

# West Lothian tenants news

WINTER 2022

Informing and involving West Lothian's tenants

## Be safe this Winter

• Page 7



Tenant  
Spotlight

Page 3

Protect your  
home

Page 9

Competition

Page 16

# tenants news Contents

## TALKING TENANTS

Talking Tenants Tenant Spotlight



3

Become a Talking Tenant Expert through Social Media



4

The Next Generation of Tenant Participation

5



## HOUSING

Application Points Online and FAQ



6

Coming Soon



6

## CUSTOMER

Be safe this winter



8

Here's what you can do to stay safe from fire this Winter!



8

Protect your home



9

Cost of living



10

**Better off**  
Advice Shop



11

Paying your rent



12

Community Connections

12



13

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls in Scotland



13

## BUILDING SERVICES

Building Repairs - Who's responsible



14

Keeping our Tenants



15

COMPETITION

Win a chance to design the spring 2023 front cover of the Tenants News

16

KID'S CORNER

17

Tenants Tasty Treats

18

# Talking tenants



## Tenant Spotlight

One of our Tenants Panel members, has recently completed a HNC in Counselling and the Tenant Participation Team would like to congratulate this member for all their hard work. Please find a small article written by our Tenant member.

15 years ago, my life was turned upside down and due to unforeseen circumstances, I was left homeless.

However, this would become one of the best things to happen to me. It was through an established homeless group I had my first experience with Tenant Participation and I was asked to do a Tenant Led Inspection as they say the rest is history.

Over the years I have been involved within a range of different engagement opportunities, interviewing staff, training sessions, having my voice heard, new build consultations to attending conferences and winning awards.

I am a core panel member and chair of one of the meetings.

It has helped me to gain different skills and knowledge, most of all I learned how to conduct myself in a professional manner.

As my self-esteem has grown it has built my confidence. I am more comfortable to speak out and ask questions. Something I hesitated with in the past.

I recently completed a HNC into Counselling and graduated.

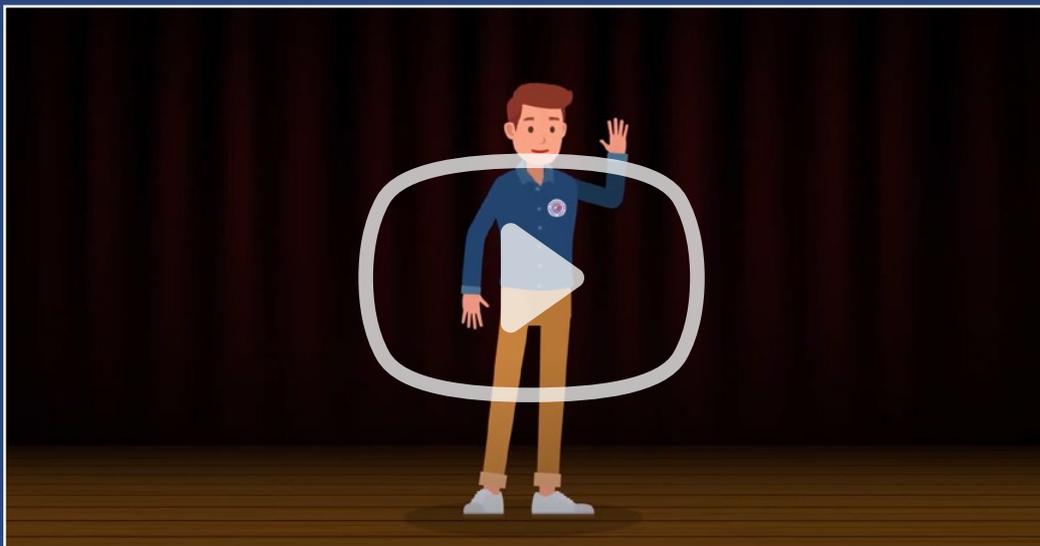
None of this would have been possible without having the help and guidance over the years.

