



PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING TENANT HANDBOOK

Information about your tenancy and Link's services

Link will produce this information on request in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print and Community Languages. To find out more please call 0330 3030 124

Arabic

ستصدر Link هذه المعلومات عند الطلب بطريقة برايل، ومن خلال شريط صوتي ونسخة بخط كبير واللغات التي يتحدث بها الأقليات. لمعرفة المزيد يرجى الاتصال بالرقم 0330 3030 124

Bengali

লিংক (Link) অনুরোধক্রমে এই তথ্যাবলীকে ব্রেইল, অডিও টেপ, বড় হরফের মুদ্রন বা কমিউনিটির ভাষাগুলিতে প্রদান করবে। আরো জানতে অনুগ্রহ করে, 0330 3030 124 নম্বরে কল করুন।

Mandarin

Link将根据需求以盲文、录音带、大字体和各种社区语言提供此信息。了解更多详情，请拨打：0330 3030 124

Polish

Link może dostarczyć niniejsze informacje w alfabecie Braille'a, na taśmie audio, w wersji dużym drukiem lub w językach używanych przez mieszkańców społeczeństwa. Aby uzyskać więcej informacji, prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 0330 3030 124.

Punjabi

ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਲਿੰਕ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0330 3030 124 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Urdu

درخواست پر اس معلومات کو لنک (Link) بریل، سننے والی ٹیپ، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور کمیونٹی زبانوں میں فراہم کرے گی۔ مزید معلومات کے لیے برائے مہربانی نمبر 0330 3030 124 کو کال کریں۔



Get in touch

We are open Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm (4.00pm on a Friday)
We open from 10.00am on a Tuesday to allow for staff training

Call us on **0330 303 0087**
Text us for a call back on **07850 632886**

Email us at linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk

Write to us at:
Link PSL
2c New Mart Road
EDINBURGH
EH14 1RL

Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Call us on **0330 303 0087**
for advice on emergency repairs

If you smell gas, call Scottish Gas Network on **0800 111 999**
If you experience a complete loss of power, call Scottish Power on **0845 272 7999**
If you experience complete loss of water, call Scottish Water on **0845 600 8855**

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/LinkGroupLtd
Follow us on Twitter [@Link_Group_Ltd](https://twitter.com/Link_Group_Ltd)

Link PSL is a trading name of Link Housing Association Limited



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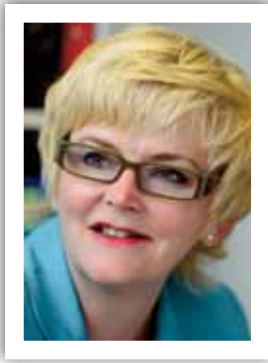
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Welcome



Welcome to Link

This Link Private Sector Leasing (PSL) tenant handbook has been designed to provide you with an easy-to-read guide to the main services Link provides.

We have taken on board comments and suggestions made by tenants and I hope the handbook helps you make the most of your tenancy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen Middleton".

Maureen Middleton
Director of Housing Services



About Link

Link Housing Association Ltd. was formally established in 1962. Now, over 50 years later, it is one of the largest organisations of its kind in Scotland.

Link Housing Association Ltd. is part of the Link group of social enterprises which offers a wide range of services to over 11,000 families and individuals in 26 council areas across Scotland.

Since September 2010, the City of Edinburgh Council has contracted the property and tenancy management functions of its Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme to Link.

Link is the point of contact for all PSL tenants during their tenancies.

Get involved

Tenant participation is how you can help influence the decisions made about the services you receive and the management of your home and neighbourhood. It is a two-way process which involves the sharing of information and ideas with the aim of improving the standard of service we provide.

We are accredited with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service for our good practice in involving tenants in decision making.

We welcome and encourage you to feedback your views and we recognise the importance of meeting your needs and expectations.



Service Standards

Customer care

We have developed customer service standards as part of our commitment to put you first and to deliver services that are accessible to everyone.

We will:

- Treat you with respect and in a professional manner
- Ensure your needs are identified and understood and try to see things from your point of view
- Respect your right to confidentiality and keep your personal information secure in accordance with data protection legislation
- Make copies of our policies available on our website and in printed form on request
- Ensure we use plain English in any correspondence and it is concise, accurate and jargon free
- Provide information in large print, Braille or audio tape or use translation services for customers whose first language is not English
- Encourage and seek your feedback on services you have received
- Ensure our offices offer equal access for all our customers
- Inform and consult with you when there are changes to the services you receive
- Keep you up-to-date with relevant information via newsletters, our website and social media
- Maintain your property to a high standard

CONTACTING US

We have improved our response times for general enquiries to a maximum of 3 days for phone calls if you ask for a call back. We will respond within 3 days where possible and no later than 5 days to e-mail and written correspondence.

If it's going to take longer we will acknowledge your query or make a phone call to advise you how long it will take us to respond.

