



# Landlord Report to Tenants 2021/22

Information on  
the performance  
of the council as a  
housing provider






# Development includes 60 new council homes for rent

East Lothian Council working in partnership with the Scottish Government to provide affordable housing:

- 16 x two-bedroom flats
- 12 x one-bedroom flats
- 11 x three-bedroom houses
- 4 x four-bedroom houses
- Completion Date: Summer 2022



**For further information contact:**  
 Tranent Area Housing Office  
 The George Johnstone Centre  
 Tel: 01620 827827  
 email: tranentarea@eastlothian.gov.uk

 Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services if you require assistance on 01620 827199

# Contents

This report has been developed in partnership with **East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP)**.

*If you have feedback on any aspect of this report we'd love to hear from you - see page 15.*

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# Welcome



Welcome to East Lothian Council's latest Landlord Report to our tenants, which provides information on our performance as a landlord for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This report shows how we are meeting the requirements of the Social Housing Charter on key tenant issues such as; repairs, rents, energy efficiency and improvements. It also highlights aspects of the service which are working well and identifies those areas where we need to improve.

It is important to note the challenges of the last two years and the ongoing impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the service as we try to catch up in areas such as repairs and modernisation works as well as beginning to meet some of the wider challenges such as energy efficiency and climate change.

In addition to the pandemic, the construction sector has also been impacted by other factors such as Brexit and the war in Ukraine which has created a volatile construction sector, leading to increased demand for materials. This is resulting in increased costs, shortages of materials and shortages with the availability of labour, which is affecting the delivery of the council's affordable housing programme, voids and re-lets as well as modernisation and repairs. We therefore continue to find ourselves in challenging times, however I would like to note the ongoing commitment and hard work of staff to ensure our services run as smoothly as possible while supporting and ensuring the safety of our tenants.

We hope you find our report and how we have performed on the key indicators we submit to the Scottish Housing Regulator informative. You can find out further information on the role of the regulator online at:  
[www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)

## **Wendy McGuire**

Head of Service (Housing)  
East Lothian Council



East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) continue to work in partnership with East Lothian Council to deliver and sustain an improved service for all our tenants. This has been a very difficult year again for communities and tenants alike caused by the ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic. However, despite everything we have continued to build our partnership, working with the council and have adapted positively to new ways of working whilst still delivering the service and support our tenants and residents have come to expect from our organisation. The dedication and willingness by all our volunteers and local groups to support their communities throughout the Covid restrictions has really been a remarkable achievement. It makes me very proud as chairperson of ELTRP, particularly in such a challenging climate, to be part of a combined effort by everyone; all working together to improve the area and wellbeing of all our East Lothian tenants and residents. You will see evidence of this partnership approach throughout this year's Landlord Report to Tenants and I really hope you enjoy reading it. Please contact ELTRP or the council if you have any comments or would like to feedback on any aspects of the report.

## **Jim Herron**

Chairperson  
East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel

# Achievements & key highlights

## Social Housing Charter

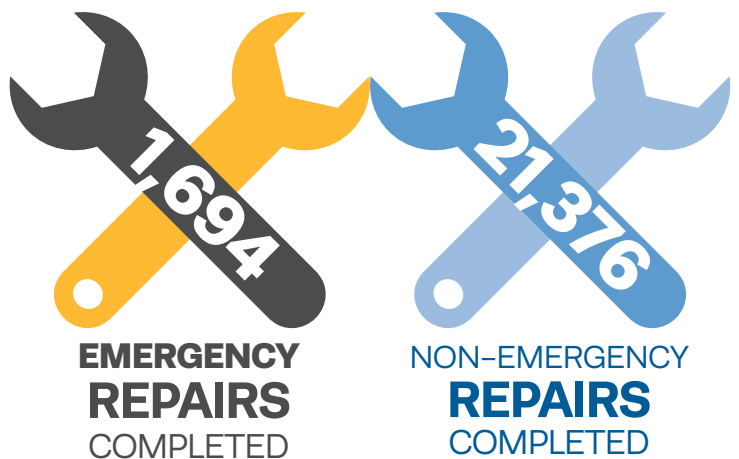
*'The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that the council should be achieving when delivering our housing services.'*

