

Tenants Voice

Issue 105 - May 2018



EDINBURGH TENANTS
FEDERATION



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FEDERATION



Friday 15th June 2018 7.00pm-11.00pm

Registration and Tea and Coffee available from 6.30pm

Edinburgh Capital Hotel, 187 Clermiston Road, EH12 6UG

The AGM will be followed by a social with a buffet



All welcome to the biggest event of the year for tenants in Edinburgh!

For bookings contact 0131 475 2509,
email info@edinburghtenants.org.uk or book online at
www.edinburghtenants.org.uk

Please use public transport where possible
Assistance with childcare and transport may be available

Places must be booked in advance by
Wednesday 6th June 2018

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

As you know, at this time of year, the Federation writes to all our member groups, individual members and associate members inviting them to re-join the Federation for the coming year. **Applications must be received in the Federation Office by Friday 1st June 2018, so if you have not received this information please contact the Federation Office.**

The application forms have changed this year as the Federation needs to follow the rules set down in its new Constitution and to conform to the new Data Protection rules, commonly known as GDPR, which come into effect in May. For member groups, this means that as well as the group applying for membership, they need to nominate a member of their group to be their representative at Federation Meetings and the nominated person needs to give written permission for the Federation to hold their details in the Federation Office. Individual members must also give written permission to allow the Federation to hold their details. These permissions can be given by the person concerned by them signing the appropriate section of the membership application form. If you require assistance to complete your application form or would like further information please contact the Federation Office by email to info@edinburghtenants.org.uk or phone 0131 475 2509.

A HUGELY SUCCESSFUL ETF LEARNING SESSION

We have officially kicked off our spring training sessions with the 'Tenant Participation (TP)-Back to Basics'. Together, participants completed a tenant participation jigsaw to focus in on what meaningful TP is to them and quizzed themselves on tenants' rights and landlord responsibilities. The evening was topped off with an insightful discussion about different types of power, which was built to enable tenants to walk away with more knowledge on how to use their inner and collective power.

"It brought us all together", one participant said. Mari Lehva, ETF's Outreach Worker said she really enjoyed delivering the training. "Everybody brought great energy and views with them. It was powerful and inspiring to hear what motivates people to get involved and what they want to change. Thanks so much to everyone who came along." Here's to using our power and effecting change!



Tenants matching up their rights and landlord responsibilities with key TP legislation

UPDATE FROM ETF'S TENANT LED INSPECTION TEAM

It's been a long process, however we are delighted to say that ETF's Tenant Led Inspection (TLI) Team have reached the end of the Rent Collection Communication Inspection. Tenants made a total of 23 recommendations suggesting how the Council could improve the way they communicate with tenants about their rent.

The Council should reword rent collection communication letters so they are less intimidating to tenants.

Change the term 'rent arrears' to 'rent debt'.

Rent Statements could be simplified so that tenants can understand them better.

Recommendations centred on

The City of Edinburgh Council rent collection communications should take into account tenants with literacy difficulties, where English is not their first language and mental ill health.

Face to face communication between the Housing Officer and the tenant should be encouraged where appropriate.

The Council should publicise more effectively what help is available to tenants who experience rent difficulties.

The Council produced an action plan stating how they would address the recommendations and this has been agreed by the Inspectors.

If you would like a copy of the TLI report and action plan or would be interested in becoming a Tenant Led inspector, please contact Mark Henry at the Federation Office on 0131 475 2509 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk.



ETF's TLI team meet with Council staff to finalise the action plan

Heather Ford, Convenor ETF Tenant Led Inspections

ETF WELCOME CATH O'SHEA



My name is Cath O'Shea and I'm lucky enough to be studying Housing with Stirling University and to have a 50 day practical placement with ETF taking place this year. Stirling University's Post Graduate Housing Studies Diploma course focusses on Council and Housing Association Housing has been running for over ten years now.

I hope to learn a lot from tenants and ETF staff about tenant participation and the issues this involves. I've enjoyed meeting tenants who are volunteering with ETF and have already learnt quite a bit.

In January, the Federation Burns Supper meant I met a lot of tenants and found out through the quiz how impressive everyone's general knowledge skills levels are! I also thoroughly enjoyed the ode to the laddies and the lassies.

