

talkback

AUTUMN 2024

elha.com
east lothian housing association



Lifespans of Fixtures and Fittings in Your Home

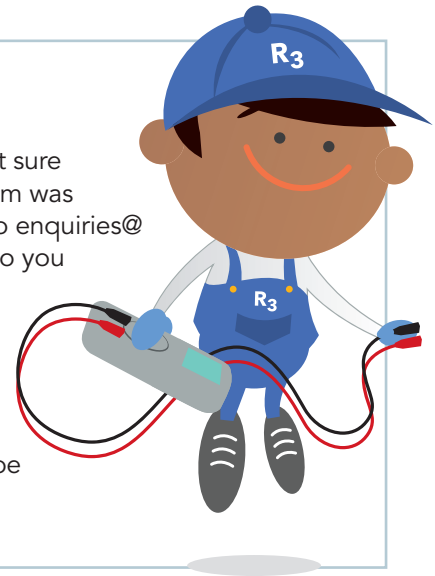
We know from the number of views that articles on maintenance get, that tenants are very interested in knowing when they are likely to get improvements to their home, such as a new kitchen, bathroom, or windows, etc.

We now provide this information on elha.com to give you an idea about when you may get new fixtures and fittings but please note that these timescales are not set in stone.

LIFESPANS OF FIXTURES & FITTINGS
<https://www.elha.com/page/lifespans>

If you're a new tenant and not sure when your kitchen or bathroom was installed, please drop a line to enquiries@elha.com and we'll get back to you with the dates.

We always carry out a pre-contract survey before carrying out any work, and if everything is still in good condition, replacement may be postponed.



New Feature for Platinum Tenants

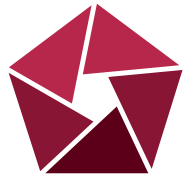
We launched a new automated service for our Platinum Key Tenants during July. This alerts Platinum Key Tenants about any surveys they need to complete before we assess who qualifies for a Key Tenant Discount on the 28th of the month. We know that it's easy to miss the odd repair satisfaction survey, so we hoped this new service would cut down on the number of Platinum Key Tenants who don't meet the requirements each month. We're very happy to report that no Platinum tenants missed a repair survey during July or August.

If you'd like to learn more about the Key Tenant Scheme, pop into your My Home account and click on the button in your Key Tenant box.



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Scottish Housing Regulator – A Guide

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has published a handy guide for tenants and other service users, explaining who they are, what they do and how they regulate social housing in Scotland.

<https://bit.ly/47cwA96>

If you'd like to get involved with scrutinising our services, please get in touch through your **My Home account**, or by e-mailing enquiries@elha.com.

Annual Assurance Statement

Every year we send an Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator, confirming that we comply with our regulatory framework (or setting out any action we need to take to ensure we comply).

The 2024 Assurance Statement is now complete and is available on **elha.com**. Visit the Assurance Statement page

<https://www.elha.com/page/assurance-statement>



Reporting Serious Concerns

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has just published a new leaflet for tenants who wish to report serious concerns regarding their landlord. It is important for all tenants to understand their rights, but also their responsibilities regarding complaints.

Find out more, and read the leaflet on the SHR website: [SHR Factsheet](#)

<https://bit.ly/4dkA3of>

We follow the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure, which you can read here:

<https://bit.ly/3APEyc3>



The Return of the Sticky Bun Focus Group!

You may remember that we invited all tenants to come along to our Sticky Bun Focus Group at the end of June, to have a look at our annual performance and have a chat about how we publicise this information.

Our tenant's views are very important to us as they help to shape the services we provide so that we are getting these right for you. It's also a legal requirement that we create opportunities for you to participate in the work that we do, and we're happy to do this in a friendly informal way.

We were delighted that several tenants joined us on the day, and we had a really good conversation over coffee and cake. We chatted about what we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator and went through our entire Performance 365 microsite (see the link below) where a sample of our annual performance figures are published. Did you know we are pretty good and that we perform above the Scottish average in almost all areas?

