

VIEWPOINT^{*}

tenant handbook

Information about your Tenancy





Our vision and values

A Visionary Vision

Life need not be complicated. We are here simply to help people enjoy their later years. Everything we do is about realising this vision and in order to achieve this we have an equally straightforward set of values. These values define us and are:

- Inspire with positive smiles and words
- Say 'yes I can and I will'
- Celebrate age, experience and wisdom
- Do according to our customers' wishes and ambitions
- Treat people (everyone is a VIP) as we would a 'loved one'
- Work hard, have fun and laugh
- Stay courageous, creative and ahead of the game
- Work with those that share our values

These promises shape us. They are a commitment to our residents, staff and suppliers. They are fundamental to every single plan, decision and project we embark on.



Viewpoint will produce this information on request in Braille, Large Print, Audio CD and in community languages.



Staff Working Together with You

Your Sheltered Housing Coordinator

Viewpoint coordinators will be onsite at all our sheltered housing developments providing additional safety and security to tenants. Their main focus will be to:

- Assist tenants with individual or group queries
- Act as point of contact for tenancy matters, deal with communal repairs
- Liaise with other services (healthcare, social work etc.)
- Encourage and promote self-service digital services
- Assist you to sustain your tenancy
- Encourage tenants to socialise and connect with their community

Your Housing Officer

Your housing officer works to help you maintain your tenancy. Their duties include:

- Advise on how to move to another property
- Allocate empty properties
- Update any changes in circumstances
- Manage your rent account
- Estate management
- Neighbour disputes
- Liaise with other services as required

Your Technical Officer

Your technical officer is part of the assets team and their focus is on the property that you live in and their duties include:

- On-going and major repair work
- Manage routine contracts such as ground maintenance
- Planned upgrade work for internal areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and heating
- Planned upgrade work for external areas such as roofing, windows and painting
- Carry out pre and post inspections (see Section 4 on Repairs and Maintenance)

Working together with you

Your housing officer and technical officer and sheltered co-ordinator (if you have one) may also work jointly on things such as loss of essential services which may impact on your property in order to work with you to find solutions tailored to your individual needs.

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Section I:
**Introduction to your
Handbook**

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The tenancy agreement you signed is a legal agreement between you and Viewpoint Housing Association. The tenancy agreement explains your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and Viewpoint's responsibilities as a landlord.

This handbook is a guide to your tenancy and gives you further information that you can refer to if you need some information or advice.

It does not list every detail and refers to our policies and processes, which you can access on our website (www.viewpoint.org.uk).

Alternatively, you can contact us and we can talk to you about this or send you a paper copy.

1.1 How to Contact Us

You can write to us or visit us at our offices:

Viewpoint Housing Association
4 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh
EH9 2HG

Telephone during office hours: **0131 668 4247 ***

- **Option 1:** To Report a Repair
- **Option 2:** To Speak to a Member of the Housing Team

Email: admin@viewpoint.org.uk

Visit our website: www.viewpoint.org.uk

Our Offices are open:

- Monday 9am - 5pm
- Tuesday 9am - 5pm
- Wednesday 10am - 5pm
- Thursday 9am - 5pm
- Friday 9am - 4.30pm

If you have an emergency when the office is closed please telephone **0345 604 4686** or pull your emergency cord if you have one.

Public Holidays

Our offices are closed on the following public holidays each year. Please note that where these dates fall at the weekend the public holiday will move to the Monday and/or Tuesday of the following week.

- New Year's Day and 2nd January
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Christmas Day and Boxing Day

Recording of Calls

* Please note that we record telephone calls to and from our Receptionist and designated Housing Team and Repairs Team telephone extensions. This supports effective training and delivery of high standards of customer service. It also enables Viewpoint to deal efficiently and effectively with internal or external complaints.

Call recordings will be automatically recorded, stored securely and automatically deleted after 3 months. Where a decision is made to keep the recording for longer than 3 months it is saved to our system, and only kept for the period necessary and deleted in accordance with the timescales specified within Viewpoint's Data Retention Policy. For more information, please refer to our Privacy Policy and Fair Processing Notice, which are available on our website.

We may be required to disclose call recordings to third parties such as the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Solicitors and/or the Police.

Section 2:
**Your Rent and
Service Charges**

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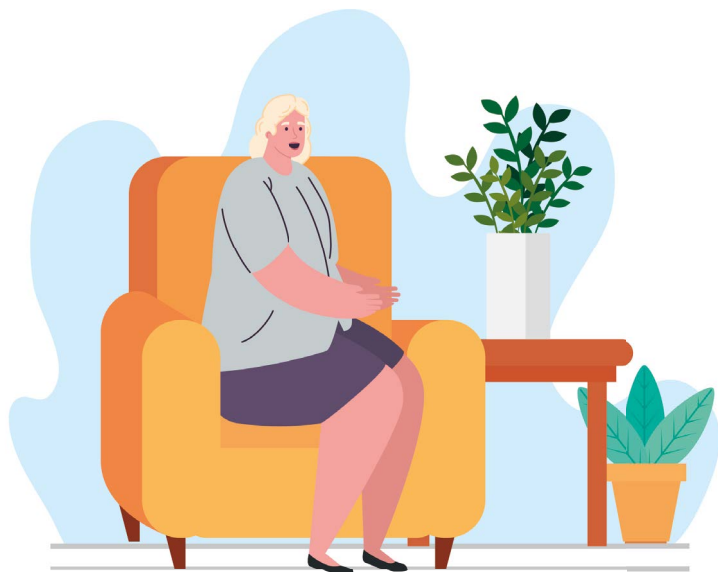
2.1 When is my rent and service charge due to be paid?

Your rent and service charge is due on the first of each month and you should be paying monthly in advance as stated in your tenancy agreement.

2.2 How much is my rent and service charges?

You will be told what your rent and service charges are when you sign your tenancy agreement.

In February each year, we will tell you what your new rent and service charges will be from the 1st April of that year.