February found me drafting the ETF briefing paper on the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) consultation on their review of the Charter. Some of you may have responded to this and SHR will update us on everyone's responses later in the year.

The CIH conference in February introduced me to the latest ideas about using digital communication methods e.g. texting, Facebook etc. to engage with tenants.

ETF have loaned me for ten days to Manor Estates Housing Association (HA) to focus on their tenant participation strategy and to help them analyse the results of their tenant satisfaction survey. I'm learning that tenants are not always keen to get involved in how a HA operates or makes its decisions and HAs need to work hard to ensure tenants' views are heard.

On the Council side of things there seems to be a different picture and I met an enthusiastic and committed group of tenant volunteers in May who are working with Justine Bradd (ETF Housing Rights Development Worker). This group are about to carry out a survey of housing and service satisfaction levels amongst sheltered housing tenants across the City of Edinburgh. I'm looking forward to supporting Justine in helping the group put a strong case to the Council for service improvement.

I really benefitted from Mari's (ETF Outreach worker) evening training session on tenant participation and what it is. It was great to hear different tenant participants reasons for being involved; "anger at injustice and people not being listened to", "bringing the knowledge that positive change can happen based on even just a few people's involvement, based on years of experience of activism", "to help people that don't have the same power that I have" and "to get rid of poverty".

I'm looking forward to contributing and learning even more about tenant action over the next few months.

Cath O'Shea, ETF Housing Student

APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

Since November I have been completing assignments alongside my work with ETF in correlation with my Digital Marketing apprenticeship. Up until April/May 2018, I have primarily focused on doing online assessments involving researching, notes and answering questions similar basically to exams at school. However, later in May I shall be attending my first of my training courses learning finally some 'hands on the keyboard' skills involving Digital marketing. The first training class 'Creative Business Studies' will be a week-long session which will be focusing on the creative side of digital

business i.e. advertising, promotion, etc. I will have three more classes for this course, the others being 'Digital Marketing Bootcamp', 'Creative Content Class' both being in July and 'Analytics' which will be done partly in the ETF office over the summer. After multiple online question based assignments it will be refreshing getting more hands on learning and gain and develop some new or existing skills to take forward to assist ETF and my future job prospects.

Craig Burns, ETF Communications Assistant

HOUSING RIGHTS HEATS UP

The works in West Cromwell, Persevere and Citadel Courts has continued to progress well. Regular meetings with the Council take place monthly where there is an opportunity for representatives to ask questions and raise issues in regards to the works. A good working relationship has been established with Council officers from various departments.

Here is a brief update on what has been happening:

In Persevere and Citadel Courts, the Kitchen and Bathroom and Heating Programme has now been completed with any empty properties being picked up at a later date.

The timeline for the window programme has slipped back due to regulation discussions. Whilst this is disappointing it is important that the Council does take the time to ensure that the correct windows are installed.



New kitchen in the community flat



New bathroom in the community flat

The Community Flat in Persevere Court has also had a bit of a face lift, a new kitchen and bathroom have been installed which has made a huge difference to the facilities available to the local community. The flat has also had a lick of paint, new carpets and flooring and heating to add to the final touches of brightening the place up. Thanks to the City of Edinburgh Council and the contractors in the area for making this happen.



View from the West Cromwell Street Flats

Across the way in West Cromwell Street the external works continue to take place with the demolition of the laundry room in full swing. The works were held up slightly by the bad weather in March, despite this, things are moving well. The internal works have now been completed with only the very top properties requiring work to be completed. This will take place once the works to the roof are completed.

Sheltered Housing Liaison Group

Representatives of the Sheltered Housing Liaison Group have been busy preparing the questions for their survey in regards to housing support and agreeing what sheltered housing complexes they will visit. It is hoped that the results of this survey will be ready early in the autumn and will be presented at a conference after that.

Other Housing Rights News

The residents have welcomed a number of guests to the area to hear about their experiences of using a rights based approach. First up they welcomed representatives from the Scottish Government; Gill Scott, Housing Rights Outreach and Improvement Manager and Angie Meffan-Main, Policy Profession Manager, Ingage Directorate for Local Government and Communities.

