those who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness meant that this had to change to prioritise those in greatest need, rather than those who waited the longest. There is very low availability of available affordable properties and an increasing number of people looking for social housing.

This understandably leads to frustration for applicants and questions to the service.

Changes to Scottish legislation around how we allocate properties prompted some changes to The Allocations policy in 2018.

### Some key points to note in this policy for customers:

- There is no longer any 'list', and applicants do not have a fixed position on a list. As we assess applications on the severity of applicant needs, this determines how many points you receive.
- As more people apply with different needs, this changes the priority of who receives an offer of the next available property.
- We match any properties that become available to the applicant with the highest need, to the type of property we have available.

- People can apply for a range of areas, or property types, and each case is completely different, this means matching properties to people is an individual exercise
- Previously, officers have tried to help customers understand this, by attempting to provide a rough idea of a list position, however this is no longer something that will be provided – the estimates are not meaningful, accurate and do not help customers plan, or understand when they are likely to receive an offer of housing.
- The truth is, because we do not know who will approach the service for housing at any point, and how much need they will have, we cannot estimate who will have the highest priority at any point.

## Notes of Interest

The service receives a huge number of emails, calls and letters regarding this request. Applicants will see a property they perceive to be empty, and contact the service to ask if they can be considered for it. There are a number of facts on notes of interest applicants should note:

- The service operates a needs based allocations policy as

mentioned previously, and notes of interest have no impact on an application.

- Some nearby councils do operate a 'bidding' system for properties, there is no process for this in West Lothian – the council has decided properties should go to those most in need, rather than creating a 'fastest first' policy. This ensures we focus on prevention of homelessness and meeting the needs of applicants on an individual basis.

- There are a number of reasons why a property may look empty – it may be 'void' or in the process of being repaired ready for relet to someone it has been allocated to. It may be a property in use as a temporary tenancy or for decant (where we use it for a short time if we need to move someone out of their home temporarily for emergency or intrusive repairs).

Continued on next page



# CASS (Customer Application and Stock Summary)

The service has examined all these requests and we understand why applicants ask for this information. We have developed a new report that we will publish each month on our properties across all wards or areas in West Lothian.

There is other key information to help our applicants understand our supply, the demand we have for this and by using their knowledge of their own application points, how close they are to the level of points our properties are going for.

Each month a report will be produced at the start of each month and published on the council website.

This is called the CASS (Customer Application and Stock Summary).

This means there will be a total of nine reports for customers to choose from covering the 9 ward areas.

The information in these reports will be

updated in the first week of each month from November onwards.

**The CASS provide explanations and data for the following topics:**

## Application

- What are the points levels for applications choosing housing in this area?
- How popular are the areas in this ward for applicants?
- How popular are the areas in this ward when chosen as preferred areas for applicants?
- How many applications are being offered a home right now?
- How many homes have been let this financial year?
- How many homes have been let in the previous financial year?
- What kinds of properties do applicants want in this area?

## Stock

- How many properties does the council have in this ward?
- How many properties might be available soon in this area?

You will find the report [here](#)

In order to improve the chances of getting an offer of property, the service advises all applicants to widen their choices to as many areas as possible, and to contact the Housing Options team to discuss their application and all options available to them.

Applicants should also consider other Registered Social Landlord housing providers within the West Lothian.

Information can be found [here](#).

**Paying your rent is secure & easier online**

Paying rent online is the easiest option, find out how at:  
[www.westlothian.gov.uk/paying-rent](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/paying-rent)

**Our team are here to help.** If you are struggling to pay your council housing rent, for whatever reason, don't delay & contact us now.

# 2022/23 Rent Consultation



In the autumn of 2017 HCBS asked tenants to vote for, and provide views on the options for the annual rent increase from years 2018 to 2023.

In addition, we also ran local drop-in sessions and an online campaign to provide tenants with as many opportunities to respond as possible.

We received our best ever response to a rent consultation, with 1192\* surveys returned.

