

West Lothian

West Lothian Council

# tenants news

Informing and involving West Lothian's tenants

SPRING 2022



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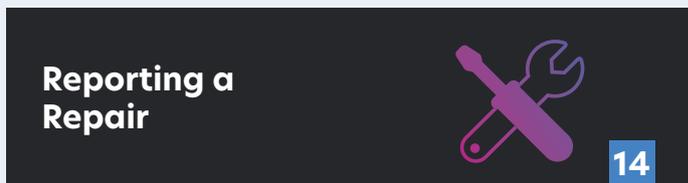
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# Talking tenants

## Our new section of the Tenants News

Talking Tenants provides an overview of what our tenant participation team discusses, works on, and improves. We will provide a Torchlight on a particular topic we have been working on to provide you a detailed overview of that topic.



### Talking Tenants topic is a list of what we have been working on.

#### Our look and feel

We are revitalising our look and feel. We are including more digital engagement and more opportunities for our tenants to be involved.

#### The Tenant Participation Action Plan

The Tenant Participation Strategy - the next five years.

#### Review of the Tenants Handbook

## Talking Tenants Torchlight - Tenants Handbook

### The Tenants Handbook

- Getting the keys to your first home or moving to a new home is an exciting experience, but we appreciate that you may have many questions about how your new West Lothian Council Tenancy will be managed.
- Housing, Customer & Building Services (HCBS) have created an online Tenants Handbook to guide you through every stage of your tenancy journey. You can find the Tenants Handbook online at [westlothian.gov.uk/tenantshandbook](https://westlothian.gov.uk/tenantshandbook).
- We are working with our tenants to develop the Tenants Handbook, ensuring that the information tenants need is accessible, understandable, and up to date. The review of the Tenants Handbook commenced in 2021 and will be completed in 2022. Following the review, we will launch our brand-new Tenants Handbook.

We understand that not all tenants will have fully explored the pages within the handbook; therefore, we have pulled together some highlights of the information that is included.

#### What is the Tenants Handbook?

The Tenants Handbook is an online resource that guides new and existing tenants through renting their home from West Lothian Council, and it includes information on:

- How to pay your rent and access the Tenants Portal.
- Your responsibilities as a West Lothian Council tenant, including what to do if you want to get a pet and information on how to look after your garden.
- Benefit entitlement and who to contact if you need support.

- How to manage your home, including frequently asked questions, how to end your tenancy, or how to swap your home with another tenant currently living in social housing.
- How to look after your home, including information on preventing dampness and condensation.
- How to stay safe in your home, including fire safety.
- Repairs and maintenance, including how to request a repair or how to get permission to carry out DIY work.
- Make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible, as well as information about how to get help if you are struggling with your energy bills.
- Our tobacco and smoking policy.
- Information on the services West Lothian Council provides, such as bin collection dates.

#### Why are we reviewing the Tenants Handbook?

We are reviewing the Tenants Handbook to make sure the information we provide to our tenants is relevant, accessible, and up to date.

The way we deliver services has changed significantly over the last two years. Therefore, the way tenants request services and engage with the Council has changed. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have all changed how we live and work; a high proportion of council staff are working remotely or have moved to hybrid working.

Reviewing the Tenants Handbook ensures that the handbook remains relevant as our operational practices develop and improve.

The tenant handbook is available online, and the link to the handbook is sent to every new tenant at sign up.

# Become a **Talking Tenant Expert** through Social Media



## 'Talking Tenants' is a new role within the remit of Tenant Participation.

This is an entirely voluntary opportunity, but if you are interested in helping out our Customer Participation Officers on the running of the Facebook page and being an advocate for digital Tenant Participation, here is what we will do to support you and what the role of the Talking Tenant representative entails.

### What We Will Do to Support You?

- ✓ We will make you a Group Expert.
- ✓ We will provide you with training on Facebook if required.
- ✓ We will be there to support, help and guide you.
- ✓ We will provide you with a Facebook page login (if you are not comfortable using your own).
- ✓ We will provide you with a unique profile picture and banner (if you wish to use it).

## What the Talking Tenant Representatives role involves?

- ✓ You will provide recipes, positive quotes, and activities (quizzes) as a Facebook post.
- ✓ We expect at least one of the above a week to help keep our tenant engagement levels high.
- ✓ You will be aware of special days worldwide that we may wish to post about, e.g. Christmas Day, Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day etc.
- ✓ You will use your own experience as a tenant representative to help encourage others to be more involved.

## What does the role not involve?

- ✗ Deal with any enquiries or complaints from tenants; this is the responsibility of the Customer Participation Officer. If you see a post that requires our attention, please tag us.
- ✗ You will not approve people for the page. We need to check that they are a West Lothian Council tenant before approval.
- ✗ You will not be dealing with anything that impacts West Lothian Council or Housing, Customer, Building Services.

## Facebook Admin

**Dyann Evans** - Customer Participation Officer  
**Caitlin Howie** - Customer Participation Officer

If you are interested or require further information, please email [TP@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:TP@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.