If you call us, we will:

- Answer the telephone within 20 seconds when the office is open
- Respond to telephone messages, left on our voicemail facility when the office is closed, within four hours of opening the next working day
- Call you back, if you have asked us to, within 24 hours where possible and no later than 3 days

If you write to us, we will:

- respond within 3 days where possible and no later than 5 days to e-mail and written correspondence
- If it's going to take longer we need to issue an acknowledgement or make a phone call to advise the correspondent
- Include a contact name and telephone number, together with any other information needed (eg reference number)

If you email us, we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your email within 24 hours
- respond within 3 days where possible and no later than 5 days to e-mail and written correspondence

Complaints and feedback

We aim to get our services right first time.

We encourage you to let us know by phone, email, surveys, letter or face-to-face what you thought of the service you received. We are especially pleased to hear when we have got things right.

If you feel that our service has let you down and you want to make a complaint then please follow our complaints process.

We have a number of ways for you to provide feedback as part of our tenant participation activities.

The feedback you provide helps us learn from mistakes and improve the services we provide.

Your Tenancy

Your rights and responsibilities

Your tenancy is secured by a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) agreement issued by Link on behalf of your landlord, the City of Edinburgh Council. Before issuing the tenancy agreement you need to sign a "Section 34" form which creates the tenancy as an SSST.

Link leases properties from landlords for between one and three years. After the initial let period, the owner has the right to reclaim possession of the property at the end of the lease, or earlier by giving notice. If this happens, and provided you have conducted your tenancy in good order, we will offer alternative accommodation where possible.

You should read your tenancy agreement when you sign up for the property as this is a legally binding document and sets out your legal rights.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Link expects you to:

- Pay your rent on time
- Respond to letters from the Council about your Housing Benefit – it is your responsibility
- Respect the terms of your tenancy agreement. You are responsible for visitors and those living with you should also respect these terms
- Occupy your property as your only, or principal home
- Report any repairs promptly
- Keep the property in good order. If you have a garden to maintain you need to make sure this is done too as part of your tenancy
- Allow access to your property for any repairs, checks or planned maintenance work
- Request permission for any alterations you want to make to the property
- Keep your gardens and/or common areas, drying greens or back courts tidy
- Request permission for and control any pets by preventing them from fouling
- Put all waste in the bins provided, return bins to the proper place after they have been emptied and keep communal bin areas tidy
- Tell us if your circumstances change as this can affect your Housing Benefit

Link expects you not to:

- Disturb neighbours with loud and persistent noise, particularly late at night and early in the morning.
- Smoke before and during any visits by Link staff and ventilate your home where possible

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- We aim to provide you with high quality accommodation
- We aim to ensure your home is in good decor, clean and secure and the gas, electricity and heating systems are in good working order from the start of your tenancy

The property must meet the following minimum standards:

- The property must be wind and water tight and in all other respects reasonably fit for people to live in
- The structure and exterior (including drains, gutter and external pipes) must be in a reasonable state of repair and in proper working order
- Installations for supplying water, gas and electricity and for sanitation, appliances providing heating and hot water must be in reasonable state of repair and proper working order
- All furnishing referred to in your inventory must be capable of being used safely for the purpose for which it has been designed
- The property must have a satisfactory way of detecting fires and for giving warning in the event of a fire or suspected fire
- We will keep your property in a good state of repair

We will:

- Visit you regularly to ensure the property is in good order
- Notify you of any changes to your tenancy with as much notice as possible, for example where the owner wishes to take the property back
- Give you at least 24 hours' notice if we need access to your property to carry out a repair
- Provide you with free and confidential welfare benefits advice

If you have any concerns about your tenancy or the property you live in please contact us on **0330 303 0087**.



Moving in

We will visit you within the first six weeks of your tenancy to see how you are getting on and to answer any questions you may have. Nevertheless, you can request a visit from your Housing Officer at any time.

We will ask you to sign an inventory at the start of your tenancy. This will be checked at the end of your tenancy and you will be responsible for any items damaged or missing.

To help you settle into your new home quickly and easily, below is a handy checklist of the things you need to do when you move in.

- Make arrangements to pay your rent
- Put your spare set of keys in a safe place – we will only provide you with one set
- We will contact the City of Edinburgh Council and register you for Council Tax. You are required to pay this from the date you move in
- We will contact the City of Edinburgh Council to make claim for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction (if applicable). You need to respond quickly to any correspondence from them about your claim
- Organise home contents insurance – see below
- Contact your preferred telephone provider who will advise how to get connected
- If applicable tell your doctor, dentist, children's school, employer, DVLA, TV licensing, and bank that you have moved

GAS AND ELECTRICITY

At the start of your tenancy we will let you know who your gas and electricity suppliers are. We will also advise them of the meter reading(s) at the start of your tenancy and your name.

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

Link is not responsible for insuring the contents of your home – you are. We are only responsible for insuring the building.

