

# applicants news

## Changes to Housing Benefit

**The UK Government is proposing to make changes to the way some welfare benefits are paid. These changes are contained in the Welfare Reform Bill which is currently going through Parliament. One of the changes that the UK Government wishes to make is to calculate housing benefit for council and housing association tenants in the same way as it does for claimants who rent their homes in the private sector.**

One of the proposed changes is that from April 2013, housing benefit payments will be restricted for working age claimants where the person is deemed to be under-occupying their home. This basically means that if there are too many bedrooms for the number and type of people living in a property, then that household would be classed as 'under-occupying'.

If this proposal is included in the final version of the Welfare Reform Act, it will affect people who are in receipt of housing benefit at that time and are under-occupying their home.

This is something that you need to know about if you think you may be under-occupying your home. See some of the examples shown below, which show how this would work:

- If you are single or a couple, you are deemed to need a one bedroom property. If your property is larger you will not receive housing benefit payments to cover the extra bedroom(s).
- If you are single or a couple with one child, you are deemed to need a two bedroom property. If your property is larger you will not receive Housing Benefit payments to cover the extra bedroom(s).
- If you are single or a couple with two children of the same sex under the age of 16, again you are deemed to need a

### Welcome to the summer edition of Applicants News.

This edition updates you on the UK Governments proposal on housing benefit changes and how this could affect you if you are offered a property. There is also information on the number and types of council properties let throughout our towns and villages over the last year and it shows the points range they were allocated on.

Also checkout our Homeswapper scheme; if you are looking for a mutual exchange either within West Lothian or out with the county you might find this useful.



two bedroom property as the children can share. If your property is larger, you will not receive housing benefit payments to cover the extra bedroom(s).

- If you have additional rooms to accommodate children you have access to, you will not receive Housing Benefit to cover the extra room(s) in the property.

At present the UK Government have not told us how they will work out the value of the under-occupied rooms, but if it is based on what we currently charge for each extra bedroom then the loss of housing benefit could be around £24.00 per room, per month.

At this time it is unclear what the final details of the legislation in the Act will be, but if these proposals become law, you would have to pay the shortfall in rent that your housing benefit would not cover.

**It is therefore very important that you take this into account if you are offered a property that would be regarded as being larger than you actually need.**

# HomeSwapper

If you are looking for another house, why not try the Homeswapper Scheme. Homeswapper is also known as Mutual Exchange.

Homeswapper is a website that helps tenants in social housing swap houses locally, regionally or nationally. It may be a quicker way of moving than waiting on an allocations list.

As a West Lothian Council tenant, this service is free of charge and to register, log on to [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk) and follow the registration process.

If you don't have access to a computer you can pop into your local CIS Office or library for advice and assistance about the Homeswapper Scheme and the opportunity to view the scheme.

You can also advertise a swap in local press or put an advert in local shops and supermarkets.

**For more information on this scheme you can pick up a leaflet in any Council Information Service Centre, local library or contact your local housing office.**

## Properties Let in West Lothian

April 2010– March 2011

This report gives information on the number and types of lets that took place over the past 12 months.

Ward	Community	House Type	No of Bedrooms					TOTAL	Points Range
			1	2	3	4	5		
Armadale	Armadale	4 in Block	2	55	9			66	250-1200
		Cottage	12	5	7	3		27	330-1000
		Flat	3		1			4	300-400
		Maisonette		1	2			3	150-400
	Blackridge	4 in Block	1					1	400
		Cottage	1	3	6			10	300-450
		Flat	1					1	400
	Torphichen	Maisonette		3	3			6	400-460
		4 in Block	1					1	400
	Westfield	4 in Block			1			1	350
Cottage		1	2				3	400	
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>22</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>123</b>	
Bathgate	Bathgate	4 in Block	10	12	1			23	180-1400
		Cottage		4	7			11	400-1150
		Flat	11		1			12	400-450
		Maisonette			1			1	400
	Boghall	Sheltered Housing	4					4	250-400
		4 in Block	12	13				25	100-1150
		Cottage		10	2	1		13	400-500
	Wester Inch	Flat	3	24	2			29	350-1150
		Cottage		18	8			26	100-1200
	Whiteside	Flat	19	21				40	100-1000
4 in Block		1	1				2	400-100	
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>60</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>186</b>	
Breich Valley	Addiewell	4 in Block		10	3			13	400-1300
		Cottage	1	2	5			8	400-450
	Breich	4 in Block		1				1	400
		Cottage	1		1			2	400
	Fauldhouse	4 in Block	9	20				29	240-1400
		Cottage	1	6	2			9	400
		Flat		2	3			5	100-400
	Longridge	Maisonette		3	6			9	100-400
		Cottage		1	3			4	400
	Polbeth	4 in Block		3	4			7	300-1280
		Cottage	4	4	3			11	400-1230
	Stoneyburn	Flat	2		1			3	400
		4 in Block		6				6	400-1350
West Calder	Cottage	3	2	3			8	400	
	4 in Block	2	6				8	400-600	
	Cottage		1	2			3	400-1000	
	Flat	1	1				2	400	
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>24</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>36</b>			<b>128</b>	

