



**East Lothian**  
Council

# Tenant Handbook

**Information  
and support  
for your  
tenancy**



# Contents

Welcome	3
Your rights and responsibilities	4
Rent, Council Tax and benefits	5-8
Maintaining your home	10-11
A helping hand	12-13
Repairs and maintenance	14-19
Waste & recycling	20-21
Community Protection	22-23
Housing options	22-26
Useful numbers	28
Feedback & complaints	29
Notes	30/31

## Data Protection

East Lothian Council uses the personal data you provide for purposes associated with the delivery of our services. For more information see: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/communityhousingpn](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/communityhousingpn)  
Personal data will be retained in line with East Lothian Council retention policies. Data Protection Officer, East Lothian Council, John Muir House, Haddington, EH41 3HA. Email: [dpo@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:dpo@eastlothian.gov.uk)

# Welcome

We are delighted to present you with your Tenant Handbook. Developed in partnership with East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel, it contains important information about your tenancy and how to access services and support you may need.

We hope you will be very happy in your new home.



This handbook signposts to more information online and from other organisations. If you have any problems finding more information or accessing the internet please ask your Community Housing Officer (CHO) for help.

Your Community Housing Officer

Telephone Number

Email Address

# Your rights and responsibilities

**Your Tenancy Agreement sets out the conditions under which your home is let to you. Please read it carefully so that you know your rights and responsibilities.**

**As a tenant you have a number of rights and responsibilities. These are detailed in your Tenancy Agreement and are to do with the care you take of your home, your neighbours and your neighbourhood.**

It is very important that you advise us of any changes to your household as there are conditions set out in your agreement which are affected if you want to sublet, pass on or add another person on to it. There are also rules about when certain people can succeed (take over) your tenancy.

To notify us about changes in your household, you must complete a **Household Form**, which is available from local offices and from our website. You must return your Household Form to a local housing office. Please be aware that letting other council departments, such as Council Tax or rents know about these changes will not count and, as a result, you may not be able to make the tenancy changes you would like.

You sign your **Tenancy Agreement** when getting the keys to your new home. **Please read it carefully so you understand your rights and responsibilities.**

Our responsibilities are to provide you with a home that is wind and watertight and habitable, keep your property in good repair and make sure that repairs we are responsible for are carried out within the timescales. We can also take appropriate action regarding your tenancy in certain circumstances, for example if there has been evidence of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

We will provide all applicants being offered a tenancy with our **Moving In** leaflet, also available to download at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/moving-in](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/moving-in). The leaflet includes all of the information you need from being given your offer to moving into your new home. Information is given on the offer process, paying your rent and council tax, information on accessing benefits and help to furnish your property if you are unable to meet the costs of this yourself. The leaflet includes the **Lettings Commitment**, which gives information on the standards you can expect of your new home when you are given your keys.

If you have any questions, please contact your Community Housing Officer or visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housingcontacts](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housingcontacts)

# Rent, Council Tax & financial help

**Paying rent is the most important part of your Tenancy Agreement and we are on hand to help you manage this throughout your tenancy.**

If you have any difficulties paying your rent, or want to speak to someone about rent arrears, **please** email us at [rentadvice@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:rentadvice@eastlothian.gov.uk) or call us on **01620 827 528**

## Rent

**Your rent is charged fortnightly, and is payable in advance by the first Monday of each rent period**

It is important that you pay your rent on time, and in full, and that you are aware of the consequences if you do not pay. Your Community Housing Officer will advise you when your first payment is due. The majority of tenants pay their rent on time, however if you are having problems please don't be afraid to ask for help and don't delay. Our Rent Income Team will deal with your concerns confidentially and sensitively and will make sure you get the help you need.

We write to our tenants in March each year, advising of the amount of rent to pay and what the payment dates are for the financial year.

## Ways to pay

### Set up a direct debit

Paying by direct debit is an easy and hassle-free way to manage regular outgoings and helps avoid forgetting to make your rent payments.

