VIEWPOINT Winter 2024

Fire Safety and Common Areas

An essential read for all Page 1

Harassaga towards our staff

Why it is never acceptable Page 8

newspoint

Highlights

Page 6 Welfare Benefits Service Could it help you?

Page II Review of Quarterly Meetings

Page 18 Croft-an-Righ & Canongate Kirk

Page 12

Keep Warm This Winter Some tips to keep you cosy

Important Information

Telephone

0131 668 4247 Freephone Repair Number 0800 345 7347 Out of Hours Emergency Number

0345 604 4686

admin@viewpoint.org.uk www.viewpoint.org.uk

👖 / ViewpointHA

Opening Hours

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am - 5pm

Wednesday 10am - 5pm

Friday 9am - 4.30pm

Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

Our offices will be closed on 25th and 26th December 2024 and 1st and 2nd January 2025.

Please note that there will be no staff on site on these dates.

If you have an emergency during this time tenants in sheltered and alarmed housing are still able to contact Telecare by using their pull cords.

Our out of hours emergency support service can be contacted by all tenants on **0345 604 4686**

© Viewpoint Housing Association Ltd. 4 South Oswald Road Edinburgh EH9 2HG

Scottish Charity No SC005619.

A Scottish Charitable Housing Association. Register of Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies No. 1228 RS. Register of Housing Associations No HEP199. Scottish Property Factor No PF000364

Welcome to your Winter Edition of Newspoint

As winter settles in, we are delighted to bring you a packed and informative edition of Newspoint. We have worked to make this issue both interesting and entertaining, offering vital updates and insights for you as a valued Viewpoint tenant, along with a look at recent happenings around our houses.

One article of particular importance covers our Clear Corridor Policy, which ensures we meet essential fire regulations. If you read only one thing in this issue, make it this! We also provide a performance overview for Viewpoint during 2023/2024, celebrating our achievements and highlighting areas for improvement.

Additionally, we address a serious matter affecting staff wellbeing: verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of staff members is strictly unacceptable, and we just want to highlight this in light of recent changes in legislation. To help protect you from scams, we are also including critical information on scam calls and warnings about a recent text scam connected to winter fuel payments.

On the lighter side, this edition includes a Find the Santa competition, a fascinating look at Canongate Kirk, fun filled quiz nights, and highlights from fabulous fundraising events that took place around our houses.

Lastly, we know winter can be challenging, so remember to keep warm. If you find yourself struggling to heat or eat, please reach out to a staff member, and we will do our best to find services to help prevent a crisis.

With best wishes for a safe and warm winter **The Editorial Team**

Join the Newspoint Team!

We are looking for tenants interested in contributing to Newspoint, our newsletter published 3 times per year. Join the team to help make Newspoint an engaging and informative publication!.

What is involved?

- Meetings: Just one or two short meetings per issue, either in person or online
- Flexible Commitment: Participate as much as you like. You can join for just one issue or as many as you would like—it is entirely up to you.
- Have Fun: Meet other tenants, have fun, and help shape the newsletter for everyone.

Please note we will cover travel expenses for meetings or provide IT equipment for joining online, so there are no costs to you for taking part. If you are interested, speak to any staff member or contact Heather by:

Phone:	0131 662 5142 or 07554 389 180
Email:	tp@viewpoint.org.uk
Post:	4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG

Join us and make Newspoint a newsletter we all love!



Important News about Communal Areas

On occasions we encounter some issues within communal areas we manage. In this newsletter we wanted to clearly set out and remind tenants about the importance of following our fire safety policy to ensure you remain safe. We understand that you may wish to make communal areas more homely and display personal items, however, as your landlord we need to ensure we comply with all relevant legislation.

Fire Safety in Communal Areas

Viewpoint has a Fire Safety Policy that complies with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, wider legislation and current best practice. Part of the policy outlines how we manage communal areas at our housing sites. The full policy is available for download from our website or speak to any member of staff.

What is a Communal Area?

A communal area is any area that is not within the confines of the tenant's property. This includes, but not limited to, stairs, stairwells, corridors, landings, lounges, laundry rooms and foyer entrances to the building. There are also external communal areas such as landscaped / planted areas, car parks and mobility scooter storage facilities.

We carry out regular fire risk assessments and we will take all reasonably practicable action to eliminate or adequately control any risks identified in communal areas.

Our Responsibilities

We clearly and regularly communicate our policy regarding communal areas to tenants.

When new tenants sign up for Viewpoint properties we remind them that we have a zero tolerance approach to keeping items in communal areas, other than those furnishings provided by us.

All new tenants sign a Good Neighbour Agreement and tenancy agreement which contain important conditions relating to communal areas.

We carry out regular fire risk assessments and we will take all reasonably practicable action to eliminate or adequately control any risks identified in communal areas.

We carry out regular inspections of communal areas to ensure they are kept clean, tidy and free of any items.

We make sure that the communal areas, both internal and external, are managed effectively and kept free from obstructions or hazards to protect the health and safety of tenants, staff and other users of our buildings. This is particularly important to ensure there is a safe route for emergency services.