2.3 How do I pay my rent and service charges?

There are several ways that you can pay your rent and service charges:

- Direct debit on the 1st (or by agreement with your Housing Officer on the 15th) of the month. This is our recommended method.
- Online on our website using a debit card – www.viewpoint.org.uk/make-a-payment-online/
- Bank Transfer (BACS)
- At the Post Office or any shop displaying the Pay Point sign using your All Pay card. – if you would like an All Pay card to pay your rent then please let us know and we will order one for you
- Using the All Pay app or at www.allpayments.net
- Standing Order
- By Post with a cheque – remember to put your name and address on the back of your cheque along with your rent account number if you have it. Please do not send cash in the post.
- In cash at our head office or to your Co-ordinator, if you have one

2.4 How do I get help with paying my rent?

If you are on certain benefits or a low income, you may be able to claim housing benefit (housing payment if in receipt of Universal Credit).

In order to do this you need to complete an application form and submit it to your local Council. Proof of your income and any savings you have will be required. If you need help with this, please speak to our welfare benefits adviser (see Section 3 – Money Matters)

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit then any help with your rent will be part of your monthly Universal Credit payment. If your housing payment money is paid to you then you need to make sure that you then pay the money to the Association.

If your housing benefit or Universal Credit does not cover the full cost of your rent and service charges, you will have to pay the difference yourself.

2.5 What happens if I cannot pay my rent?

If you are having difficulty paying your rent you should contact your Housing Officer immediately to discuss this. They will discuss the reasons for the problem and try to assist you in any way they can e.g. repayment plan, referral to our Welfare Rights Officer, referral to money advice etc.

It is important that you take action and contact us as soon as you have a problem as this makes it easier for you to sort things out.

2.6 What happens if I do not pay my rent?

We have an arrears policy and procedure, which means you would be contacted by letter, by home visit and by phone to try to help you resolve the problem and set up a repayment plan.

If you do not pay or do not keep to your repayment plan then the Association may take you to court to evict you from your tenancy. This is why it is important that you let us know when there is a problem so that we can give you advice and assistance to resolve this.

Eviction from your home is not an action that we take lightly and is a last resort when a tenant does not pay their rent.

2.7 How is my rent and service charge calculated?

We have a rent setting policy that is available on our website or you can contact any member of staff for a copy of this. Your rent charge is based on property type, size and accommodation type. Your service charges are dependent on where you live and what services are available to you e.g. laundry facilities. Some of our properties have communal heating or heating and hot water boilers and relevant charges are made to cover this service.

Each year the Board reviews the rents and service charges. All tenants are advised of the proposals and have the opportunity to give feedback on this. All feedback is then presented to the Board, along with other financial information for the Board to make a final decision on the rent and service charges for the following year. Tenants are then advised what their rent and service charge will be for the coming year.

2.8 What are my service charges for?

Your service charges will depend on the type of accommodation that you live in and these will be discussed with you at the start of your tenancy. You will only get charged for services that are part of your tenancy agreement.

Service charges include landscape maintenance, laundry facilities, common area expenses, catering and heating and/or hot water.



Section 3:

Money Matters

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3.1 Welfare Benefits

What is a Welfare Benefit?

A welfare benefit is money paid by the government to you if you are on a low income e.g. you have no job, in a low paid job, are unable to work through ill health etc. There are also benefits that are not dependent on income such as child benefit and the state pension. Welfare benefits are an entitlement and if you qualify, you should make sure that you take steps to make a claim.

3.2 How do I know if I qualify for any Welfare Benefits?

Our Welfare Rights Officer can carry out a benefit check & assessment to make sure that you are claiming everything you are entitled to. You can contact our Welfare Rights Officer by telephoning our office on **0131 668 4247**.

You can also go online to check your entitlement to means based benefits by using

www.turn2us.org.uk/benefits/calculator

What can the Welfare Rights Officer do?

Our Welfare Rights Officer can identify benefits that you may be entitled to and help with making a claim for benefits, the majority of these are now made online. They can also assist with reviews, reconsiderations, appeals and attend tribunal or medicals with you. They can pursue problems with the relevant departments to resolve issues that you may be having in trying to make your benefit claim.

3.3 Money Advice

I cannot afford to pay my bills – what do I do?

If you are claiming your welfare benefit entitlements but are still struggling to make ends meet then you can get some assistance with budgeting through a money advice service.

Will I have to pay to get money advice?

You should not have to pay for money advice, although there are companies that do charge for their services. Below are some organisations that offer free, confidential and impartial advice:

- **Citizens Advice:** Speak to a member of the Money Talk Team by calling **0800 085 7145**, get more information on line at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/debt-and-money or contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- **Money Advice Scotland:** Telephone **0141 572 0237**, go online at www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk or email info@moneyadvicescotland.org.uk
- **Step Change Debt Charity:** Telephone **0800 138 1111** or online at www.stepchange.org
- Speak to our Welfare Rights Officer, who can help you find a money advice worker.

Another valuable money advice source is the Money Saving Expert online at www.moneysavingexpert.com. This has advice and tips about saving money, household bills, insurance etc.

3.4 Credit Unions

A credit union is a place where you can save your money and get loans at competitive rates. Credit Unions are 'not-for-profit', so any money made goes back to the people who use it via their rates and dividends.

For more information, or to find a credit union close to you go online at www.creditunions.scot

3.5 Energy Saving Advice

There are a number of ways you can keep your energy bills down:

- Turn your thermostat down by 1°C can save up to £65 per year
- Use low energy lightbulbs and switch off lights you are not using
- Turn off appliances at the plug – don't leave appliances on standby
- Only boil the water in your kettle that you are actually going to use
- Use a wash bowl rather than washing your dishes under a running tap
- Paying your bill by direct debit may be cheaper than paying a quarterly bill – ask your supplier for further information on the cheapest payment methods
- Further information on energy saving can be found at www.changeworks.org.uk/

Switching Energy Supplier

Compare different suppliers to get the cheapest tariff. You can compare prices on a comparison website to see what is on offer. Websites like www.uswitch.com (or telephone. **0800 688 8663**) can help.