*'It has helped us focus on how we are performing as a landlord and provide information to our tenants.'*

This report covers the period from April 2021 to March 2022 which saw us, for the second year, facing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been another difficult year for us all and we have faced further challenges trying to recover, with the financial and other impacts that both the pandemic and ongoing world events have brought us. At times during the past year we had to provide our service in line with Government restrictions and again this has impacted on us, as we have at times only been able to carry out essential and emergency services. The majority of our housing staff have continued to work from home and interacted with their tenants by telephone, email and in person where this was required and within guidelines.

Despite the restrictions we have continued to let our properties, collect rents, carry out repairs and support our tenants.

The key headlines between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022 are:



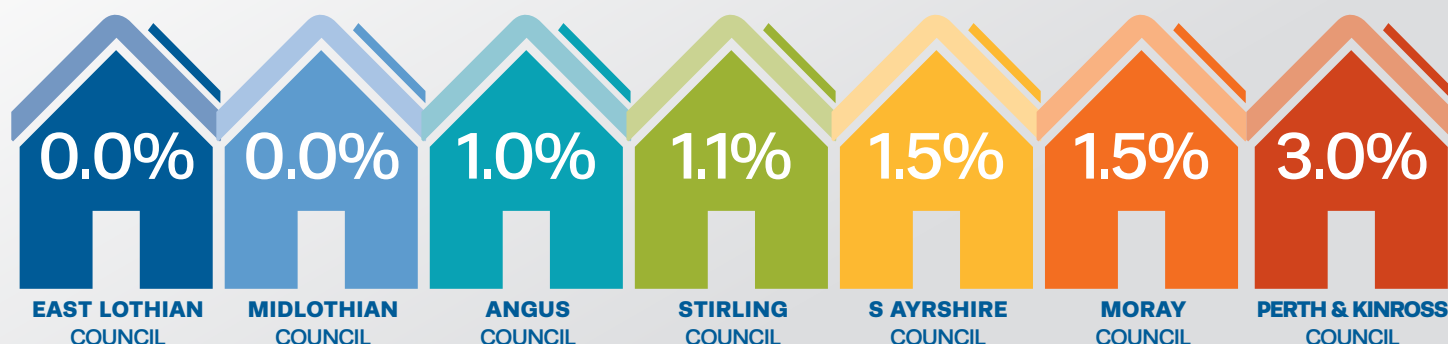
# Rent & value for money

## Our rents

On 31st March 2022 we owned 8,988 properties and our average rent was £72.61 per week.

We took the decision not to impose any increase to our tenants in the current financial climate. We were one of the few councils in Scotland who chose not to do so.

The table shows rent increases in similar sized local authorities to East Lothian Council



## Rent collected

The rent we collected from April 1st 2021 to March 31st 2022 was £ 32,435,670.

This was out of a total of £31,481,838 rent due.

*This amounts to 103.03% as some of the money collected was arrears paid by previous tenants who had arrears when they left their tenancy.*

## Arrears

At the end of 2021/22 there were 8,634 current tenants, of whom:

- 28.36% had rent arrears.

Of those with rent arrears:

- 58.35% owed less than £250
- 11.19% owed more than £1,000.

## Rent loss due to voids

Voids are properties where a tenant has moved out and we are carrying out the necessary repairs and maintenance work for the new tenant.

### Void properties

2018/19	1.19%	£341,581
2019/20	0.53%	£156,998
2020/21	0.64%	£202,858
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>1.04%</b>	<b>£331,487</b>
2021/22 SA*	1.43%	

\*Scottish Average

The percentage of the rent due that we lost through properties being empty during the last year has increased due to a variety of reasons including staff shortages, contractor shortages and delays as well as extra measures we had to put in place to allow our staff to work safely within a property.