Doing Tenant Participation has helped me and I can confidently say my life has changed dramatically since I became involved.

## Tenant Participation (TP) - Taking Part - Animated Video

Our West Lothian tenant reps and TP officers have been working in partnership, to produce an engaging animated video to promote the benefits of Tenant Participation.

A full day collaborative session was held at Blackburn Partnership Centre, where we had open discussions, brainstorming exercises and used up a lot of flip chart paper to map out our vision! We had refreshments throughout and lunch was provided. We are thrilled with the results and wanted to showcase it to you all.



**This work was part of the Tenant Participation Development Working Group (TPDWG).**

The aim of this group is to work with council officers to take an active role in developing Tenant Participation (TP) in West Lothian and ensure the council is meeting the aims of the TP strategy by monitoring performance against the TP Action Plan. This group is made up of council officers and tenants from across West Lothian! If you would like to be involved in any aspect of TP, please email [TP@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:TP@westlothian.gov.uk) or call **01506 282967 / 01506 281885**.

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



## Talking Tenants – Facebook Guidelines

### '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, 01506 281885  
**Caitlin Howie** - Customer Participation Officer, 01506 282967

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!**

# Application Points Online and FAQ

Housing has online services for our customers. You can manage your housing application as a new or existing customer, log simple non-emergency repairs for your West Lothian Council tenancy, view tenancy information, and more. If you haven't accessed these services yet, we invite you to look here and register.

**REGISTER NOW**



If you are a tenant, you will need your tenancy reference number, which can be found on your rent card or letters from us about your tenancy; if you wish to access your online housing application, you will need your application reference.

A new enhancement within the application management section of the portal now allows customers to view their total

application points online. This means that customers can now create an application, submit documents, see the status, make preference changes and view their points anytime.

We have also published a Frequently Asked Questions section to cover common questions, found [here](#).

Under the **Housing Need section**, you will find housing applications and homelessness questions. For example one of the recent changes housing made was to look at things customers asked for that would not have any impact on their application like asking for a note of interest in a property to be recorded or a list position.

**COMING SOON**

**RENT CONSULTATION**

We consulted with all our tenants in 2017 about future rent increases. This conversation centred around what their preference was in terms of the rent they pay, what was reasonable and fair when considering the improvements, new homes, and investment they also wanted to see in council houses from 2018-2023. Following this consultation we have continued our engagement through smaller consultations, which have been a success.

The time is nearing for the service to consult once again on the future of rent charges and possible increases from 2023 onwards. We understand how important this is to our customers, and this is why we are giving early notice to you of our intention to once again speak to you about the rent you pay.

We will consult with tenants through our social media channels, Tenants News, our CX team will have open discussions to find out what tenants' preferences are, and

our tenant representatives will be leading on the formal discussions we hold on this crucial consultation.

This will begin in the Autumn and will run for several months – and we need your views. Watch our social media, website and future editions of this newsletter for more information on how you can take part.

# Be Safe this Winter

West Lothian Community Safety Partnership would like you to be prepared for this winter. It is important that we take time out to plan ahead, to keep ourselves, and others, safe.



## Winter Ready West Lothian

Keep abreast of the most recent updated information:

- Have your home winter ready
- Do you need a Scottish Fire and Rescue Home Fire Safety Visit?
- Do you know where your nearest salt point is and how it gets filled?
- Help and advice to keep vulnerable people in our communities safe
- Winter driving advice

## Advice Shop – West Lothian Council

The Advice shop can give useful advice on fuel poverty as well as other services, including:

- Energy advice
- Money and debt advice
- Financial wellbeing

### Advice Shop phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday: 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday: 8:30am to 4:00pm

Telephone number is **01506 283 000**

Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, face-to-face appointments remain limited

### Winter Fuel Payment 2022/23 | Pensioners Heating Allowance

([theukrules.co.uk](http://theukrules.co.uk))

**Winter Fuel Payment: Overview - GOV.UK** ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## Dress for the Weather – especially if out walking

- Wear warm clothes and sturdy, comfortable footwear suitable for the weather conditions.
- Several thin layers of clothing might be better than one thick layer.
- Wear a good waterproof jacket and consider using waterproof trousers.
- Wear a hat, gloves and scarf – the Scottish wind can find its way into every gap!