Please note that if you have communal heating and/or hot water supply and you pay this as a service charge to Viewpoint that you cannot change supplier for that service. We aim to ensure that the contract we have for suppliers is value for money.



Section 4:

Repairs and Maintenance

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Keeping your home in a good state of repair is important to you and to the Association. If you have a repair to your home or to the common areas then you need to let us know as soon as possible.

4.1 How do I report a repair?

You can report a repair as follows:

- By telephone on our Freephone number
0800 345 7347
- By email to repair@viewpoint.org.uk
- Through our website
www.viewpoint.org.uk/request-a-repair/
- In person at our offices or directly to onsite staff
- If you live on a staffed site and there is a common repair then you should report this to the member of staff on duty, unless it is an emergency when you should report it directly
- If you do not live on a staffed site and a common repair is required then you should report it as you would a repair to your home

What if there is an emergency and the office is closed?

If our offices are closed and you have an emergency repair then you should either

- Telephone Hanover Telecare who deal with our out of hours emergency repair calls on
0345 604 4686
- Pull the cord of your alarm system if you have one

4.2 How long will I wait for my repair to be done?

We will endeavour to repair as quickly as possible to avoid any inconvenience to you. When you contact us to report a repair, we will decide which repair category it falls into and this will give an indication of how long it will take to complete your repair. If your repair is covered by Right to Repair (see Section 4.4) you will be told this when you call.

4.3 What are the categories for repairs?

Emergency

Repair will be made safe within 2 hours and complete within 24 hours, if possible. An emergency repair is where it is likely to cause injury to individuals or substantial damage to the property. Examples are floods or significant leaks, no electricity, no water, no heating, blocked toilet, board up broken window etc.

Urgent

Completed within 3 working days. An urgent repair is one that may cause inconvenience to the tenant but little possibility of further damage if dealt with within these timescales. Examples are faulty light fittings, partial loss of water, faulty door entry system etc.

Routine

Completed within 15 working days. These are non-hazardous routine repairs

4.4 How will I know when the contractor is coming to carry out the repair?

For an emergency repair, the response will be within 2 hours and there may be a return visit required to finish the repair.

For urgent and routine repairs, the contractor will contact you to arrange an appointment to carry out the repair.

Our contractors will have identification when they call at your home.

How do you make sure that the work is completed properly?

In line with our policy, 10% of completed repairs are post inspected by the Assets team. This assists in monitoring the contractors and the quality of work.

On completion of routine and urgent repairs, tenants are issued with a satisfaction card regarding the repair and about their experience with the contractor e.g. were they polite, did they clean up after themselves. All tenants who complete a satisfaction survey will be entered into our quarterly prize draw to win a shopping voucher.

If a tenant or the asset management team are not happy with the quality of the repair then the contractor is asked to call back to rectify the work. There is no additional cost to the Association for this.

What is the Right to Repair?

Certain repairs fall under the Right to Repair. This means that tenants have the right to have small urgent repairs carried out by Viewpoint within a given timescale.

These repairs have been defined within Scottish law and the table below show the timescales for completion (up to the value of £350). These are known as qualifying repairs.



Fault (Qualifying Repair)	Max Days**
Unsafe power or lighting sockets or electrical fittings	1
Loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
External window, door lock not secure	1
Loss or partial loss of room or water heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilets which do not flush (where there are no other toilets in the house)	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans (where there is no other toilet in the house)	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1
Loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Significant leaking from a water or heating pipe, tank or cistern	1
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Unsafe access to a path or step	1
Loose or detached banisters or handrails	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

** Working days from day after date of notification of qualifying repair or inspection.

If qualifying repairs are not attended to within the timescales, you have the right to appoint another contractor to carry out the work agreed (up to a value of £350). We can give you the contact details for our alternative approved contractors, as you have to use an approved contractor.

If we fail to complete a qualifying repair within the maximum time allowed, you may be entitled to £15 compensation, and a further £3 per day for every day the repair remains outstanding to a maximum of £100.

For further information on the right to Repair go to www.gov.scot/publications/right-repair/



4.5 What repairs am I responsible for?

Viewpoint provide a comprehensive repairs service, however there are some repairs, which are considered the responsibility of the tenant.

Listed below are the repair responsibilities for you as the tenant and Viewpoint's responsibilities.

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Balconies	✓		
Bannister (internal)	✓		
Baths	✓		
Bin Stores	✓		
Brickwork, blockwork, etc	✓		
Ceilings	✓		
Chimney stacks/pots/cowls	✓		
Chimney sweeping		✓	
Cisterns	✓		
Clothes pole	✓		
Cookers - only where provided by Viewpoint	✓		
Communal areas to flats	✓		

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Communal TV systems	✓		
Damp-proof courses	✓		
Decoration - internal		✓	
Door bell		✓	When the Association have supplied/ fitted for specific need or with a new door
Doors to common area	✓		
Doors/door fittings - external	✓		
Door locks	✓		When tenant has lost or broken the key
Doors - internal	✓		Holes in panel doors
Down pipes, rain & soil	✓		

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Drainage-Blockage in internal wastepipes	✓		When blockage caused by tenant negligence and have evidence to support this
Drainage - Excluding above	✓		
Driveways		✓	Where part of pedestrian access to house or if fitted by the Association or inherited and kept by Viewpoint
Drying areas	✓		
Electric plugs		✓	
Electric wiring, sockets & switches	✓		
Entry systems	✓		
Fascia, soffit boards, etc	✓		

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Fences - garden boundary	✓		
Fences - between gardens		✓	Where fence has been provided by the Association or inherited and kept by Viewpoint
Floor tiles	✓		When fitted by the current tenant
Floorboards	✓		
Foundations	✓		
Fuse box, fuses etc	✓		
Gas central heating/pipes/ radiators/ timer/pumps/ thermostats	✓		Unauthorised installations and those not adopted by the Association for maintenance
Gas piping	✓		
Garages	✓		
Garden huts		✓	