The direct debit guarantee, offered by all banks using the direct debit scheme, gives customers three important safeguards:

- **an immediate money-back guarantee from your bank in the event of an error**
- **advance notice if the date or amount changes**
- **the right to cancel at any time.**

Complete a direct debit instruction online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/rent-dd](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/rent-dd) or call **01620 827 528**

### Alternatively you can pay:

- Online using a debit or credit card [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/payrent](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/payrent)
- By calling **01875 824 301** with a debit or credit card during office hours: Monday to Thursday 9am–5pm and Friday 9am–4pm  
You will need your tenancy number.
- In person at a Post Office or PayPoint outlet using your rent payment card.

## Help with your housing costs

If you're struggling to pay your rent, it's always worth checking you're claiming all financial support you may be entitled to:

**If you're working age and out of work or on a low income you may be entitled to Universal Credit.** This may include some help towards your housing costs.

Apply online at [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

**If you're pension age or if you live in supported accommodation you may qualify for Housing Benefit.** You can apply if you're working or out of work. How much you get depends on how much rent you pay, how many people live with you and your household income, including benefits, pensions and savings.

Apply online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/apply-for-hb](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/apply-for-hb)

Alternatively, to request a paper application form email [financialsupport@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:financialsupport@eastlothian.gov.uk), collect a form from any of our area offices or call **01620 827 730**

## Council Tax

Every year the council agrees council tax charges and the allocation of funding to council services for the 12 months ahead. It is important that you pay your council tax as funding for council services is mainly provided by council tax and Scottish Government grants. The council provides a range of services which there is a rising demand for. The cost of these services and reductions in overall central government funding means doing more with less money.

### Paying Council Tax

The easiest way to pay is by direct debit. If you would like to pay this way visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax-dd](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax-dd) or call **01875 824 314**.

Alternatively you can pay:

- Online using a debit or credit card at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/pay-council-tax](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/pay-council-tax)
- By calling **01875 824 301**
- In person at a Post Office or PayPoint outlet

More information about council tax, including details of discounts and exemptions available to help reduce your council tax charge, can be found at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax)

If you have any queries about paying your council tax or are struggling to make payments, complete our online enquiry form at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax-enquiry](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax-enquiry) or call **01620 824 314**

### Council Tax Reduction

You may be eligible for help with your council tax payments via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Eligibility depends on your income, including income from people who live with you so you may qualify whether you own your home, you're working, out-of-work, are retired or a carer. If you have more than £16,000 in savings you will not qualify, although the savings rule does not apply if you receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit. You may also be eligible for help if you receive any other qualifying benefit.

Find out more or apply online visit:

[www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction)

Alternatively you can request a paper application form by emailing [financialsupport@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:financialsupport@eastlothian.gov.uk) or collect one from any of our area offices, or by calling **01620 827 730**

## Financial Help

### Free, impartial, confidential advice and support

Our Financial Inclusion Team can:

- carry out a benefit health check to identify what benefits or grants you may be entitled to and help you to apply
- ensure you are receiving the correct amount
- help you to challenge or appeal decisions if you've recently had a benefit claim turned down

Visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/financial-inclusion](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/financial-inclusion)

email [financialinclusion@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:financialinclusion@eastlothian.gov.uk) or call **01620 827 827**

and ask for Financial Inclusion

### The Scottish Welfare Fund – Assisting people on a low income who are in crisis or in need of support

The Scottish Welfare Fund is available to assist people on a low income who are having difficulty because of an exceptional situation or in meeting a one-off expense. Two types of grant are available:

- The **Crisis Grant** which can help with living expenses or for essential items following a disaster.
- The **Community Care Grant** which can support independent living and can be for essential items such as furniture, household equipment or travel costs.

Grants are discretionary which means even if you qualify, you may only be awarded a grant if your application meets the priority level set in East Lothian and there is money left in the Scottish Welfare Fund annual budget.