# The Next Generation of Tenant Participation

## CALLING ALL 16-25 YEAR OLD TENANTS

We are keen to recruit young and enthusiastic individuals to join our tenant participation team. This voluntary position will provide you with excellent life skills and work experience. Our meetings are held online, so you can take part wherever you are; however, you will be paid out-of-pocket expenses if travel is required.

### Being part of the next generation tenant participation focus group, you will:

- Improve your professional writing skills through reports.
- Improve your communication skills.
- Develop an understanding of Housing, Customer and Building Services, which will help you with your tenancy or if you have an interest in working in housing.
- Gain experience in participating in meetings which will help build confidence.
- Have opportunities to assist in designing marketing materials such as Tenant's News.
- Become one of our social media experts.
- Have the opportunity to take part in day events such as inspections.
- Leave your mark on high-level policies and procedures.
- Most importantly, have your voice heard within the service and help mould tenant participation for the future.

If you are looking to develop life skills, have skills to offer, or are a budding graphic designer, marketing or business student, please contact [TP@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:TP@westlothian.gov.uk); our friendly team is excited to hear from you.

## GET INVOLVED

Don't have time to attend Tenant Participation meetings? Why not join our Facebook page! Our Facebook page is there to allow us to consult and chat with our tenants – but not only that, it is a place where tenants can help each other. We post items relating to housing consultations, helpful hints and tips, survey feedback, and much, much more.

We even have a regular segment to appoint a TP Mascot of the month, where you can get your furry friends involved.

The Facebook page is run by the Housing, Customer & Building Services Customers team and tenant experts.

**Search West Lothian Council Tenant Participation on Facebook**

**Click join and remember to provide us with your address to verify you are a tenant!**

# Spring Gardening Hints and Tips

Well maintained gardens look nice and can be a great source of enjoyment for you and your family. On the other hand, overgrown gardens don't look very nice and can cause problems for you and your neighbours.

As part of your tenancy agreement, you are expected to look after your home and garden, and you must carry out the following maintenance work to your garden area regularly:

- any grassed areas should be cut at least once every four weeks in the growing season
- hedges and shrubs should not be allowed to overhang footpaths or get excessively tall/wide
- clear away and dispose of any rubbish or dog fouling
- If you have any concerns about maintaining your garden, please contact your local housing office by calling **01506 280000**.

Where tenants are not maintaining their gardens to a reasonable standard, action will be taken to address any issues with the tenant concerned. This could ultimately result in a charge being made to the tenant for any work the Council has to take to remedy the situation.

**To help you maintain your garden, here are some spring gardening hints and tips.**

## Top Tip: Make your own compost

Have you thought about making your own compost? If you haven't already, now's a great time to set up a compost area in your garden. This could be as simple as buying a ready-made compost bin, or you could build your own using spare wood.

A compost area provides somewhere to put all your organic waste. Once it has broken down, you'll get a lovely, rich compost your plants will thrive on. Make sure you have a good mixture of grass clippings, vegetable peelings and paper. To help the process along, you'll need to turn your compost with a garden fork each month to keep it aerated.



Click [here](#) to view a list of organic material suitable for composting.

## Top Tip: Add a little colour

Springtime is the start of the "growing season" in our gardens and a great time to introduce some colourful flowers in containers or pots. They are easy to maintain, and by using containers, you get the joy of having pretty flowers without the hard job of digging. Plus -they are great for attracting butterflies into your garden. It can be an inexpensive way to brighten even the smallest of gardens. Before you start with the containers, have a general tidy up remove dead leaves and other debris that's been blown into your garden over the winter. You can cut back the old dead growth of any plants you may already have now.

If you have borders and beds already, then clear them back to bare soil. Put the dead organic matter you've cleared away into your brown bin along with any weeds you can see.

## Top Tip: Grow your own veg

Did you know you can grow vegetables in pots or containers? Vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, onions, lettuce, and even beetroot can be grown in pots very easily and provide fresh produce that you know hasn't been treated with pesticides. A brilliant way of getting children involved in your garden is to give them their own container to grow their favourite vegetable. Growing your own vegetables is as close to farm-to-table as it gets when you're eating what you're growing.



## Top Tip: Looking after your grass

Grass is a plant and needs regular care and maintenance to keep it at its best. Grass/lawn care is important and can quickly become a difficult job if you allow it to become overgrown. Most people cut the grass for the first time of the year when the weather begins to get warmer, probably around March-April, as that is when the grass starts to grow.

The first cut of the grass growing season is probably the most important. But don't cut it too short at this first cut as it can damage the grass. You should aim to remove no more than one-third of the grass blade length. Grass that turns yellow or brown can be a tell-tale sign that the grass may have been cut too short.

Under normal Scottish weather conditions from March to June, you may only need to cut the grass once or twice a month. As the weather gets warmer and it rains less, the grass will dry out, so if there is an extended period of dry weather, water the grass to keep it from drying out and dying. Water in the morning or evening to avoid drying out in the sun.