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Gates	✓		Only when provided by the Association or inherited by Viewpoint and kept
Greenhouses		✓	
Glass - external		✓	Normally, tenants should claim the cost of replacement from their house contents insurance
Glass to internal doors/screen		✓	
Guttering	✓		
Hatch to loft (communal or individual)	✓		
Handrails - external	✓		
Immersion heaters	✓		Unauthorised installation
Keys (replacement)		✓	

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Kitchen fittings & worktops	✓		Unauthorised installations and those not adopted by the Association for maintenance
Lifts	✓		
Lighting pendants, roses and lights	✓	✓	Where there is a sealed lighting unit in the bathroom, the lamp is over 10 feet high or if fluorescent lighting is faulty Viewpoint will be responsible
Overflow pipes	✓		
Painting - external	✓		
Painting - internal		✓	
Parking area (communal)	✓		

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Paths	✓		
Plaster & plasterboard	✓		
Pumps	✓		Unauthorised installation
Radiators	✓		Unauthorised installation
Rotary clothes lines – exclusive use		✓	
Rotary clothes lines - communal	✓		
Roofs, roof tiles/slates, roof lights	✓		
Roughcast	✓		
Shower unit		✓	Only when provided by the Association or inherited by Viewpoint and kept
Sink bowl & drainer	✓		
Skirting boards	✓		

Item	Viewpoint	Tenant	Exceptions
Smoke detectors	✓		
Stair lighting	✓		
Taps	✓		
Toilet seats	✓		Non standard item will be replaced
TV aerial communal sockets	✓		Unless damaged by tenant through neglect
Ventilators and fans	✓		Unauthorised installations
Wash hand basin	✓		
Washer on taps	✓		
Waste plugs/ chains to basin/bath/ sink		✓	
Water heating	✓		Unauthorised installations
Water supply	✓		
WC	✓		
Window frames, sills & fittings	✓		

The exception would be where there has been wilful, negligent or accidental actions by the tenant to cause the repair and this will mean that the tenant will be responsible for the cost of the repair(s).

Who is responsible for graffiti removal?

Where graffiti appears on external surfaces or in internal areas such as close walls, we will remove this as soon as possible. If the graffiti is offensive, this will be treated as an emergency.



4.6 What about maintenance and servicing contracts?

In addition to carrying out repairs, we also have maintenance and servicing contracts to deal with specific issues. Details of this type of work and their frequency is detailed below.

These are all essential to ensure that you are safe in your home and therefore you must make access available. We will give you an appointment for this work and if this does not suit, then telephone as soon as possible to re-arrange.

Please note that we are required to carry out your gas servicing by law and if you do not give access then we will arrange to force access to your home to carry out the work. You will then be re-charged for the cost of the forced entry. Gas servicing is annual, however it will normally be arranged every 11 months to ensure access and that the annual inspection target is met.

Type of servicing	Frequency
Gas servicing	Annually
Alarm/pull cord servicing	Annually
Electric Inspection	Every 5 years
Shower hoses	Quarterly

4.7 Can I alter or adapt my home or carry out improvements?

If you wish to carry out alterations or improvements to your property, you must obtain permission, in writing, from us before you start the work. Please contact us to obtain the form that you need to complete in order for us to be able to make a decision.

Will I get any compensation for the costs of my alterations and improvements?

You have the right to compensation for particular tenant improvements to your home at the end of your tenancy. Legislation states which improvements are included in the scheme, how the compensation is calculated, and the minimum and maximum amounts payable. You should make sure that you retain receipts for the work that has been carried out, as you will require these to make a claim.

Please ask a member of staff for further details if at the end of your tenancy, you think you may be entitled to this.

If I have particular needs are you able to adapt my house to meet them?

If you have particular needs e.g. need a walk in shower in your bathroom or a ramp to your front door (called Stage 3 adaptations), then you normally require a referral from the Occupational Therapist (OT). The OT will call at your home to assess what you can do and decide the best adaptation to meet your need.

If you do not know how to contact the OT, or are unable to contact the OT yourself then please let either your co-ordinator or a member of the housing team know and they will help you.

Please note that the Association does not have any say in the timing of the OT assessment, therefore, we cannot indicate how long your assessment will take.

If an adaptation is required for you to be able to live in your home with more ease, the OT's recommendation will be passed to our repairs department. From there a technical officer will survey your home to assess if the adaptation is possible; sometimes this is jointly carried out with our specialist contractor. This visit can confirm if the adaptation is possible, and give a timescale that the works required would take and a start date for the works.

4.8 What is the programme for Viewpoint improvements to my home?

We are continually developing our planned maintenance programme, which identifies the fixtures and fitting in each property and predicts their lifespan over a 30-year period. Examples of items in our planned maintenance programme are:

- Replacement kitchens and bathrooms
- Replacement central heating boilers and heating systems
- Replacement doors and windows
- Renewal of electrical fittings
- Replacement roofs

We share our plans for future investment work to our housing stock through the tenants' newsletter, and we will consult you on any future proposals by letter or email. We publish information on our website at www.viewpoint.org.uk

4.9 Fire Safety Responsibilities as a Landlord

We have responsibility as landlord to ensure that the homes we let comply with health and safety standards to ensure that there is satisfactory provision for detecting fires and for giving warning in the event of fire or suspected fire. This includes:

- Fire detection in all individual homes
- Fire detection in a number of communal areas in our complexes
- Emergency lighting in a number of communal areas in our complexes
- Fire Fighting Equipment (FFE) in a number of communal areas in our complexes



4.10 Fire Safety – Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

You should always take care in your home to ensure that your actions do not create the right environment for a fire to start. The Fire and Rescue Service have a list of advice to help you prevent a fire from breaking out in your home.

