

# Jean Gray CEO Viewpoint

**I** was privileged to attend my first Tenants' Conference in June and meet so many of you who are keen to be engaged with what we do and for Viewpoint, that is going to be key to our success moving forward.

I am slowly getting to know the organisation, its people, its processes, its structure and where things aren't quite right. Coming into the organisation my message is that we need to have a clear vision and strategic direction with a focus on a person-centred approach and we must ensure services are delivered that will continue to improve the lives of our tenants and residents.

We know that we have a rising older population and we know that dementia currently kills 1 in 8 people. We know that there is a lack of funding and services available to help address these challenges. Viewpoint is uniquely placed, providing a continuum of care and support as well as accommodation for older people. Our services range from mainstream and amenity to low support sheltered housing, through to end of life care in a care home setting. We want to make a positive impact on people's lives.

So, what are my key observations after my first few months:

- There is a lack of real engagement and poor communication with our customers but also within the organisation - and by communication I also mean listening!
- There appears to have been a role created for a number of tenants to report complaints, issues and repairs direct to senior staff and not through communicating with the relevant staff at Viewpoint;
- There is a lack of strategic direction for staff and that's visible to you, our customers;
- Our service can be inconsistent; and
- There's been a turnover of staff for some time, which causes

disruption to services, means there is lack of consistency and in some cases work either gets missed, delivery of service is poor or there is confusion about who is responsible for resolving an issue to conclusion

## So what do we need to get better at?

- Our customer focus and communication;
- Delivery of our services - particularly voids, repairs and complaints
- Planned maintenance – we need to take stock of where we are with our investment programme and where we need to go in the future
- Digital strategy – we need to make best use of technology, ensuring our infrastructure is sound so that we can maximise use of technology where appropriate;
- Data – we need to look at the information we hold and ensure it is accurate and robust. We need to be able to get an overall picture of our properties but also have a good understanding about who is living in the property and how we can make it better or as I would hope a home for life.

## How can we get that right?

It is about going 'back to basics', and making sure you - our tenants, customers, residents - are at the heart of what we do and participate in the decisions we make. Involving tenants in the key decisions of the organisation is paramount to its success. We need to be working with you but my role, alongside that of my Executive Team, is to make some of the most important and key decisions and present these to the Board. Combining our skills and knowledge with your views on our homes and services can act as a powerful catalyst for change. There are times when we will say no - not



because we like to - there will be a reason and we need to get better at saying why we are not doing something, or why there's been a delay.

However, as we look forward, we must take cognisance of what else is happening, not only in the sector, but in the external world:

- Brexit – who knows what will happen but it is a risk we must continually monitor;
- By 2030 one in five people in the UK will be 65 or older so there's no wonder that there's an urgency to build homes and adapt existing stock so it is suitable. We need to work sensitively but the challenges of older people's housing are neither new nor a surprise. Relationships between health, care and housing still need to improve. Our stock needs to be improved - simple things like updating interior design, better lighting, improving colour contrast for those with visual impairments; improving signage, kitchens which are dementia friendly, bathrooms with walk in showers, updating

safety & security features and taking measures to reduce trips, hazards and falls. Meanwhile improving insulation and windows can bring savings on energy bills when combined with modern heating systems as well as improve comfort;

- Poverty is an issue and we cannot ignore that some of our customers are suffering, but in many cases not telling anyone. We are here to help;
- Communities – communal areas are important but so are relationships to ensure we enable a culture where we are kind to each other, listen, help and do as much as we can to combat loneliness and isolation. We need to be more creative in using these areas to ensure no one is suffering alone;
- Technology is an area that is rapidly growing - video door entry systems, digital smart alarms to trigger care in emergencies and the use of voice activated digital devices such as Alexa to provide information, reminders and updates could all prove useful.