## Christmas shopping

Limit the amount of money you carry and don't keep it all in one place. Have some in an inside pocket in case your purse is lost/stolen, then you have some money to get yourself home safely.

## Going away this Christmas? Make safety plans for your vacant home:

- It may be obvious, but make sure all your doors and windows are locked
- Keep your garden furniture secure and out of sight
- If you have motion detector lights / house alarm. Are they in working condition?
- Ensure your home insurance is up to date
- Ask a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your house

## Keeping warm:

Wear warm clothing inside and outside: The cold weather can cause our bodies to release heat more quickly, making us more susceptible to illnesses and hypothermia. Fill a kettle and keep hot drinks in a thermos flask to prevent using more fuel throughout the day for a top up of hot drinks.

## Emergencies:

Have emergency kits ready: When the temperature drops, a number of emergencies can occur including power outages, pipes and roads freezing over, snowstorms, and more. It's best to prepare for the unexpected by having an emergency kit ready in your home or in your vehicle. This kit may include torches, blankets and gloves, a first-aid kit, bottled water, canned foods, and other items that can be useful.





# SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

## Have a Safer Winter – Here’s what you can do to stay safe from fire this Winter!

**If you’ve been drinking, don’t cook. NEVER** leave cooking unattended.



**Always put candles out** when you leave the room, go to bed or leave the house.



**Keep candles away from anything which could catch fire.**

**It’s safer to smoke outside**, or standing at an exterior door or window, **especially if you are tired or have been drinking.**



**Do not** smoke, use naked flames or get near to anything which may cause a fire whilst wearing clothing or a bandage that has **been in contact with emollient skin cream.**

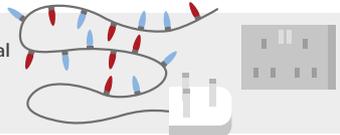


Make sure your **smoke and heat alarms are working. Test them every week.**

**Keep portable heaters away** from furniture, bedding or curtains. Don’t sit too close and **turn off portable heaters before going to bed.**



**Unplug** fairy lights or other electrical Christmas decorations **when you leave the house or go to bed.**



**Keep in touch** with friends, relatives and neighbours who live alone or **who may be at risk.**



If you’ve got a live Christmas tree it’s important to **keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.**



A **phone call**, or a socially distanced door-step chat **can make a massive difference at this time of year.**

During winter most of us will be spending more time at home. We want to ensure your home is as safe from fire risk as possible and would therefore encourage you to go through our **questionnaire** and follow our advice.

There are nine topics and once you have answered each question you will get some useful guidance. Visit: Scottish Fire & Rescue Service ([firescotland.gov.uk](http://firescotland.gov.uk)) for more information on how to keep safe.



### We need people to join Scotland’s fight against fire and help us protect our communities. We want the public to know:

- It is safer to attend an organised bonfire or fireworks display.
- Deliberate fire setting is an offence, don’t accept it – report it.
- SFRS see an increase in deliberate fires and antisocial behaviour towards crews within the autumn season.
- SFRS will work together with multi agency partners to reduce the amount of deliberate fires and fire related offences within the autumn period.
- Outdoor fires, in particular rubbish and refuse fires, can overstretch local SFRS resources, taking firefighters away from other incidents and put lives at risk.
- Schools and educational premises are often targeted within the period and local areas will consider initiating a “school watch programme”.
- Young people between the ages of 11 and 16 can anonymously provide information to Crimestoppers about a crime by visiting [www.fearless.org](http://www.fearless.org)
- SFRS encourage residents within affected neighbourhoods to proactively report fire related offenders through the **Crimestoppers website** or via 0800 555 111.
- If you must organise a home event, read our safety advice and information carefully first. This will reduce the risk of an accident or the need to call SFRS for an emergency response.