Apply online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund)

email [scottishwelfarefund@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:scottishwelfarefund@eastlothian.gov.uk) or call **01620 828 790**

## Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

The CAB provides information and advice on a range of issues including benefits, debt and money, work and housing. [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

There are two offices in East Lothian: Haddington **01620 824471** and Musselburgh **0131 653 2748**

## Boost your income

[www.eastlothian.gov.uk/boost](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/boost)

The cost of living is affecting us all. Let's make sure you get the financial support you're entitled to.



East Lothian  
Council



# Maintaining your home

## Keys

Two sets of keys are supplied for each door into your home. If you live in a flat with a door entry system, two key fobs for the main door to the block may also be supplied. If any keys or fobs are lost, it is your responsibility to replace them, or you will need to pay for a replacement provided by us.

## Stair cleaning

If you live in a flat within a common stair then you will be responsible to take your turn to clean the stair. A rota system will be in place to make sure that every tenant takes a turn and is responsible for keeping the area clean. If there is no rota in place in your stair your Community Housing Officer can set this up. It is the responsibility of all tenants in the common stair to keep the area clear of all belongings.



## Home contents insurance: pay as you go

Whilst we provide buildings insurance for your property, **we do not insure your furniture, belongings or decoration against theft, fire, vandalism and burst pipes**. You will need to take out home contents insurance, either through the council tenant's insurance scheme, or by making your own arrangements. This scheme is open to all council tenants, and the cost of insurance is payable fortnightly along with your rent.

To request an application form email [insurance@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:insurance@eastlothian.gov.uk) or pick one up at any of our area offices.

## Heating

### Keeping warm and keeping costs down

Everyone should have a warm home, but in a time of rising fuel costs that can be expensive. Help is on hand to make your home more energy efficient, so it costs less to heat.

**Home Energy Scotland\*** offer free, impartial advice on energy saving, keeping warm at home, sustainable renewable energy and more.

Call: **0808 808 2282** or visit [www.homeenergyscotland.org/home-energy](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org/home-energy)

### Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

This provides the energy efficiency information on your property.

\*The Energy Saving Trust manages delivery of the *Affordable Warmth and Energy Assistance Schemes* through Home Energy Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

# A helping hand

**From budgeting to mobility support, your Community Housing Officer (CHO) is here to help with any aspects of your tenancy you need advice or support with.**

## Tenancy Support

### Having difficulty maintaining your tenancy?

We can offer you practical support and assistance to allow you to successfully live independently in your own home, including assisting you with personal budgeting and debt, applying for housing benefit or other benefits, or reporting repairs.

You can find more information in our Tenancy Support leaflet at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/tenancysupport](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/tenancysupport) or from your CHO.

### Care leaver or care-experienced?

If you are a care leaver, or care-experienced your CHO is there to provide help and support as you take on your new tenancy. Additional information can also be found at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/tenancysupport](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/tenancysupport)

## Garden

### If you have a garden, you must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming over-grown, untidy or causing a nuisance.

If you fail to do this, we are entitled to decide what work requires to be done. If you do not undertake this work, we may do it ourselves and charge you for it. In addition, you must not remove, chop down or destroy any bushes, hedges or trees without our written permission.

If you are having difficulty managing your garden, contact your CHO.



## A Better Life

A Better Life is a digital platform for the East Lothian Rehabilitation Service. This website was formerly known as "Help from HILDA". It aims to provide information and tools to manage your health and wellbeing and to be a resource if you care for others.

For more information visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elrs](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elrs)

## Recycling First

Recycling First may be able to help you with recycled furniture for which you only pay a small delivery charge. You need to be referred by an agency (Homeless Team, Health Visitor, Social Worker etc.) who will complete a referral form. Requests will be fulfilled as soon as possible depending on availability of stock. They also supply starter packs containing kitchen and cleaning items, bedding, towels and curtains. Recycling First is based at Unit 12, Macmerry Industrial Estate, telephone **01875 615 797**

## Tenant Participation

### Your opinion matters to us. We encourage all our tenants to get involved and influence the housing services we deliver.

