

WINTER 2021



PSL news

The newsletter for Link Private Sector Leasing tenants

Welcome

...to the winter 2021 edition of the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) tenants' newsletter.

We've delivered the PSL service on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council for over 10 years now and, in April 2020, won the contract to continue to manage this valuable service.

We know Covid-19 has had an impact on our service and your circumstances, and we're working to make sure full service continues so you have a safe, warm and comfortable home.

In this newsletter, we've included information on rent, repairs, employability and support, which we hope you find useful.

If you have any suggestions or would like to talk about anything in this newsletter, please contact us on **0330 303 0087** or linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk.

Finally, on behalf of the PSL team, I would like to wish you a happy and safe festive period.

James Calder
PSL Manager

Ways to pay your rent

We offer various ways for you to pay your rent. You can choose the one that suits you best:



Telephone Call us on **0330 303 0087**.



Direct Debit Call us on **0330 303 0087** to set up a Direct Debit.



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.



Cheques or postal order cheques These 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.



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



Cash You can pay your rent for no charge in any Post Office, shop or garage which displays the PayPoint, Payzone or allpay logo by using an allpay card.

If you have any changes in your circumstances or are experiencing financial difficulty (Covid-19 related or not), please let us know by calling **0330 303 0087** so we can support you.

Fire safety

During each tenancy visit, your housing officer will test your smoke detector and carbon monoxide alarm.

All properties we lease have mains-wired smoke detection systems in place and you should know how to check they work. If not, please contact us on **0330 303 0087**.

If you stay in a communal block of flats, remember to keep any gardens and communal closes free of obstructions.

Always plan your escape routes before you need to use them. For example, which window would you use if the main door to your property could not be used due to fire or smoke?

For more advice, or to report any concerns, please contact your housing officer on **0330 303 0087**.





Have you heard of Scottish Child Payment?

It's a new fund for families on certain benefits or tax credits to help towards the costs of looking after a child. It's £40 paid every four weeks for each child under six.

You can apply over the phone by calling **0800 182 2222** or fill in an application form, available to download from **www.mygov.scot** (alongside information on other payments currently available from Social Security Scotland).

You can also ask for a form to be posted to you by calling **0800 182 2222**.

New benefits you should know about

BEST START GRANT

A package of three payments for parents and carers during the early years of a child's life.

Payment 1: pregnancy and baby payment

To help with expenses in pregnancy or having a new child, for example maternity clothes, a pram or additional heating. £606 payment for a first child and £303 for other children. There will be an extra payment of £303 if you have a multiple birth.

Payment 2: early learning payment

To help with the costs of early learning around the time your child starts nursery.

£252.50 payment for eligible families on certain benefits or tax credits who have a child between the ages of two and three years and six months.

Payment 3: school age payment

To help with the costs of a child starting school.

£252.50 payment made around the time a child normally starts primary one.

BEST START FOODS

A payment replacing UK Government's Healthy Start Vouchers in Scotland. £18 every four weeks (£36 for a child under one). A new payment card will replace the paper vouchers, giving you more flexibility.

You can visit **mygov.scot/beststart** for more information.

If you would like support to apply for grants or funding, please contact your housing officer on **0330 303 0087**.

Repairs update

Covid-19 restrictions have changed recently to help keep everyone safe.

Our services are currently being disrupted due to isolation requirements. Our repairs service will only carry out urgent and emergency work until mid-January, at which point we will review this.

There may be delays to repairs services caused by other reasons too, such as waiting for quotes or a decision from the landlord, or consultation over communal repairs with other owners in a block. We will keep you updated if a repair is delayed.

If your phone number or email address has changed, please let us know by contacting **0330 303 0087** or **linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk**.

You can report a repair on **www.linkhousing.org.uk/reportrepair**, by emailing **linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk** or calling **0330 303 0087**.

Struggling to pay your gas and electricity bills?

Home Energy Scotland can help! Visit **www.homeenergyscotland.org** for tips on how to make your home warmer while saving money.

Damp and mould?

Condensation is a major cause of dampness and starts as moisture in the air, usually caused by cooking, washing or drying clothes indoors. When the moist air hits cooler surfaces it turns into water, which can lead to mould.

Follow these tips to prevent any problems:

- Keep your home adequately heated at all times
- Cover pots and pans when cooking
- Turn on any extractors when cooking or bathing
- Always vent tumble dryers outside the home
- Close the door when having a bath or shower
- Wipe condensation off windows
- If you dry clothes indoors, open a window
- Leave space between the back of furniture and the wall to allow air to circulate

If you need any advice on damp and mould, please contact us on **0330 303 0087**.

Safety checks

To keep you and your family safe it's important you give us access to your home to carry out legally required safety checks for gas, portable appliance testing (PAT), Electrical Inspection Condition Report (EICR) and legionella.

Please contact us as soon as you get our letter to let us know if you will be in, or if you want us to access your home with keys when you are out.

Tenancy agreements require reasonable access to be provided. Charges may be made for failed appointments.

You can text us on **07850 632886** during office hours to request a call back about your safety check. Remember to include the subject and your address.

You can also call **0330 303 0087** or email linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk.

All government Covid-19 guidance will be followed, as detailed below.