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- It's 2 years since Grenfell and we are still talking about what happened and in some cases still debating about alarms, sprinklers, insulation and cladding. We will be replacing alarms to the new standard and we will hopefully look at some of this work alongside replacement telecare and lighting to reduce disturbance to you in your homes.
- Our Asset Management Strategy is not just about replacing like with like. It's about being more innovative and looking at potential remodelling to ensure our properties are fit for purpose. Yes, we do have a lot of information about our properties, with a lot of maintenance to complete but again we need to talk to you, involve you and bring you on

the journey when we need to start major works in your complex;

- Scottish Government Post 2021 – we continually hear about how much good work is going on, in particular delivering the Scottish Government's target of 50,000 new homes by 2021. But what's next after that...there is no doubt that housing for older people is a recognised and rapidly growing market, but too often, the focus is on new build as a way to meet demand. Maintaining, adapting and improving existing stock can be less capital intensive, reduce our carbon footprint and is a way to meet rising demand in a shorter time frame. There will always be room for new developments but we should be

seeking to ensure that current housing remains fit for purpose and provides affordable, decent and attractive homes in which people can grow older happily – part of my role is to make sure that message is heard and attended a session with new ministers in the middle of August to do just that;

- Value for Money is one of the "in" phrases and rightly so. We should be held accountable and we should be ensuring that when we are procuring contracts, services and goods that we are following procurement guidelines to get the best 'bang for our buck'. But value for money isn't just about financial impact it is about social impact - the effect of activity on the social fabric

of the community and well-being of individuals and families. That is important and very much links to who we are at Viewpoint.

My message today is this is the start of a new era at Viewpoint. We will continue to engage with you and we will be open and honest. We need to work together to continue to shape Viewpoint - we will change, we will improve and we will always have the customer at the heart of what we do. You will challenge us, as you should, and we will still get things wrong but what we need to do is admit we got it wrong; put it right and learn from our mistakes and then move on.

## Highlights from Viewpoint Tenant Conference June 2019

Viewpoint's tenant conference took place on the 27th of June 2019 at the COSLA Conference Centre in Edinburgh. Twenty tenant volunteers gave up their precious time to plan an event which was both informative and participative. The agenda was balanced to allow tenants to learn about the roles and responsibilities of senior staff and what they see as their priorities. The agenda also allowed tenants to pose

questions directly to senior staff who all spent time going round the tables. The conference also provided tenants with an opportunity to feedback on what Viewpoint should START, STOP and CONTINUE. This important information is now available for staff and the Board of Management to inform both operational and strategic decisions. The main themes have been incorporated within Jean Grays article.



## Consultation Volunteers

Viewpoint's Consultation Volunteers have had a busy few months and the number of volunteers continues to grow.

We currently have over 40 Volunteers who help us in the following areas:

- **Recruitment and Procurement** - volunteers participate in staff recruitment and procurement of new and existing contracts;
- **Communication** – volunteers look at all forms of communication, including methods, content and design;

- **Performance** – volunteers investigate service issues raised by information about our performance, and recommend actions to improve services. Volunteers who are interested in performance will also take a lead on scrutiny of services.

Over the past few months, our volunteers have participated in the recruitment of 6 vacancies at Viewpoint, with more in process.

Our performance and communication volunteers met in June to discuss our performance against the Social Charter Indicators and to discuss what

our landlord report should look like.

We will shortly be holding training in procurement for volunteers who have expressed an interest in assisting with the procurement of our Repairs and Maintenance service and our telecare response service.

During July, we reviewed our Rent Arrears Policy with a group of our volunteers.

If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact us at Head Office on 0131 668 4247, option 2, or e mail [admin@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:admin@viewpoint.org.uk)



# Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group

The Fife group was formally launched at a successful event held at Buchan gardens Buckhaven on Saturday the 1st of June which was attended by over 40 Fife tenants and Viewpoint staff, including Jean Gray, Viewpoint's new CEO.

The event was planned and organised by tenants. The event included a display of art work undertaken by the Buchan Gardens Art club and City Park Arts & Crafts. The event also had a stall with a selection of cards and baking which was used to raise money for local charity.