Residents David, Margaret and Heather welcomed them and Sean Brady from the Participation of Practice and Rights (PPR) in Belfast into their homes to hear how improvements to their housing has made a positive difference to their lives.

Margaret said of her kitchen "I just love it, what a difference it has made. I enjoy spending time in here now."

As a result of the visit, Gill has invited the residents to share their experiences with colleagues in the Scottish Government. You can hear how they got on in the next edition of *Tenants' Voice*.



Angie, Gill, Sean and Heather outside the Community Flat



Angie and Sean visit Margaret's flat



Envisioning a future for the shared space

As part of ETF's evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Equality and Human Rights Committee (E&HRiC) residents welcomed Claire Menzies, Clerk; Committee member Jamie Greene (MSP) and local MSPs Ben Macpherson to hear about human rights and housing. This was a good opportunity for the residents to tell their experiences and how the Scottish Parliament could embed human rights in its future, particularly around bringing MSPs to the grassroots of communities.

Heather Ford tenant and Justine Bradd, Housing Rights Development Worker were part of roundtable discussions at the E&HRiC panel meeting on 26th April.

Justine said, "It was a fantastic opportunity to share our experiences of bringing human rights to the grassroots with the E&HRiC. I'll be watching with interest what the next steps will be."

To read our response to the Scottish Parliament on the call for evidence please visit <http://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/etf-response-to-equality-and-human-rights-committee/> or call the office to request a copy.



Heather and David outside the Scottish Parliament building



Heather and David with Ben Macpherson, MSP and Jamie Greene, MSP

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF TENANTS TAKING AN ACTIVE PART IN TENANT PARTICIPATION?

How much should landlords spend? This is a common question! The findings of research into resourcing tenant participation across the UK have been mixed. Some studies have indicated the level of resources has a significant impact on the success of tenant participation, while others have not found this to be the case. What is clear is that it is crucial that landlords agree with tenants the level of resources that should be allocated to tenant participation and that tenants are involved in agreeing the priorities for the tenant participation budget. Resources also need to be regularly reviewed as participation structures improve and develop. Where does the money come from? The majority of funding for tenant participation comes from tenant rental income. However, it is the responsibility of the landlord to meet the development support, administration and organisational needs of tenant groups. (Extract from TP Participation publication).

Edinburgh Tenants Federation is unique in its Tenant/Landlord relationship. For over 26 years, this 'working together partnership' has provided both tenant and landlord the opportunity to develop new approaches to resolving and improving service delivery. Some examples are:

- Mental Health Awareness where tenants who have difficulties in adapting to the problems associated in living in a more independent environment could be observed and given support from Concierge Staff. Training was given to the staff to recognise tenants in their area of responsibility and report their concerns to the relevant support team;
- Tenant Led Inspections, where tenants are given an opportunity to work with their landlord in 'behind the scene' scenarios such as repairs, communications, Kitchen and Bathroom programmes and submit their comments on what can improve the quality or other issues relevant to Customer Satisfaction, that being the tenant.
- Being involved in the various aspects of rent levels, scrutiny and value for money is another issue of interest to tenants and members have shown the skills necessary in working with CEC Housing to reach a conclusion amicable to both parties.

ETF have provided valuable 'tools' which not only are Award winning but set examples to others.

Davie Thomson, ETF Executive Committee Member

GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARDS

We were delighted to hear that Douglas Nairn, a tenant of Birnies Court was a winner at the Council's Good Neighbour Award. Councillor Kate Campbell, the new Housing and Economy Committee Convenor presented these on 29th March at the City Chambers. The awards were organised by the Council, in partnership with Capital Credit Union who's Chief Executive Officer - Marlene Shiels OBE was also in attendance.

Douglas was awarded this for his efforts in keeping the area clean and tidy by litter picking, carrying out gardening and general maintenance.

ETF's Convenor Betty Stevenson said, "I was chuffed Douglas won the award, he does a lot for the community and he deserved it. If there were more people like him, Edinburgh would be a much better place."

Other winners included: Frederica Valet for giving practical and emotional support to a neighbour and for helping with Granton beach and pier clean ups, Isa Morey from West Pilton for her kindness to neighbours and Jeanette Harkins.

Congratulations to all the winners.



Douglas and Betty



The award winners with Councillor Kate Campbell

MOREDUN'S MERGING!