## Top Tip: Drainage

During heavy and persistent rain, it is normal for water to pond on the grass, but this should drain away within a day. Aerating helps to relieve compaction and assists with drainage. Use a garden fork in spring and autumn to spike your lawn, as this can help to relieve compaction and assist drainage.

## Top Tip: Dealing with moss

If you have moss in your lawn, you will need to scarify it to allow the grass to grow. Scarify (or scrape) your grass using a rake; this helps reduce the build-up of thatch and allows water and air to penetrate the soil.

## Top Tip: Dog Waste

To prevent the burning of the grass, pour a bucket of water on the grass after your pet has peed.

**Enjoy your garden, and remember gardening isn't just about making your house look good. Caring for plants can also do wonders for your wellbeing and improve your mood and mental health.**

## Customer Application and Stock Summary Report (CASS)

**In November 2021, we published a new page on our website with information we thought would be helpful for Tenants based on the common enquiries we receive.**

We looked at complaints and enquiries and determined that we received many enquiries concerning applications and our housing stock. If you go to [www.westlothiancouncil.gov.uk/HousingFAQ](http://www.westlothiancouncil.gov.uk/HousingFAQ), you can see frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers that will help you understand why we do the things we do.

As well as the frequently asked questions, we have published a report for each ward giving our customers access to stock information by area. You can see how many properties of each type and size we have. You can see how many properties have come available and the application demand for those areas as well. There are nine reports in total, which are updated each month that you can access at any time that is convenient to you.

When we investigated these enquiries, we noticed two items that we needed to change. The first was that customers ask us 'where they are on the housing list'. There are no housing lists anymore; instead, applications receive a score. That score is based on their need for a house against specific criteria, like overcrowding, medical need, underoccupancy. Because of this score based on housing needs, these can change as customers' circumstances change. We tried to help customers desperate to know but found that they were often confused or frustrated because any position we gave

could go up or down. As well as this, we could only check for a small number of possibilities. Now that we have the CASS reports, customers can check key information about housing stock and applications to help them make housing decisions.

The second item we noticed was that customers still ask us to record 'notes of interest'. When applying for a house, they might have seen a house they thought was ours that they liked. However, when we match a home to a customer, it is done through our housing management software, and that software does not look at notes of interest. We found this also could cause frustration, so we have briefed our staff to stop recording these.

**Have you seen the CASS report before? What are your thoughts on this?  
We would love to hear your feedback; please email [TP@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:TP@westlothian.gov.uk)**

# What's New with our **Libraries** and **Customer Information Services?**

## Libraries

### We are introducing **cloudLibrary**

- a fantastic, modern way to manage your library account. Simply download the cloudLibrary by bibliotheca app for free from your app store and register using your library membership number and PIN.



When you visit the library and have selected the books you wish to borrow, scan their barcodes using your smartphone or tablet, finish the checkout process in the app, then pack your books and go! You can also view the library catalogue, reserve physical books and renew your loans. Multiple accounts can be added too, which is very handy if you want to keep track of all household library accounts in one place.

### Coming soon, **'Libraries Can Do It'**

a new and exciting project which aims to reduce social isolation, promote mental health and wellbeing, nurture creativity and reduce the attainment gap. 'Libraries Can Do It' is an externally funded project that aims to support the most disadvantaged communities in West Lothian. These four communities are within the lowest 5% as recorded in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

The project will encourage community members, library users, partners, and staff to share their ideas to help develop an exciting programme of new activities and events. If you live in Armadale, Blackburn, Craigshill or Whitburn and are interested in finding out more about 'Libraries Can Do It', please email: [library.info@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:library.info@westlothian.gov.uk).

Similar activities may be hosted in libraries in other areas of West Lothian as part of the West Lothian libraries activity programme; however, these will not be delivered or named as part of the project as they will not be funded by the project.

A lot is going on in your local library. Please visit the individual library webpages for more information: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/libraries).

## Customer Information Services (CIS)

Do you have a question about a council service?

Do you need some advice or support?

Would you like some help filling out a council form?

Our Customer Information Service (CIS) is here to help: the CIS is the Council's in-person advice and enquiry service and is located within council buildings in 9 towns and villages throughout West Lothian.

We have several trained officers who can answer questions regarding a wide range of council services/issues, e.g. applying for a council house, council tax queries, applying for a bus pass/Blue Badge, arranging a repair.

Attendance is by appointment only. If you would like to speak with one of our officers, please phone **01506 280150** and make an appointment. We aim to deal with your enquiry whilst you are with us. To help us do that, please ensure you bring along any related paperwork or information.

We are open Monday – Friday with varying opening hours in each location. For further information, please check our [website](#) or call our appointment line.

We also have Payment Offices located in Bathgate Partnership Centre and Arrochar House (Livingston), where staff can receive payments towards rent and/or council tax accounts. You do not need an appointment to attend a Payment Office.

# COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

## Community Safety Partnership response to Antisocial Behaviour

### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Over the past year, Police Scotland has received numerous complaints regarding off-road vehicles within urban and rural areas throughout the county. Reports of off-road vehicles using public footpaths poses a significant risk to public safety and can also cause significant environmental damage as well as causing a nuisance to those living, working and visiting the area.

Police Scotland continue to monitor and review areas of criminality and/or concerns daily through regular operational and partnership meetings. Moving forward, a partnership approach will be adopted with the Local Authority, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and partners and other partners of West Lothian Partnership Against Rural Crime group.

**Anyone who wishes to provide information about those involved can report to Police on 101 or the 'contact us via the Police Scotland website'. Alternatively, you can report anonymously via the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.**

### DELIBERATE FIRE-SETTING

In 2019-20 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service attended 11,649 deliberate outdoor fires. Many of these involved young people. This year, the Community Safety Partners wish to plea to all parents to help us make sure children and young people are aware of all the risks of playing with fire.

**Deliberate fires take firefighters away from other incidents and put lives at risk.**

### LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO PREVENT DELIBERATE FIRES

**Don't accept it. Report it**  
Contact Police Scotland via the non-emergency number 101 to share information on anyone who deliberately sets fires. Alternatively, give the information anonymously by calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



### ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND NOISE

As the better weather approaches and people are out and about and catching up with friends, the Safer Neighbourhood Team often experiences an increase in enquiries relating to antisocial behaviour. This year, the Community Safety Partners are asking people to be mindful of how their daily activities affect neighbours.

**For anyone experiencing antisocial behaviour or noise related disturbances, contact 01506 280 000 and ask for assistance from The Safer Neighbourhood Team noise witnessing service. You can also contact Police Scotland on 101 or in serious circumstances for ongoing disturbances; call 999, or you can report it anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.**





Over the past few months, our CX team has been extremely busy speaking to our tenants. Here is a look at what they have covered from January and plan to complete by June.

## CX Calendar\*

January	February	March	April	May	June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Your Home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Customer Contact, Support Advice &amp; Participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Digital Engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>Annual Return Charter (ARC)</li> <li>Building Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>ARC</li> <li>Antisocial Behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability</li> <li>ARC</li> <li>New Build Properties</li> </ul>

### Customer Experience Topics

Here are the topics we will speak with our customers about this year.

\*may be subject to change.

- Affordability
- Antisocial Behaviour
- ARC (Annual Return on the Charter) Survey
- Building Services (Repairs)
- Customer Contact, Support, Advice & Participation
- Customer Profile
- Digital Engagement
- Financial Profile
- Housing Options
- New Build Properties
- Your Home

If you are interested in participating in any of these discussions or would like us to consider other topics, please feel free to contact the CX Team by calling 01506 280434 or emailing at [HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk)

## Interesting Facts

The CX Team has attempted to contact

**2,342**

which is approximately 17% of all of our tenants.

By June we aim to contact a further

**660**

customers

**538** customers have shared their views on services and have helped us make suggestions to improve the service we provide to you

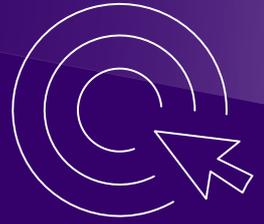
## Findings

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

- 82% of customers feel part of / included in the community they live in.
- 79% of customers are satisfied with the overall quality of their home.
- 75% of customers who have contacted the Safer Neighbourhood Team within the past 12 months were satisfied with the advice and information they received.

## Digital Engagement

Housing, Customer, and Building Services has created a digital engagement themed survey to help us better understand how we can continue to communicate with customers and tenants remotely whilst making the most of online digital tools.



If you are keen to participate in this survey, please let us know by calling 01506 280434 or emailing [HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HCBSCX@westlothian.gov.uk)

## Improvements

From your lived experiences we have been able to recommend 10 quick hit improvements, and 12 long term improvements.

- An example of one of your quick hit recommendations was to provide a spotlight on the Housing Officer. To help tenants understand who their Housing Officer was, what their job role is and how to contact them.
- An example of a longterm recommendation was to introduce an Affordability Tool as part of the allocation process, to allow tenants to have a better understanding of their income and expenditure, and if they could afford the property they are being offered.



You will be well aware that our Customer Experience teams plan to use your views on our services to shape improvements in the next couple of years. This also presents us with a chance to extend this approach to complement our Tenant Participation activities.

Using customers' and tenants lived experience of the services they are accessing, using, and trying to engage with is a hugely positive and proven method to getting the changes customers wish to see. We know that tenant participation groups and regular meetings don't work for everyone.

Some of our customers have busy lives with many responsibilities such as caring for others, shifts, and childcare that can prevent them from getting involved. Some people cannot commit to the level of time and involvement that tenant participation can bring, but that doesn't mean we are not interested in your views.