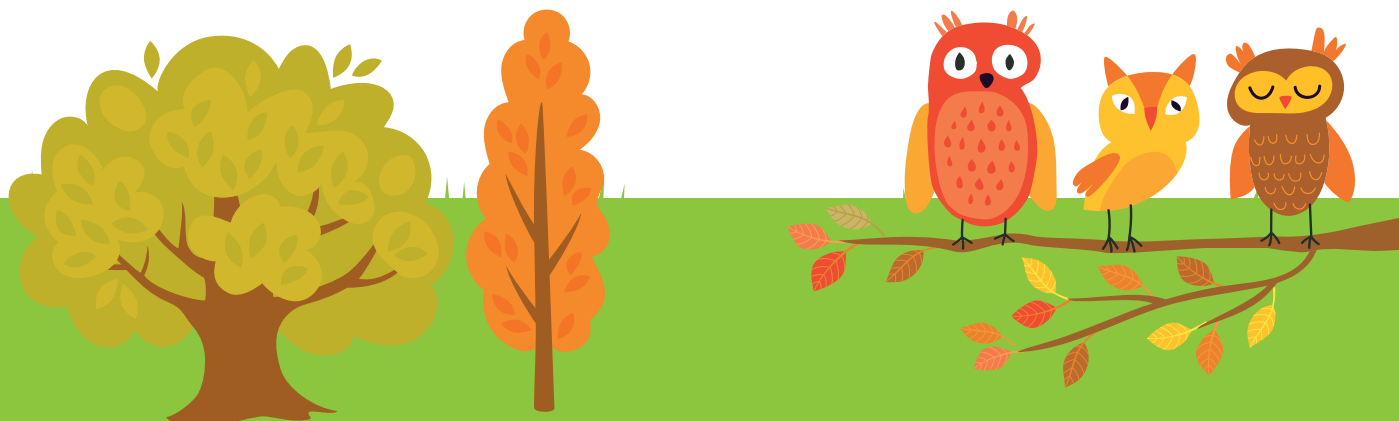
We also talked about what information we promote in our newsletters and tenant participation activities in general. And as a fun bonus, while looking at planned maintenance, the attendees discovered they're all getting new kitchens this year!

Everyone had some great ideas for improvement and asked us to consider the following:

- Digital Membership forms – *becoming a member currently still requires a printed form - it's time for us to sort that out!*
- Better information on alternate heating types is needed for tenants and staff. *We have a number of properties with green energy initiatives, and while we do provide some information on these on elha.com, the group suggested more detailed user instructions.*
- Promoting the fact that R3 can be hired to do private work for tenants – *we'll have an article in the next edition with more details.*
- The option for future sticky bun meetings being in the evening. *That will be an option next year.*

We think that these suggestions are really good and are things that we can implement in the near future. Please keep an eye on future newsletters - we will keep you updated this way.

A huge thank you goes to those tenants who took the time to pop down to our offices that day, we thoroughly enjoyed it and hope you got some benefit from this. We also hope that you will come back next year to do the same.



Alzheimer Scotland

In-House Money & Home Energy Advice Service

Alzheimer Scotland is Scotland's leading dementia organisation. They deliver high quality services across the whole of Scotland, including a free 24-hour Dementia Helpline. Below are a few of the many resources available

24 Hour Dementia Helpline

Freephone: 0808 808 3000
Email: helpline@alzscot.org



National Dementia Advisor Service

The service aims to provide a responsive, high-quality information, advice and advocacy service relating to all aspects of brain health and dementia.

Telephone: 0300 373 5774
Email: ndas@alzscot.org

East Lothian Dementia Advisor

Alzheimer Scotland's East Lothian Dementia Advisor is a point of contact for people with dementia and their families at any time that you have a question or concern and require information and advice about any aspect of living with the condition. Support can be provided by phone, email, or in person.

Michael Huddleston – 0131 654 1114 / 07831859490 /
Email: mhuddleston@alzscot.org

Michael is also a "Digital Champion", who can assist with finding digital tools, e.g. simplified remote controls and movement activated lighting.

Learn more about Alzheimer Scotland:

Website: <https://www.alzscot.org/>
Twitter: @alzscot
Facebook: @alzheimerScotland



Winter Fuel Payments for Pensioners Will Be Replaced

The Scottish Government has confirmed that it will follow the UK government in no longer providing Winter Fuel Payments to all pensioners. Instead, a means-tested payment will be put in place, but no details on this have been confirmed.