Ward	Community	House Type	No of Bedrooms					TOTAL	Points Range	
			1	2	3	4	5			
Broxburn	Broxburn	4 in a Block	3	1				4	400-500	
		Cottage	3	9	4			16	250-550	
		Flat	5	9	2			16	400-1200	
		Maisonette		3	1			4	400	
	Ecclesmachan	Cottage			1			1	400	
		Uphall	4 in a Block	2	4	1			7	350-1150
	Winchburgh	Cottage	Flat	7	1				8	400-1250
			Flat	1					1	400
		4 in a Block		2	1			3	400-1000	
		Cottage	3	6				9	400-450	
		Flat	1	2	4			7	100-490	
Maisonette			1	2		3	400-1100			
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>79</b>		
East Livingston	Mid Calder	Sheltered Housing	3					3	0	
		4 in a Block		1				1	400	
		Cottage	1	1				2	400-450	
	East Calder	4 in a Block	1	2				3	400-1000	
		Cottage	2	5	5			12	400-1000	
	Kirknewton	Cottage		1				1	400	
	Pumpherstoun	4 in a Block			1			1	400	
	Uphall Station	Cottage	2	7	3			12	400-1200	
Cottage		2	1	2			5	400-550		
FLAT	2					2	400			
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>		
Linlithgow	Bridgend	4 in Block		18	1			19	400-1150	
		Cottage	1	2				3	400	
	Linlithgow	4 in Block	1					1	400	
		Cottage		3	1			4	390-550	
		Flat	7	1				8	400-1250	
	Linlithgow Bridge	Maisonette			1			1	400	
		4 in Block		2				2	490-500	
	Newton	Cottage		1	1			2	400-460	
Cottage			1				1	400		
Philpstoun	Cottage			1			1	400		
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>9</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>42</b>		
North Livingston	Deans	Cottage	12	3	3			18	150-600	
		Flat	3					3	400	
		Maisonette		3				3	400	
	Eliburn	4 in Block		1				1	150	
		Cottage	4	5	1	1	1	12	150-1100	
	Knightsridge	Cottage	2	4	5			11	350-1100	
		Flat	2	1				3	400	
Livingston Village	Cottage	1					1	400		
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>52</b>		
South Livingston	Dedridge	Cottage	6	6	2		1	15	280-990	
		Flat	8					8	150-590	
		Maisonette			4			4	660	
	Ladywell	4 in Block	3	1				4	790	
		Cottage	3	1	3	1		8	250-840	
		Flat	3	3				6	490-970	
Maisonette		2				2	400-970			
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>		
Whitburn	Blackburn	4 in Block	7	6	3	3		19	150-1200	
		Cottage	2	3	2			7	400-1100	
		Flat		22	4			26	200-400	
		Maisonette		8	3			11	400	
	East Whitburn	4 in Block		1				1	400	
		Cottage	1	1				2	240-330	
	Harthill	Cottage	1	2	2			5	400-450	
	Seafield	Cottage	3	3				6	400	
	Whitburn	4 in Block	40	38				78	60-1400	
		Cottage	3	16	10	3	1	33	120-1210	
		Flat	15	14	6			35	100-1000	
Maisonette			27	9			36	0-1400		
Sheltered Housing	2					2	0-250			
<b>WARD TOTAL</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>261</b>		
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>274</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>960</b>		

# West Lothian Home Choice

**West Lothian Council is launching a new service at the beginning of July 2011, where we will be working in partnership with private landlords and letting agents to provide a better standard of service to those accessing housing in the private rented sector.**

The aim of the new service is to promote good practice, ensure those Landlords involved comply with core standards of property management and provide access to training, support and information on private sector housing.

It will also provide access to private sector housing, which will be advertised through a web based property portal where prospective tenants will be able to search for private sector housing from any computer which has access to the internet. There will be pictures of the property, information, location of property along with monthly rents and any deposits required. Under existing legislation, private landlords must apply for registration with their local authority. The local authority must be satisfied that they are fit and proper persons to let property, before registering them. They must meet

minimum standards and any landlords not meeting or complying with the regulations will not be registered or will be removed from the register.

**Anyone who owns residential property within West Lothian, which they let out, must apply to register with the council.** It is the owner of the property who must register.

**For more information and to check if our landlord is registered log on to:**  
[www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk)



**There will be further information on West Lothian Home Choice in the next newsletter, with contact details if you require more information or wish to discuss the service with a member of staff.**

**Armadale CSC**  
Email: [Armadaleaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Armadaleaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Bathgate CSC**  
Email: [Bathgateaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Bathgateaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Blackburn CSC**  
Email: [Blackburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Blackburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Broxburn CSC**  
Email: [Broxburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Broxburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Fauldhouse CSC**  
Email: [Fauldhouseaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Fauldhouseaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Linlithgow CSC**  
Email: [Linlithgowaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Linlithgowaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Livingston CSC**  
Email: [Livingstonaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Livingstonaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**West Calder CSC**  
Email: [Westcalderaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Westcalderaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Whitburn CSC**  
Email: [Whitburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Whitburnaho@westlothian.gov.uk)

**West Lothian Connected**  
CSC, Almondvale Centre

## Customers with special requirements

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on **01506 775000**

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط ويخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.  
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف 01506 775000

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Informacje te mogą być przełożone na język Braille'a, dostępne na taśmie magnetycznej lub wydane dużym drukiem oraz przetłumaczone na języki mniejszości narodowych. Prosimy o kontakt z Usługami Tłumaczeniowymi pod numerem 01506 775000.

Text phones offer the opportunity for people with a hearing problem to access the council. The textphone number is **01506 464427**. A loop system is also available in all offices.

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