Option	Number	Percentage
Option 1 – Annual increase of 3% over five years	986	85%
Option 2 – Annual increase of 4% over five years	170	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1156</b>	<b>100%</b>

As you can see most who voted, chose **Option 1 – a 3% increase over five years to 2022/23.**

At its budget meeting in February 2018, the Council were provided with the results of the survey and agreed to increase the rents in accordance with the most popular option chosen by tenants, Option 1. This increase is enabling investment in our existing houses, over the next five years, whilst also supporting the council to continue to

invest in the supply of new council homes for the future.

Included in the survey response card we asked three questions that we wanted your views on. Out of the 1192 responses returned, some had to be discounted either because the questions were left blank or no clear answer was given. The questions were:

Question	Yes	No
Option 1 – Annual increase of 3% over five years	813 (69%)	368 (31%)
Option 2 – Annual increase of 4% over five years	963 (81%)	221 (19%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>861 (73%)</b>	<b>321 (27%)</b>

As you can see from the responses received, a significant majority of tenants said “Yes” to each question, giving us valuable information which we will use when considering further future plans and developments.

Every year in March, the service issues a letter outlining tenants individual rent balances and your new weekly rent charge for the coming year. Should the 3% be approved during council budget setting in early 2022, this will contain the 3% increase as agreed with tenants.

Our CX team have been making contact every month with tenants to discuss how affordable they feel their rent is, and to understand if there is any further support or advice needed to help those struggling.

If you receive an email from the team, please speak with us, your input is vital to ensuring the service understand the customer point of view on rent.

Many of the tenants who we have spoken with to date have found this very useful, and have obtained further help and support as a result.

If you are having any difficulties financially, please remember that your local Housing Team are here to help you! If you are failing to pay your rent, for whatever reason, don't make things worse speak to us now!

You can do this by calling your Housing Officer on 01506 280000 or emailing us your enquiry by clicking [here](#).

*\*Note: All totals do not add up to 1192 as questions on some paper returns were not fully answered.*



# Winter Recipes for you to enjoy with family or friends

## Easy Peasy Gingerbread Cookies

These decorated gingerbread cookies look great as Christmas decorations or even as a homemade gift.

### What you'll need:

- 100g salted butter
- 3 tbsp golden syrup
- 100g dark muscovado sugar
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 225g plain flour

### To decorate

- 50g icing sugar

### How you make it:

- Heat the butter, syrup and sugar together in a small pan until melted, stirring occasionally. Set aside to cool slightly.
- Mix together the bicarb, ginger, cinnamon and flour in a large bowl. Pour in the buttery syrup mixture and stir to combine, then use your hands to bring together to

form a dough. The dough will be soft at this point, but it'll firm up in the fridge.

- Put the dough on a sheet of baking parchment, shape into a rectangle, and lay another sheet of parchment on top of it. Roll the dough out to a thickness of ½cm. Transfer to a baking sheet to keep it flat, leaving the parchment in place, then chill in the fridge for 1 hr.
- Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5 and line a large baking sheet with more baking parchment. Remove the dough from the fridge and cut out shapes using a cookie cutter. You can choose any shape. You can use a smaller shape to cut out of the centre to thread ribbon through and hang from a Christmas tree.
- Place the shapes, spread apart, on the lined baking sheet, and bake for 10-12 mins. (Depending on the size of the cutters

you use, they might need a few minutes more or less cooking in the oven). Leave to cool completely on the baking sheet.

- Meanwhile, mix the icing sugar with 1-2 tbsp water – you want to create a consistency that's thick and pipeable, and not too thin or it will run. Decorate the cooled biscuits with the icing using a piping bag with a thin nozzle or drizzle over the top.



## Campfire stew

This hearty and warming recipe uses a lot of cupboard staples and is a favourite with all the family.

It can be batch cooked and frozen for another day.