Moredun 4 Multis Residents Association (M4M RA) grew out of Moredun's then Community Health Flat in Little France House, a successful but sadly now defunct NHS-run project designed to address health inequalities in the area. Volunteers were

encouraged to get involved in community projects and campaign for changes they wanted to see in the area.

M4M RA's first major success was securing the building of a popular play park in the field to the rear of the flats following a high-profile campaign and petition. This was followed by a new footpath and lighting, the installation of safety railings, ensuring problems with the new kitchens and bathrooms were resolved, campaigning to prevent the building of houses on our only green space and holding a well-attended public meeting on fire safety in the wake of the Grenfell disaster.

In recent years we have tried to recruit new supporters and foster a community spirit by encouraging locals to come together to organise fun events – a successful bonfire night saw 500 people pack the field to the rear of the flats and even more attended last summer's Superhero themed Fun Day.

Historically there have been three groups in the area – one representing the bottom four high rises, another representing the top two and another nearby blocks of maisonettes. Each struggled to recruit sufficient members to its committee. Each faced largely similar problems and issues. And with a greater emphasis on holding big events that benefitted residents in the whole of the area, it was agreed that it made sense to merge all three and launch a new group – Moredun Multis and Maisonettes Residents Association (MMMRA).

The more people who know about the new group, and the more positive an image we create, the more folk are likely to get involved – hence it was decided to mark the official launch of MMM RA, on Saturday 28 April, with a community fun day.

The day was a great success. An inaugural meeting of MMMRA was held, and a new 7-strong

Committee elected. Then, formalities over, the fun day began and was opened by Lezley Marion Cameron, local Councillor and Vice Convener of the Housing and Economy Committee. Locals were soon enjoying bouncy castles, face painting, a community café, live music, kids' arts and crafts activities, family portraits, and a fancy dress jogging session amongst other attractions.

Other local community groups (and ETF of course) were invited to showcase their work and local Cllr Cameron and fellow local Councillor Stephanie Smith were on hand to meet to residents and hear about their experience of high rise living.

An eye-catching display designed by ETF Outreach Worker Mari Lehva featured a timeline of our successes and a spectacular model of a high rise, complete with opening windows, was on display with locals invited to open the windows and write on them what they thought our priorities for the future should be.

We would like to thank ETF's Justine and Mari for their help and guidance in launching MMM RA, Cllrs Cameron and Smith for coming to talk to locals, Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre for donating towards the cost of the day, Lifelong Learning, the Bethany Christian Trust, the Rev Cammy McKenzie and everyone who played a part in making this event such a resounding success.

Here are some photos from the official launch.



Niel Hansen, Former Secretary of Moredun 4 Multis

GATESIDE COMMUNITY HUB



The Community Hub in renovation stage

Over the past couple of years, I have taken over the running of Gateside Tenants Residents Association (GTRA). Most of my time spent with GTRA has been trying to have a community hub built for the residents and boy what a slog it has been! If you thought it was an easy task think again! If it wasn't for GTRA's Committee and all their hard work, this would have been an impossible task.

The costs alone for building the hub are three or four times what you would expect, so you have to take this into account. The amount of phone calls, emails and meetings just to get this far is ridiculous, but it is a must. I found this out the hard way.

The amount of planning takes up 50% of your time and the rest includes waiting for replies to phone calls and emails. I must say the City of Edinburgh Council has been great with all their help along the way. Help provided by the Council has involved paying for the temporary road and assisting in the planning process. There was many a time when I thought what's the point? And do I need all the stress? At times I've been ready to pack it all in but I won't let the residents down. If they want a community hub they will get it.

The main problem we have encountered is funding in that most funders require a business address. This is a problem as GTRA's committee all work from home. There is no point going to the big funders as the smaller funders have less stipulations on their forms. However we have found that it's still hard to meet the criteria of the funders, but we live in hope.

I was lucky enough to buy a cheap unit from a company in Glasgow for about half the price and designed the inside to suit our needs. We have had a lot of interest from local people wanting to become involved, including the Lord Provost who came to the site to help.

If I was asked to do this again, the answer would have to be no. However I would be interested in helping another group.