The Tenants discussed and agreed the group's constitution and elected the committee members for the group including John Muir as Chairperson.

A selection of tenants then each gave a short talk, Wilma Rankin and Pamela Gilles discussed their respective art groups, and Danny Rankin gave an in depth presentation on the WWII RAF Mosquito bomber. The day was closed off by tenant Tam Frame singing a medley of classic songs which ended the day on a high note.



## What next for Newspoint

In the spring edition of Newspoint we highlighted that we were going to undertake a consultation exercise with tenants and ask:

1. What they found most enjoyable and value about the Newsletter;
2. What information is most useful, and
3. How often should it be sent out

The consultation took place over April and May of this year and included discussions at quarterly meetings and coffee mornings in 12 complexes. We also received 4 emails and 27 completed consultation cards from tenants.

The majority of feedback on what tenant's value about Newspoint is

- Details of where money is being spent improving properties; and
- News about what is happening in other complexes

Similarly, tenants found updates on

staff appointments and social events and general news useful.

Tenants wanted to see a more balanced view on areas where Viewpoint needs to improve and how they plan to do this. There was wide range of views from tenants on how often they wanted to receive Newspoint from never, monthly, 3 monthly, quarterly and annually.

**So what next?** A number of tenants offered to help with the production of Newspoint (even helping with the delivery) and we will be contacting our Communication Volunteers about this too. We expect our new Tenant Participation & Communications Co-ordinator to lead on this when they start in September. In the meantime if you have any suggestion or articles for Newspoint please email them to [newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk) or speak to onsite staff or send them to our Head office at 4 South Oswald Road Edinburgh EH9 2HG

## The Viewpoint Lothian Tenants Group

A small steering group of Lothian tenants have been meeting to finalise the constitution and code of conduct for the impending Lothian Group. They have suggested that the group could be called the Tenant Action Group (TAG) to reflect the work they will undertake in working with Viewpoint to improve and monitor services, and also to explore ways of how social activities and opportunities can be developed within Viewpoint complexes.

Every Lothian tenant should have received a letter from the Group inviting them to comment on the proposed constitution and code of conduct which will underpin the work of the group.

We are currently collating the information contained within the returned questionnaires and it is proposed that a formal launch event is held later in the year. The letter also asked tenants to indicate if they might be interested in becoming a committee member.

### VTRG

Viewpoint Tenants' Representative Group is a Registered Tenant Organisation and exists to promote the interests of all tenants to Viewpoint Housing Association.

The Group is made of representatives from Viewpoint complexes. The VTRG has set up their own email address which tenants can use to communicate with them at [help@vtrg.info](mailto:help@vtrg.info)

## Bimal and life in Scotland



**B**imal Giri is Viewpoint first PATH Scotland trainee. PATH seeks to address the under representation of black and minority ethnic communities working in housing by providing a 3 year traineeship. Here he tells us about his experience of life in Scotland.

It was bitterly cold, rainy and dark day when I first set my foot to Scotland. Yet almost 15 years have gone past, there is not a day that goes by where I am not grateful for being able to live in such a beautiful country!

My ancestors brave Gurkhas Soldiers always remain loyal and trustworthy for this nation. They involved in every wars when needed for the safeguard of this country.

We have long-standing relationship with this country and it goes back to 1814. The other aspect attracted me in Scotland is - we have in common - hospitality culture, welcoming guest with home brewed alcohol and playing bag-pipe in auspicious occasion.

Like me, there are many-made Scotland their home, away from home. Some came in search of good life, some for changes and some to reunite their family and this apply both way. Many Scottish made their home in the Himalayas (South Asia- Nepal). In 1967 first trekking and climbing company for Mt Everest called 'Mountain Travel Nepal' was established by British and Scottish ex-servicemen. This changed the dimension of

tourism in Nepal. A missionary of the Church of Scotland, Rev Dr. John A Graham founded a School called 'Dr. Graham's Homes' in 1900. So its human nature that people move from place to place, continent to continent in pursue better life.