We can help and support you in a number of ways, for example to help you set up a tenants and residents group or to get involved in tenant scrutiny which can help us improve services for tenants.

You can get involved in a way that suits you, such as:

- as an individual tenant
- through a tenants and residents group
- by being a member of East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel (ELTRP) for more information visit [www.eltrp.co.uk](http://www.eltrp.co.uk) or call **0131 665 9304**
- by getting involved in our tenant scrutiny activities

As a landlord, we must report on our performance every year against the outcomes in the Social Housing Charter and we publish our Landlord's Report in October each year. You can download a copy of the report from our website or pick one up from your area office. If you have any questions about tenant participation, or would like more information about how you can get involved, call us, or email us at:

[tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk)

# Repairs and maintenance

To request a repair, ask for advice, or get updates on work to your council home, call our Repairs Team on 01875 824311 or email [housingrepairs@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@eastlothian.gov.uk)



## Gas leaks

**If you suspect that there is a gas leak in your property, report it immediately to the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999**

You must also report gas leaks to the council on **01875 612 818**

## Emergency repairs

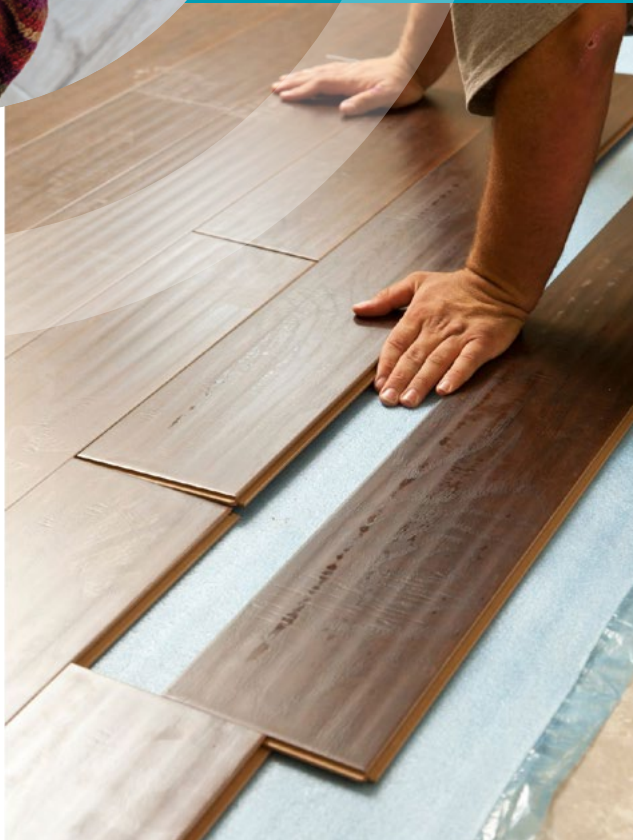
Some emergency repairs are available to all tenants 24 hours a day, every day of the year. We aim to respond to these within four hours of you reporting them, wherever possible. When you phone us to report an emergency repair, we will give you advice to eliminate or reduce any risk of danger. Examples of emergency repairs include: blocked toilet, electrics sparking, roof slates/masonry hanging dangerously. To report an emergency repair call **01875 612 818**.

## Non-emergency repairs (*priority and routine*)

All other repairs are treated as **non-emergency repairs**. Depending on the nature of the repair required, it may be classed as a **priority** which we aim to fix within 24 hours of you reporting it to us (includes during evenings, weekends and public holidays). All other non-emergency repairs are classed as **routine**, which we aim to fix within 20 working days (Monday to Friday, not including public holidays) of reporting.