This is separate from the Winter Heating Payment, which helps people on low incomes heat their homes.

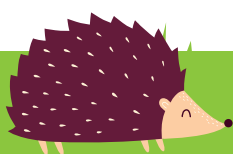
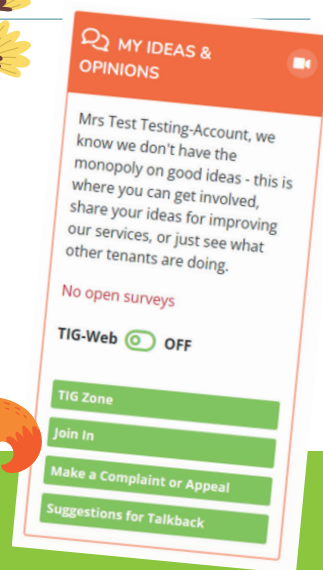
We will keep you informed as more information is released.



Appealing Decisions

If you disagree with a decision we've made, for example, if you have lost your Key Tenant Status, you did not qualify for extra transfer priority to move, or your application for a joint tenancy was refused, you do have the right of appeal if you think we made a mistake, or if you have additional information which may be relevant.

We've now made it much easier for you to log an appeal –you can do this in the same way you log service complaints, neighbour disputes and estate management issues. This can be found in your 'My Ideas & Opinions' box in My Home.



The Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment is for parents or carers on low incomes who have a child under 16.

Who can get the Payment?

To get the payment you must normally live in Scotland, be getting a qualifying benefit and be responsible for a child under 16.

Getting a qualifying benefit

The qualifying benefits are Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income Support, Pension Credit, Jobseekers Allowance (income based) and Employment and Support Allowance (income related).

Responsible for a child

You are responsible for a child if you or your partner get child benefit for the child, or the child is included in you or your partner's Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit or Pension Credit award or you or your partner are a kinship carer for the child.

How much is the Scottish Child Payment?

The Scottish Child Payment is £26.70 a week for each eligible child and is paid every four weeks into your bank account.

Claiming Scottish Child Payment

To make a claim you can phone Social Security Scotland on 0800 182 2222, claim online at mygov.scot or download a paper application form from mygov.scot.

More information on the Scottish Child Payment can be found at:

<https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment>



Gold Plus Transfer Pass

Last year, 23% of our available homes were allocated to existing tenants. This freed up their homes for another household, meeting the needs of two households. The reason for so many transfers is that we award a Gold Plus Priority Pass to any existing ELHA tenant who has any level of priority and is meeting all the terms of their Tenancy Agreement.

We know that a small number of tenants have missed out on a transfer because their rent account wasn't clear, or when we carried out a home inspection there was work required to bring the property up to a reasonable standard which was their responsibility to do.

So – if you need to move, and you've been awarded a Priority Pass, make sure you qualify for your upgraded priority by keeping your home in good condition, and keeping your rent account clear.





Don't Miss Out on your Rent Discounts!

Our Key Tenant Scheme (KTS) is now over seven years old, with tenants who have been Platinum Key Tenants from day one now having received over £1,900 in Rent Discounts during this time!

We want to help all our tenants to claim their Rent Discounts, but we know there's a few things that trip some people up every month. So, here's a few tips to keep your Rent Discounts where they should be - in your bank account!

Make sure you're in for any visits

If you've arranged a visit, or if we've arranged one and given you enough warning about it, please make sure you're in as you can lose your Key Tenant status if you are not at home when we call. If you need to rearrange a visit, that's fine, just contact us to let us know that you won't be home and save us a wasted journey. This applies to all home visits and is no longer just limited to repair calls.

Make sure you've paid your full 'Rent Due' by the 28th of each month

Your Rent Due is either your rent minus any Rent Discounts, or your rent plus any repayment agreement or other charges, again minus any Rent Discounts. The monthly Key Tenant Scheme process, which tells us who qualifies for a Rent Discount on the 1st of the following month, is run after midday on the 28th of each month, so make sure your payment is made before this.

If you're having any problems making a payment, get in touch as soon as possible – as long as we know you're working with us, we should be able to come to an agreement.

