

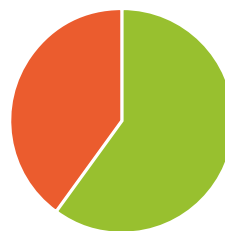
Rent Increase Consultation Results

We'd like to give a huge thank you to everyone who took part in this year's Rent Increase Consultation.

30% of our tenants responded, which meant we got a really good idea of how tenants feel about this year's proposed increase as well as the new perk for Bronze, Gold and Platinum Key Tenants, the Housing Perks Discount Scheme, which gives tenants the ability to buy shopping vouchers at a discounted cost, enabling many tenants to save 4% on their groceries and up to 15% on clothes.



- 18% I don't plan to download the Housing Perks App
- 51% I have already downloaded the Housing Perks App in order to access discount vouchers
- 31% I plan to download the Housing Perks App to access discount vouchers



Are You Happy with the Proposed Rent Increase of Inflation Plus 1.5%?

- Yes 60%
- No 40%



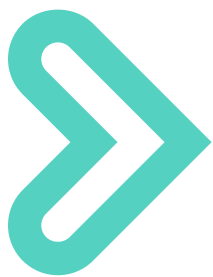
Hello TIG!

We had several tenants come along to our TIG Recruitment session in January. The tenants got to meet some of our staff members, and chat about tenant scrutiny, this year's rent increase, planned maintenance, the upcoming changes to the Radio Tele-Switch service, and much more. They even got a chance to see a sneak peek of the results of this year's Rent Increase Consultation.

We hope to see them all join the TIG as regular members, take part in our tenant events and scrutiny projects, and influence service development for years to come!

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HOUSING PERKS

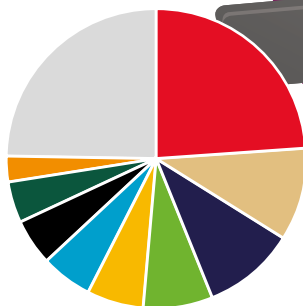
- have you signed up?



So far, over 470 tenants have signed up to use Housing Perks and are saving an average of around £3 on every shopping voucher.

While we don't know what individual tenants are saving, we can see the overall savings and the proportion for each retailer:

- **24%** Tesco
- **10.2%** Amazon
- **9.9%** ALDI
- **7.4%** ASDA
- **6.1%** Greggs
- **5.6%** Primark
- **5.1%** Marks & Spencer
- **4.3%** Morrisons
- **2.8%** TK Maxx
- **24.7%** Others



If you're a Bronze, Gold or Platinum Key tenant, you are eligible for Housing Perks. Through the Rent Consultation, a great many of you who had not yet downloaded the App told us that you would, so come on, what are you waiting for – start saving now! It's surprising how little amounts saved each week can build up into big savings, and remember, Housing

Perks savings are on top of any other savings, discounts or loyalty points you might get.

To find out more, we have an information page in My Home with links to download the App, a helpful video on how to use it, and some tips and tricks suggested by people already using the App to make savings.



www.elha.com/page/housing-perks

Money & Home Energy Advice

Our Money & Home Energy Advice Service is a free, confidential, service we provide to our tenants and members of their household. Andrew, our Money & Home Energy Adviser, can provide you with information, practical assistance and support wherever appropriate, for example:

- **Help you access any benefits you may be entitled to**
- **Build a budget with you to help make the most of your money**
- **Check that you are on the right energy tariff for your heating type, household composition and property type**
- **Perform a financial 'health check', even if you aren't in any debt**
- **Give advice on any aspect of welfare benefits and home energy**

This service was registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) who informed us that as the services we offer are not undertaking any regulated activities, we should cancel our registration. We have now done this and want to assure you this cancellation will not impact on any of the services we provide you.

If you have any concerns about benefits, utility bills or debt or would just like to speak to Andrew about your finances or energy efficiency, please get in touch with your Housing Officer, or fill in the referral form in My Home. Andrew will be happy to help via the telephone, in the office or a home visit.



www.elha.com/page/money-advice

www.elha.com/page/energy-advice

New Staff



Say hello to our newest Apprentice, Liam Gaffney, who joined our Housing Department at the end of last year. Liam's

role is Digital Services Modern Apprentice, and he is busy learning about our Key Tenants Scheme, our Rent Collector App, Performance 365, and many more of our Digital Services.