## Rechargeable repairs

We will ask you to pay for any repair which "has been caused by neglect or recklessness", as outlined in our Repairs and Maintenance leaflet. Visit: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/rechargeable-repairs](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/rechargeable-repairs)





## Fire Safety: What to do in the event of a fire

**If a fire breaks out in your home, do not tackle the fire yourself, leave quickly, without collecting belongings, check everyone is safe, outside and contact emergency services on 999.**

If a fire breaks out during council office hours (9am–5pm Monday to Thursdays, 9am–4pm, Friday) call East Lothian Council's Contact Centre as soon as possible on **01620 827 827** and ask to speak to your Area Housing Office.

If you have nowhere to stay as a result, our out-of-office hours emergency number is **0800 169 1611** for temporary accommodation. Find out more in our *In the event of a fire in your home* leaflet, available to download at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elc\\_fire\\_emergency\\_tenant\\_info](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elc_fire_emergency_tenant_info)

## Cyclical Safety Checks

**As a landlord, we must undertake several safety checks in our tenancies on a cyclical basis. These include but are not limited to gas, electrical and fire safety checks.**

The law, and good practice, dictates that we must do these checks on a cyclical basis. To carry out this work, engineers must be able to access your home and we will do this on a flexible planned appointment approach. Depending on the type of safety check, either our own staff will arrange for this work to be carried out, or we have appointed external contractors who will contact tenants directly to arrange these visits. Once this work is carried out, tenants will be given a copy of the test certificates.

## Compulsory Access Procedure

**In accordance with the law, we have a compulsory access procedure for when we need to carry out urgent work or safety checks in a property.**

We will hand-deliver an appointment letter to your home at least 24 hours before access is required. If you are not at home on the time and date specified in this letter, we will enter the property, which will be by way of forced access. In these cases, we will charge you an administration fee to cover our expenses and any associated costs e.g. change of locks. You have the right to appeal this recharge using a feedback form, which is available from all our area offices. You can also provide feedback via our website at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/feedback](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/feedback)

You must report to us any necessary repairs and allow us access to your home to fix them. You are responsible for repairing any damage that has been caused by you, your family or any visitors, other than repairs caused by wear and tear. If you request a repair that has been caused by neglect or recklessness on your part, you will be charged for the cost and call-outs associated with the work. Find out more in our repairs leaflet at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housingrepairs](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housingrepairs)

## Your Right to Repair

**Our Right to Repair scheme gives you the right to have small emergency or urgent repairs done quickly.**

We are responsible for making sure that such work is completed on time. You can claim compensation if we fail to meet these standards. To qualify for the Right to Repair scheme, the repair must meet certain conditions. There are timescales in place, and also some exceptions.

For more information, look at the Your Right to Repair leaflet at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/righttorepair](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/righttorepair) or call us on **01875 824 311**.

## Mutual repairs and shared costs

A mutual (or common) repair is carried out on an element of a building that is shared with other owners, such as chimneys or roof repairs, gutters, downpipes, fences or external roughcast. Find out more about how we deal with these in our ***Mutual Repairs and Shared Costs*** leaflet. You can pick up a copy from any of our area offices or download it at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/mutualrepairs](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/mutualrepairs)

## Making your own improvements

**You must ask us for written permission, known as Landlord's Consent, before you undertake certain improvements to your home.**

Key examples include:

- Make any alteration whatsoever to the gas installation pipework and/or gas fittings and equipment
- Make alterations, improvements or enlargements to the house, fittings or fixtures e.g. laminate flooring, fitting an electric shower
- Add new fittings or fixtures, both internally and externally
- Put up a new garage, driveway, shed, pigeon loft, greenhouse, fence, a wall, dog run, garden decking, chicken coop or any other external structure
- Installing an electric car charger
- Adding a window or room in the roof space
- Decorate the outside of your house
- Lay any other form of flooring, other than carpet or vinyl flooring

To ask for Landlord's Consent, email [permissions@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:permissions@eastlothian.gov.uk). We will not refuse your request unreasonably, but we may place conditions on our consent, including conditions regarding the standard of work. For more information see our ***Alterations & Improvements To Your Home*** leaflet or visit: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/improvements](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/improvements)