Respond to your repair surveys

This catches people out every month. Repair surveys are on your Repair History page in My Home, not in the Ideas & Opinions box like most of the other surveys. If you've had a repair survey e-mail, just click the link in the e-mail, or pop into your Repair History page, and click on the speech bubble icon to open up your survey.

Because this results in more lost Rent Discounts than anything else, we have introduced an automated reminder to Platinum tenants.



Applying for a Transfer?

If you want to move home and you're actively applying for a transfer, please make sure you only apply for properties you want.

If you have been awarded a Priority Pass and have set it to be valid for all areas and property types, and you apply for absolutely everything, there is a good chance that we will offer you a home you don't really want. If we do offer you a property, and you then decide you'd rather not move to that new home without good reason, you run the risk of losing your Priority Pass for 12 months. It would then be your responsibility to re-apply for this.

So – if you want to move to a house in Tranent, please limit your applications to houses in Tranent. That way you won't have to apply for homes in areas you don't want.

<https://www.thesehomes.com/>



A Message from our Money & Home Energy Adviser - Assistance with Health Costs

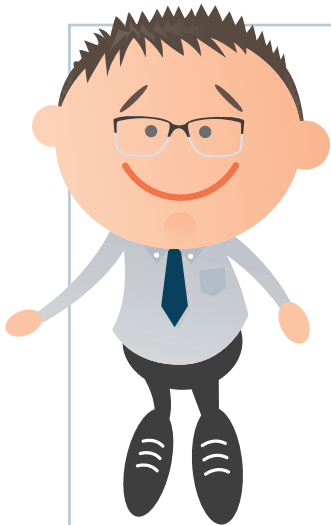
Help with health costs, including NHS dental treatment, eye care and more, may be available for individuals and families claiming Universal Credit and other benefits.

You can use the link below to visit the NHS eligibility checker to find out if you are entitled to help.

NHS Help

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-help>

If you are not automatically entitled, it will show what other help is available, such as applying to the NHS Low Income Scheme.



Consultation Calendar & Policy Reviews

In the coming year we have several consultations and policy reviews. We are not proposing to make any significant changes to our policies and services but if you would like to take part in a specific policy review, please contact us at enquiries@elha.com and mark your email 'Policy Review'.

We would really welcome your views.

Consultations:

Consultation/Survey

Stair Cleaning survey
Garden Care Review
Rent Increase Consultation
Repair Satisfaction Surveys

Participants

Tenants receiving this service
Tenants receiving this service
All tenants
Any tenant who has ordered a repair

Date

Autumn 2024
Autumn 2024
January 2025
Continuous

Policy Reviews:

Policy

Tenancy Management
Domestic abuse

Review Date

November 2024
March 2025



Ending Your Tenancy



There are several ways in which a tenancy can end, the most common being when a tenant requests to do this.

If you are thinking about ending your tenancy with us, there are a few things you need to know:

- You must give us 28 days notice in writing
- We need to visit your home to carry out a full inspection of the property before you move out and will aim to visit you within a week of receiving your termination
- If you don't allow us to carry out an inspection, you risk losing your Rent Discount if you are a Gold or Platinum Key tenant, and it is more likely that you will be charged for works needed on moving out
- If, at the inspection we find repairs are needed which are our responsibility, we will want

to do these before you move out and will agree a suitable date with you

- If we find repairs that you are responsible for, we will tell you what you need to do and will arrange a further date with you to return and check the work before you move out
- If we are not given the opportunity to carry out a final check and find that work has not been done or it is of poor quality, we will carry out the work on your behalf and will charge you the costs
- If you have altered your home without permission, you need to seek permission straight away - we are finding an increasing number of tenants are making changes without getting our written permission first, for example, garden improvements (decking, astroturf and sheds), painting

kitchen cupboards, altering the electrics to place large TV screens up on walls, and laying floor tiles

- Depending on the work that you have carried out, you may be asked to return the property to its original condition before your tenancy ends and if you don't do this, or if you do not have permission for the alteration, we will restore the property to its original condition and charge you for the work which can be very expensive
- We will ask you to clear any rent arrears or any other tenancy debt that you owe us before you leave
- You can receive an End of Tenancy Reward of £150.00 if you return the keys on time, leave the home in good condition with no chargeable repairs and leave no tenancy debt
- You can find a list of the most common chargeable repairs that we carry out along with costs on elha.com

