

Key Notes

East Lothian Council's Newsletter
for Private Sector Landlords

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RTS switch-off delayed

The UK government has announced a delay to the switch off of the technology which controls Radio Teleswitch (RTS) electricity meters.

The switch off was due to take place throughout the UK on 30 June 2025, but will now be phased in gradually, beginning on a significantly smaller scale in areas with very few RTS customers.

In advance of any phase out activity in their area, households will be contacted by their energy supplier to inform them well ahead of time, before their meters are affected. If your property is tenanted and the tenants pay the electricity bill, this communication will go to them. If your property has an RTS meter it is strongly advisable to contact your tenants to ask them to keep an eye out for this communication and act on it when it arrives, otherwise any electric storage heaters or hot water tanks in the property may cease to function when the RTS technology is switched off in their area.

Your property is most likely to have an RTS meter if it is heated by electric storage heaters. The RTS automatically switches the electricity between peak and off peak rates in the morning and evening, and can also be used to turn heating and hot water systems on and off at specific times of the day.

The service was introduced in the 1980s and, as planned, is now reaching the end of its life. But slow progress to replace these meters has left around 314,000 households still using them as of May 2025 – equal to around 1% of British households.

Check detector expiry dates

Landlords and letting agents are reminded to ensure they check the expiry dates of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors in their rental properties and replace detectors on or before the expiry date.

To avoid potentially life threatening situations like a detector failing to alert the tenant of the presence of carbon monoxide, it is vital that landlords and agents have a system in place to ensure dates are checked and replacement detectors fitted where necessary.

The safest system is to note all expiry dates at the point detectors are fitted and use property management software or interactive diaries to record the dates and flag up a reminder in advance of when detectors are nearing their expiry dates.

Detectors typically last for 5-10 years. It is also best practice to check that detectors are working correctly when conducting property inspections.



HMRC advice on filing your Self Assessment tax return

HMRC reports that many people wait until the last minute to file their Self Assessment tax returns because they have busy lifestyles and are 'putting it off.' The deadline to file for the 2024/25 tax year is 31 January 2026 but taxpayers don't need to wait until then and can file now.

A record nearly 300,000 people filed their tax return in the first week of the new tax year, almost 10 months ahead of the deadline, HMRC has revealed. Millions of others, however, decide to wait until closer to the deadline to file. HMRC has learned this is caused by:

- being unaware of the deadline;
- disorganisation;
- fear of the process;
- misunderstanding of the benefits of filing early;
- 'too busy' and not prioritising tax; or
- putting it off.

HMRC is this year encouraging all taxpayers to make life simpler for themselves by filing early.

In addition to avoiding the stress of last-minute filing, there are other benefits to filing now:

- Pay via wages or pension: Filing a tax return before 30 December means HMRC can automatically collect tax owed from wages and pensions through the following tax year.
FIND OUT [↗](#) if you are eligible to pay this way.
- Get a tax refund sooner: Taxpayers can find out sooner if they have overpaid and they're owed money and will be refunded sooner.
- Know what is owed: Finding out how much is owed sooner gives taxpayers time to budget and plan their payments. HMRC's Budget Payment Plan service allows people to spread the cost of the next tax bill with regular weekly or monthly Direct Debit payments.
For more information go to **PAY WEEKLY OR MONTHLY** [↗](#) on GOV.UK.
- Proof of income: Filing early provides proof of income which may be needed for a mortgage, loan or to claim benefits.

It is quick and secure to file on GOV.UK with more than 97% of taxpayers **Filing online**

FILE YOUR SELF ASSESSMENT TAX RETURN ONLINE [↗](#)

HMRC helpline and webchat advisers help those taxpayers who need **extra support**. Alternatively, you can ask a friend, relative or accountant to complete the tax return on your behalf.

Find out more: Self Assessment tax returns: **HOW TO GET HELP** [↗](#)

People who have health issues or personal circumstances that may make it difficult to interact with HMRC online can be supported by its Extra Support Service.

For more information, go to **GET HELP IF YOU NEED EXTRA SUPPORT** [↗](#)

Taxpayers who no longer need to send a Self Assessment tax return should contact HMRC as soon as possible. Penalties may be incurred for failing to file on time.