We will remove any items considered to be an immediate fire risk or trip hazard without notice.

We will give you reasonable time to remove any items that are found in communal areas. Failure to remove such goods will result in us removing the items to a place of storage for a period onemonth (in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1982 The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982: Section 93). Any goods that are not reclaimed will be disposed of without compensation. The costs associated with removal, storage and disposal will be re-charged to the tenant concerned.

Appropriate legal action will be taken against any person who persistently breaches rules relating to the use of communal areas.

We will ensure that all furniture and furnishings provided by us within communal areas comply with The Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).

We provide comprehensive fire safety awareness training to our staff on a regular basis.

Your responsibilities

By signing up for a tenancy with Viewpoint you entered into an agreement not to keep any items in communal areas. Unless a designated area for storage is provided, no items should be kept in any communal area as we adopt a **zero tolerance approach**. This includes, but not limited to:

- Furniture such as bookcases, tables, chairs
- Door mats
- Artificial or real plants
- Shoes, boots and trainers, including storage racks
- Decorative items such as wreaths including fixing them to your entrance door
- Electrical equipment
- Storing or charging Mobility scooters / bicycles / motorbikes / mopeds
- Flammable liquids or gas bottles
- · Pushchairs and prams
- Children's toys
- Items left by previous tenants
- Items of furniture and goods waiting for disposal

You have a duty under the Local Government Act 1982 The Civic Government Scotland Act 1982: Section 93, to keep common areas free of combustible substances and anything which might obstruct egress from and access to the property in the event of a fire (as the occupier). You are required to move any items that we ask you to. If you do not remove any items that we ask you to, we will take legal action, however, we would prefer to find a more amicable way to deal with this before legal action was progressed.

You can report an issue in a communal area by contacting us so we can deal with it.

What happens next?

If you have any personal items including furniture, door mats, plants, pictures on walls or any other belongings in communal areas at your site then you are politely asked to remove them within 7 days of receiving this newsletter.

Viewpoint Housing Association will be monitoring communal areas on an ongoing basis and fulfilling its responsibilities as set out in this article.

Remember – this zero tolerance policy for items in communal areas is there to protect you, our staff, contractors and other visitors to the site.

If you do not remove any personal items in communal areas, you will be contacted by your Housing Officer.

If you need assistance removing any items, please let your Housing Officer or Site Co-ordinator know.

More Information

The Scottish Government website offers comprehensive fire safety information for residents. www.gov.scot

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the people of Scotland and also offers detailed information. www.firescotland.gov.uk

WELFARE BENEFITS SERVICE Here to Help You

eet Eleanor Eccles, Viewpoint's dedicated Welfare Rights Officer. She is here to make sure all our tenants are getting the financial support they deserve. Whether it is checking you are claiming the right benefits, helping with new benefit applications, or guiding you through any tricky letters from the Benefits Agency, Eleanor is there for you. Eleanor can offer you reassurance and support as you navigate the benefits system so reach out for a chat (contact details at the bottom of this article).

The Welfare Rights Service is super flexible – Eleanor can connect with you in lots of ways, including home visits, phone calls, emails, WhatsApp, or even just a simple text.

What can Eleanor help with?

- **Benefit checks:** Ensuring you are getting everything you are entitled to.
- New claims: Helping you apply for benefits if needed.
- Understanding notifications: Explaining letters from the Benefits Agency, Council Tax, or Housing Benefit.
- **Appeals:** Supporting you if you need to challenge a decision.
- **Signposting:** Pointing you in the right direction for other services you might need.

A Look at Eleanor's Impact

Eleanor's hard work over the past year (2023/2024) has made a massive difference, bringing in an incredible $\pounds 1.25$ million in financial gains for tenants. Her commitment to helping people is truly amazing!

Real Stories

Case Study I: One tenant, D, was facing a £22,000 overpayment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. With Eleanor's help, they successfully appealed the decision, and the overpayment was cancelled.

Case Study 2: Another tenant, B, reached out to Eleanor after a health issue. Eleanor helped them claim Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit, which also reinstated full Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

How to Get in Touch

If you have a benefit question or just want a quick check to make sure you are getting the right support, you can reach Eleanor easily:

Phone: 0131 662 5144

Email: eleanor.eccles@viewpoint.org.uk Write: 4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG Ask: Ask any member of staff to refer you.

Remember, Eleanor is here to help you navigate the system and get the support you are entitled to!



What is pension credit and is it worth me applying?

Pension Credit is a benefit that can help boost your income if you're at state pension age and have a low income. Usually, if you are earning less than £218.15 a week as a single person or £332.95 a week as a couple, you may qualify for this additional support. Getting Pension Credit can open up access to other helpful benefits, like reduced NHS dental costs and assistance with council tax and housing costs.

It is worth noting that about a third of people who are eligible have not applied yet.

This is where Eleanor can help—she can assist you in checking your eligibility and, if you qualify, guide you through the application process to make sure you receive what you are entitled to.