If your home is affected by fire or a burst pipe (or flooding from another property) it could mean financial disaster and emotional trauma if your clothing, furniture and personal belongings are damaged or destroyed and you do not have home contents insurance.

Call us on 0330 303 0087 for advice and information about special deals with recommended providers.

Anti-social behaviour

How you get on with your neighbours can be one of the most important factors in determining whether you are happy in your home. Everyone has the right to live safely and peacefully without worrying about being annoyed or harassed. You can avoid problems by considering how your behaviour affects others – just follow these do's and don'ts.

DO

- Take your turn at cleaning stairs and common areas (you will be informed if you have a stair cleaning contractor)
- Close gates and doors behind you (particularly when fitted with controlled entry systems)
- Take responsibility for your children, pets and any visitors to your home
- Put your rubbish and recycling in bins provided

DON'T

- Play music or your television loudly
- Leave any rubbish or bulky items in common areas
- Use household appliances (like vacuum cleaners or washing machines) late at night or early in the morning
- Allow dogs to foul in communal/garden areas without cleaning up

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour that causes (or is likely to) cause fear, alarm or distress. If you act in a way that causes nuisance or annoyance and stops people enjoying the peaceful occupation of their home, this may also be considered anti-social behaviour. These actions can include:

- Persistent, excessive noise
- Verbal or physical abuse of neighbours
- Racial or sexual harassment
- Vandalism in the neighbourhood or damaging neighbours' property or
- Drug abuse or selling drugs

We have a responsibility to prevent our tenants behaving in an anti-social way in and around their homes. This means that if you act in an anti-social manner we can take action including:

- Investigating complaints about your behaviour
- Writing to you to explain that your behaviour is causing concern and asking you to modify it
- Giving advice on noise reduction
- Asking the Council to apply for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order
- Going to court to get an interdict to prevent you behaving in a certain way and seeking decree for eviction

If you are affected by other people's anti-social behaviour, you should keep a written record of the incidents, with dates and times. Depending on the seriousness of the situation and how badly it affects you, you should contact the Police on **101** or the City of Edinburgh Council's night noise team on **0131 529 3030**.

Communal areas

BINS AND RECYCLING

You can contact the City of Edinburgh Council to confirm when and how often your bin collections will be. You must dispose of any bulky items either to a local community recycling centre or ask the Council to collect them. You must not dump items as this is called 'flytipping' and is illegal.

GARDENS

If you have a private garden you are responsible for maintaining the garden and keeping it tidy unless you are advised otherwise at tenancy sign up.

VANDALISM

Incidents of vandalism are rare but they do happen. If you witness someone vandalising a property please call the police. If we find out that a Link tenant (or a visitor to their property) caused the vandalism we may take action against them.

If you find damage caused by vandalism, please call Police Scotland on **101**.

Pets

You must ask Link for written permission if you want to keep a pet in your home. Where permitted, you are responsible for it at all times ensuring that it does not cause a nuisance to neighbours or damage your property. Generally only one pet per property will be permitted.

Pests

You are responsible for keeping your home clean and tidy to reduce the likelihood of pests such as mice, fleas, ants and bedbugs. It is your responsibility to let us know as soon as possible to sort it out. It is our responsibility to deal with any pest problems in common areas. If pests are getting into your home via damaged windows or doors, please call the repairs team on **0330 303 0087**.

Change in circumstances

It's important to let us know if someone moves out of your property, if you want someone to move in or you want to transfer your tenancy.

Please get in touch before your circumstances change to avoid accruing rent arrears.

You must report any changes in your circumstances to Link PSL and the City of Edinburgh Council Revenues and Benefits Division. Link PSL can help you with any aspect of your Housing Benefit claim over the phone, at a tenancy visit or in our offices. Please contact us in the event of any change to your circumstances.

RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN

If your relationship with a partner breaks down and you can no longer live together (and you are joint tenants), you will have to decide who will remain living in the property. If one person is the sole tenant they have the right to remain in the property whilst the other does not.

Please contact us on **0330 303 0087** for advice.

BECOMING A STUDENT

If you are considering returning to full-time or part-time education please note it could have an effect on your entitlement to Housing Benefit.

There are a few circumstances where **full-time students** can continue to be eligible for Housing Benefit. Here are some examples:

- Lone Parents
- Couples with children
- Couples where one partner is not a student
- If you are under 21 and are not in higher education
- You have been incapable of work for more than 28 weeks
- You receive Disability Living Allowance

If you do not fall into one of these categories it is unlikely that you would have any entitlement to Housing Benefit if you became a full-time student.

Part-time students can still be eligible to claim benefits but you must check that your course is considered to be part-time under benefit regulations, as it may differ to the definition set by the college. Please contact us to find out if your course will be classed as part-time.

If you decide to take up a place at college and you no longer qualify for Housing Benefit, you are required to meet your rent charge in full. If you fail to meet your monthly rent payments you will be placing your tenancy at risk and this may affect your future housing options.