GTRA would like to thank the following for their involvement in the Project:

- OneCity Trust;
- Edinburgh Tenants Federation;
- The City of Edinburgh Council;
- Peter Strong, North West Locality Manager,
City of Edinburgh Council;
- P1 Contracts;
- TESCO;
- JD Cabins.



Paul Vaughan,
Chairperson,
GTRA

LINKING LAICHFIELD



Tea and technology- learning digital skills can be easy and fun

Tuesday 3rd April saw People Know How hold their first digital drop-in with tenants at Laichfield Community Association. The sessions have been going on every week ever since, and are well enjoyed by the tenants. Christine from Laichfield said: 'The volunteers who come are great-they take time to explain things and tenants are getting a lot out of the sessions. We are really picking things up-working with smartphones, tablets and laptops.'

The sessions take place at Laichfield every Tuesday from 10.00am-12.00pm and are open to both tenants and the public. May also saw People Know How starting Digi-drop in sessions at Norton Park Reception, every Friday 10.00am-12.00pm. We encourage anyone interested to come along!

GET ONLINE WITH RE:CONNECT - FREE DIGITAL DROP-IN SESSIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY



RE : CONNECT



The Team at People Know How

Do you find your access to computers limited? Or would like more help getting online and improving your digital skills? Then we might be able to help! At People Know How we are committed to making the internet easier to access and easier to use. Across Edinburgh we have set up eight free drop in sessions where our friendly volunteers are on hand to support you. Just come along to one of our drop-ins and use our laptops or bring your own laptop, smartphone or tablet. Whether you just want to surf the net, watch music videos or you have a more specific need or question, we are here to help.

Drop-ins open to all:

- Monday 3.00pm-5.00pm, Craigentinny Community Centre, 9 Loaning Road, Edinburgh, EH7 6JE
- Tuesdays 11.00am-2.00pm, Dr. Bell's Family Centre, 15 Junction Pl, Edinburgh, EH6 5JA
- Wednesdays 11.00am-2.00pm, the Ripple Project, 198 Restalrig Rd. South, Edinburgh, EH7 6DZ
- Thursdays 11.00am-2.00pm, People Know How, Room 5.03, St. Margaret's House, 151 London Road, Edinburgh, EH7 6AE
- Fridays 10.00am-12.00pm, Reception, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY
- Fridays 2.00pm-4.00pm, Starbucks, 3 Shrub Place, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, EH7 4PA
- Saturdays 11.00am-1.00pm (1st, 3rd, 5th Saturday in the month), 4.00pm-6.00pm (2nd & 4th Saturday in the month) People Know How, Room 5.03, St. Margaret's House, 151 London Road, Edinburgh, EH7 6AE

Drop-ins for specific client groups:

- Mondays Session for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, 9.30am-11.30am Streetwork, 22 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AF
- Wednesdays Session for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, 4.00pm-5:50pm, Social Bite, 131 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DT

You can find your nearest session by clicking the link, <http://peopleknowhow.org/drop-ins-sessions/> or write an e-mail to reconnect@peopleknowhow.org to get in touch.

Glenn Liddell, People Know How



NEWS FROM THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

You said, we did

At several recent meetings, Edinburgh Tenants' Federation have raised a range of topics for discussion on ways to improve the services you receive. As a result, a number of actions are being taken to improve customer services to you:

- ✓ An action plan for improvement has been agreed for repairs reporting;
- ✓ An out of hours repairs service is being tested;
- ✓ The different ways you can ask us to do something for you are being improved;
- ✓ Key service guides are being developed for staff working in reception in the localities;
- ✓ Ongoing Customer Care training is being introduced for all housing staff.



We are also working with tenants on how we can improve services on an ongoing basis, e.g.

- ✓ Regular focus groups – such as repairs complaints and stair cleaning;
- ✓ Tenant satisfaction surveys;
- ✓ Estate walkabouts to check local areas and see what needs to be done;
- ✓ Meetings with local resident groups;
- ✓ Tenant Led Inspections.

Some tenants choose to be part of the Tenant Panel to be invited to take part in various ways. It's entirely up to you how little or how much you take part. Any tenant and their family members, 16 years or over and living with them can join. Find out more at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/tenantpanel, tenant.panel@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone 0131 529 7805.