.....



There are many foodbanks across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife.

Knowing where they are is one thing but you then have to find out how to access the service and that is not always easy. Some you can go directly to and others you need a referral from another agency, such as Viewpoint.

If you do need the services of a Foodbank and need assistance to access this, please speak to any member of staff and be assured that this will be kept confidential. If they do not know the answer, they will find out for you.



Meet our New Head of Housing

JOHN TURNBULL

I am proud to be working at Viewpoint delivering essential housing, care and support services to our customers. Although I have worked in housing for local authorities and housing associations for almost 35 years - I'm still learning. I hope to be able to bring my experiences to Viewpoint to develop and improve our service offer to customers. It has been a pleasure meeting tenants and colleagues over the last few months as I get to grips with this challenging role - thank you for the warm welcome. There is plenty to do and I will be looking to successfully lead the housing service to address the challenging and complex housing environment we work in. Viewpoint's values attracted me to this role (as well as the chance to work in beautiful Scotland).



If you prefer to search online, here are some useful links with further details on accessing the services: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cost-living/food-bank-information

www.edinburghcitymission.org.uk/support /referrals/registration/

www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles /benefits-and-money-advice/food-banks

www.trussell.org.uk/emergency-food



HARASSMENT TOWARD STAFF OR CONTRACTORS

IT'S NEVER ACCEPTABLE

t Viewpoint, our staff and contractors work hard to ensure your homes are safe and well maintained. A concerning issue that can sometimes arise is harassment directed towards our staff, whether that is verbal, physical or sexual. This kind of behaviour is never acceptable towards any of our staff or contractors.

What is Harassment?

Harassment can take many forms, ranging from inappropriate comments to physical intimidation or abuse. Harassment can take many forms, ranging from inappropriate comments to physical intimidation or abuse. It is essential to recognise that any unwanted behaviour, even a one-off incident, that has the potential to either violate the person's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person, is not acceptable.



- Verbal Harassment: Shouting, screaming, namecalling, or using derogatory or offensive language. Even 'inappropriate jokes' 'banter' or 'comments' that may seem trivial can make people feel uncomfortable or create a hostile environment.
- **Physical Harassment:** Any form of physical intimidation, from pushing or blocking someone's way to more aggressive actions like shoving, hitting, or threatening with physical harm.
- **Common harassment:** Incidents such as texts, voicemails, letters or emails or threats.
- Sexual Harassment: Inappropriate comments or advances, unwelcome touching, or other behaviours of a sexual nature that make someone feel uncomfortable or objectified.

Why Harassment Is Never Okay?

Harassment of staff and contractors is not only disrespectful—it can have serious consequences. It affects the morale of those who provide essential services and can lead to delays in delivering services that you depend on.

Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment can lead to legal action, including fines or eviction for tenants who engage in such behaviour. No one should risk their tenancy or reputation by engaging in behaviours that harm others.

Consequences of Harassment

Viewpoint take harassment toward staff or contractors very seriously. We have clear policies regarding the treatment of staff, and violating these policies can result in penalties. Possible consequences include::

- Written Warnings
- Eviction
- Legal Action

Respect for Staff and Contractors

Our staff and contractors are professionals who deserve respect, just like anyone else. Staff and contractors should be able to perform their duties without fear of unwanted behaviour, just as tenants deserve to live without harassment.

Did you know?

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, came into force in October 2024. This law places a new duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. At Viewpoint, these are the steps we have put in place:

- Updated our Dignity at Work Policy & Procedure
- Organised Dignity at Work training for staff which includes sexual harassment training
- Ensured all complaints are investigated properly
- Considered the risks of sexual harassment to staff and reviewed our risk assessments
- Continue to foster an inclusive culture
- Monitor and evaluate progress to ensure we are compliant

Review of Bin Cleaning

Viewpoint Housing Association (VHA) currently undertakes the cleaning of bins (communal/domestic/recycling) and communal bin areas across the developments that own and manage.

This is done on a regular basis in order to maintain the required levels of cleanliness in and around our developments.

To enable us to sustain this service in the financial year 2025/26, a review will be carried out between now and January/February 2025 to look at the services that are required at each development and the frequency that they are required to be undertaken.

Once this review is completed it is intended that recommended actions will be implemented from the 1st April 2025.







'LIVING ALLOWANCE' TEXT & 'UC APP' SCAMS WARNINGS

Claimants are being warned that scammers are targeting them with bogus texts and apps.

The living allowance text claims to be from the "UK Government Living Allowance Office". It begins:

"UK Government Living Allowance Office Last Time Reminder: Due to the reduction of winter heating subsidy, you can no longer receive it, and the uk government has decided to advance the living subsidy to allow you to survive the winter."

If you receive such a text, do not click on the link and do not respond in any way.





Meanwhile Citizens Advice are warning people to beware of a scam UC app called "Universal Credit Guide", which is targeted on people worried or confused by the UC claims process, Citizens Advice say that the DWP is investigating the app and warns people not to respond to any suspicious text messages.