That is why Scotland enjoys and respects the diverse culture because they believe that we learn from each other's ideas, taste and preference, people's like and dislike that contribute to make a country prosperous and strong.

In my 9 months as a trainee with Viewpoint, I find this place welcoming, friendlier and warm. Viewpoint has recognised the importance of diversity, inclusion and equality.

## New Tenant Participation & Communication Coordinator

**F**ollowing feedback from Tenant satisfaction surveys and consultations the Board agreed to fund a new full time post of **Tenant Participation & Communication Coordinator** with a remit to work across departments to ensure that the association's tenants are involved in and consulted about that the services which the organisation provides. Competition for the post

was fierce with over 50 applications being received for the position. Tenants were very much involved in the recruitment process. After careful consideration Viewpoint staff and Tenant Panel agreed that the post should be offered to Heather Jeffrie. Heather currently works for Argyll and Bute Council and will start with Viewpoint on the 30th of September.

## Appointment of Simon Haile new Head of Assets

**A**fter a rigorous recruitment process which included a tenant interview panel we have appointed Simon Haile as our New Head of Assets

Simon Haile started his career in property maintenance and asset management in 1993 at Rugby Borough Council, leaving as Maintenance Team Leader in 2016 to take up a new role as Operations Manager at Kettering Borough Council. Over this time, Simon has gained a wealth of experience in all aspects of social housing property maintenance and asset management including responsive repairs, void property management, cyclical and planned work and capital investment projects.

Simon is an advocate of providing a customer-focused service. At Rugby, he led on a lean systems thinking review for responsive repairs which improved fixed first time rates by over 25% and, reduced customer waiting times for repairs to be carried out. Latterly at



Kettering, Simon has been involved with re-structuring the Property Services Team to ensure their in-house maintenance team is able to meet customer needs now and in the future.

Simon and his family relocated to the Scottish Borders in May 2019 and, he is very much looking forward to joining Viewpoint in September.

Colin Dumma our current interim Head of Assets will be staying on for a short period to assist Simon and help with the delivery of our improvement programme for this financial year.

## Viewpoint Housing Association Tenants Raise £1,379 For Marie Curie Hospice

Over 50 tenants at Gillespie Crescent, a Viewpoint Housing Association complex, rallied together to raise an amazing £1,379 pounds for the Marie Curie Hospice in Edinburgh. This get together was in remembrance of their friend and fellow tenant Pat Skivington who recently passed away at the Hospice.

With Pat's local roots and fun for life, she was a true inspiration to all that knew her. Pat along with a number of tenants, was instrumental in organising social events at Gillespie, especially for many who require significant support.

Viewpoint tenants and fellow organisers Maureen Scott and Colette Cruise stated "it was fitting that we



raised the money by holding a cream tea as this is just the type of sociable event Pat enjoyed organising and taking part in."

Local businesses also generously donated a large number of raffle prizes which the tenants are very grateful for.

Jean Gray, Viewpoint's CEO stated "This was such a lovely and thoughtful afternoon

in memory of a special tenant whilst also raising funds for a great cause. The success of this event reflects the hard work, commitment and community spirit which is prevalent within Viewpoint complexes and it is important that we ensure these sort of fun events continue and wherever possible include all of our residents.

## Universal Credit and TV Licence Help – Elaine can help!

Universal Credit (UC) began a phased introduction in 2013 designed to replace six means tested benefits paid to people of working age. UC is designed to be an evolving benefit and has been subject to various hiccups and amendments. To date over a million people are in receipt of UC. Currently it is expected to be 2023 before the full transfer has taken place. Severe disability premium (SDP) is an extra amount included in some means tested benefits to help with the cost of disability. There is no provision in the calculation of UC for this premium. On January 16th 2019 a "Gateway" was introduced which prevented anyone currently in receipt of SDP from claiming UC. Unfortunately, those who previously qualified for this payment who had transferred to UC before 16/01/2019 found themselves with less money. From 24/7/19 the claims of those who lost money when they transitioned to UC will be re-examined with a view to making a lump sum compensatory payment & applying ongoing Transitional Payments in recognition of their previous SDP

entitlement. If you think this applies to your claim request a review in your online journal. The Gateway which prevents those currently in receipt of this extra money applying for UC is to be removed in 2021.