A big change has been the move to patch working for housing officers:

- ✓ More housing officers looking after around 200 homes and tenants;
- ✓ A direct local point of contact with the Council for tenants;
- ✓ Opportunity for annual conversations for tenants;
- ✓ Local initiatives to encourage tenant views on services in every patch.

Officers are getting to know the tenants in their area; in the 2017 Tenant Survey, almost half of those tenants who took part said they were already getting to know their housing officer. If you haven't met your housing officer yet, your local office will be happy to put you in touch with them.

South East

40 Captain's Road. EH17 8HQ
southteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 529 5151

North East

101 Niddrie Mains Road. EH16 4DS
eastteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 529 3111

249 High Street. EH1 1YJ
citycentreteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 529 7061

28-30 Ferry Road. EH6 4AE
leithcitycentreteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 529 6170

South West

10 Westside Plaza. EH14 2ST
southwestteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 527 3800

North West

8 West Pilton Gardens. EH4 4DP
northteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 529 5050

The Drum Brae Library Hub,
81 Drum Brae Drive. EH4 7FE
westteam@edinburgh.gov.uk
0131 529 7440

Jennifer Hunter, Tenant and Resident Services Manager, City of Edinburgh Council



Helping you in your community

ISS is a worldwide facilities company that offers a range of services including, cleaning, security and catering services. Currently, we provide the Edinburgh Stair Cleaning Service on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council. ISS is committed to making a difference in the communities in which we work. Have you got an idea for a community clean up event in your area? We would be happy to volunteer our time to help out with community projects and initiatives. We have previously been involved in various projects around the UK such as community clean up events, landscaping of community gardens and regeneration of play areas. If there are any projects planned around Edinburgh, please get in touch and we will be happy to discuss with you how we can help. Contact us on Greig.Dodds@uk.issworld.com, 0844 936 1400 Find out more about ISS here www.uk.issworld.com.

Greig Dodds, Operations Support Manager, ISS

Interview with Michael Thain, Head of Place Development, City of Edinburgh Council



1. What is your vision for Edinburgh for the next 12 months?

My vision for Edinburgh is that it continues to keep becoming a place where people look after each other.

2. How will the Council be able to provide the service that has been promised to tenants with the cuts that have been imposed against the Council?

We will listen to tenants about what they want and we'll prioritise from there. We spend a lot of time listening to tenants and hearing their views. There is direct accountability between the service the Council provides and tenants.

3. What challenges do you think the Council is facing in the coming year?

The city is growing rapidly. The traditional way of funding Councils is declining and this is an added challenge. We need to continue to meet the needs of tenants and residents. People's lives are changing fast and a lot of people are being left behind. The job of public services is to protect people from these changes and ensure they are not being left behind.

4. Do you therefore believe it is compulsory for there to be a rent rise?

We want to ensure that rents are affordable for everyone and find out what tenants want.

5. How do you feel the four localities are working out so far?

Its early days for the localities. We have

worked as a Council to devolve services as close to communities as possible. We want the tenants to feel the Council is responsive to the needs of communities. That's why we've introduced patches throughout the city.

6. Tell me a wee bit about yourself?

I come from a small village in north east Scotland. I grew up in a small community where everyone knew each other. I have worked in public services for 30 years helping people, their families and communities help each other.

7. Do you have a favourite holiday destination?

The small village in north east Scotland where I grew up.

8. How do you like to relax in your spare time?

I like to spend time with my family and friends.

9. If you had the opportunity to meet one person dead or alive who would it be?

My grandfather. He was a big influence on my life.

10. How would you use one wish with a magic wand?

If people take a bit more time to be kinder to each other.

11. What has been the proudest moment in your career thus far?

When I come across someone whose life has been changed for the better by someone working for the Council. I get a real sense of pride about this.

NATIONAL NEWS

Regulation of Social Housing

Members of Registered Tenant Organisations and individual tenants within ETF recently attended a review session on the Scottish Housing Regulator's Consultation *Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland: A Discussion Paper*. The aims of the session were to gain more of an understanding of the priorities being considered by the Scottish Housing Regulator and what if anything could be improved. The Scottish Human Rights Commission (the Commission) has supported ETF to take a human rights based approach to this submission grounded in international human rights law obligations.