## Condensation & mould

You are responsible for preventing mould growth in your home arising from condensation. You can avoid condensation by:

- Adequately heating every room in your home
- Leaving window trickle vents open
- Not turning off extractor fans
- Closing the door in your bathroom after a bath or shower
- Not leaving windows open during the colder months
- Avoiding drying clothes in doors
- If you do need to dry clothes indoors, then do so in the kitchen, with the door closed and extractor fan running
- Avoiding clutter and leaving a space behind furniture

**Some daily household activities create more moisture than you might expect...**



# Waste & recycling

We all generate waste at home and it's what we choose to do with it that matters. By using your bins correctly we can improve our recycling rates.

To find out more about bins and recycling services, Assisted Collections or to book a Bulky Waste Collection (you may be required to pay a charge for each item uplifted) please email [wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk) visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/recycling) or call 01875 824 305

## Waste and recycling collections

As a council tenant you will receive the following collections:

- Food waste: silver caddies
- Cardboard & paper, glass: blue, green or black recycling boxes
- Plastics & cans: white recycling sacks
- Non-recyclable waste: green bin

To find out which days your bins and boxes are emptied, visit Your Collection Calendar at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/bincollectiondays](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/bincollectiondays)

An annual fee applies to our permit-holder garden waste service for local residents. Contact Waste Services on 01875 824 305 or email [wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk) to find out how and when to apply.

## Food Waste Collection Service

Please use the plastic liners provided by the council to line your kitchen caddy. Towards the end of each roll of liners you should find a yellow tag, please secure this to the handle of the outdoor caddy when you put it out for collection and a new roll of liners should be left for you. Please place your outdoor caddy at the kerbside by 7am on your collection day.

You can order new or additional recycling bins or boxes and covers by contacting Waste Services on 01875 824 305 email [wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Assisted Collections (Pull-Outs)

### Non-recyclable and garden waste

If you are unable to put your green or brown bin out at the collection point and do not have someone else living at the same address who is able to assist you, you can apply for help. You can call us on 01875 824 305 email [wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Recycling boxes and food caddy

For help presenting your recycling boxes or food caddies contact Waste Services on 01875 824 305 or email [wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:wasteservices@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Bulky Waste Collections (Special Uplift)

If you have bulky household items that are too big to fit in a wheeled bin or be transported to a recycling centre such as mattresses, furniture or large kitchen appliances, this service can help. You can book a collection by calling 01875 824 305 or request it at your local housing office. You may be required to pay a charge for each item uplifted.



## Recycling centres

The council provides a network of recycling points for paper, textiles, glass and cans, and three recycling centres to recycle a wide range of items at:

**Dunbar Community Recycling Centre**  
Spott Road Industrial Estate, Dunbar EH42 1RS

**Kinwegar Recycling Centre**  
A199 Haddington Road, Wallyford EH21 8JU

**North Berwick Recycling Centre**  
Heugh Brae, North Berwick EH39 5PS

# Community Protection

**We want all tenants to feel safe and relaxed in their home. If you are experiencing any antisocial behaviour problems within your community, or with neighbours, we can help.**

Please report any issues to the council's 24 hour confidential helpline on **01875 824 307**, email **asb@eastlothian.gov.uk** or at **www.eastlothian.gov.uk/reportit**

## **Please don't suffer in silence.**

To reports any acts of criminality that require an emergency response you should call Police Scotland on **999**. Non-emergency reports can be made via **101**.



## Antisocial Behaviour

**This term covers a range of behaviours including loud music, shouting, swearing, verbal abuse, vandalism, graffiti and physical violence.**

Our Local Area Housing Teams and specialist Community Protection Team work together with Police Scotland in responding to antisocial behaviour complaints.