The app is available on the Apple Store, which lists the developers address as Benin City in Nigeria. A quick web search reveals a number of other UC apps available for use on Android phones, but none of them are, in any way, connected with the DWP.

Tenant SatisfactionSurveyCOMING UP IN 2025

It is almost time for our Tenant Satisfaction Survey again! Every three years, we reach out to get your thoughts on how we are doing and where there is room for improvement. This survey is something we are required to do by the Scottish Housing Regulator, but more importantly, it is a great way for us to get your honest feedback.

The last survey was in March/April 2022, so the next one will be arriving sometime between February and April 2025. This is your chance to share your views with us. We genuinely use your feedback to help guide improvements, so your input really makes a difference.

Be on the lookout for the survey next year—in your mailbox or your email. It only takes a few minutes to complete, and it is a great way to make sure your voice is heard.

Thank you for being part of our community and for helping to make Viewpoint even better!



Quarterly Meeting Review We Want Your Feedback!

e know the quarterly meetings that we hold in each development have not quite worked the way we hoped. The idea behind these meetings was to give us a chance to meet with you, talk about the issues that matter, and keep you updated on what is happening at Viewpoint. However, the meetings have mostly turned into discussions about repairs, which was not the main purpose. While repairs are important, that is not all we wanted to focus on.

Because of this, we are doing a full review of the quarterly meetings to better understand what is working and what is not – for both tenants and staff. We want to find out how we can make them more useful, interesting, and informative for everyone going forward.

We have already spoken to our Housing and Assets Officers and sent out a survey to Coordinators to gather their thoughts. Now, we are reviewing all the feedback and exploring new ideas for how we can meet with you and talk about the things that really matter to you. After we have had some internal discussions, we will send out a survey to all tenants to get your input on how we can improve the meetings.

We will be sending out the survey around March/April 2025, so keep an eye on your mailbox and make sure to share your thoughts with us!

Please remember that you can report any common or personal repairs at any time. Please do not wait until the Quarterly Meeting. The sooner we knw, the sooner we can get things sorted.

Keep Warm This Winter

We all know how to keep warm in winter – Or do we? Sometimes we 'forget' or dismiss the simple ideas so this wee article is a reminder, and maybe you will even try something new.

ΟΝΕ

Wrap Up Warm....in layers

It has been scientifically proven that wearing layers of clothing helps to keep you warm.

Your first layer should be made of a material like polyester, which will draw the moisture away from your skin. Subsequent layers like a fleece or a jumper should be snug but not too tight.

тwо

After using your oven leave the door open

And this will allow any residual heat to heat the room.

One of our staff members said they had never thought about doing this but tried it out and really saw the difference in the temperature of their room. Give it a go and get some 'free' heat.

THREE

Remember the hats, scarves, gloves and socks when going out

Your body loses most of its heat through whatever is exposed so stay covered up and you will stay warm. Just remember and get a hat that covers your ears!



FOUR

Close your doors and your curtains

We normally keep the temperature in the room we are sitting in a bit higher than the rest of the house. No point in losing that heat by leaving the doors open, even if you are just nipping to the kitchen for a cuppa. It is recommended that you keep your main living room between 18 - 21 oC and the rest of your rooms at 16oC at least.

Open your curtains during the day to let in the natural sunlight but close them at dusk so you do not lose any heat. If you can get thermal linings for your curtains to help keep the heat in.

FIVE Slipper up

Wearing slippers around the house can really help keep your tootsies warm.

I have terrible cold feet and it was only a few years ago that I invested in a pair of very cosy boot slippers and in winter they are my saviour. They are not the most attractive slippers in the world but I take the view it is not a fashion parade and it means my feet are cosy – really cosy!

SIX

Stay as active as you can ...then put your feet up

I appreciate that this is very difficult for some of you but even just a wee wander around the house can help boost your circulation.

And when you do sit down, put your feet up, as it is coldest nearest the ground.

SEVEN

Winter warming food

Winter is the season for food that makes you feel warm. A nice plate of hot soup, a beef and bean casserole or a sausage and tomato stew are all feel good and feel cosy foods.

And then you can always drink some warming drinks, not just tea and coffee but hot chocolate, warm milk or Ovaltine. However, do not use alcohol to keep you warm – although it will give you a warm feeling inside the alcohol actually takes the blood supply away from your vital organs and causes your body some temperature control issues.

EIGHT

Don't underestimate the humble hot water bottle

Just make sure that you take care:

- Do not use boiling water as this can damage the seams of the bottle. Allow the water to cool for a couple of minutes.
- Don't try and fill the bottle too fast as there could be some splash back
- Don't overfill the bottle Recommended that it should be around half to a maximum of three quarters full
- Use a hot water bottle cover to prevent burning yourself – it also keeps the bottle warmer for a bit longer.
- And then tuck up with the hot water bottle and feel cosy!

NINE

Draught excluders are cool

The humble sausage dog draught excluder can really help keep your room warm. They are relatively inexpensive or you could make your own.