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland

[firescotland.gov.uk](http://firescotland.gov.uk) [@SFRSYourSafety](https://www.facebook.com/SFRSYourSafety)

Call us to arrange a free Home Fire Safety Visit for you or someone you know who may be isolated or at greater risk from fire. Together, we can all stay fire safe.

CALL **0800 0731 999** TEXT **'FIRE'** TO **80800** or visit [www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)

# Protect your home



**POLICE  
SCOTLAND**  
Keeping people safe  
**POILEAS ALBA**

Having your home broken into is not common. There are however many ways that you can help secure your home.

They don't all cost money – some are common sense and good housekeeping.

Don't leave keys on the inside of door locks, under mats or anywhere else they can be easily found

- Keep your home locked at all times
- Many thieves do not need to break in at all because a door or window has been left open or unlocked
- If you have a 'thumb turn' lock on the inside of a door, ensure that it cannot be accessed from outside
- Don't keep house keys and car keys on the same key ring
- Don't keep a lot of cash in the house
- Mark your property with a UV marker pen or Security DNA marking Kit - these can be bought online or in some stores
- Look for the Secured By Design accreditation on the product and register - you can place an invisible imprint of your postcode and house number on your possessions
- You can record and register details of your valuables, serial numbers and features or marks, on devices on the national mobile property register on the **immobilise website** - this includes mobile phones, cameras, laptops and tablets
- If you have a wall calendar, avoid having it shown near a window from where appointments can be seen - people may see when there will be no one in.

Don't leave valuables where they can be seen through a window – for example, around the tree at Christmas time

Visit: [Winter Road Safety](#) – Police Scotland for more information and advice



# Cost of Living



The Customer Experience team continue to engage with customers on their views and experiences of the services they've received from the council.

The team focused on gaining a better understanding of how the current cost of living crisis is impacting our customers, particularly when it comes to our customer's affordability and how they choose to spend their money.

Of the customers we attempted to contact, we have successfully engaged 96 through our affordability project, and an additional 32 have spoken to us about their financial profile.

We complete affordability discussions

with customers every month, looking at their household income/expenditure and how customers choose to spend their finances. We ascertain if customers feel the rent and services they receive from the council are affordable.

In addition to affordability, we completed our financial profile project in August, which asks customers about their employment status and any income their household receives from wages/welfare benefits. We discuss with customers any

rent arrears and other corporate debts they may have.

When the team identify a customer who may benefit from additional support with their financial situation, they can offer to make a referral to the most appropriate service on the customer's behalf, such as the Advice Shop. The team have submitted five referrals over the previous quarter for additional financial support.

**Below are some of the key highlights from our discussions with customers:**

## Affordability

- 76% of customers consider their current rent affordable, whilst 62% believe their other outgoings (gas, electricity, food etc.) are reasonable.
- 72% of customers reported they have never had any barriers in paying their rent.
- 62% of customers reported having money left at the end of the week or month.
- 62% of customers stated they regularly review their outgoings to see if they can make savings.
- 55% of customers we spoke to think that the council consider how affordable the rent is before offering a property to tenants.

## Financial Profile

- 77% of customers feel that HCBS offers sufficient financial support and advice.
- 72% of customers reported having no outstanding charges or rent arrears with the council.
- 66% of customers reported receiving one or more forms of welfare benefits to support their household income.
- 59% of customers advised that their financial profile had minimal impact on their day-to-day life.
- 38% of the customers we spoke to were in employment.

After completing our projects, we identify any service improvement recommendations put forward by customers, which are passed on to the Senior Management Team for consideration. Where a customer's improvement has been taken forward by the service, we contact the customer to keep them updated on how the service is implementing their improvement.