With this in mind, we plan to launch CX Inspect, which will see interested customers given a chance to use our services,

then tell us about their experience of accessing and receiving our services – and tell us what worked and what did not work well. Suggestions about what could be improved or things you would like to see us do – or stop doing. This will be really important to how the service changes in future.

### **We will be offering plenty of chances for customers to get involved in CX inspect -**

The beauty of it is you do not commit to anything other than telling us how it went for you when you contacted us. You will see lots of slots offered over social media and online, and if you are interested in taking part, you can also let us know at [HCBCSX@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HCBCSX@westlothian.gov.uk).

## BUILDING SERVICES

# The Importance of Gas Safety Checks

West Lothian Council as your landlord, are bound under The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out an annual safety check on all gas fittings provided in its properties.

### **COVID Impact**

The impact of the COVID Pandemic has meant the Council's Gas Safety Check program is currently out of sync. To bring this program back into sync, you may receive correspondence to book your Gas Safety Check earlier than normal in 2022. Please engage with the request to book an appointment to allow the program to return to normal in 2023.

### **Our responsibilities as a Landlord. We will:**

- arrange for a Gas Safe Registered engineer to carry out a gas safety check every 12 months.
- Ensure a Gas Safe Registered engineer carries out all gas maintenance works.
- Maintain the gas appliances, pipework and flues provided in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep a record of each annual safety check and service.

### **Your responsibilities as a Tenant. You will:**

- co-operate with your landlord and make sure you allow the Gas Safety Engineer access to the property, so they can carry out the annual safety checks.
- Have any gas appliances in the property installed by a Gas Safety Engineer.
- Never tamper with or remove gas fittings.

- Not block air ventilation grills.
- Keep flue terminals clear.
- Turn off any faulty appliance and contact your local area housing office for advice.
- Never cover a gas appliance.

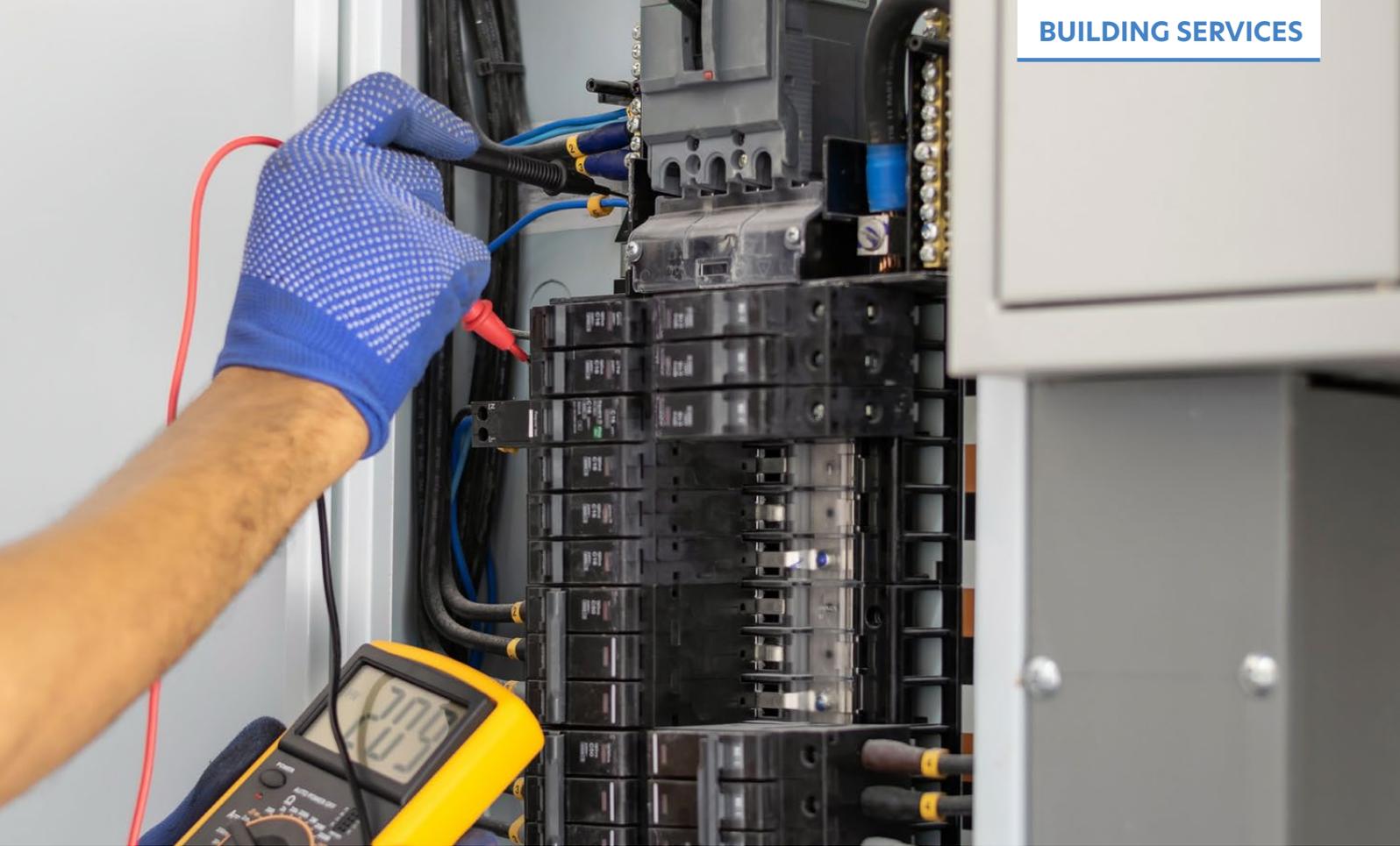
Failure to give reasonable access to your home to allow us to complete the Annual Gas Safety check is dangerous for you, your family and your neighbours. It is also a breach of your tenancy agreement. The Council is legally entitled to force entry to any properties to carry out the appropriate annual safety checks.