Minor problems may be resolved by letting your neighbour know that they are disturbing you. If this approach fails, or you feel uncomfortable in doing this, you can access the services of the Resolution Team on **01620 829 902**. Trained mediators will work with you and your neighbour in helping find a solution to any problems.

If you, anyone that lives with you, or any visitors to your home behave antisocially, then you might be in breach of your tenancy agreement, and action may be taken against you as the tenant.

## Resolution

**We promote tolerance and the right of every resident to enjoy peace and quiet in their own home with respect for, and from, their neighbours.**

The local resolution service is based within the council's Community Protection Team. Trained officers can assist in resolving disputes that arise between neighbours in a sensitive, confidential and respectful manner. The service can be contacted by calling **01620 829 902** or emailing **mediation@eastlothian.gov.uk**

You can also get more information and help from Victim Support who offer free and confidential support. Call them on (Freephone) **08081 689 111** or visit **www.victimsupport.org.uk**





# Housing Options

If your circumstances change, or if your house is no longer suitable for your needs, we can offer you advice on your housing options. You may want to consider moving somewhere else. Ask at your local housing office for a housing options interview on 01620 827 827.

## Homelessness

If you find yourself homeless, or are likely to lose your home in less than two months, please contact our Homelessness Team on **01620 827 536**

If you are facing a homeless emergency out with office hours, for example, you have nowhere to stay that night then call **0800 169 1611**

We can carry out a homeless assessment at your request. We have a legal duty to carry out this assessment in line with the Scottish Government's homelessness legislation. However, we will make every effort to prevent you from becoming homeless, provided it is safe for you to stay. We will also review your housing options, or if you are at risk of losing your current accommodation, we will try to assist you in sustaining it, when we can. Call the Prevention Team on **01620 820 107**

## Transfers

### Does your current council home no longer meet your needs?

Is it too big, or do you need to move to one that is better suited to your health needs? We offer incentives to downsize to a suitable property. All council tenants that have a secure tenancy can apply to transfer to another council house. To be considered for a move, you will need to complete a Housing Application Form and return it to your local area office. Your housing circumstances will be assessed and an award of points made. How long you have to wait for re-housing will depend on the level of points your application is awarded, your areas of choice and the property types you have selected. If you have any questions about this, contact your Community Housing Officer.

When you give the council notice of terminating your tenancy you will be provided with our **Moving Out** leaflet, also available to download at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/moving-out](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/moving-out)

The leaflet sets out your responsibilities when leaving a council tenancy and includes an end of tenancy checklist to give information on how the property should be left. We hope that all tenancies are given back to us in a clean condition and fully cleared of items in order that we can allocate the property to another tenant as soon as possible. Your CHO will discuss the information provided in the leaflet at the pre-termination visit and advise what needs to be put right, to avoid being charged for work which needs to be carried out after you leave.

## Incentives to transfer

### We offer incentives to make transferring to your new home easier

You could be eligible for a payment if you move to a smaller property that is owned by the council or a Housing Association. Please note that if you currently owe the council money, this grant money may be used to repay that debt. The council does not offer a removal service – you will need to arrange this yourself. Further information is available in our Transfers leaflet at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/transfers](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/transfers)

## Mutual exchanges

### You can exchange houses with other council and housing association tenants in East Lothian and throughout the UK

You can advertise your house on the council's website by completing an online form, as well as search for suitable exchanges. You should not carry out an exchange without first getting permission, and you will not be allowed to exchange to a house that is too large for your needs. In some cases, incentives are available to make moving easier. For more information visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/mutual-exchanges](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/mutual-exchanges)

A number of housing associations operate in East Lothian including; **East Lothian Housing Association, Homes for Life, Places for People,** and **Wheatley Homes East.** For more information and contact details visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housingassociations](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housingassociations)

*You should not carry out an exchange without first getting permission, and you will not be allowed to exchange to a house that is too large for your needs unless you are downsizing from a larger property.*

## Sheltered housing (retirement housing)

We have a number of sheltered housing complexes which are aimed at older residents offering independent self-contained homes, each with their own front door. There is normally a scheme manager or warden available during office hours, and an alarm system provides emergency contact to allow residents to summon help.

Visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/sheltered-housing](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/sheltered-housing) to find out more or speak to your CHO.

## Amenity housing

We realise that sheltered housing will not appeal to or suit everyone. However for people who would prefer to remain outwith the sheltered housing environment, amenity housing can provide an alternative option.

Amenity housing normally consists of two-apartment houses. This type of housing is generally offered to older people or disabled people under pensionable age. There is no resident Warden or Sheltered Housing Officer available for this type of accommodation and it is not part of a sheltered housing complex. You should note Amenity Housing does not have any of the communal facilities found in the sheltered housing complexes.

For more information go to [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/amenity-housing](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/amenity-housing)





# Get in touch

Call 01620 827 827, or email your local Area Office to contact your Community Housing Officer.

## MUSSELBURGH AREA

The Brunton, Ladywell Way, Musselburgh EH21 6AF

[housingmusselburgh@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingmusselburgh@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## EAST AREA – DUNBAR, HADDINGTON & NORTH BERWICK

John Muir House, Brewery Park, Haddington EH41 3HA

[housingdunbar@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingdunbar@eastlothian.gov.uk)

[housinghaddington@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housinghaddington@eastlothian.gov.uk)

[housingnorthberwick@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingnorthberwick@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## TRANENT & PRESTONPANS AREA

The George Johnstone Centre, 35 Winton Place, Tranent EH33 1AE

[housingtranent@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingtranent@eastlothian.gov.uk)

[housingprestonpans@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:housingprestonpans@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## HOUSING OPTIONS TEAM

The Brunton, Ladywell Way, Musselburgh EH21 6AF

[homelessness@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:homelessness@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Useful telephone numbers

East Lothian Council	01620 827 827
East Lothian Council Emergency Line	01875 612 818
National Gas Emergency Service (report a gas leak)	0800 111 999
Antisocial Behaviour Helpline	01875 824 307
Homelessness Team – Duty Officer	01620 827 536
Homeless Emergency Helpline	0800 169 1611
Council house repairs	01875 824 311
Report fly tipping / broken street light	01875 824 305
Payments line (rent and council tax payments)	01875 824 301
East Lothian Resolution Service	01620 829 902

## Feedback & complaints

We are committed to providing quality services for the people of East Lothian. We follow the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's standard complaints handling procedures. If you have a concern, we will do our best to resolve it. We'll also make sure you know what to expect at each stage. We will keep your complaint confidential – only those who need to know about it in order to investigate will see the details.

To make a comment, suggestion or complaint about a council service, download a feedback form online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/feedback](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/feedback) or pick one up at your local office.

### Significant Performance Failures

The Scottish Housing Regulator has created factsheets for tenants who wish to report a significant performance failure. A significant performance failure is something that your landlord does, or fails to do, that puts the interests of its tenants at risk – for example, it fails to carry out health and safety requirements, such as annual gas safety checks. This is something that does, or could, affect all of your landlord's tenants. For more information visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housing-performance](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housing-performance)







Versions of this leaflet can be provided in Braille, large print, audiotape, or your own language. For assistance call our Community Housing freephone: **0800 413 721**

Verbal abuse and threatening behaviour is never acceptable. #zerotolerance

**We're living through stressful times right now, and everyone's feeling it.**



Our staff are doing their best to assist local residents and businesses whilst delivering essential services.

**Please, be nice.**



**BE NICE**  
RESPECT US AS WE RESPECT YOU




East Lothian Council 2024 [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)  
Follow us  @ELCouncil or  @EastLothianCouncil

East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel  
Scottish Government  
UK Government Website  
Scottish Housing Regulator

[www.eltrp.co.uk](http://www.eltrp.co.uk)  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)  
[www.housingregulator.gov.scot](http://www.housingregulator.gov.scot)