Currently it is proposed that free TV licences, funded by the Government for over 75s will end from 01/06/2020. From 1 June 2020, there will be a new scheme. Anyone aged 75 or over who receives Pension Credit will still be eligible for a free licence. If you are not entitled to PC, you will be covered until 31 May 2020 but will then need to buy one. TV Licensing will write to those involved in good time before their license expires to advise what they should do. If you think you may be eligible for Pension Credit (PC) or wish to check you can find out more at [www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility) or by calling 0800 99 1234 or contacting me at Viewpoint HA my contact details are below.

If you have queries about any of the above or about welfare benefits you can contact me 0131 662 5144 or at [elaine.rosie@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:elaine.rosie@viewpoint.org.uk)

## Down With the Kids



As part of our commitment to "Joy in later years" Viewpoint recognises that our housing complexes sit within communities across the city of Edinburgh. In some of our complexes, as well as our care homes, residents and staff have had long running relationships with local schools and nurseries.

Shared activities such as crafts or music, provide opportunities to break down generational barriers and instil a sense of connection. Our visiting young people are increasingly coming along to interact with rather than 'perform' for our residents. This enhances the children and young people's sense of community and fosters an understanding and respect for older people. It offers opportunities for learning through exposure to people with lived experiences of historic events or times, bringing their learning to life.

For our residents, many of whom live many miles from their own grandchildren or great-grandchildren, spending time with children and young people gives them a sense of purpose

and an opportunity to play that they wouldn't ordinarily have. In sharing their experiences and skills they have an increased sense of purpose and connection with younger generations.

Our residents really look forward to the visits by nursery children in particular. At Inverard House, the nursery at the Edinburgh Academy visit once a month and spend an hour or so with their friends. Academy staff tell us that the children are made to feel so welcome and the residents always put a lot of thought into the activities to entertain the children. They find it a very worthwhile activity as part of the curriculum of excellence. Our residents take a huge sense of pride in the work they are doing with the nursery and enjoy getting to know the personalities of all the children. They have a real sense of purpose in contributing to the learning of these 3 and 4 year old children.

If you would like to share stories of what's happening with your local kids or you would like support to get something started, please contact Lyn Jardine, Head of Innovation and Development at Head Office.

## Buchan Gardens Film night

**B**uchan Gardens recently held a special showing of an epic film. 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' Arguably the greatest of the spaghetti westerns with a compelling story, memorable performances, breath-taking landscapes and a haunting score. Our photograph shows some of our members who attended and also a special guest appearance of two 'STARS' from the film. The 'STARS' were : The Bad, Lee Van Cleef (aka Danny Rankin, chairman of our group) and The Good, Clint Eastwood (aka Dougie Rankin, youngest son of Danny Rankin)

After the feature film was shown there was a short film taken at 'SAD Hill', the cemetery used in the film. Danny, Wilma (Danny's wife) and Dougie flew out to Spain to the location of 'Sad Hill' to re-enact some of the scenes from the film. Danny dressed up as The Bad, Dougie dressed up as The Good and Wilma did the filming. After returning home a short film was made using parts from the original film and some we had shot ourselves.

Everyone had a great night and were treated to ice cream and popcorn during the intermission.