If you want information or need advice on whether you can continue to claim benefit or to discuss other options if you are no longer entitled to Housing Benefit, please contact us on **0330 303 0087**.



How to end your tenancy

If you want to move out you must give us 28 days' notice in writing. We cannot accept a termination notice by phone or email.

We will write to you to confirm the date your tenancy ends and make an appointment to visit you in your home (before you move out) to check if it is in good condition and to let you know if you need to carry out any repairs or redecorate. If you do not carry out these repairs or redecorate before you move out, we will do the work needed and charge you.

MOVING OUT

- Ensure your rent is paid until the date your tenancy ends
- Ensure your property is left clean, tidy and in good decorative order
- Do not leave any personal belongings in the property
- Return all sets of keys to Link no later than your tenancy end-date
- Advise Housing Benefit and Council Tax offices to let them know you are moving out
- Take final meter readings for gas and electricity and advise your supplier of these. If your meter is operated by a key or token PLEASE LEAVE THIS IN THE METER at the end of your tenancy. Even if there is credit on the meter, you cannot transfer it to another meter. You can request a refund of credit from your supplier once you have provided meter readings.
- Ensure your garden is left in a neat and tidy condition
- Ensure any outstanding repairs have been carried out
- Ensure any gas cooker removal is done by a qualified gas engineer
- Ensure your property is secure and that all windows and doors are locked

END OF TENANCY BONUS PAYMENT

We will give you £100 if your property is left in an excellent condition at the end of your tenancy.

Once you have let us know you plan to move out we will let you know what work needs to be done to be eligible for the bonus – nevertheless some terms and conditions will apply.

You will need to:

All rooms – clean windows (inside and out), floors, tiling, doors, skirting boards, cupboards (inside and out), curtains, fixtures and fittings and appliances using appropriate cleaning products.

Bathrooms – Ensure there is no lime scale, hairs or soap scum on surfaces. Ensure plug holes are cleared of debris and running free.

Kitchen – Ensure you clean above, behind and inside any appliances. Fridges and freezers should be defrosted and cleaned internally. If you switch these off leave the doors open to allow to dry. Clean the rubber seal in your washing machine

Your PSL Officer will then inspect the property and will decide on the standard of cleanliness. If you are awarded the £100 bonus, payment will be made to you by cheque to your new postal address within 28 days of termination of your tenancy. If you have rent arrears, the money will be credited to your account.

MOVING ON

If you wish to bid for properties using Key to Choice you should contact the City of Edinburgh Council to ensure your Edindex application is up to date.

Where the lease between the City of Edinburgh Council and the owner of the property is due to expire, Link's Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Team will give you a minimum of two months' notice for hand-back purposes. During this time, providing you have complied with the terms of your tenancy agreement, Link PSL will endeavour to find a suitable alternative PSL property for you to move to upon expiry of the lease. Please note: **only one** offer of alternative PSL accommodation will be made.

ABANDONMENT

If we believe that you are not living in the property (or have left without telling us), we can take legal action to end your tenancy. We will deliver a Notice of Abandonment to the property and give you 28 days' notice to inform us you are still living in the property. If you do not contact us, we will serve a second notice which formally ends your tenancy.

You have to pay your rent up until the date your tenancy ends and we will take action to recover any money owed.

Paying your Rent

Ways to pay

There are a number of ways to pay. You can choose the one that suits you best:



Pay by Telephone

Call Link PSL on **0330 303 0087**, allpay on **0870 243 6040**, to pay by credit or debit card. Make sure you have a note of your allpay reference number.



Pay by Direct Debit

This is similar to a standing order but you don't need to contact your bank every time there is a change to your rent – we do it for you. If you want to set up a Direct Debit or switch your Standing Order then call Link PSL on **0330 303 0087**.



Pay over the internet

Pay over the internet using either a debit or credit card at **www.allpayments.net**. Make sure you have a note of your allpay reference number.



Pay by Cheque or Postal Order

Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to Link Housing Association Ltd. If a cheque is dishonoured, we reserve the right to make a charge against your account to cover bank charges plus handling costs.



Pay using the allpay app

You can download the allpay app onto your mobile phone to make payments this way.



Pay by Cash

You can pay your rent for no charge in any Post Office, shop or garage which displays the Paypoint, E-pay, Payzone or allpay logo using an allpay card and at the Link PSL office, 2c New Mart Road, Edinburgh EH14 1RL. Any payments you make are applied to your rent account within 24 hours and you will be given a receipt to confirm payment.

Paying your rent

Paying your rent is not a matter of choice and it is the most important obligation of your tenancy.