**For advice on gas safety checks, you can contact our Customer Service Centre on 01506 280000.**

### **GAS LEAKS**

If you think you can smell gas or fumes, you should call the Gas Emergency Services on 0800 111 999. You should then:

- turn off the gas at the meter.
- Open windows and doors.
- Put out any naked flames e.g. your hob or candles. Don't smoke, strike matches or do anything that could cause ignition.
- Don't use electrical switches, including your TV, computer, oven etc.



## Mandatory Electrical Inspections for Council Housing

# Why is an inspection needed?

**Electrical hazards are invisible but deadly, causing fires and electrical shocks in homes across the UK each year. These fires can be caused by several sources, including appliances, cables, switches and sockets, but can be avoided by having electrical equipment checked and any necessary replacements or repairs carried out.**

Every electrical installation deteriorates with use and age. As a social landlord, the Council has legal responsibility for maintaining the fixed wiring and accessories in our homes, ensuring that the equipment is safe and serviceable.

If you are a council tenant and an inspection is due at your property, our qualified electricians will visit you and carry out an in-depth inspection, test the wiring and equipment, and arrange for any repairs that need to be done.

The Council will let you know by letter that your home is due for an inspection, and you can

give us a call to arrange an appointment at any time that suits you.

This inspection can take up to four hours to complete and will provide you with peace of mind knowing that the electrics are safe. Tenants are asked to please keep to all arranged appointments as much as possible as these inspections are vital in helping to ensure that council homes remain safe.

If an inspection in a council home brings up any issues, the tenant will be advised of the extent of the work required, and a suitable date for the follow-on works will be arranged.

### Interlinked Fire Alarms - Legislation Update

As of 1 February 2022, updated legislation put in place by the Scottish Government means all homes need to have interlinked fire alarms.

As a social landlord, West Lothian Council is responsible for ensuring that all council homes comply with this new safety standard (please note that the Council has no responsibility for carrying out work in private properties). While most installations have been completed across our homes, tenants are asked that should they receive a notification from Building Services regarding an installation to please provide access to operatives to safely carry out the work.



**If you aren't sure if an installation has been completed at your property, please contact building services by email: [electricalcompliance@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:electricalcompliance@westlothian.gov.uk) or telephone 01506 283717.**

# Building Services, Repairs: who's responsible?

As your landlord, Housing, Customer and Building Services have a legal responsibility to carry out certain repairs, while others are the tenant's responsibility.

Did you know  
internal doors  
are the tenant's  
responsibility?

Did you know  
skirtings are  
the tenant's  
responsibility?

The table below shows tenant's and landlord's responsibilities:

Repair Type	Whos's responsible		Comments
	WLC	Tenant	
<b>WINDOW</b>			
Glass in windows		✓	Unless you can show the glass was broken by vandals or similar
Sills	✓		
Window Catches	✓		
Window Sash (not open or close)	✓		
Window Handles	✓		
<b>STRUCTURE</b>			
Plaster Repairs to Ceilings/Walls	✓		
Damp Proof Course	✓		
Floors	✓		
Outside Woodwork	✓		
Roughcast & Plastering	✓		
Skirting Boards		✓	
Stairs	✓		
Steps to Entrances	✓		
Walls	✓		Refers to Structural Wall of Building
<b>DOORS</b>			
Doorbell		✓	Except for Door Entry
Door Chain	✓		
Door Nameplate		✓	
Glass on Inside Door & Screen	✓	✓	If the property type has internal doors or a vestibule door screen with a glass panel fitted, which has been damaged, this will be recharged to the tenant.
Internal Doors, including handles/latches, timber facings etc.		✓	
Lost or Broken Keys	✓	✓	WLC will replace the keys, but the cost will be recharged to the tenant.
Locking Mechanism on External Door	✓		
Outside Doors (including doors in flats)	✓		

Full details of the landlord and tenant responsibilities can be found online [here](#).

# Reporting a Repair

As a West Lothian Council tenant, you are entitled to have certain repairs carried out to your home if and when required. To help the Council manage repairs to around 14,000 homes, we have to categorise each repair based on the repair's type and urgency; you need to know this, as each category has different timescales for when we must complete the repair.