## City park craft sale & coffee morning

**T**he annual charity craft sale & coffee morning was held in City Park on Saturday 20th July, 10am – 2pm, the Craft Group had their home made crafts on sale to everyone, home baking, and were also doing teas & coffees, tombola and a raffle, the ladies raised a whopping £600 in total. (£300 for MND & £300 for TCCL). Local councillor Ann Verner said *"it was a fantastic day I loved coming along, A big thank you to everyone who came along"*



Fern's Kitchen  
Balfour House  
10 Cameron Crescent  
EH16 5LB  
07565651031  
fernskitchencatering@gmail.com

*Fern's Café offers a wide range of home cooked and affordable nutritious food, as well as outside catering and social events for Viewpoint tenants. You can keep up to date with what's going on through our blog at fernskitchen.org, Facebook, Twitter @ferns\_kitchen or on Instagram.*

**Mon- Fri 9am – 2pm**  
**Tues 11:30am – 2pm**

## Woodthorpe Courtyard

**H**ere in Woodthorpe we have a secure inner courtyard which was in dire need of some TLC. Local staff decided to make this area a project and secured money from Viewpoint's common area funds to deck the area where steps led down to a patio area. By decking this it is now level with the upper part of the courtyard. It is now a safe environment for tenants who have mobility aids, wheelchairs. Once the raised flower beds were cleared of weeds the Tenants got together to turn it into a beautiful courtyard with plenty of colourful plants. There is also tables, chairs and parasols for tenants use.

I'm glad to say that an area which was underused is now utilised by our tenants who take great care of it and like to meet up together for a chat in the summer afternoons. Jackie Anderson-Tighe the local Coordinator



# Performance Report for Tenants 2018/19

We will be uploading the Annual Tenants Performance Report to our Website by

the end of September. If you would like a copy of the report please request one

by contacting our Head Office on 0131 668 4247 or email

admin@viewpoint.org.uk

## Food Friends

As part of Eat Well Age Well's campaign to tackle malnutrition, their Small Ideas, Big Impact Fund provides grants for great new ideas and existing projects that support older adults with food, eating well and keeping social.

Through this scheme 'Food Friends' has been set up by Edinburgh Community Food. Working in partnership with Viewpoint Housing Association, the project enables residents to enjoy cookery sessions, community meals and social eating in a fun and friendly environment. Residents prepare meals from scratch using healthy ingredients and learn about maintaining good nutrition in later life. As well as learning new skills, cooking and eating as a group provides vital social contact. The group is open to any Viewpoint tenant and is free with all the ingredients and support provided by Edinburgh Community Group.

To find out more about Food Friends contact Lesley Curtis on 0131 467 7326

### Eat Well Age Well

Did you know that it's estimated 1 in 10 older people are at risk or suffering from malnutrition? That equates to 103,000 older people in Scotland alone – enough to fill Hampden Stadium twice over!

Eat Well Age Well is a national project from award winning Scottish charity Food Train, which is focused on ways to help prevent, detect and treat older people who are undernourished. Those who are malnourished are twice as likely to visit their GP, more likely to require hospital admission and have a greater number of health issues.

It's important to remember that losing weight is not an inevitable part of ageing, and if you do have any concerns about low weight, unintentional weight loss or poor appetite then you can contact the Eat Well Age Well team on **0131 447 8151**.



## Scottish Housing Regulator – New Regulatory Framework

Earlier this year, the Scottish Housing Regulator ('the Regulator') published a revised Framework which sets out how it regulates housing associations.

It is the Regulator's role to monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) in the performance of housing associations' housing activities, governance and financial wellbeing.

A core principle of the Framework is that housing association's assure themselves, their tenants and the Regulator. From this year, Viewpoint must prepare and publish an Assurance Statement annually, to confirm that it is meeting the regulatory requirements set, or, if not, what is being done to fix any instances of material non-compliance. Viewpoint's governing body approves the Statement and the Chair must sign it. This Statement will be made available to tenants.