- If you do not pay your rent, you will go into arrears
- If you do not contact Link about missed payments or if you do not keep to an agreement to repay any rent arrears, we will take legal action to recover the money owed. As a last resort, we will evict you from your home and will ask the court to charge the legal costs to you

Help with paying your rent

If you can't pay your rent or you have difficulties paying, please call us straight away. The earlier you tell us about your situation, the easier it is to help you sort the problem out. Not paying your rent puts your home at risk.

We take rent arrears very seriously and, whilst we are keen to help and understand difficult situations, we have strict procedures to deal with them. We will try to work with you by telephone or visiting you at home. If you do not work with us to help resolve your rent arrears we will take prompt legal action, which could lead to eviction.

We can help by providing advice and can act on your behalf to resolve benefit problems, welfare rights issues and benefit entitlement checks. Call our team for free and confidential advice on **0330 303 0087**.

- Do not ignore the problem
- Do not ignore our letters or telephone calls regarding rent arrears as this will result in legal action if you do not contact us
- Do not borrow money from door-to-door or payday lenders as this will make your debt problems worse due to the high interest rates you have to pay back on any loans



Repairs and Maintenance

How to report a repair

We are open Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 5.00pm (except for Tuesday where we open at 10.00am) and Friday 8.30am – 4.00pm.

Call us on 0330 303 0087

Text us for a call back on 07850 632886

Email us at linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk

Write or visit us at:

Link PSL
2c New Mart Road
Edinburgh
EH14 1RL

OUT-OF-HOURS EMERGENCIES

WHAT YOU NEED TO TELL US

What's happened	Who to contact	Telephone number
Complete loss of power supply	Scottish Power	0845 272 7999
Complete loss of water	Scottish Water	0845 600 8855
Emergency repair which is a risk to your security, health and safety or the property.	Out-of-hours service	0330 303 0087

We want to get things right first time so the more information you can give us about the problem, the better our chances of getting the repair done quickly and effectively. The details we need are:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number
- The nature of the problem
- Does it affect your home only or common parts of a close or block?
- When can you provide access for an inspection and/or the repair to be carried out?

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPAIR IS REPORTED

Once you have reported a repair we will tell you if it is an emergency, urgent or routine repair. The type of repair will determine how long we have to respond and complete the repair (where possible).

As we need to contact the owner first to agree who completes the repair, there may be a delay in providing you with confirmation of when the repair will be done. For urgent and routine repairs we will let you know within 24 hours. For emergency repairs (depending on what time you tell us about them) we aim to have a contractor with you within 3 hours.

Emergency repairs within 3 hours (make safe)	Urgent repairs within 2 working days	Routine repairs within 5 working days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total loss of water supply • Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns • Flooding • Severe storm damage or serious roof leak • Total loss of electrical supply • Unsafe electrical fittings • Insecure external doors, locks and windows • Total or partial loss of gas supply • Gas leak • Blocked flue • Blocked main drains, soil pipe or sole w.c. • Only toilet does not flush • Blocked drains, sinks, basins, bath • Total or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available • Failure of lift • Failure of warden alarm / call system • Unsafe access path or step 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial loss of water supply • Manageable / minor plumbing leaks • Defective cistern or overflow • Heating system defects / partial loss of heat (if alternative heating available) • Hot water system defects / partial loss of hot water • Partial loss of electric power • Minor electrical faults • Manageable/minor roof leaks • Blocked gutters • Severe dampness • Security of internal doors and windows • Failure of entry phone • Faulty extractor fan • Defective flooring • Faulty communal TV aerial • Damage to stair treads or hand rails / banisters • Unsafe timber flooring • Rain penetration at doors or windows • Fire damage • Offensive or racist graffiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose slates / tiles where there is no rain penetration or falling slates / tiles • General joinery repairs • Repairs to doors, windows and floors • Repairs to external walls, fences and paths (but note statutory obligation to repair unsafe access path or step as emergency see above) • Repairs / cleaning of gutters and downpipes • Repairs to kitchen fittings • Repairs to plaster work • Dripping / leaking taps or shower units • Other minor plumbing repairs • Repairs to tiling • Easing doors and windows • Other minor day-to-day repairs / replacements



Repair responsibilities

While the majority of repairs are Link's responsibility, there are some that are yours. Please note that this is not a full list. If you are not sure about a particular repair, contact Link PSL.

REPAIR	LINK	YOU	MORE DETAILS
Replacing glass in windows	✓		Unless the breakage was caused by you, your family or a visitor
Replacing lost keys and cost of re-entry if tenant locked out		✓	
Maintaining heating appliances	✓		
Maintaining sanitary ware	✓		
Maintaining chimney flues	✓		
Decoration and repair of common areas including closes	✓		
All internal decoration	✓		Unless damage was caused by you, your family or a visitor
Replacing light bulbs		✓	
Clearing blocked waste pipes	✓		Unless it was caused by carelessness
Damage caused through neglect or misuse of the property by the tenant family or visitors		✓	
Cleaning common areas like closes and staircases where Link does not provide a cleaning service		✓	
Smoke Alarm battery	✓		
Pest and vermin control	✓		



Alterations to your home

If you want to make any alterations including decoration to your home, you must write to Link to ask for permission.