- **Smokers** - Make sure cigarettes are properly stubbed out in an ashtray and empty your ashtray regularly. Never smoke in bed.
- **Candles and Tea lights** – make sure you candles are in candle holders and cannot be knocked over. Keep the candles away from anything that can catch fire such as curtains, cushions, cards, television etc. Never leave a lit candle alone – not even for a few seconds and make sure that your candle is properly snuffed out before going to bed.
- **Electrical Appliances**
 - Most appliances now come with a sealed plug, however if this is not the case make sure you are using the correct fuse according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - If your fuse 'blows' this probably means there is a fault in your appliance.
 - Unplug appliances when you are not using them.
 - Reduce the risk of fire involving white goods such as washing machines by avoiding using them when you are out or asleep.
 - Do not allow your freezer to ice up as this can eventually lead to a fire.

- o Do not run electric cables under carpets or rugs as they can be damaged by walking over them.
- o Never use more than one adaptor in a socket to prevent overload and use a star adaptor as opposed to a block adaptor. NB the total amps of your appliances in an adaptor should not exceed 13 amp. This means if you have a 4 way adaptor you can put 4 x 3amp plugs in as this comes to 12 amps but you could not put a 3amp and a 13 amp plug in the same adaptor.
- o Check cables on your appliances regularly and if damaged do not use the item.
- o Never repair and re-join cables.



- Lampshades advise of maximum wattage of the bulb you can use. Check the wattage of the bulb before fitting the shade as a higher watt bulb can cause the shade to overheat and catch fire.
- Never cover lightshades or lightbulbs as the heat could start a fire.
- Do not cook if you are very tired or if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- If you cook in deep oil, use an electric fat fryer rather than a traditional chip pan as they have safety cut outs.
- If you do use a chip pan:
 - Only ever fill with 1/3 oil
 - Fry in small amounts as overfilling causes spills
 - Turn the handle to the side but do not let it hang over other rings
 - Make sure the food you put in the hot fat is dry and not dripping wet or covered in ice
 - Never leave the pan unattended
- If you are grilling fatty foods make sure you clean the grill pan as fatty deposits build up and can catch fire.
- Make sure you have no cables trailing across or near to the cooker
- Never dry towels on top of the cooker
- If using a portable heater keep it 3 ft away from anything that could catch fire e.g. chairs, clothing, curtains etc.

- If putting an electric blanket away in a cupboard always roll it and never fold it as this could damage the wires
- Do not leave your electric blanket on all night unless it is marked 'suitable for all night use'
- Make sure heaters and fires have guards
- Don't leave matches or lighters where children can find them
- When you are going to bed, or leaving the house have a quick check to make sure everything is switched off that should be and all is safe.



Section 5: Other Tenancy Matters

VIEWPOINT 

5.1 Keeping Pets

Do I need permission to have a pet?

We recognise that keeping a pet can be beneficial to some people's physical and mental wellbeing. Before you get a pet, you must get Viewpoint's permission in writing. Permission, if given, will be to keep one pet.

How do I get permission to keep a pet?

You can get an information leaflet with an application form from any member of Viewpoint staff or from our website. You will need to read the leaflet and complete the application form giving details of the pet and information about who would look after it in the event of you being unable to do so.

You will then receive a letter from your Housing Officer confirming if permission has been granted.

You will need to make sure that your pet is kept under control, and does not cause nuisance to neighbours or damage to your property or the common areas.

Please note that if you, or your visitors, have a dog you must:

- Keep the dog on a short leash within the internal and external common areas
- Not allow the dog to foul on Viewpoint grounds

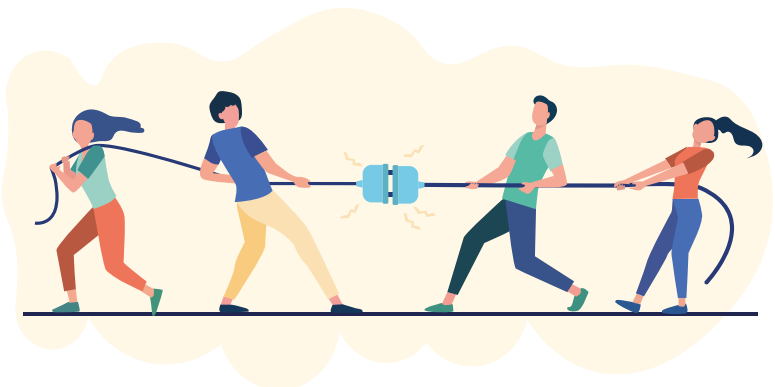
If you do not keep your pet under proper control, then you may be asked to make alternative arrangements for it.

5.2 Neighbour Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour

Problems with neighbours can range from loud music or dumping of rubbish through to drug dealing or racial abuse. There is no single answer to resolving these issues.

Some issues can be resolved prior to them becoming a problem. You need to be aware of how your actions can affect your neighbour(s). You can then minimise any issues that might arise. Examples of this could be:

- If you are hard of hearing wireless headphones to listen to your television or music may be of benefit
- If you are unable to get rubbish in your bin because it is full then maybe your neighbour has space in theirs rather than just dumping it and hoping that the birds or rats don't burst the bag open



What should I do if my neighbour is being anti-social or causing a nuisance?

Neighbour complaints are all different and there is no one answer to any of the problems that arise. If you are experiencing neighbour nuisance then speaking to your neighbour may be enough to resolve the problem.

Ongoing neighbour nuisance, or serious anti-social behaviour, may need you to make a complaint to your Housing Officer. They will discuss the issue with you and tell you what can be done. They will offer you advice and assistance, which may include a referral to, or involvement of, other agencies.

If criminal activity is involved, you should contact the police to discuss this with them, as well as speaking to your housing officer.

We will not tell the person you are complaining about who has made the complaint without your consent. The person may guess it is you that has made the complaint.

Our policy and procedures are on our website or you can get a copy of these by asking any member of staff.

5.3 Maintaining Garden Areas

Do I have to maintain the garden?

In areas where there is common garden ground the Association will undertake to maintain this ground and this will be included as part of your rent and service charges.