Here is a reminder of the themes we will be contacting customers about to discuss over the coming year:

- 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)**



# Better off Advice Shop



The rising cost of living is causing many people to worry about money and how to stay afloat through the winter. The Advice Shop can help you to make sure your income is maximised, provide help to deal with debts and offer support through a range of grants if you have a low income.

## Maximise your Income

A range of social security benefits are available to help people with a low income. You do not have to be out of work to make a claim and how much you are entitled to will depend on your individual circumstances.

To check if you might be entitled to make a claim to top up your income, our simple benefit calculator should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and can help you to identify what to claim.

[BENEFIT CALCULATOR >](#)

## Deal with Problem Debt

If you are struggling with debt, you don't need to do it alone. The Advice Shop has a team of specialist money advisors. They can work with you to make sure your finances are under control and explore your options to deal with any debts you are finding difficult to manage.

Debt advice providers across West Lothian have produced a money and debt toolkit to help you find the best support available for your circumstances.

[APPLY ONLINE >](#)

## Financial Support

The Discretionary Housing Payment is a cash limited fund available for short term assistance for those people who face hardship as a result of not being able to meet their housing costs.

Discretionary Housing Payments are available to assist council tenants, tenants of registered social landlords and tenants who are renting in the private sector who are in receipt of housing benefit, or the housing cost element of Universal Credit.

[APPLY ONLINE >](#)

## Energy Grant

A new energy grant of up to £150 is available for people with a disability or long-term health condition who have to pay more for gas and electricity. This could be due to having mains powered equipment, a need to have heating at a constant level or another reason. Applications for this grant should be made online.

[APPLY ONLINE >](#)

Anyone worried about money can contact the Advice Shop to speak to an advisor about any support you might be entitled to.

Tel: 01506 283000 (option 5)

Email: [advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk)

[Online](#)

# Paying your rent

You must pay your rent on time. The money we collect from rent is used to pay for services and improvements for your home and the homes of our other tenants, too.

Depending on your household's circumstances you may qualify for Universal Credit or in some cases, Housing Benefit. If you are having difficulties paying your rent it is in your best interests to contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible.

If you do not qualify for assistance through Universal Credit or Housing Benefit it is important to make sure you can afford the rent for your home. If you fail to pay your rent you will be at risk of losing your home.

You can pay your rent weekly or monthly. Whatever way you decide to pay you should keep in mind that you will be required to pay in advance.

## How to pay your rent

We recommend paying your rent by direct debit. This is the easiest and most efficient way to pay your rent; it ensures that you are up to date with your payments and removes the stress and inconvenience of paying by other methods. Payments made by direct debit are covered by the direct debit guarantee, this means that you are in control of your payments and your money is safe.

**You can set up a direct debit payment online by completing the direct debit online form, or by calling 01506 280000 and selecting option 6.**

You can also pay your rent online at:

Tenant Portal >

Online Pay >

There are many different ways to pay your rent. If you use a third-party method, such as paying at the Post Office, there may be a delay in your payment reaching your rent account. The table below shows how long your payment will take to reach your account based on the way you chose to pay:

Direct Debit	Instant
CIS (Payment Desks, Bathgate and Arrochar)	1 day
Online or Telephone	2 days
Bank Transfer	2 days
Post Office / PayPoint	5 days

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A new service Community Connections has been introduced by the Health and Social Care Partnership across West Lothian, to improve access to information, advice and signposting within local communities.



The Community Connections sessions are open to anyone aged 16+ to provide quick and easy access to the right information at the right time. The aim of these sessions is to deliver direct face-to-face support, information or guidance on topics such as benefits, employability, finances, housing, living well at home, social care, social isolation, support for carers or anything else that matters to you. Currently the sessions are supported by Advice shop, access-2-employment, social work, housing staff and Carers of West Lothian.

**The drop-ins take place on Wednesday mornings between 10:00am and 1:00pm in West Calder in the New Café on Main Street, and on Thursday afternoons between 1:00pm and 4:00pm in the Library at Linlithgow Partnership Centre.**

**Two new drop-ins will be established for phase 2 Livingston North Partnership Centre on Friday afternoons and Blackburn Partnership Centre on Tuesday mornings.**

Additional Community Connections drop in sessions will be rolled out across West Lothian.