Safety in the home

GAS SAFETY

Gas servicing is essential to ensure the boilers and fires in your home are safe to use and are operating efficiently. Faulty appliances can produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide which can prove fatal.

We have a gas servicing programme which ensures every appliance and gas installation is checked and serviced at least once a year. It is vital that you allow access to our gas servicing contractors when your appointment is scheduled. If the appointment you have been given is not suitable we will give you notice to enter your property with the engineer to complete the inspection.

If you know that your gas installations or pipework are defective, you must tell us immediately. You must never use appliances that are condemned or unsafe.

IF YOU CAN SMELL GAS CALL TRANSCO ON 0800 111 999

DO NOT: CREATE A FLAME OR USE ELECTRICAL SWITCHES

**DO: PUT OUT ANY FLAMES
OPEN DOORS AND WINDOWS – VENTILATE THE PROPERTY**

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

As part of our commitment to maintaining your safety we complete an annual check on portable appliances (fridge, oven, washing machine, for example) and a more thorough check on the electrical installations such as wiring and sockets every three or five years. We will write to you with an appointment giving notice of when the electrician will attend. Please ensure you permit access.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

A copy of the energy performance certificate for your property is held by Link which details how energy efficient your home is. We work closely with owners to look at ways of improving the energy efficiency of your home. If you would like to discuss easy ways to save money on energy bills and make your home more energy efficient, please contact our landlord team for free advice.

FIRE SAFETY

Your property is equipped with a mains operated smoke detector and if appropriate a carbon monoxide detector. We will test these at each property visit with you. Please do not attempt to disarm these. If there is a fault with the equipment please contact us immediately. You should also plan your escape in the event of fire and consider all exits from the property. Do not store flammable items such as paraffin or liquid gas fires in the property. They are very expensive to use and very dangerous in terms of producing carbon monoxide and fires. Never leave a cooker or naked flame such as a candle unsupervised.

ASBESTOS

We hold a register which records the presence of any asbestos-containing materials in your home.

In order to maintain the register we regularly survey and update the information we hold. We will make sure you are aware if any asbestos exists and any actions that may be necessary to ensure it remains in a safe condition.

We want to reassure you that if you receive a letter to say that asbestos-containing materials have been found in your home, we will manage and monitor them on your behalf.

Materials containing asbestos are perfectly safe as long as they are not disturbed, for instance, by drilling, cutting or rubbing where dust has been created. We ask that if you plan to carry out any DIY in your home, and you think you have asbestos present, you contact us for advice.

If you are due to have work carried out in your home by Link PSL contractors they will make additional protection and preparation before work commences and will advise if this extra work will affect you.

BURST PIPES

Most properties can be affected by burst pipes when unoccupied during cold weather.

Although pipes are insulated, they can still freeze in exceptionally cold weather. To prevent this happening keep your heating on at a very low setting or turn off the mains water supply at the stop-cock.

If a pipe bursts you should:

- Turn off the mains water supply at the stopcock
- Turn off any central heating boilers or electric immersion heaters (unless you are certain that the burst is only on the mains supply pipe)
- Turn on all taps to drain your storage tank
- If water comes into contact with any electrical fittings, switch off the electricity supply
- Telephone our Repairs Team
- Warn any neighbours who might be affected
- Try to store some water in the bath or another large container so that you have water for flushing the toilet, washing, etc., until the burst is repaired

CONDENSATION MOULD

Condensation occurs when warm moist air contacts a cold surface and can also occur through any activity that creates steam. The main sources of condensation are bathing, showering and cooking; drying clothes indoors and using unvented tumble driers.

Condensation causes dampness that can lead to the growth of mould. If mould occurs then this can be cleaned using an appropriate household cleaner and damp cloth (do not to use bleach as this may damage coloured paint).

To help reduce the risk of condensation in your home:

- Keep a window open when drying clothes indoors
- Don't dry clothes over warm radiators
- If you use a tumble dryer, place the exhaust hose out of a window
- Keep kitchen and bathrooms well ventilated and close the doors when cooking or bathing
- Keep lids on pots and pans
- If you have an extractor fan use it; if it is not working contact Link's PSL Repairs Team
- Make sure air can circulate behind furniture and inside wardrobes
- Keep your home warm and allow air and sunlight in

Money Matters

Money and benefits advice

Our staff offer a free and confidential welfare rights, money advice and tenancy sustainment service by phone, email or by visiting you in your home. The service is impartial and focuses on your needs and options.

To allow us to make enquiries on your behalf, you may need to complete and sign a mandate agreement.