If you have your own garden, you will be responsible for maintaining this. We are not looking for perfection but would expect the grass and hedges to be kept neat and tidy, paths and flowerbeds weeded regularly and rubbish to be disposed of properly.



5.4 House Content Insurance

The Association will insure the building and fixtures to your home but we do not insure your contents. You should make sure that you have your own contents insurance to cover you in the event of any incident such as theft, fire, flood or accidental damage.

5.5 Window Cleaning

Who is responsible for cleaning the windows?

Outside windows are cleaned in our sheltered, alarmed and retirement properties and this is included in your rent and service charge. We do not clean the inside windows of individual flats but we will clean the inside of the communal area windows, corridors or stairwells.

5.6 Stair Cleaning

Who is responsible for cleaning the communal stairs and landings?

In our sheltered, alarmed and retirement properties this service is included. For general needs flats, this varies and you will have been told this when you signed for your tenancy.

5.7 Mobility Scooters

Do I need to let Viewpoint know I am going to get a mobility scooter?

Yes, we have a policy on keeping mobility scooters. You have to apply for permission before you hire or buy the mobility scooter. Staff will carry out a risk assessment to ensure safe storage and charging is possible in your area. For full information on keeping a mobility scooter please ask a member of staff for the tenant information leaflet and/or the policy.

5.8 Additional Services in Sheltered and Alarmed Properties

If you are living in sheltered, retirement or alarmed housing, there may be additional facilities that are available to you e.g. laundry or common area for social events. If you live in sheltered housing, you will also have a member of staff on site (times dependent on where you live). Full details of the services you have available and the times staff will be on site are contained in the local leaflet given to you when you signed your tenancy agreement. If you would like another copy of this, please speak to your co-ordinator or a member of the housing team.

5.9 My home is no longer suitable for my needs. What can I do?

If your home is no longer suitable for you and you need to move you can apply for a change of house. Please speak to a member of staff who can advise you or refer to our website at www.viewpoint.org.uk/housing-support/how-to-apply/

However if you are happy in your present home and would prefer to stay there please let us know as we may be able to help you stay there. We can look at getting you additional support or adaptations to your home that may save you having to move. For more information on adaptations, please see Section 4.7 of this handbook.

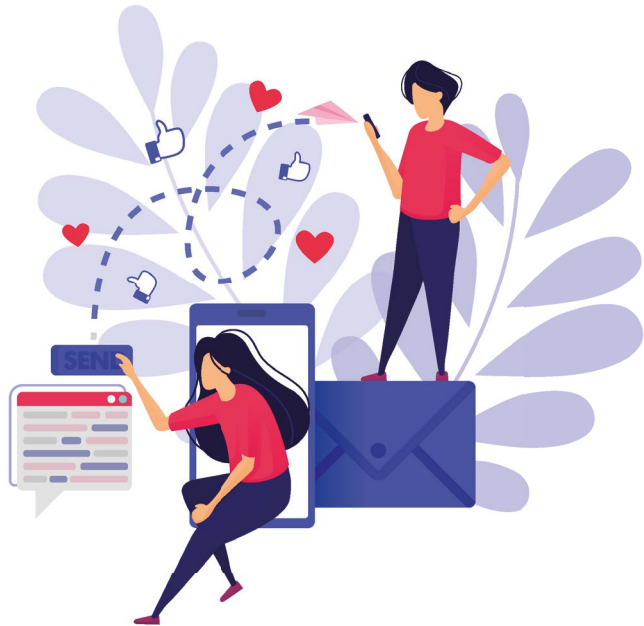
5.10 How do I end my tenancy?

Full details of how your tenancy can be ended is in your tenancy agreement. In summary, your tenancy can end in the following ways:

- You, and any joint tenant, must give us at least 28 days' notice in writing.
- By written agreement between you, and if applicable the joint tenants, and us
- By your death if the house does not legally transfer to someone else who is living with you.
- If you abandon the property
- By converting the tenancy to a short Scottish secure tenancy (through the court)
- By court order for eviction

Section 6:
Tenant Participation
– how to get involved

VIEWPOINT 



There are many ways that you can be involved with your housing association. Below is a list of the regular ways to be involved; however, there may be other opportunities, which we advertise in our Newsletter and on our website.

We also welcome ideas from you so please do not hesitate to contact if you think there is something else we could be doing.

Provision of Information

You will receive our Newsletter, called Newspoint, three times per year: the autumn, winter and the spring. Newpoint provides information about social activities that tenants have been involved in, information about Viewpoint services and other information that we hope tenants find useful.

From time to time we may write to everyone to advise of important information such as a proposed change to our services.

We produce information on an annual basis about our performance e.g. Annual Performance Report, complaints summary, tenant participation summary. This lets you see what we have been doing, and what has gone well and areas we need to improve on. This information is published on our website and highlighted in Newpoint. You can request a paper copy of these documents from a member of staff.

Satisfaction Surveys

After you have had a repair carried out, you will receive a repairs satisfaction card. The information we gather from this allows us to monitor the contractor and to resolve service delivery issues to you as quickly as possible.

We send satisfaction surveys to new tenants as part of the settling in process. The information we gather helps us to ensure tenants are happy with our lettable standard and allows us to resolve any outstanding issues at the start the tenancy.

We carry out a tenant satisfaction survey every three years to try to find out what your views are of our services. This information is used to help shape services in the future.

Regular Tenant Meetings and Walkabouts

Some of our areas have regular quarterly meetings and walkabouts with the Technical Officer and Housing Officer for your area. This is an opportunity for you to discuss any local issues or any ideas that you feel would benefit your community. We may also seek your views at these meetings regarding policies and procedures or changes to services.

Please contact us if you are not sure whether there is a quarterly meeting in your area. If you do not have a quarterly meeting in your area and would like one, please contact your housing officer to discuss.