Looking for these to be illustrated and not necessarily put in a list like this but more random – boxes? Clouds? Something pretty \Box

ENERGY ADVICE IS AVAILABLE

We are aware that some tenants have their own boiler and pay for their heating and hot water directly to their supplier. As a result you may have had to pay the significant increases for heating and hot water.

We are also aware that even if you pay us for heating and/or hot water that you may have high bills for your electricity.

Viewpoint, in partnership with other housing associations, have access to energy advice services. If you would like to be referred to this service please either

Speak to your Coordinator or Housing Officer

Telephone us on 0131 668 4747 (option2)

UMMARY OI 2023/2

by Megan Macdonald Governance and Compliance Officer

Complaints

At Viewpoint, we aim to get things right the first time, but we understand that sometimes things may not go as planned. When issues arise, it is important to raise them so that we can address and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Most Stage One complaints are handled through our frontline resolution procedure, aiming to have a response within five working days from the day we receive the complaint.

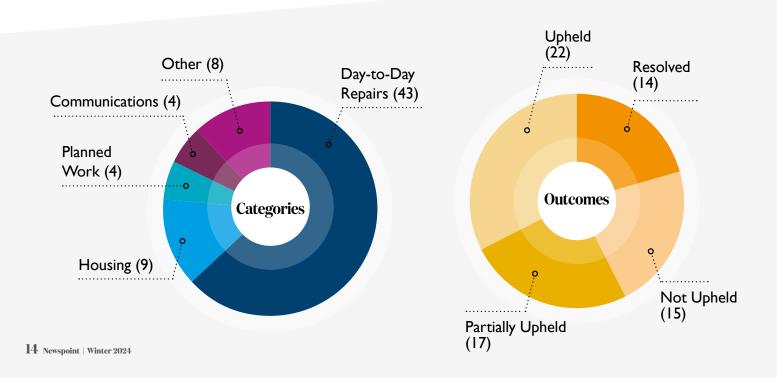
Stage One

68 new complaints received during 2023/24. 3 complaints carried forward from the previous year.

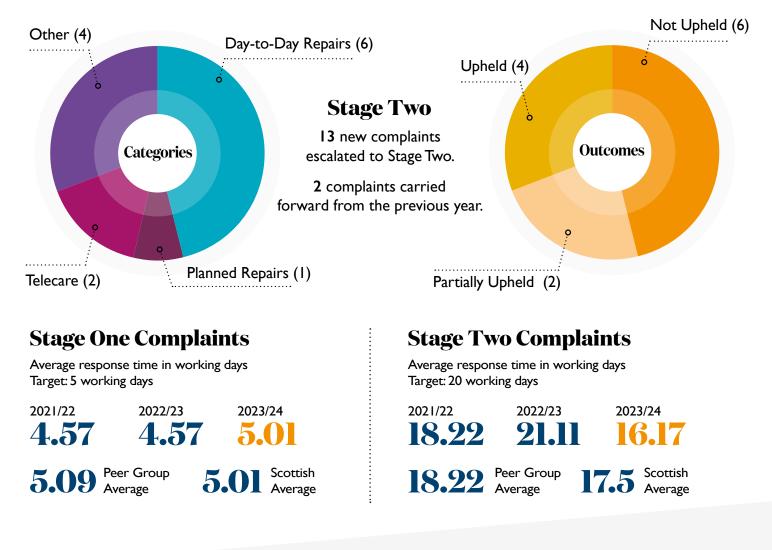
How to Raise a Complaint:

- Email us this is the most direct and fastest way to contact us about your complaint. Send your concerns to feedback@viewpoint.org.uk;
- Phone us you do not need to know the exact person to contact - just inform our Receptionist, who will either direct you to the correct person or ensure your message is passed along for a callback;
- Speak to your housing coordinator, Housing Officer, or Assets Officer. Let them know directly about your issue;
- Write to us you can send your complaint by post. No need to address it to anyone specific; our Receptionist will ensure it reaches the appropriate person.

Below is a summary of the categories and outcomes of the 68 Stage One complaints we received during 2023/24. Timescales for our responses are also shown.



Of the 13 stage two complaints, a summary of the category and outcomes are displayed below:



Compliments and Feedback

At Viewpoint, it is always encouraging for our team to hear about what we are doing well, as well as areas where we can improve.

You can share your compliments the same way you would submit a complaint. We ensure that all compliments are recorded and passed on to the relevant person or team, along with their line manager.

Compliments for 2023/24

During the 2023/24 period, we received 20 compliments. Here are a few examples of the positive feedback we have received:

"Could I also say how pleased all residents were with the guys charged with doing the job. Great workers who left the place spotless at the end of the day."

"A lovely person to deal with and responds to requests and gets the job done."

"Very pleased with the adaptation carried out on the radiators. They made a very neat job of this and made my life easier."