Liam is also studying for a Diploma in Digital Application Support and is powering through his coursework in addition to supporting our Digital Services Officer.



Andro Sneddon joined us as our new Property Officer at the beginning of January, bringing over a

decade of experience working within new build construction and social housing, having carried out a variety of roles including Assistant Customer Care Manager, Quantity Surveyor, and Housing Officer. Having completed an HNC in Quantity Surveying and gained experience on a variety of social housing projects throughout Glasgow, Dundee, and East Lothian, he hopes to bring a well-rounded perspective to the Asset Management team.

Andro will be working closely with Housing Officers Hannah and Ian, so you may see him out and about with them at estate inspections and joint visits, and he will also be working with R3 Repairs to help deliver planned maintenance projects.

Benefit Updates – March 2025

There are some changes on the horizon - here are some quick updates for you:



Deadline to fill National Insurance gaps to increase State Pension

People have until 5 April 2025 to fill gaps in their National Insurance (NI) record dating back to 6 April 2006. After this date, payments can only be made for the previous six tax years.

The quickest and easiest way for people to check a State Pension forecast and find out if they can benefit from paying to fill NI gaps is by checking their NI record on GOV.UK or in the HMRC app.

www.gov.uk/check-national-insurance-record

Move to Universal Credit

Tax Credits are closing on 5 April 2025, and if you have received a migration notice you must respond by the deadline date to continue to receive financial support from the UK Government.

The DWP will continue to increase the number of Migration Notices being sent to people receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), with all notices due to be sent by the end of 2025.

A Universal Credit Helpline will be open from 5 April: 0800 169 0328.

Changes to Statutory Sick Pay

Through the Employment Rights Bill, the Government is strengthening Statutory Sick pay by removing the Lower Earnings Limit so that the safety net of sick pay is available to those who need it most.



Tenant Involvement Group

– in their own words



If you've ever wondered what's going on behind the scenes, have you considered joining our TIG-Panel?

The TIG-Panel meet every three months and:

- Oversees our Tenant Participation Action Plan
- Reviews consultation and survey feedback as well as any complaint reports
- Gets advance notice of upcoming changes and new services
- Has the opportunity to meet regularly with the Management Team and take part in things like new build viewings, stock tours and meeting with other tenant groups

It's great chance to get involved, but don't take out word for it – here's what some of our TIG-Panel members say:

Joining the TIG has given me a great opportunity to contribute my thoughts and experiences as an ELHA tenant, as well as gaining valuable insights into how the organization works, both internally and with others such as R3, ELC, etc. I enjoy the meetings, which are always filled with positive ideas.

-Tracey, Musselburgh



Being a TIG (Tenant Involvement Group) member is important!

Wanting to be a TIG member is equally important. But there is a subtle difference.

Being a member of TIG allows you to participate, not only with other members of TIG, but also with ELHA staff on a host of matters surrounding ELHA tenancies, including your own, such as Maintenance and Repair, Property Management, Rents, Performance, Pets, New Developments etc. In fact, pretty much anything and everything to do with what affects ELHA tenants.

Why wouldn't you want to join?

It is fun, rewarding, fulfilling, and gives you a sense of responsibility in actually contributing to something which will affect and help all ELHA tenants.

There are approximately four or five TIG meetings a year, held in the main office in Haddington, and not only will you meet the other members of TIG, but also dedicated

ELHA staff who are kind, considerate, helpful and knowledgeable. And, best of all, they provide coffee and delicious cakes and pastries at every meeting.

You can attend and contribute as much as you like, but I can guarantee that if you make the leap and attend your first one, you will want to come again and again. If you want to take things further, ELHA will encourage you both in a practical and financial way to attend seminars, conferences and other Housing Association events.