Tenant Volunteers

We hold a register of volunteers who are willing to be involved on specific issues and projects. You can be involved as an individual, or as part of a working groups. When you volunteer, you can tell us what kind of thing you would be interested in. The possible areas of interest are below and you can show interest in one or all of these things. We have divided this into 5 categories:

- Performance of Viewpoint
- Communication
- Recruitment of Staff
- Tenant conference planning
- Editorial Team for newsletter

If you are interested speak to a member of staff, telephone us on **0131 668 4247** or email tp@viewpoint.org.uk

Tenant Groups

We have two tenant groups: one for Fife tenants and one for Lothian tenants. These groups are independent, but work with Viewpoint to ensure tenants get the best service. They aim to work with you to provide opportunities for socialising so that you get to know other Viewpoint tenants.

You can contact the groups as follows

- **Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group** – FifeViewpointTG@gmail.com
- **Lothian Tenants Action Group** – Lothiantag@gmail.com

If you prefer to speak to one of the committee, contact our offices and we will pass a message onto the committee and ask them to contact you directly.

Both these groups aim to hold four open forums each year, to which all tenants living in that area are invited.



Section 7:
**Complaints,
Compliments and
Suggestions**

VIEWPOINT 



We actively encourage you to give your views about our homes and services.

Our website details our processes for making a complaint, a compliment or a suggestion.

www.viewpoint.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

If you wish a paper copy then please ask any member of staff for this.

Complaints

We want to provide you with the best service that we can so that you do not need to make a complaint. We apologise if you have had to make a complaint in the past and will endeavour to ensure that you do not feel the need to do so in the future. If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by:

- Speaking to a member of staff on the telephone or in person
- Through our website
www.viewpoint.org.uk/make-a-complaint/
- By email to feedback@viewpoint.org.uk
- In writing to our main office at **4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG**

If you do not feel confident enough to make a complaint on your own, you can ask someone to help you such as a relative or friend. If you wish, you can also use the services of an advocate and we have provided some details of advocacy services as part of our complaints leaflet. These are on our website or can be requested from any member of staff. Alternatively, you can search for an advocate online by entering a search in your search engine. See Section 8 for further information on advocacy.

If, after receiving our final decision, you are still unhappy with either the result – or the way in which we handled your complaint - you can ask the SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman) to look into it. We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision. Contact details for the SPSO are:

- Address: **SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS**
- Website: www.spsso.org.uk
- Freepost Address: Freepost, SPSO
- Freephone: **0800 377 7330**
- Online contact form:
www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Compliments

It is just as important for us to know what we do well as it is to know where we are going wrong. Compliments allow us to look at what you like about the services and build on that in other areas of the work that we do. You can compliment our services by:

- Speaking to a member of staff on the telephone or in person
- Through our website
www.viewpoint.org.uk/compliments-and-suggestions/
- By email to feedback@viewpoint.org.uk
- In writing to our main office at **4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG**

Suggestions

We want to offer you the opportunity to make suggestions to improve our services.

We now have a more formalised process to deal with your suggestions to ensure that if you make a suggestion that you will be advised of the outcome, regardless of whether the suggestions is followed up or not. You can make a suggestion by:

- Speaking to a member of staff on the telephone or in person
- Through our website
www.viewpoint.org.uk/compliments-and-suggestions/
- By email to feedback@viewpoint.org.uk
- In writing to our main office at **4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG**



Section 8: Advocacy Services

VIEWPOINT 

8.1 Do you need help to make sure your voice is heard?

At Viewpoint we would encourage you to discuss any housing issues with a member of staff, however we recognise that sometimes you may need a little bit of help to resolve your issues.

This may be needed because you are not in a position to do this yourself due to mental or physical health problems, a learning disability or just through a lack of confidence. It may be possible for a family member or friend to help you but, if not, there is help available for you, in the form of advocacy.

An advocate does not just deal with housing issues, but with other issues you may have such as with your doctor, the NHS, your dentist, your bank, etc.



8.2 What is Advocacy?

An advocate is a person who can help you make your needs and wishes known. They work to ensure that:

- The service is confidential, impartial and independent of Viewpoint
- You can access and understand information that you need or want
- You understand your rights
- You have a voice and that you are being listened to
- You are supported to make decisions
- You get help to make a complaint if you are unhappy with services

8.3 How do I find an Advocate to work with me?

You can find an advocate by:

- Using the internet and searching for advocacy service in your area
- See the list on our website of possible services (www.viewpoint.org.uk)
- Ask a member of staff for a paper copy of the list

The services listed by Viewpoint are all free of charge and independent of us.

Please note that there are other advocacy services available.

Section 9:

**Data Protection and
Access to Information**

VIEWPOINT 

9.1 Freedom of Information & Environmental Information

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI) requires Scottish Housing Associations to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which has the approval of the Scottish Information Commissioner. It must detail all of the key information that we publish and how you can access it.

Viewpoint is under a legal obligation to:

- Publish the classes of information that the authority makes routinely available
- Tell the public how to access the information and whether information is available free of charge or on payment
- Alongside the FOI, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR) provide a separate right of access to the environmental information that we hold.

Viewpoint has adopted the Scottish Information Commissioner's (SIC) Model Publication Scheme (MPS). (www.itspublicknowledge.info/ScottishPublicAuthorities/PublicationSchemes/TheModelPublicationScheme.aspx)

We have developed a Guide to Information which contains links to where you can find all the information available online or on request. You can access it online (www.viewpoint.org.uk/freedom-of-information/guide-to-information/) or ask a member of staff for assistance.

FOI & EIR give you the right to ask for and be given information. To exercise your right you can:

- Use our online form to submit a request for information (www.viewpoint.org.uk/freedom-of-information/information-request/);
- Contact our Data Protection Officer at dpo@viewpoint.org.uk;
- Ask a member of staff for assistance; or
- For more information visit our website: (www.viewpoint.org.uk/freedom-of-information/)



9.2 Data Protection

Data protection is the fair and proper use of information about people. It's part of the fundamental right to privacy.