The Regulator will consider what Viewpoint says in its Annual Assurance Statement as part of its risk assessment

of the organisation, alongside other information it routinely receives from us, its engagement with us and other sources of information about us, to determine what assurance it needs from us and what we may need to do to improve. This allows the Regulator to prioritise their resources and plan how to engage with housing associations through further scrutiny, engagement and intervention. The main risks which the Regulator considers are:

- Poor outcomes for tenants;
- Poor quality of tenants' homes and investment failures;
- Poor financial performance and management; and
- Poor governance,

Following the Regulator's risk assessment, a 'regulatory status' will be published alongside an Engagement Plan. This status will provide a single view of Viewpoint's governance, financial wellbeing and performance.. This status can be 'Working Towards Compliance' or 'Statutory Action'. 'Working

Towards Compliance' is used where the association is materially non-compliant but the regulator is satisfied that it has the capacity and willingness to resolve the issue within a reasonable time. Statutory Action means that the Regulator is using its statutory powers to address the non-compliance.

Our Engagement Plan sets out the information required from us by the Regulator, what we need to do, and how and why the Regulator will engage with us. The Engagement plan is kept under continuous review and engagement may be varied in response to new information or events. The Engagement Plan is updated when the Regulator changes its assessment or engagement. Our current Engagement Plan does not require any additional assurance from us to the Regulator.

Further information, including Viewpoint's current Engagement Plan can be found on the Scottish Housing Regulator website at [www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)

## Direct Debits – and why they make your life easier!

**A direct debit is an instruction from you to your bank. It authorises Viewpoint to collect payments from your account when they are due.**

A direct debit is a convenient way to pay your rent and it gives you peace of mind that you won't miss a payment. We wanted to include here the most frequently asked questions to clarify how the system works.

**What happens after I complete my direct debit form?** We will enter your bank details into our system and an electronic file will then be sent to our bank. They will confirm that the bank details are correct and that the direct debit can be taken from the account. Viewpoint will then write to you to confirm that the direct debit will be taken, and the date and amount of the first payment. *With direct debit your rent is payable on the 1st day of the month.*

**What are the advantages for tenants?**

The main advantage is that you do not need to

do anything more once the direct debit is set up; Viewpoint will make sure that your direct debit amount is updated each year if rents change.

**How will I know how much is being taken?**

Viewpoint will write to you at least 10 working days before we take the first payment, to confirm the amount being taken. We will also write to you 10 working days before any change is made to your direct debit amount

**What happens if amounts are taken incorrectly?**

We would of course make a refund as soon as possible to reimburse you. You are covered by the Direct Debit Guarantee, which means a full and immediate refund will be made if an error is made in the payment by Viewpoint.

*It's easy to start paying by direct debit; please just ask your Housing Coordinator/ Housing Officer for a direct debit instruction form. You can cancel your direct debit at any time.*

# Repairs and Maintenance Update



**W**e are currently working alongside F3 surveyors based in Edinburgh, to finalise tender documents, process and timeline to tender our five year repairs and void contract. The current arrangement is with T.B McKay on a temporary contract basis and the new contract we are developing is designed to ensure value for money for VHA and our customers. We will advertise the tender very soon on Public Contracts Scotland and we hope for a good response from service providers suitable for the works. A single service provider will be appointed for the repairs contract and we will have supporting service providers for the void repairs part of the contract. We are using a standard form of contract that is tried and tested and allows us to closely measure the performance of the service provider and ensure they adhere to contract requirements and provide a first class service. The terms of the contract also enables VHA and the successful bidder to develop close working relationships and improve the service by a number of means – this includes introducing mobile working opportunities for the contractor and VHA staff. We are confident this will improve response times and value for money for the actual work completed. Although the contract is for five years it is on a 3+1+1 basis. This means we can retender earlier if the approved supplier is not providing the service required or market conditions change dramatically.

Although our current contractor T.B McKay are providing a decent standard of contract we are always looking to improve the service provided.

As part of the procurement process we will be involving tenants in the selection of contractors who will be invited to submit tenders. Tenants selected to be part of the process will undergo procurement

training along with key staff so consistency of selection will be maintained.