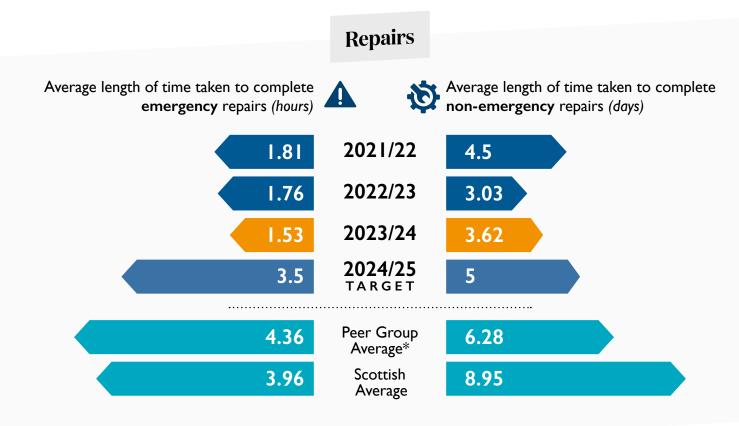
"I would like to let you know how helpful and friendly I have found our co-ordinator to be. She is always cheerful and professional and nothing ever seems to be too much trouble. You and we are very lucky to have her."



Tenant Performance Report 2023/2024

Every year we are required to prepare a report on Viewpoint's performance in relation to the Scottish Housing Charter. The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

We ask tenants to be involved in the publication of this, not only to help agree on the content and design, but also to discuss Viewpoint's performance with staff. Here are some of the key statistics within the document.



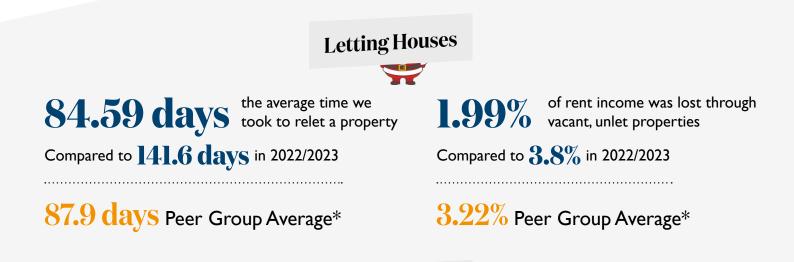
Medical Adaptations

The Association spent

£150,206 carrying out medical adaptations on our properties. $\pounds 142,438$ was grant funding from the Scottish Government $\pounds 57,768$ was financed by the Association **39.91 days**

Average time to complete a medical adaptation

66.51 days Peer Group Average* 44.8 days Scottish Average



Rent Arrears

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 Target	Peer group Average	Scottish Average
% of rent collected from tenants as a % of total rent due in the last year	98.95%	99.51%	99.5%	n/a	97.4%	99.4 %
% of tenants consulted about proposed rent increase	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a	n/a
Gross rent arrears as a % of rent due	2.49%	2.98%	2.84%	2.5%	2.77%	6.34%
% tenants who says good value for money from rent and service charges	76.08%	76.08%	76.08%	n/a	71.88%	81.6%

The full report, with this and other information is available on our website at www.viewpoint.org.uk/media/4936/2023-2024-tenant-performance-report.pdf

If you would like to see all our performance information and compare it with other landlords, you can visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's website at www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance

*Our Peer Group is Bield, Hanover, Trust and Blackwood Housing Associations.

Croft-An-Righ & Canongate Kirk

by Stuart Ramsay, Session Clerk, Canongate Kirk

he name 'Croft-an-Righ' comes from the Gaelic – 'the field of the King'. Viewpoint's residence at Croft-an-Righ lies immediately to the northeast of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, just beyond its perimeter wall. Its history, and that of the Palace, are drawn from that of the Parish of Canongate, the Church of Scotland parish in which Croft-an-Righ is situated. The origins of the parish lie in an incident that occurred 896 years ago.

On Holy Cross Day 1128 - 14th September in the modern calendar - King David I was in-residence at Edinburgh Castle. Edinburgh was then a small burgh below the Castle; beyond it was woodland. Despite it being a holy day, the King wished to go hunting, and left the Castle with a party of courtiers and eventually found himself in what is now Holyrood Park, in pursuit of a stag. According to legend, the King found himself dismounted and alone when the stag turned and charged at him. Believing that he was about to die, he prayed that his life may be spared. At the critical moment, the King saw a cross between the antlers of the stag at which point the stag ran away, leaving the King unharmed.

Believing that God had intervened to save his life, King David gave thanks by issuing a charter to build an abbey on the site of this encounter. The abbey came to be called the Abbey of the Holy Rood, meaning 'holy cross'. Hence the name 'Holyrood'. In the charter establishing the Abbey, King David granted it lands which formed the bounds of a parish, and specifically placed Edinburgh Castle within it, even though it fell out-with those bounds.

King David gave thanks by issuing a charter to build an abbey on the site of this encounter. The abbey came to be called the Abbey of the Holy Rood Holyrood Abbey was granted to the canons of the Order of St Augustin. These were ordained priests who, in addition to their devotions within the walls of the Abbey, also played an active part in the life of the Edinburgh, which was then confined to the upper part of the Royal Mile. They provided medical and pastoral care in the community. The path by which the canons walked to and from Edinburgh – their 'gait' – became known as Canongait, now spelled 'Canongate'. Over time, this route became populated and the residents worshipped in Holyrood Abbey.