We can help you with all aspects of welfare reform, benefits and debt including:

- Advice and information on benefits and benefit claims, tax credits and charitable grants
- Confidential benefit checks to identify the benefits you should be receiving
- Completing claim forms (such as Income Support, Housing Benefit, Personal Independence Payment)
- Monitoring claims and ensuring their progression through the benefits system
- Liaising, mediating and negotiating with the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenues and Customs, local councils and creditors
- Representation at Benefit Appeals Tribunals and assisting with complaints and disputes
- Mediating and negotiating regarding repayment arrangements towards rent arrears or any other debts
- Advice on financial education, financial products and budgeting
- Assistance if you are affected by the benefit cap
- Dealing with rent arrears as well as any debts you may have

The Edinburgh PSL team has a confidential service to assist you with benefit issues which is independent of the benefits authorities. The Welfare Benefits Officer within the team can help you deal with benefit problems, welfare matters and benefit checks. If you would like to use this service, please contact the Edinburgh PSL team on 0330 303 0087 and ask for the Welfare Benefits Officer.

Energy-saving advice

We try to make sure your properties are built and maintained to ensure they are warm and secure. But there are a number of ways you can keep your energy bills down as well.

- Turn your thermostat down – by turning your thermostat down by only 1°C you can save up to £65 a year. Bleeding radiators and using draught excluders can also help to save money.
- Install low-energy light bulbs – A 100W light bulb costs up to £3 a day to run. By fitting energy-efficient light bulbs you can save up to £50 a year on your bills and that includes the cost of the bulbs! Remember to switch lights off when not needed.
- Turn off appliances at the socket, don't leave them on standby. By switching off your TV at the wall you can save up to £40 a year. Doing the same for computers can save up to £27 per year.
- Set your washing machine to wash at 30°C and always do a full load
- Use a bowl to wash up rather than leaving the hot tap running
- Boil only the amount of water you need every time you use your kettle
- Consider using pressure cookers, steamers or microwaves as these use less energy
- Keeping your fridge and freezer full means they don't have to work as hard and therefore use less energy

DON'T OVER-PAY FOR THE ENERGY YOU ARE USING

You should be aware that how you pay affects what you pay. For example, if you pay via monthly direct debit then you will be charged less than if you pay via a quarterly bill. You can also make savings by requesting online 'paperless' billing, which means you don't have the added cost for administration of paperwork.

Pre-payment meters may be the most expensive way to pay for energy. A number of saving options are available if you shop around for the best tariff or alternative payment methods to suit your needs. For more information contact Link PSL office for more information and advice on **0330 303 0087**.

METER TYPES AND READING

There are a number of ways to record as well as pay for energy. It is important to keep in mind that not all tariffs are available on certain meters; you should check with your supplier to ensure you are on the best meter and tariff to reduce your bills.

Some suppliers may ask for a deposit on a newly installed credit meter (if there have been arrears at the property in the past) or may ask that you remain with them for a set period. This deposit is to cover the cost of replacing the meter. Nevertheless, you should ensure you are reimbursed once the agreed security period has ended.

Dry Meter: This is for gas and records usage in cubic metres, although some older models may still be in cubic feet.

White Meter / Economy 7 / Economy 10: This is for properties with electric heating and records energy use at two rates. Night rate is cheaper when storage heaters are charged. Day rate (Booster) is more expensive.

Prepayment Meter: This allows the householder to use charge cards or keys on a regular basis to 'top-up' the energy available to the property. Normally tariffs are more expensive on this meter.

Credit Meter: This allows householders to pay for energy on a weekly/monthly/quarterly basis and use Direct Debit. There are also some better tariffs and discounts available with this meter. Householders are advised to update their supplier with 'Actual' readings.

Smart Meter: These transmit energy usage readings directly to the supplier avoiding estimates. They can also provide information of current usage and can allow instant supplier-switching.

SWITCHING SUPPLIER

Compare gas and electricity prices to make sure you're on the cheapest tariff for you. To compare energy prices, you will need to work out how much you are currently paying for your fuel during a set period of time (for example, over a month or a year). You can do this by contacting your current supplier and asking it for the information, or by looking at your previous bills. Once you have established what you are currently paying, you should contact alternative energy suppliers to compare their prices. Phone Link PSL for advice on switching supplier on **0330 303 0087**.

Suppliers can offer a wide range of payment options for customers experiencing financial difficulties.

Suppliers must take into account money advice and recommendations from other agencies and third parties, e.g. social services or the Citizens Advice Bureau, when setting debt repayments.

These options can include:

- Payment by instalments
- Fuel Direct plan, which deducts directly from state benefits
- Prepayment Meters, provided it is safe and practical for the consumer
- Energy Efficiency advice
- Grants and charitable trusts that may be able to help

If you are in debt to your current supplier, or have had a bill outstanding for more than 28 days, the supplier may object to a transfer taking place until the outstanding amount is paid.