### What you'll need:

- 1 gammon joint (to keep it healthy remove all fat)
- 2 onions chopped
- 3 bell peppers sliced
- 3 cloves garlic crushed
- 1 tsp paprika, cumin and ground coriander
- 1 tin baked beans
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tin kidney beans
- 1 stick celery chopped
- 2 large carrots chopped
- 6-8 button mushrooms cut in half (optional)
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 pinch chilli flakes

- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 dash Hot Sauce (optional)

### How you make it:

- Soak the gammon joint overnight in cold water if necessary
- Reserve half of the sliced peppers, and add all the rest of the ingredients to the casserole dish, stir well and cover with a tight-fitting lid or seal with tin foil.
- Cook for 2-3 hours at 170-180°C, checking every 30 minutes or so
- Check the consistency of sauce and tenderness of meat. The meat should be starting to fall apart and sauce thickening
- You can remove the lid and continue cooking to finish the meat and thicken the sauce if necessary

- The meat should have broken up, but if not shred it with two forks and mix well
- 15 minutes before the end of cooking stir in the reserved peppers and serve





# TEN TOP TIPS TO AVOID CHRISTMAS DEBT

## 1 Don't forget the everyday bills

Remember that rent, utility bills, food bills and other existing debts still have to be paid and the consequences can be severe if they're not. Even though it's Christmas, get your priorities right.

## 2 Plan early for Christmas

Be realistic and budget accordingly. Work out how much you are going to spend on each person – and stick to it. Manage expectations as to what you or Santa can give.

## 3 Don't bank on an overdraft

If you do need more money, don't just run up an overdraft without talking to your bank first; it will work out much more expensive.

## 4 Keep things simple

If you can afford to pay for your goods outright with cash or debit card, don't be persuaded to take out extended credit agreements unless they really do work out cheaper.

## 5 Shop around

Try as many different places as possible to find the best price. Buy what you want and not what other people say you need. Be wary of extended warranties; the cost of a repair could be less than the cost of the warranty.

## 6 Buy safe to be safe

Whatever the deal, whatever the temptation, don't buy from unauthorised traders and don't borrow from unauthorised lenders. The initial savings and convenience may prove to be a false economy

## 7 Read the small print

Check for hidden extras in any credit agreement. Work out the total amount payable. Ensure that the monthly instalments are within your budget before signing. Interest free credit can seem attractive, but if you don't pay on time, or miss a payment, you could have to pay a lot more.

## 8 Do your own credit checks

If you are going to use a credit card, shop around and compare terms. Some cards charge high interest rates, but provide interest free periods or discounts. Budget for all these costs and put the payment dates in your diary

## 9 Be organised

There's a lot to remember at Christmas. If you've borrowed money don't forget that it won't be long before you have to make a payment. Make sure you pay on time, even if it is only the minimum, or you will be faced with additional charges.

## 10 Start planning and saving for next Christmas

Once Christmas is over, it's worth looking at what you did well and what you didn't. Learn from your mistakes and start planning how you will do things differently next year. This might also be a good time to start saving for next Christmas.



# Contact West Lothian Council

The council's Customer Service Centre (CSC) lines are open from Monday to Friday, 8am to 10:30pm. Thereafter, a number of staff are on site to deal with emergency calls. The CSC lines are also open from 10:30pm on Friday to 8am on Monday for emergency calls relating to noise, homelessness, repairs to council houses, roads, street lighting and environmental health.

MyWestLothian (Report It, Request It, Pay For It, Tenant Self Service)	<a href="http://my.westlothian.gov.uk">my.westlothian.gov.uk</a>
Contact us	<a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/contactus">www.westlothian.gov.uk/contactus</a>
Homelessness	0800 0323 450
Housing, Repairs and Gas Servicing	01506 280000, select option 1
Council Tax and Benefits	01506 280000, select option 2
Customer Service Centre	01506 280000 <a href="mailto:Customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk">Customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk</a>
Antisocial Behaviour	01506 282000 or the Police on 101
NETS and Land Services	0800 616 446
West Lothian Advice Shop	01506 283000 <a href="mailto:Advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk">Advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop">www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop</a>