The ruins of Holyrood Abbey lie beside The Palace of Holyroodhouse

Royal lodgings were maintained within the Abbey for successive monarchs and members of the royal family. This changed, however, in 1503 when King James IV built a palace close to the Abbey. Thus began the story of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which today, is The King's Official Residence in Scotland. To the northeast of the grounds lies a house that once belonged to a series of important courtiers, called Croft-an-Righ House, now an office for staff of Historic Environment Scotland. Viewpoint's residence at Croft-an-Righ lies beside this house, just off Croft-an-Righ Lane, which is also home to the craftsmen and craftswomen of Historic Environment Scotland at St Ann's Workshops. These highly skilled individuals lovingly maintain the Palace, the Abbey ruins, as well as Edinburgh Castle and Bute House, the Official Residence of the First Minister.

Following the Reformation in the 16th Century, Holyrood Abbey's role as a parish church for the people of Canongate was given recognition when it was re-styled as The Kirk of Holyroodhouse, a congregation of the new Church of Scotland. The congregation continued to worship in the abbey kirk until 1687 when the Privy Council, on behalf of King James VII & II, took over the building so that it could be used as the Chapel Royal for the Order of the Thistle. The congregation were forced to leave. However, they ultimately came to inhabit the new premises, which King James VII & II had commissioned for them, a short distance from the abbey kirk. They moved into this new building in 1690, and it has been the home of Canongate Kirk ever since.

In the Spring edition of Newspoint we will hear what is happening at Canongate Kirk today.

Croft-an-Righ is situated within the parish of the Canongate Kirk. We are very fortunate to celebrate a short service for all denominations held in our lounge on the second Sunday afternoon of each month at 4pm. The Reverend Neil Gardner, followed by a cup of tea or coffee and a chat, leads the service. All are welcome.

The Canongate Kirk has a rich and colourful past, which one of our tenants thought would be interesting to share with you all. Stuart Ramsay, Session Clerk at Canongate Kirk, has written this article about Canongate Kirk's history and it will be in two parts, with the next part in the spring edition of Newspoint. He has also provided the beautiful photograph of the church wearing its autumn robe of colours.

We hope you enjoy learning about Canongate Kirk and the stories that make it such a special part of their parish.



Croft-an-Righ House and the entrance to St Ann's Workshops seen from Croft-an-Righ Lane



Raising a Cup for a Cause Macmillan Coffee Mornings at Marian House and Northwood House

acmillan Cancer Support's annual Coffee Morning is the charity's largest fundraiser, bringing people together for a shared cause supporting those living with cancer. Whether it's a casual get-together with friends, a workplace event, or a neighbourhood gathering, the idea is simple: enjoy food, drinks, and good company, while raising funds to make a difference.

This year, Marian House and Northwood House supported this meaningful cause with their own Coffee Mornings, held on Friday, 27th September 2024.

At Marian House, Althea, the Activities Coordinator, took the lead in organising a fantastic event that saw an excellent turnout. Guests indulged in a delightful spread of coffee, tea, and delicious treats, all in the spirit of charity. Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of everyone involved, an impressive £465 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Meanwhile, over at Northwood House, Sheltered Housing Coordinator Aileen hosted a similarly successful Coffee Morning, supported by tenants to ensure there were plenty of goodies to eat. Aileen's daughter, Kirsty, pitched in with baking and tea-making, ensuring there was plenty of delicious food to go around. Aileen's granddaughter, Una, also came along with her mum, charming all the guests with her baby talk. The lively, friendly atmosphere encouraged everyone to relax, chat, and enjoy themselves. Northwood House raised £180 for the cause so far, as donations are still coming in from those unable to attend.

A big congratulations goes out to both Althea and Aileen, as well as the staff, tenants, residents, and volunteers who helped make these events such a success. Their efforts not only brought people together but also raised crucial funds for Macmillan, supporting individuals and families affected by cancer. Every cup of tea, every slice of cake, and every donation is a step closer to making a difference. Well done to everyone involved!

A big congratulations goes out to both Althea and Aileen, as well as the staff, tenants, residents, and volunteers who helped make these events such a success. Their efforts not only brought people together but also raised crucial funds for Macmillan, supporting individuals and families affected by cancer.

Every cup of tea, every slice of cake, and every donation is a step closer to making a difference. Well done to everyone involved!



Woodthorpe Raise Funds for Breast Cancer Now



Tenants at Woodthorpe held a Breast Cancer Now Fundraiser on Friday 16th August 2024 at Colinton Bowling Club.

They hosted an afternoon tea alongside a boozy raffle, name the bear and tombola to raise funds for the charity.

They had local actress Nicola Roy who has starred in River City, pull out the raffle tickets alongside wee Jack, Jan's nephew. (Jan is one of the main organisers).