Being a private landlord

You have several responsibilities as a private landlord which you are legally responsible for even if you use a letting agent to manage your property.

THIS LINK  will take you to a Scottish Government page which provides information and advise on these responsibilities.

Gas and Electrical Safety Certificates

All rental properties must have the following checks carried out to ensure they are safe for tenants:

Gas Certificate – all gas appliances must be checked on an annual basis and a certificate must be in place to show all appliances are safe for use.

Portable Appliance Test (PAT) – all electrical appliances that are portable (e.g. toaster, washing machine) must be checked and a certificate provided to show they are safe for use.

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) – wiring and sockets must be checked on a regular basis. Your electrician will stipulate when the next check is to be completed (maximum 5 years).



Landlord Registration

All owners of rental property need to be registered as private landlords.

This can be done online at landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk

There are some exemptions to this requirement.

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

If you take a deposit from your tenant, it must be paid into one of the three approved Schemes.

Carbon Monoxide Detector

If you have gas appliances, CO detectors are to be fitted within a specified area of these.

Energy Performance Certificate

All properties must have an EPC before the property can be advertised. If you have a Home Report you will find a copy of the EPC in this report. An EPC is valid for 10 years.

Legionella risk assessment

It is a legal requirement to have a risk assessment for legionella carried out in all rental properties.

The risk assessment should identify any areas where legionella bacteria could grow and if treatment is required.

Insurance

As the owner of the property you are responsible for insuring the buildings. You may choose to arrange insurance for any contents you may have in the property, anything belonging to your tenant is their responsibility to insure.



Smoke alarms

One functioning smoke alarm in the room which is frequently used by the occupants for general daytime living purposes (living room/lounge)

- One heat alarm in every kitchen
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each story, such as hallways and landings
- Mains-operated alarms (with battery back-up) and tamper proof/sealed/long-life lithium battery alarms are permitted. The expiry date should be visible on each alarm
- Alarms should be ceiling mounted
- All alarms are to be interlinked. This can be done by wires (hardwired) or wirelessly (by radio communications)

Furniture

Make sure any furniture you leave in the property meets fire regulations.

As well as the Core Information Programme (below), LAS run a Best Practice Programme covering:

- Creating Inventories
- Dealing with abandonment
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour – the requirement for evidence
- Chasing the debt
- Dealing with difficult tenants
- Dealing with rent arrears

CORE INFORMATION PROGRAMME

Managing common repairs

11 November 2025, 2.00pm to 3.00pm

This webinar provides landlords with a guide to the regulations involved in joint repairing responsibilities that come with the ownership of property with communal obligations. It relays the latest information about recent changes to the Repairing Standard.

Topics include:

- Rights and obligation of tenement flat owners
- Managing common repairs
- Working with property factors
- Managing payment for common repairs

Ending a tenancy, the legislation: understanding notice grounds and getting the paperwork right

28 October 2025, 2.00pm – 3.15pm

This is an essential webinar for all those involved in serving notices for both Private Residential Tenancies (PRT) and Short Assured Tenancies (SAT), to ensure that landlords have the knowledge needed to successfully complete and serve the correct notice.

Topics include:

- Understanding the grounds for repossession of a PRT and SAT
- Getting the timing right
- Completing and serving notices for both PRT and SAT

Data protection for lettings

24 September 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

When letting property you are effected by data protection laws and a solid understanding of these laws is vital. This webinar deals with the legislation in place that makes dealing with GDPR part of letting private property.

Topics include:

- The requirement to register
- Managing data during a tenancy
- Retaining data following a tenancy
- Sharing data
- Privacy policies
- Breaches and consequences of non-compliance

Safety compliance and certification for private rented property

29 October 2025, 10.00pm – 11.00pm

This webinar brings landlords up to date with all the health and safety requirements when letting property, including ongoing compliance and all necessary certifications.

Topics include:

- Health and safety legislation
- Safety requirements and certification
- Maintenance and safety compliance

All courses and webinars run by LAS can be found listed on their website landlordaccreditationscotland.com and can be booked online.



Managing the end of a tenancy

9 September 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

This webinar deals with the communication and associated tasks when the tenancy is coming to an end, considering the reason for the tenancy ending.