# Housing allocation & tenancy sustainment

## Allocations



Of these homes we let:

**121** to existing tenants  
**204** to homeless applicants  
**108** to housing list applicants

Percentage of houses that became vacant

2018/19	5.97%	509
2019/20	5.24%	450
2020/21	4.57%	399
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>4.67%</b>	<b>420</b>
2021/22 SA	7.76%	

Average time to re-let properties

2018/19	39.92 days
2019/20	30.83 days
2020/21	51.88 days
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>66.19 days</b>
2021/22 SA	51.57 days



## Sustainment

**94.14%** of all new tenants sustained their tenancy for more than 1 year.

We have a Tenancy Support Officer in each of our four housing offices with an average 30 cases each at any given time. They support existing tenants to sustain their tenancy and assist with:

- Budgeting
- Maximising Income
- Claiming benefits and accessing grants
- Dealing with letters
- Helping find/access essential household items
- Housing Options
- Helping report repairs
- Helping develop independent living skills

Two Tenancy Support Officers also work within our Housing Options Team to assist our homeless applicants to set up and sustain their tenancy.

# New Builds

Despite the necessary restrictions imposed we managed to deliver **55 new build properties.**

We were able to allocate these to applicants with the greatest housing needs and they have been able to safely move in with the measures that were put in place during the pandemic.

- we completed 55 new build properties
- bought 22 properties for rent through Open Market Acquisitions (*this is when we purchase properties which are advertised on the open market, to assist meeting the needs of those on our housing list*).





# Communication & Participation

Over the past year, due to restrictions on face-to-face contact we continued to use alternative ways to interact with our tenants. Rather than home or office visits we used telephone calls and email to provide support. We were also able to share relevant information about council services by text message. Our website has been updated to include a number of forms and additional housing information.

Tenant participation activities continue to help ensure tenants have a voice and can participate with us. We continue to work in partnership with East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) and local tenants and residents groups.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we had to find new and innovative ways of keeping in touch and engaging with ELTRP, our tenants and tenants groups. By making greater use of digital communication channels like Zoom, Skype and Teams, we were able to conduct all our meetings and events online. We have made a number of changes to the way we work and support tenants to enable them to attend these online meetings.

ELTRP continued to provide support for tenants and residents by obtaining funding for IT equipment, holding regular fun online events to engage in a less formal way, and helping us all get used to these different ways of working. We saw all of this as an opportunity to increase online tenant participation. We will continue to support tenants, and upskill our staff and ELTRP so that they can provide training and support. We do look forward to getting back to meeting with tenants' groups in person soon.



Playground: Woodhall Road, Pencaitland

## Local Initiatives

Other ways in which we encourage tenant participation is through estate inspections and local initiative projects. Local initiative projects are often identified by tenants' groups as positive ways of improving their area. Although we were not able to carry out any of the planned estate inspections over the past few years we were able to complete a number of local initiative projects.

Some of the projects in 2021/22 included: upgrades and additional equipment to play parks in Tranent, Musselburgh and Haddington; new secure doors to common areas in Musselburgh, Tranent and Prestonpans; modernisation to communal garden spaces in Tranent; fencing and improvements such as resurfacing drying areas in Musselburgh, Dunbar and Haddington.

The annual Local Initiative Budget is £200,000

Year	Total Spend (£s)
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2019/20	161,994.19
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2020/21	169,492.00
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<b>2021/22</b>	<b>99,032.27</b>
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# Housing quality & upgrades

We must make sure our properties meet certain standards and are well maintained. The standard, set by the Scottish Government, is called The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

The aim of the SQHS is to ensure tenants' homes are safe and secure, energy efficient, well maintained and have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition.

Over the last year we brought 1,304 properties up to the new smoke, heat and carbon monoxide standards as well as completing 2,743 electrical installation inspections.

The Scottish Housing Regulator monitors how many of our properties meet Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (ESSH).