USEFUL ORGANISATIONS FOR ENERGY DEBT ADVICE

The Citizens Advice Bureau Scotland offers free, confidential and independent advice on debt and financial matters. Find your local office at www.cas.org.uk

- Energy Saving Scotland offer advice on energy efficiency and reducing fuel bills: **0800 512 012**
- There are energy advisors at each energy supply company who can discuss options with their individual customers
- If there are general money worries, which go further than energy bills, there are plenty of organisations available who can help – such as National Debt Line which provides free confidential and independent advice: **0808 808 4000**

Help with getting online

We know that you may access the internet at home through your smart phone or computer and we offer access to services online such as paying your rent, reporting a repair or contacting us.

We encourage all tenants to consider the benefits of learning to use computers and we can provide advice about accessing free WiFi and internet access in local libraries and other community facilities.

We aim to support you to:

- Benefit from products and services online
- Manage your money and access cheaper financial products
- Pay bills and do online shopping
- Search and apply for jobs
- Access information for online learning
- Keep in touch with family and friends
- Complete benefit forms online

Compliments and Complaints

We are committed to providing high quality customer service. We value feedback (good and bad) and use this information to help improve the services we provide.

COMPLIMENTS

If you have received excellent service from a member of staff, please get in touch.

Call us on **0330 303 0087**
Email us at linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk

Write to us at:
Link PSL
2c New Mart Road
EDINBURGH
EH14 1RL

COMPLAINTS

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about what we do (or do not do) or about the standard of service provided by us or by someone working on our behalf.

You can complain about:

- delays in responding to enquiries and requests
- failure to deliver or standard of a service
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies
- treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure
- someone working on our behalf

HOW DO I COMPLAIN?

You can complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, email or by completing the form on our website. It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- how we have failed in your expectations
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

WHAT CAN'T I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service; for example, reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour
- requests for compensation
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a stage two investigation.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HAVE COMPLAINED?

The Council and Link PSL operate a two-stage complaints procedure. Where possible we will try to resolve the issues you raise with us under stage 1 of our procedure and log this with both the Council and Link's complaints monitoring systems. We will respond to your complaint within 5 working days and can provide written confirmation of what has been done and what you can do if you remain dissatisfied.

If your complaint is complex or involves different issues, we may record your complaint under stage 2 of our procedure. If you remain dissatisfied with how we handled your complaint under stage 1 you may escalate your complaint to stage 2. We will respond to your complaint within 20 working days, where recorded under stage 2.

WHAT IF I AM STILL DISSATISFIED?

If you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint was handled under stage 2 of our procedure, you may appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) which is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. This includes complaints about Scottish councils, housing associations or co-operatives.

The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- where you have not gone all the way through the housing association's or co-operative's complaints handling procedure
- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about, or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO at:

Free phone advice line **0800 377 7330**
Online form www.spsso.org.uk/online-contact
In person **4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS**
By post **FREEPOST EH641, Edinburgh, EH3 0BR**
Fax **0800 377 7331**

Useful Numbers

To find out your supplier call	
GAS TRANSCO	0870 608 1524
ELECTRICITY MPAS	0845 270 9101
Energy Suppliers Contact Numbers	
Scottish and British Gas	0800 048 0202
Scottish Power	0845 2727 999
	0845 270 9191 pre-payment meters
	01355 814 767 home movers
N Power	0845 071 4525
EDF Energy	0800 026 2270
E.on	0845 059 9905
Scottish Hydro Electric	0845 026 0655 0800 223 377

Useful numbers

EDINBURGH

Alternative money, debt and housing advice services:	
The Advice Shop	0131 200 2360
Shelter Edinburgh	0808 800 4444
Community Help and Advice Initiative	0131 442 1009
Granton Information Centre	0131 552 0458
Citizens Advice Bureau	0131 558 3681 (appointments) 0131 557 1500 (advice)
City of Edinburgh Council Housing Options Team	0131 529 7368

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES AND PHONE NUMBERS

	Website	Telephone No.
Age UK Advice Line	www.ageuk.org.uk	0800 169 6565
Credit Union (Abcul)	www.abcul.org	0161 832 3694
Crimestoppers	www.crimestoppers-uk.org	0800 555 111
Domestic Violence (National)	www.ncdv.org.uk	0844 8044 999
Drug Advice Helpline	www.talktofrank.com	0800 77 66 00
Energy Efficiency Advice	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk	0300 123 1234
National Debtline	www.nationaldebtline.co.uk	0808 808 4000
National Grid UK Helpline	www.nationalgrid.com	0800 111 999
Neighbourhood Watch	www.neighbourhoodwatch.net	0116 271 0052
NHS 24	www.nhs24.com	111
Pension Credit Helpline	www.direct.gov.uk	0800 99 1234
Samaritans	www.samaritans.org	08457 90 90 90
TV Licensing	www.tvlicensing.co.uk	0844 770 7142
Victim Support Scotland	www.victimsupportsco.org.uk	0845 603 9213

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www.linkhousing.org.uk