**Phase 3 (December 2022)** Broxburn, East Calder, Fauldhouse & Whitburn.

**Phase 4 (March 2023)** Armadale, Bathgate, Craigshill & Winchburgh.

**If you would like support or guidance on any of the above topics please come along for a cuppa and a chat.**

More info >



Are you looking to improve your skills in everyday use of English, communications and numbers?

Want to feel more confident using a computer, tablet or digital device?

Is English your second language and you want to improve your communication skills?

**Why not consider joining free part-time courses provided by the Adult Learning Team at West Lothian Council.**

These courses are provided during the day and evenings Monday to Thursday and are in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Our programme is based in local community venues. We provide a variety of courses in literacy, numeracy, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), digital skills courses and other areas.

For more information please see [our webpage](#) or email us at [adultlearning@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:adultlearning@westlothian.gov.uk) or call free on **0800 731 1831**

## Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls in Scotland

**16 days of Action against gender-based violence is an International campaign to challenge violence against women and girls, this will run from Friday 25th November – Saturday 10th December 2022.**

We are currently putting our local calendar of events together that will include the raising of awareness of gender-based violence and we will have events available to residents, agencies and professionals across West Lothian.

We will be starting off activities with a planned march and rally in Livingston on 25th November.

**16 Days of Activism**

**Watch out for more information to come, and keep an eye on West Lothian Councils Facebook Page!  
25th November – 10th December**

# Building Services, Repairs: who's responsible?

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

Did you know toilet seats are tenant's responsibility?

Did you know internal alterations to gas or plumbing pipes to accommodate new appliances are the tenant's responsibility and they must arrange a gas safe engineer to carry out any necessary work?

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

Item	Responsibility		Category
	WLC	You	
Kitchen appliances (unless provided by WLC)		●	
Cooker socket	●		L1/L2
Supply & fit a new bayonet for a cooker		●	
Kitchen units, sink bowl and drainer (through fair wear and tear)	●		L3
Alterations to kitchen layout or worktops to accommodate new appliances (purchased by the tenant, WLC must provide permission for any alteration work)		●	
Alterations to gas pipes or plumbing pipes to accommodate new appliances (WLC must provide permission for any alteration work)		●	
Bath	●		L3
Wash basin	●		L2
Toilet seat (unless subject to occupational therapist referral)		●	
Shower unit (unless provided by WLC)		●	L2/L3
WC and cistern	●		

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

# Keeping our Tenants



Every year, West Lothian Council undertake a number of statutory compliance projects to keep tenants and properties safe. This is done by checking electrical systems in homes and upgrading fire and smoke alarms.

Additionally, the Council have an ongoing Capital programme where they replace end of life central heating systems to ensure you have efficient and effective heating within your home.

## Electrical Checks

A programme of Electrical Safety checks is carried out every five years. These checks are vital to maintain the safety of the electrical installation and this also assures compliance with the regulations. So far this year, the Council has completed 3290 electrical checks and will inspect at least a further 1220 more properties.

These checks are an inspection of the electrical wiring within the property which allows the electrician to assess the condition and arrange upgrades or remedial works if required.

## Fire and Smoke Detection

Did you know - In Scotland 2021 there were 25,147 fires attended to which is up 2.6% on the previous year - 60.9% of accidental house fires started with a cooking appliance.

West Lothian Council have upgraded smoke and heat detection systems in all our properties which meet the new Scottish Government legislation and targets. However, the work doesn't stop here, there is an ongoing programme to replace smoke and heat detectors as they reach their replacement dates. Interlinked smoke and heat alarms will help to reduce accidents and help safe guard against fires and maintain fire safety.