The session was facilitated by ETF's Development Worker Mark Henry. ETF has submitted a response to the consultation and here are some of the main points raised by ETF.

“People should be involved in decisions that affect their rights.”

“How can landlords help those who are homeless?”

“Tenants have a right to an adequate standard of housing as part of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR).”

“It’s critical that regulatory activity is informed by human rights norms and standards.”

“Landlords need to be held accountable to tenants and be able to demonstrate they are listening and being proactive to tenants.”

A copy of ETF's response to Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/etf-response-to-our-regulation-of-social-housing-in-scotland/>, or you can phone Mark on 0131 475 2509 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk and request a paper copy.

ETF urges caution on proposed sprinkler systems

ETF has cautiously welcomed a proposal to install fire sprinkler systems in new-build social housing. ETF's stance comes as a result of a consultation on a potential private members bill from Highlands MSP David Stewart. Mr Stewart is proposing sprinklers in all new build social housing, and also consulted on retrofitting sprinklers in existing high rise housing in the social sector.

ETF recognises that fire safety is of great importance to community based housing associations, but that in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy it can be easy to overlook other pressures such as from loss of income as a result of Universal Credit.

ETF Executive Committee member Heather Ford said, "ETF supports any measures that will reduce the risk of fires in social housing. However ETF is concerned about the additional costs that Fire Sprinkler Systems will have for tenants. Tenants in Edinburgh already pay the highest rents in Scotland and rents will increase by a further 2% for 2018-2019. There needs to be a recognition of what the costs will be for tenants, with many already having to pay extra as a result of Welfare Reform.

A copy of ETF's response to the proposed Installation of Fire Sprinkler Systems in new social housing can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/eff-response-to-proposed-social-housing-automatic-fire-suppression-systems-scotland-bill/>, or you can phone Mark on 0131 475 2509 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk and request a paper copy.



LOOPs



As we get older it can be harder to get out and about and enjoy all the things we used to. However this doesn't need to be the case – the LOOPs Phone line is here to help. Working alongside the LOOPs Community Navigator and LOOPs Community Wellbeing projects, we aim to reduce social isolation and loneliness in over 65s by giving free advice on activities and services in your local area.

We take calls from people of all backgrounds as well as family, friends, and health workers calling on someone's behalf. If you are feeling lonely or just want to try something new call us to find out what opportunities are available in your local area. For example we recently took a call from a lady looking for a lunch club for her 90 year old mother who also needed transport. We were able to provide details of three nearby lunch clubs and local community transport providers.

If you would like to speak to one of our friendly volunteer advisors, call us on 0131 603 8311. We are open Mon-Fri from 10am-4pm. alternatively you can email us at loops@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk.

For full details of the LOOPs Community Navigator projects please visit:
<http://www.loopsprojects.org.uk/>.

Euan Hamilton, LOOPs Phone line Communications Assistant

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ETF High Flats Meeting

Monday 28th May 2018, 7.00pm-9.00pm, Birnies Court Community Room

ETF Repairs Meeting

Wednesday 13th June 2018, 7.00pm-9.00pm, Norton Park Conference Centre, 57 Albion Road

ETF Annual General Meeting

Friday 15th June 2018, Edinburgh Capital Hotel, 187 Clermiston Road, EH12 6UG. Places must be booked in advance by Wednesday 6th June 2018

Comments, compliments, complaints

Please give us feedback on this publication. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints we would like to know. Just contact us at the ETF office.

About Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Edinburgh Tenants Federation is the umbrella organisation for tenants' and residents' groups in Edinburgh and a Registered Tenant Organisation. Tenants' and residents' groups can become members of ETF and individuals can become Associate Members. Just contact the ETF office on 0131 475 2509 or email info@edinburghtenants.org.uk for more information.

Thoughtful Quote

"So remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes a universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed. It matters that you don't just give up."

Stephen Hawking

Copy Deadline



Tenants Voice is usually published three times a year and is distributed to nearly 4,000 tenants, residents, decision makers and other interested individuals throughout Edinburgh. We always welcome contributions from our readers, though we stress that material included in *Tenants Voice* does not always represent the opinions of Edinburgh Tenants Federation. If you would like to contribute an article, please do so by the following deadline:

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Monday 30th July 2018



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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of ETF.