Topics include:

- Landlord ending the tenancy including dealing with antisocial behaviour
- Tenant ending the tenancy
- Communication with tenant about end of tenancy requirements
- The checkout inspection and follow up

Creating the Private Residential Tenancy (PRT)

5 November 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

Creating a PRT is an area of knowledge you can't neglect as a Scottish landlord. This webinar provides detailed information about the creation of a PRT using the Scottish Government model tenancy agreement and covers the documentation and associated processes that a landlord needs to be aware of when putting a PRT in place.

Topics include:

- Creating a PRT
- Mandatory and discretionary terms
- Joint tenancies
- Rent increases
- Using the Easy Read notes

Managing tenant complaints

17 September 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

Managing tenant complaints effectively has never been a more vital skill for landlords in Scotland. This webinar helps landlords develop skills to deal with challenges that may arise during a tenancy, learning to manage / de-escalate situations whilst maintaining high customer service standards.

Topics include:

- Recognising patterns of conflict unique to communicating by telephone
- Specific skills to manage / control calls
- Managing tenant expectations
- Defusing difficult situations with tenants
- Bringing matters to a conclusion.

Landlord guide to changes during a tenancy

15 October 2025, 10.00am – 11.00am

This course covers the topic of increasing rents and dealing with other changes that may occur during a tenancy. You will be guided through the legal requirements, documentation and best practices for implementing rent increases and deal with change so that actions taken are both compliant and effective.

Topics include:

- When and how you can increase rental legally
- The correct notice periods and formats
- How to complete the paperwork and serve correctly
- Avoiding common pitfalls
- Communicating effectively with tenants.

(Landlord guide to changes during a tenancy cont.)

The course also explores:

- Changes to landlord/tenant/guarantor
- Changes concerning deposits
- Tenants notifying you of additional residents
- Situation when changes to the tenancy agreement may be needed.

Understanding landlord repairing and maintenance obligations

15 October 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

This webinar deals with landlord repairing obligations and how these need to be managed at all times. It will look at the general principles regarding repairs and maintenance in privately rented property.

Topics include:

- Tolerable and Repairing standards – what are they and what are landlord obligations
- Responsibility for repairs and maintenance
- Tenant responsibilities
- Introduction to the role so the Housing & Property Chamber

Landlord guide to finding a tenant and offering a tenancy

19 November 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

Success when renting your property starts off with finding the ideal tenant. Whether you are advertising your property or want advice on viewing and deposits, this webinar will keep you up to date with best practice on all aspects of finding your tenant.

Topics include:

- Advertising the property
- Conducting viewings
- Applications
- Deposits
- Using a letting agent.

Managing the end of a tenancy

26 November 2025, 2.00pm – 3.00pm

This webinar deals with the communication and associated tasks when the tenancy is coming to an end, considering the reason for the tenancy ending.

Topics include:

- Landlord ending the tenancy including dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Tenant ending the tenancy
- Communication with tenant about end of tenancy requirements
- The checkout inspection and follow up

All courses and webinars run by LAS can be found listed on their website

landlordaccreditationscotland.com ↗
and can be booked online.



Scottish Letting Day Conference

21 October 2025

The Scottish Association of Landlords is looking forward to welcoming landlords and agents to **Scottish Gas Murrayfield Stadium** for this year's event.

Please see the attached flyer for further details.

Contact Information

Landlord registration

01620 827255

landlordregistration@eastlothian.gov.uk

HMO Licensing

01620 827664

hmo@eastlothian.gov.uk

Short-term Lets Licensing

01620 827664

stl@eastlothian.gov.uk

Housing Benefit and Council Tax

01620 827730/7729 (Benefits)

01875 824314 (Council Tax)

www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Useful websites (click text to link to website)

Private Residential Tenancy

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

My Deposits Scotland

Letting Protection Service

Safe Deposits Scotland

Landlord Registration

Housing and Property Chamber,
First Tier Tribunal

Landlord Accreditation Scotland

The Repairing Standard

Scottish Association of Landlords

Health & Safety Executive

Electrical Safety Council

Gas Safe

Energy Saving Trust

East Lothian Council

To make a comment, suggestion or complaint about a council service,
visit our website at www.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 827 199