Percentage of ESSH Complaint council properties in East Lothian were:

2018/19	58.5%
2019/20	82.8%
2020/21	86.63%
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>90.29%</b>

## Upgrading our stock

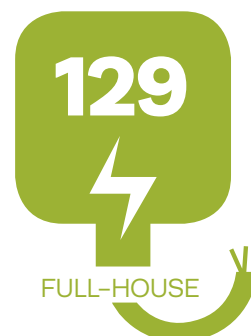
Despite ongoing restrictions imposed over the course of the last year, we continued to improve our housing stock and were able to carry out a number of upgrades to our properties including:



**348**  
**NEW KITCHENS**



**419**  
**NEW INC ADAPTED BATHROOMS**



**129**  
**FULL-HOUSE**

**REWIRING**



**419**  
**INSULATION MEASURES**  
INC LOFTS, CAVITY WALL & EXTERNAL WALL



**1,014**  
**FIRE DOORS**  
IN FLATTED PROPERTIES



**183**  
**WINDOWS & DOORS**  
(FULL HOUSE)

**HEATING**  
INC CONDENSING GAS BOILERS, AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS & HIGH HEAT RETENTION STORAGE HEATING



**303**

# Repairs, maintenance & improvement

Repairs, and in particular emergency repairs, are a key part of the service we provide to our tenants.

We carried out **1,694** emergency repairs last year. Our target to complete these type of repairs is four hours from report to completion. Shown below is the average time to complete over the past four years.

Average time to complete an emergency repair (in hours) and how this compares to the Scottish average:

2018/19	2.06
2019/20	3.98
2020/21	4.33
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>3.89</b>
2021/22 SA	4.16

We also carry out non-emergency repairs, our target from report to completion is 20 working days.

Average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs (in working days):

2018/19	8.98
2019/20	7.23
2020/21	8.23
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>9.82</b>
2021/22 SA	8.87

## Tenants satisfaction

We regularly ask tenants who have had a non-emergency repair completed how satisfied they were with the work we carried out.

Last year we carried out **21,376** non-emergency repairs.

The following figures illustrate how repairs satisfaction levels have increased over the years and how this compares to the Scottish average:

2018/19	92.80%
2019/20	90.15%
2020/21	86.42%
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>90.39%</b>
2021/22 SA	88.01%

## Requesting feedback

To make sure we keep a check on how satisfied our tenants are we carry out a survey of tenants when they move in to their home.

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home on moving in:

2018/19	70.10%
2019/20	76.89%
2020/21	76.09%
<b>2021/22</b>	<b>69.06%</b>

## Antisocial behaviour

**There were 786 antisocial behaviour complaints made in the last year. The reasons for these complaints were:**

Noise	352
Neighbour Disputes	59
Other – e.g. vandalism, drugs, threats, intimidation, youth ASB	375
<b>Total number of reports</b>	<b>786</b>

There are targets in place for resolving antisocial behaviour cases and these are agreed in advance with ELTRP. The number of cases and how many were resolved within the locally agreed targets is shown below. Some cases may take longer to resolve for a variety of reasons.

### Number of antisocial behaviour cases resolved within our locally agreed targets:

Target	No. resolved
Closed within 1 month	543
Closed within 2 months	15
Closed within 4 months	30
Closed within 1 year	45
Cases remaining open at 31/03/22	153

**Total number resolved within target (80.5%)**



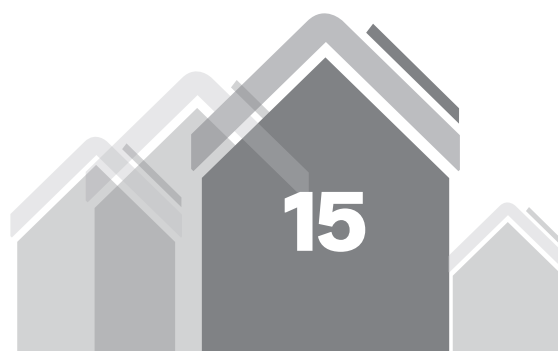
## Eviction

There were no evictions due to **Non-Payment of Rent** in the period 2021/22. The Government provision to protect tenants from eviction during the Coronavirus outbreak ended in March 2021.

## Abandonment

Over the year there are a number of properties that tenants have abandoned. The table below shows how many of our properties were abandoned in the year and which area they were in.