**We have four different repair categories. You should report these repairs as soon as possible. There are different ways to report different repair categories, depending on whether these are emergency or non-emergency.**

## Category 1 - Emergency and Out of Hours Repairs

**Report this type of repair directly by telephone to the Council's Customer Service Centre on 01506 280000.**

Emergency Repairs reported on a Monday to Friday within normal working hours – 8 am to 4:30 pm should be completed within 24 hours from the time they are reported.

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs reported on a Monday to Sunday out with normal working hours- 4.30 pm to 8 am, should be completed within 24 working hours. If there's a danger to health, risk to safety or a danger to the fabric of the building, we endeavour to have these made safe as soon as possible.

A follow-on appointment would be agreed upon with the customer and dealt with

under one of the other repair categories.

The types of repairs included in Category 1 are:

- Blocked drains
- Blocked toilets (where there is no other toilet on the property)
- Burst water pipe
- Insecure property

**NOTE:** *If a trade operative is called out to an out of hours emergency to your property for something not considered an emergency, you will be charged for this work.*

## Category 2 Repairs - Urgent

**Report these repairs:**

- **Logging into the Customer Portal** where you can request a repair, manage your repair appointments, and check your tenancy information
- **Contacting the Council on 01506 280000**
- **Attending your local customer information service** (appointment only)

## Category 2 - Urgent Repairs

these are repairs that we should complete within five working days and are classed as repairs that will affect the tenant's comfort or convenience.

The types of repairs included in Category 2 are:

- Serious Roof Leaks
- Partial Loss of Heating

**Category 3 - Non-Urgent Repairs**  
these are repairs which we should complete within 15 working days.

**Report these repairs:**

- **Logging into the Customer Portal** where you can request a repair, manage your repair appointments, and check your tenancy information
- **Contacting the Council on 01506 280000**
- **Attending your local customer information service** (appointment only)

## Category 3 - Non-Urgent Repairs

these are repairs which we should complete within 15 working days.

The types of repairs included in Category 3 are:

- Renewal of Bathroom Fittings
- Minor Controlled Leaks
- Window and Door repairs that don't cause wind and watertight issues.

## Category 4 - Routine Repairs

**Report these repairs:**

- **Logging into the Customer Portal** where you can request a repair, manage your repair appointments, and check your tenancy information
- **Contacting the Council on 01506 280000**
- **Attending your local customer information service** (appointment only)

We should complete these repairs within 30 working days. These include repairs where scaffolding is required or may require the purchase of specialised items such as double glazing, doors, lintels, and sills. These repairs don't fall into any other categories, including reactive repairs, Replacement Glazed Units, Replacement Kitchen Components, External Non-Emergency Works – Slabbing, Steps, Roughcast Patching, Install Mechanical Ventilation, Renew Bath – Non Emergency.

**Some minor repairs are a tenant's responsibility. If your repair request is for one of these, we will advise you of this at the time of your call.**