They managed to raise an amazing amount of money. Total was £1402.47.

This was organised by tenants at Woodthorpe. A great time had by all.

Carol Retires from Social Committee at Balfour House

Carol Daly, a tenant of many years, is resigning from the tenant's committee after 35 years of unstinting, caring and unselfish service to the tenants of Balfour house and sometimes inviting tenants from other areas too.

We are so grateful for all Carol had done over these years. I have been living at Balfour house for 14 years and have experienced many occasions of Carol's get togethers with entertainment and sometimes refreshments where everyone has had a most enjoyable occasion.

Carol organises our Christmas lunches and many memorable outings, with the help of other committee members. We think Carol is a star and shall miss her.

Big thanks to Carol on behalf of all tenants of Balfour house.



J

Social Activities for Sheltered and Alarmed Housing Tenants in Edinburgh

All activities offered free of charge thanks to funding from the Viewpoint Trust.

Computer Help with the Tappers Club

Tech support sessions with Tap into IT for online access and digital tasks, and plenty of time for tea and chat.

When and Where

Every Wednesday from 15 January to 19 March 2025, 2pm – 4pm 2 Croft-an-Righ, Edinburgh

Every Friday from 17 January to 21 March 2025, 10:30am – 12:30pm 47 Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh

Personal support

Contact Mike at Tap into IT for one-on-one help. Mike will discuss your needs with you and arrange support as required. Telephone 07762 982 509. Alternatively speak to your Coordinator or Housing Officer who will be happy to contact Tap into IT for you.

Booking not required unless you need transport. Please note that you do not have to attend every week as it is not a formal class but a relaxed environment to learn together!

.....

Cookery is Fun

A six-week cookery course with Edinburgh Community Food, aimed at helping tenants cook healthy meals for one (or two).

When and Where

Every Monday from 20 January – 24 February 2025 (additional courses will be scheduled), 1 pm – 3 pm Balfour House, 10 Cameron Crescent, Edinburgh.

Booking essential (limit of 6 participants per course). If the course if full then you can join the waiting list as we will be re-running the course throughout the year.

Exercise for ALL

Adaptive fitness class led by John from FitCare Scotland, designed for older adults or those with disabilities. Exercises are adapted according to your individual needs.

When and Where

Every Tuesday from 7 January 2025, 12:30pm – 1:30pm Lade Court, 4 Bakers Place, Kerr Street, Edinburgh

Booking Required (limit of 20 participants). You can book a block of up to 10 classes or book week to week as spaces permit.

Knit'N'Natter

A monthly social knitting group focused on conversation. No knitting required, but please bring the chat!

.....

When and Where

Thursday 9 January 2025, 1.30pm – 3.30pm Balfour House, 10 Cameron Crescent, Edinburgh

Monday 3 February 2025, 1.30pm – 3.30pm 4 West Richmond Street, Edinburgh

Monday 3 March 2025, 1.30pm – 3.30pm Northwood House, 18 Lauder Road, Edinburgh

Tuesday 8 April 2025, 1.30pm – 3.30pm Haugh Park, Edinburgh

Booking not required unless you need transport

.....

Transport can be arranged (free of charge) if needed.

To book a place and to book transport, call the office on **0131 668 4247** (option 2).



70th Birthday Party

AT BALFOUR HOUSE

Balfour House held a celebration for Margaret's 70th birthday in July this year.

Margaret had a great time celebrating with her friends and neighbours and was made to feel like a princess.

Glad you had a great birthday and we think the photos look great.

Quiz Night at Buchan Gardens Danny Rankin

Buchan Gardens recently hosted a Social Night on Saturday, 5th October, filled with fun activities and lively entertainment. The evening kicked off with a quiz about TV soaps, where residents were encouraged to shout out the answers they knew. The quiz was a big hit, with most questions being answered quickly—except for those about American soaps,



which did not seem to be as familiar to the crowd.

After the quiz, residents enjoyed a fantastic buffet, setting the stage for the main event of the night: a Quiz Night competition. Two teams competed—'The Clangers' and 'Bobby's Girls', each consisting of six men and women. In the end, 'The Clangers' emerged victorious.

During the prize presentation:

- Joan Byers awarded 'Bobby's Girls' their medals.
- 'The Clangers' received their medals from Mary Bradford.
- The standout moment came when Betty McKay was presented with the shield as the overall winner. This shield will now be awarded annually to the winning team.

To finish off the night, everyone enjoyed music and a karaoke session, which went on late into the night, leaving everyone in high spirits. A wonderful time was had by all!





And have the chance to win a £25 shopping voucher.

Throughout this issue of Newspoint we have 'hidden' some Santas.

To win a £25 shopping voucher all you have to do is to count the number of snowman and enter by:

- Phoning 0131 662 5142
- Phoning or texting 07554 389 180
- Email tp@viewpoint.org.uk
- Write to us at 4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HJ.

Remember to give you name and address. The winner will be chosen from all those who submit the correct answer. The closing date for entries is Monday 6 January 2025