Area	No. of abandonments
<b>East</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Musselburgh</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Prestonpans</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Tranent</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>



**ABANDONMENTS**

## Housing Options

**Demand for council housing is very high. On 31st March 2022 there were 3,709 applicants on our waiting list. The turnover of stock is very low, with only 433 properties let in 2021/22. As we are unable to meet such high demand, Housing Options advice is offered to applicants to help find alternative solutions.**

Housing Options advice is free to people in all types of housing, including council and private lets, home owners and people in other tenures.

**HOUSING  
OPTIONS SUPPORT**



## Homelessness

Under the homelessness legislation we have a statutory requirement to provide temporary accommodation to homeless applicants. The figures below illustrate our current temporary accommodation situation and average length of time residents spent in temporary or emergency accommodation in days.

### Average number of days spent in temporary accommodation by type

	Private Sector Leasing	Council/Housing Association	Hostel	Bed & Breakfast
2018/19	398	361	261	57
2019/20	711	368	212	62
2020/21	0	387	218	74
2021/22	0	450	204	84
2021/22 SA	201	365	67	36

### Average number of days spent in temporary accommodation

2018/19	346
2019/20	345
2020/21	339
2021/22	391
2021/22 SA	207

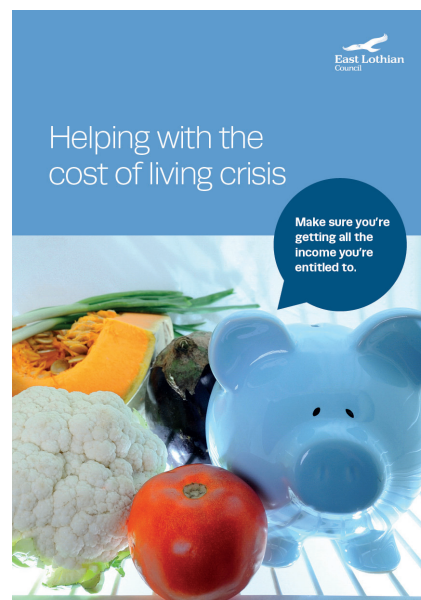
# Boost your income

## Helping with the cost of living

The increasing cost of living is affecting us all. We are encouraging everyone to go online to [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/boost](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/boost) to check that they are claiming all the financial support they are entitled to. We know that many people are not claiming all that they can get, particularly those on a pension or with school-age children.

If you are concerned about your bills, including rent and Council Tax, don't let arrears build up. There are lots of ways we can help. Find out more on the council's website or talk to your local Housing Officer, or Tenancy Support Officer.

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



## Work with us!

### Could you Share the Care?

You could make a difference for a child or young person with a disability and their family as a **Share the Carer**.

We're looking for people with the enthusiasm and attitude to offer short breaks on a regular basis from a few hours a week to overnight stays or school holiday help.

Full training and support is provided for this paid role.

Find out more: **01875 824090** or email [childrenandfamilies@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandfamilies@eastlothian.gov.uk)

[www.eastlothian.gov.uk/share-the-care](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/share-the-care)

## East Lothian Works

Have you just left school and not sure what your next steps are?

Are you unemployed?

Do you want to upskill or retrain?

If the answer to any of these is yes, please contact East Lothian Works for support.

*We're here to help.*

Get in touch with the team for free and impartial advice on your next steps at work.

Call **07890 066391** or email [elworks@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:elworks@eastlothian.gov.uk)

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

# have your say

We'd love to hear from you...



We really value your view on our report – in particular what you like about it and what information you'd like to be included in the future. You can let us know by emailing [tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk) with your feedback, or by leaving a message on our Freephone 0800 413 721.

## Get involved

By participating, you'll be able to tell us what you think about the services we provide, make suggestions on how we could do better, and check out how we're performing. There are many ways to get involved and help us keep you informed including:

- Tenants & Residents Groups
- Questionnaires & Surveys
- Consultation Register
- Estate Inspections

## Contact us

East Lothian Council  
01620 827 827

East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel  
0131 665 9304

## Visit us

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

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

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

## Follow us

 East Lothian Council  @ELCouncil

## Data Protection

East Lothian Council uses the personal data you provide for purposes associated with the delivery of our services. Find out more online at: [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)

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East Lothian Council  
Community Housing  
Penston House  
Macmerry  
EH33 1EX

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