# Spring word search

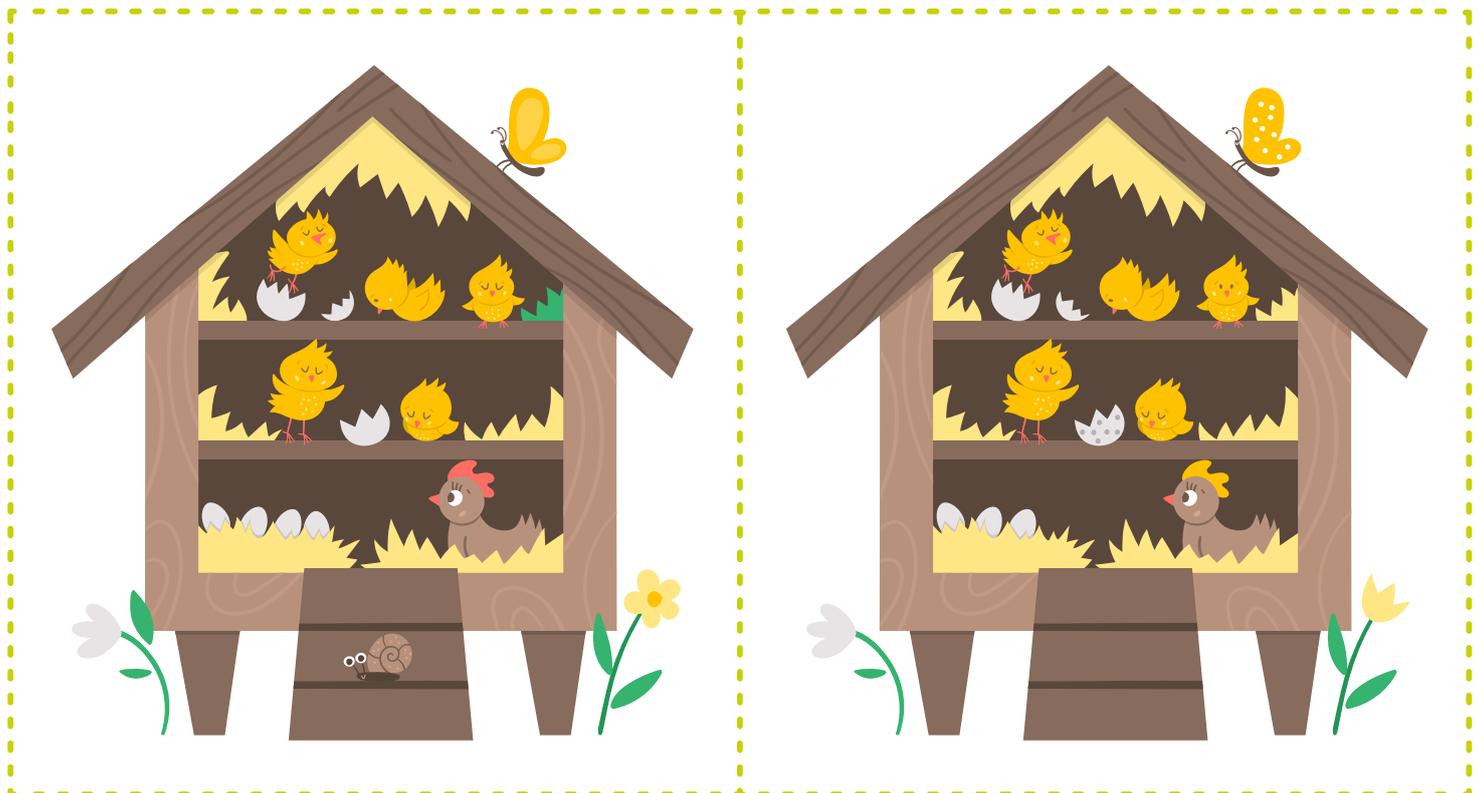


- spring
- basket
- egg
- hunt
- easter
- chick
- sunday
- bunny
- flower
- carrot



S	P	R	I	N	G	E	F
U	B	J	H	U	N	T	L
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A	Z	R	A	M	A	N	E
Y	P	R	S	E	S	M	R
I	U	O	K	G	T	O	X
E	I	T	E	B	E	U	C
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G	L	B	U	N	N	Y	Z

# Spot 10 differences



# Tenants Tasty Treats

## Mini Egg Millionaires Shortbread!

Easy Mini Egg Millionaires Shortbread, perfect for Easter. Buttery Shortbread dotted with Mini Eggs, Homemade Caramel, Chocolate and even more Mini Eggs!

**Prep Time: 20 minutes**  
**Cook Time: 35 Minutes**  
**Decorating Time: 10 Minutes**

**Serving: 16 Pieces**

### Ingredients

- Shortbread
- 200 g Unsalted Butter
- 100 g Caster Sugar
- 275 g Plain Flour
- 150 g Mini Eggs (crushed)
- Caramel
- 200 g Unsalted Butter
- 3 tbsp Caster Sugar
- 4 tbsp Golden Syrup
- 397 g Condensed Milk (one tin)

### Decoration

- 300 g Cadbury's Milk Chocolate
- 150 g Mini Eggs (crushed)

## Instructions

- Preheat your oven to 180C/160C Fan Gas Mark 4, and line a 9x9" deep square tin with parchment paper.
- Cream together your butter and sugar until smooth and fluffy.
- Add in the Flour and beat again till a biscuit dough is formed!
- Fold through/press in the Crushed Mini Eggs and then press into the bottom of the tin.
- Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until golden on top.
- Once baked, leave to cool on the side but still in the tin.
- In a large heavy-based saucepan, add your Butter, Sugar, Golden Syrup and Condensed Milk and melt on medium heat till everything is melted and dissolved.
- Once melted, turn the heat up to a medium/high heat and boil the mixture for 5-7 minutes, or until it turns a dark golden colour. Stir constantly so it doesn't catch - and use a spatula, so the bottom of the pan is scraped. Be careful; the mixture is VERY hot.
- Pour the Caramel over the Shortbread and leave it to sit for an hour in the fridge. (or 2-3 hours on the side)
- Once set, melt your chocolate carefully till smooth, and pour over the Caramel.
- Sprinkle on the Mini Eggs, and leave to set in the fridge for 1-2 hours until solid. Alternatively, leave till set on the side - it can take a few hours.
- Once set, cut up into your pieces and enjoy!

### Notes

- The Mini Eggs in the Shortbread is optional but amazing.
- You can swap the Mini Eggs for any other egg treat - be careful about soft-centred treats like Creme Eggs; they need freezing before baking into the Shortbread.
- These will last for up to one week!
- Use a large 26cm knife to cut, and cut down in one go, so it's easy to slice up. If your Caramel is rock solid, take it out of the fridge for an hour before cutting (and it means your Caramel is slightly overdone)



# 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>