There is an existing hardcore of TIG members who have, in the main, been involved in TIG for many years, and have a formidable knowledge of tenant likes, dislikes, and problems.

However, we require fresh blood and ideas to move forward in a progressive way.

So, if you feel that you have something to offer, and you like to meet people, come along and participate. Don't just sit on the fence and wait on others to do things for you.

-Sandy, Gullane





Storm Damage

We're sure many of you are aware that, during Storm Eowyn, one of our homes in Tranent had its roof blown off.

Fortunately, no one was in the house when this happened, and no one was injured. We sent R3 operatives out under our emergency procedures (sending staff out during a Red Weather Warning is only done if there is an emergency), who cleared the area and stabilised the building.

We then arranged to have surveyors inspect several homes in the area and found that while most were fine, four homes had been significantly affected by the storm (two semi-detached blocks).

These homes will need to remain unoccupied until we can arrange works to rectify the issues. As we don't hold any emergency accommodation in our housing stock we had to work with East Lothian Council initially,

who are responsible for providing this and all tenants have now been moved to alternative temporary accommodation.

Repairing these homes is going to take some time. We need to make an insurance claim, request further specialist reports and then agree and arrange the structural work. The properties have now been secured, do not pose a danger to the public but are considered building sites, so we do advise people to stay away from the buildings.

It is important to remember that this damage was caused during a Red Weather Warning. Red Weather Warnings are a rare occurrence, and this level of damage is even rarer. Our homes must all meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standards, and are built to withstand the worst that Scottish weather can throw at them.

Right to Repair and Alternative Contractors

The Right to Repair Scheme ensures that Housing Association tenants receive a good repair service for important repairs. Repairs which fall under Right to Repair must be completed within a set response time, and if we fail to meet this timescale, we must pay you compensation. You also have the right to use an alternative contractor to carry out the repair if we're unable to do it, and we will cover the costs (as long as the reason we were not able to complete the repair isn't because you were not home or refused access to your home when a repair operative arrived).

The alternative contractor for all repairs other than repairs to your gas systems is East Lothian Council.

The alternative contractor for gas repairs is R3 Repairs Limited.

To find out more, please visit the Right Repair page on elha.com:

www.elha.com/page/right-to-repair



ELHA's Management Committee becomes the ELHA Board

elha.com
east lothian housing association

Our Management Committee undertook a full governance review in 2024. As well as going fully digital and completely paper-free (just like most of our tenants!), our governance has been streamlined and our governing body will now be called the ELHA Board. The first formal meeting of the ELHA Board was in February 2025.

This should not result in any significant changes to our services or staffing structure. Who gets elected to the ELHA Board is still up to our Members, and is decided through our AGM each year. All ELHA Board members continue to offer their time voluntarily, none of them are paid.

If you would like to know more about our governance, or if you might be interested in becoming an ELHA Member (which costs just £1 for life membership), more information is available:

www.elha.com/page/who-we-are-and-what-we-do

An Update from Andrew - Pension Age Disability Payment

Pension Age Disability Payment is replacing Attendance Allowance for older adults living in East Lothian from 22 April 2025.

You can get the Pension Age Disability Payment if you:

- Normally live in Scotland
- Have reached state pension age
- Satisfy the disability test for either the lower rate (£73.90 a week or the higher rate (£110.40 a week).
- Satisfy the residence conditions
- Are not a 'person subject to immigration control'

You do not need to do anything if you already get Attendance Allowance. Social Security Scotland will let you know when you've been transferred over to the Pension Age Disability Payment and your Attendance Allowance has been stopped.

If you already get Adult Disability Payment, you'll stay on it when you reach State Pension age instead of transferring to Pension Age Disability Payment.

How to claim

If you think you may be entitled to the Pension Age Disability Payment you should claim as soon as you can as it cannot be backdated, unless you are terminally ill.

To claim you can:

- Phone Social Security Scotland on **0800 182 2222**
- Claim online at **mygov.scot**
- Fill out a claim form and send it by post - you'll need to ask Social Security Scotland to send you a paper form



www.mygov.scot/pension-age-disability-payment