Covid-19 safety measures

When reporting any repair

If you have previously reported a repair, or if you are reporting a repair for the first time, you will be asked by the repairs administrator to confirm:

- No-one in your home is self-isolating due to Covid-19 symptoms, is shielding or in any of the vulnerable categories. Your response will determine if/when your repair can take place and the staff will explain this to you during the call; and
- You agree to have our operatives working in your home. If you don't agree, we will ask you to call back when you are happy for the repair to take place.

What you need to do

When our operatives are working in your home, everyone in the household must:

- Stay in another room from the operative for the duration of the visit; or
- If this is not possible, for example, if you and the operative need to discuss the purpose of the visit, this must be done from a minimum of one metre distance and for as short a time as possible whilst wearing a face mask.

What we will do

While our operatives are in your property, they will;

- Practice good hand hygiene and wear appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment)
- Always maintain appropriate social distance; and
- Clean down all areas where they have been working.



Gas safety

To help keep you safe, Gas Safe registered engineers need access to your home every year to carry out a Landlord's Gas Safety Inspection.

If you don't allow access you are placing yourself, your family and neighbours at risk. Where you don't provide access, we will serve a 24 hours' notice letter and enter your home (using keys) as this is considered an emergency.

Please try to accommodate the annual inspection to prevent us having to take these steps. If you have pre-payment meters, please try to have

credit on these. If there's no credit available, we may need to cut off the supply until you are in credit.

If you have built up debt, please get in touch on **0330 303 0087**. We can discuss support requirements to help you to agree a more affordable repayment plan with your supplier and help you budget.

Remember, if you smell gas or fumes, or your CO alarm is activated, please call the free Gas Emergency Services line immediately on 0800 111 999, then Link, 24 hours a day on 0330 303 0087.

What to do if you smell gas:

Do:

- Open doors and windows to allow fresh air in.
- Turn off the gas at the mains tap, which is usually near the meter. Move the handle a quarter turn until it's 90 degrees from the pipe to shut off the gas supply.
- Leave the property.
- Phone National Gas Emergencies on **0800 111 999**. Only use a mobile phone from outside the property. The number is free and available 24 hours a day.
- Follow the advice given by the emergency adviser.

- Wait outside for a gas engineer to arrive.
- If you are feeling unwell, visit your GP or hospital immediately. Tell them you may have been exposed to a gas leak or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Don't:

- Smoke.
- Light a match or use any other naked flame.
- Turn any electrical switches on or off.
- Use doorbells, mobile phones or electrical switches which could cause a spark.

Access the support you need from LinkLiving

LinkLiving runs a short-term advice and support service for Private Sector Leasing tenants which can help you with:

- mental health difficulties;
- welfare benefit applications;
- debt advice;
- tenancy management (dealing with rent, repairs and utilities);
- managing relationships with neighbours;
- improving social isolation;
- accessing community services; and
- registering with your GP and accessing local health services.

Information and advice is offered through face-to-face meetings, by phone or email.

If longer term or more specialist support is needed, they can help you access a service which fully suits your needs.

If you would like more information, or to be referred for this service, please contact your housing officer or call **0330 303 0087**.

Employability

We are working with LinkLiving to provide employability support to tenants. The support will be tailored to help you develop and access more opportunities.

If you use this service, you will be allocated a case worker who will provide person-centered support to help you achieve your goals.

LinkLiving will:

- Signpost/direct you to relevant training providers to develop your skills
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses to discover a career path for you

- Teach you new skills that will support you for the future
- Provide ongoing assistance throughout your journey to help you reach your goals
- Help you access employment opportunities or further education
- Connect you with volunteering networks
- Support you with budgeting and grant applications
- Put you in touch with relevant self-help and wellness support providers

If you are interested, please contact your housing officer.

National emergency service providers

GAS - call SGN's national gas emergency number on **0800 111 999**

NO POWER - call Scottish Power on **0845 272 7999**

NO WATER - call Scottish Water on **0845 600 8855**

If you call any of the national emergency service providers, you should also follow-up with a call to our emergency repair line on **0330 303 0087**.

Festive opening times

We will be closed on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 December 2021 and Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 January 2022. On 24 and 31 December 2021 we will only be carrying out emergency repairs and emergency sign-up appointments. We hope all our customers have a safe Christmas and New Year.

If you have an emergency or urgent repair on these dates, please call **0330 303 0087** and you will be transferred to the emergency out-of-hours team.



LINKHOUSING

EDINBURGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL



How to report a repair:

Call us on **0330 303 0087**

Text us for a call back during working hours for non-emergency repairs on **07850 632886**

Report your repair online at

www.linkhousing.org.uk/reportrepair. You should only complete this form for routine repairs

Out-of-hours emergencies

EMERGENCY REPAIR IN YOUR HOME - call our out-of-hours service on **0330 303 0087**.

National emergency service providers

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NO POWER - call Scottish Power on **0845 272 7999**

NO WATER - call Scottish Water on **0845 600 8855**

If you call any of the national emergency service providers, you should also follow-up with a call to our emergency repair line on **0330 303 0087**.

Rent and tenancy enquiries

Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5pm, Friday 8.30am - 4pm.
Telephone **0330 303 0087**. Email **linkpsl@linkhaltd.co.uk**

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