## Central heating

In 2022/23 we are planning to upgrade around 1000 inefficient central heating systems. New central heating systems will benefit our tenants with a warmer home and help towards keeping running costs down and help properties meet current energy efficiency targets. We are currently ahead of this programme having installed over 460 new heating systems since April 2022.



**If you receive notification from the Council on any of these programmes please get in touch to arrange this work. Your help is greatly appreciated in ensuring you and your home are safe.**



# COMPETITION

## Win a chance to design the spring 2023 front cover of the Tenants News

Kids get creative and draw a picture that reminds you of spring – the winning entry will have their picture as the front cover of the tenant’s news spring edition and will win a **£25 Smyths Toy Superstore gift voucher.**

**Entries must be primary school age.  
Deadline: 9th December 2022.**

**Our tenants panel members will be judging the winner.**

Entries can be emailed in to the TP mail box:  
[TP.Mailbox@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:TP.Mailbox@westlothian.gov.uk) or they can be posted or handed in to the below address:

Tenant Participation Team  
West Lothian Council,  
West Lothian Civic Centre,  
Howden South Road,  
Livingston  
EH54 6FF

When submitting your picture, please include your name and age, and we will also need details of your parent, carer or guardian. Please provide their name, address and contact details. This is to ensure we can let you know if you are our winner!





# Winter

## Word Search



C	S	M	F	S	N	O	W
O	C	B	R	C	S	M	H
A	A	Q	O	O	B	V	K
T	R	E	S	L	F	E	I
W	F	O	T	D	Q	S	Z
L	W	K	Y	Q	I	C	E
V	Q	W	I	G	L	O	O
H	W	I	N	T	E	R	N

**COAT**  
**COLD**  
**FROST**  
**ICE**

**IGLOO**  
**SCARF**  
**SNOW**  
**WINTER**

# Tenants Tasty Treats

## Winter Vegetable & Lentil Soup

**Prep Time: 10 minutes**  
**Cook Time: 30 Minutes**  
**Serves 2 people**

### Ingredients

- 85g dried red lentils
- 2 carrots, quartered lengthways then diced
- 3 celery sticks, sliced
- 2 small leeks, sliced
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tbsp vegetable bouillon powder or 2 vegetable stock cubes
- 1 heaped tsp ground coriander
- Water 1½ litres

## Method

### STEP 1

Tip all the ingredients into a large pot. Pour over 1½ litres boiling water, then stir well.

### STEP 2

Cover and leave to simmer for 30 mins until the vegetables and lentils are tender.

### STEP 3

Ladle into bowls and eat straightaway, or if you like a really thick texture, blitz a third of the soup with a hand blender or in a food processor.

## Christmas Cookies

**Prep Time: 10 minutes**  
**Cook Time: 12 minutes plus chilling time**  
**Makes 20 biscuits**

### Ingredients

- 140g icing sugar, sieved
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg yolk
- 250g butter, cut into small cubes
- 375g plain flour, sieved

### To decorate

- 200g icing sugar, sieved
- edible food colouring, optional
- edible gold and silver balls
- approx 2m thin ribbon cut into 10cm lengths

## Method

### STEP 1

Tip the icing sugar, vanilla extract, egg yolk and butter into a mixing bowl, then stir together with a wooden spoon (or pulse in a food processor until well combined). Add the flour and mix to a firm dough. Shape the dough into two flat discs and wrap them. Chill for 20-30 mins. Heat oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5 and line two baking sheets with non-stick baking paper.

### STEP 2

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to about the thickness of two £1 coins. Cut out Christmassy shapes (use a cutter if you like) and place on the baking sheets. Using the tip of a skewer, cut a small hole in the top of each cookie. Bake for 10-12 mins until lightly golden.

### STEP 3

Lift the biscuits onto a wire rack to cool. Meanwhile, mix the icing sugar with a few drops of cold water to make a thick, but still runny icing. Colour with edible food colouring, if you like. Spread it over the cooled biscuits, decorate with edible balls and thread with ribbon when dry.

# 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>