The UK data protection regime is set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Under the data protection law, you have the following rights:

- Your right to be informed – Our Fair Processing Notice (FPN) assist with fulfilling these. You can access the FPN online (www.viewpoint.org.uk/data-protection/) or ask a member of staff for a paper copy.
- Your right of access - ask for a copy of the information held by us, in our records, about you.
- Your right to rectification – you can ask us to correct any inaccuracies in your information
- Your right to erasure - make a request to us to delete what personal data we hold
- Your right to restriction of processing - you can ask us to restrict the processing of your personal information, in certain circumstances.
- Your right to object to processing - you can object to the processing of your personal information when we use legitimate interest, consent or public interest as a legal basis for processing your information. For example, you can object to receiving any marketing communications from us.

- Your right to data portability – this only applies to information you have given us and when processing of information is based on your consent or performance of a contract. You can ask us to transfer your personal information to another organisation or give it to you in a useable format.

You should note that your rights under the GDPR and 2018 Act are not absolute and are subject to qualification.

When you ask us to do any of the above, we will normally respond within one month to let you know what we have done. There is no charge for this service.

To exercise the above rights you can:

- Use our online form (www.viewpoint.org.uk/data-protection/submit-data-protection-request/);
- Contact Data Protection Officer at dpo@viewpoint.org.uk; or
- Ask a member of staff for assistance.



Section 10:

Regulatory Bodies

VIEWPOINT 

10.1 Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The Scottish Housing Regulator regulates registered social landlords, and councils' landlord and homelessness services. The Scottish Housing Regulator was established on 1 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.

Their statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, people who are homeless, factored owners and Gypsy/Travellers.

The main functions of the Scottish Housing Regulator are 'To monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) in relation to social landlords' performance of housing activities and RSLs' financial well-being and standards of governance.'

The Regulator tries to ensure clear communication and effective working and actively involve tenants and other service users in their work. There is a guide for tenant and service users on the work of the Scottish Housing Regulator and can be found online at www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/how-we-regulate-information-for-tenants/

If you do not have access to the internet please contact us and we can provide you with a paper copy.

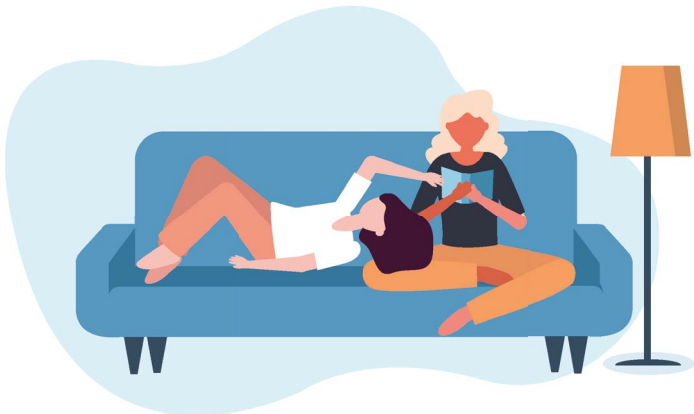
The Scottish Housing Regulator does not investigate individual complaints about a landlord. If you have a complaint then you should follow Viewpoint's complaints process as outlined in Section 7.

Significant Performance Failures

The Regulator will look at significant performance failures. A significant performance failure is something that your landlord does, or fails to do, that puts many or all of its tenants at risk, and it does not take action to put it right e.g. consistently not doing repairs when it should, not carrying out gas safety checks when it should. You can find out more information from the Scottish Housing Regulator Guide (see above).

To report a significant performance failure you can:

- Telephone: **0141 242 5642**
- Write to : **Scottish Housing Regulator, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 OHF**
- Email: shr@shr.gov.uk
- Online: www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/how-we-regulate-information-for-tenants/significant-performance-failure-reporting-form



10.2 Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

The ICE is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

The Scottish ICO office is in Edinburgh. As well as operating an advice service to address general enquiries, it promotes good practice in data protection by raising awareness of organisational responsibilities across all sectors. It also influences policy in related areas by working closely with the departments of the Scottish government and the wider public sector.

Further information on the ICO can be found online at ico.org.uk/

If you wish to raise a concern with the ICO then you can:

- Write to: **Queen Elizabeth House, Sibbald Walk, Edinburgh, EH8 8FT**
- Telephone: **0303 123 1115**
- Online: ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

10.3 Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) has a wide remit, covering a variety of functions and services. The Ombudsman's powers and duties come (predominantly) from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002, which gives four distinct statutory functions:

1. The final stage for complaints about most devolved public services in Scotland including councils, the health service, prisons, water and sewerage providers, Scottish Government, universities and colleges.
2. Specific powers and responsibilities to publish complaints handling procedures, and monitor and support best practice in complaints handling.
3. Independent review service for the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) with the power to overturn and substitute decisions made by councils on Community Care and Crisis Grant applications.
4. Independent National Whistleblowing Officer for the NHS in Scotland (INWO) – from 1 April 2021 – final stage for complaints about how the NHS considers whistleblowing disclosures and the treatment of individuals concerned.

Before making a complaint to the SPSO you should ensure that Viewpoint complaints procedure has been followed. Details on making a complaint and how to contact the SPSO are shown in Section 7.

Section II: Useful Contacts

VIEWPOINT 

11.1 My housing and technical officer contact details

Name	Contact Details
My Housing Officer is	
My Technical Officer is	

11.2 Local Authority contact details

Name	Contact Details
Edinburgh City Council	www.edinburgh.gov.uk/contact
Refuse, Recycling and Environmental Health	0131 608 1100
Council Tax and Benefits	0131 608 1111
Fife Council	www.fife.gov.uk/contact-us
Domestic bins etc.	03451 55 00 22
Council Tax and Benefits	03451 55 11 55
Mid Lothian Council	www.midlothian.gov.uk/forms/
	0131 270 7500
East Lothian Council	www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210560/your_council/12319/contact_us
	01620 827 827
	customerservices@eastlothian.gov.uk

11.3 My contacts

Name	Contact Details
NHS 24	Call 111
My Doctor is	