The new contract is due to commence on 01.04.2020 although we hope to have a handover process starting early in 2020. We will inform everyone who the preferred supplier is at the end of the procurement process and provide any further information at that stage. .

**Heating replacement works – the Asset Management Section of VHA were provided with a budget of £1.9m to upgrade a number of heating systems within selected properties before end of March 2020. However this has proved to be overly ambitious and we are unable to deliver the number required in this financial year. As a result we are concentrating on a number of priority projects and we have written to some of those tenants to make them aware of our intentions. As the heating and hot water in a high number of our properties are fed from communal boilers it makes the solution a bit more difficult in most of these instances. It isn't a case of just replacing the boilers with another communal boiler or individual boiler but in most cases we find that the existing water pressure isn't sufficient or the external gas supply not adequate so we have to work with Scottish Water (SW) and Scottish Gas Networks (SGN). Not only does this significantly increase the installation cost per property but we also have to liaise with bodies such as Edinburgh City Council for building warrant, planning and conservation areas where required, Scottish National Heritage where excavations may take place in or close to sites of historic**

interest and of course SW and SGN. We also need to communicate more closely with our tenants to make you aware of the impact all this has on you. So please bear with us as we develop final proposals and we contact each of you that will be involved this financial year.

Other major works – as we will not commit the full £1.9m to heating replacement works we are identifying other areas where the money can be best used. We are using the information from the last stock condition survey to determine the type of works we are proposing. The works include –

Replacement paths, fencing, new kitchens and bathrooms, tree and large hedge management, smoke and fire detection systems, communal fire panel upgrades, roof replacements to name a few. If your home will be included in any of these we will notify you in advance of works starting on site.

**Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (ESSH) – to comply with legislation we need to ensure our properties, where physically possible meet the requirements of ESSH. To achieve this we only have a small number of properties that require works to meet this target. Some of these works include new windows and doors, wall or roof insulation, new heating etc. Our target is to meet ESSH by the end March 2020 and as previously advised if your house is included in these works we will notify you in writing in the first instance and make you aware of what work is required and how we intend to address it.**

**Access to properties – everyday activities mean we can require access to your home virtually at any time. This can include response repairs, surveys for major contracts, annual gas servicing, water safety, electrical safety etc. Appointments will be made in most instances for repairs and we will arrange access in advance of visits for everything else where possible, although in some cases emergencies can mean we require immediate access that cannot be prearranged. We ask that you grant access to anyone we send to your property on VHA business. Failure to do this can impact on operational costs, delay important works such as heating or kitchen replacements etc. However, in respect of annual gas safety it is imperative you allow access to the gas engineer on the date notified. Your gas appliance must undergo an annual safety, within twelve months of the previous safety check. If you do not allow access for this, we may have to take legal action and these costs which are high can be recharged to the person not allowing access. Please work with us for access to your home.**

**VIEWPOINT**  
joy in later years

4 South Oswald Road  
Edinburgh  
EH9 2HG  
t: 0131 668 4247  
e: admin@viewpoint.org.uk  
w: www.viewpoint.org.uk  
  
Viewpoint Housing Association  
Scottish Charity No. SC005619  
A Scottish Charitable Housing  
Association

## Office Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9am - 5pm  
Friday: 9am - 4.30pm

If you have an emergency when the office is closed, pull the cord of your alarm call system or t: **0800 783 3615**

## Property Services: Call Handling Hours

Mon: 9am - 5pm  
Tue: 10am - 5pm  
Wed: 9am - 5pm  
Thu: 9am - 5pm  
Friday: 9am - 4.30pm

## Ways to Report a Repair

Repairs Desk direct number:  
**0131 662 0688**  
Freephone repair number:  
**0800 345 7347**  
e: [repair@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:repair@viewpoint.org.uk)  
w: [www.viewpoint.org.uk](http://www.viewpoint.org.uk)