



Gill's Message

In the final year of our business plan "Investment and Growth" we continued to roll out planned maintenance and heating upgrades to tenants' homes.

During the year we also refurbished 16, one and two bed properties at Old Course Gate, Musselburgh for mid-market rent, created a subsidiary Homes for Life Plus, appointed HfL Plus Board and established mid-market rent services (MMR). Letting all 16 homes for mid-market rent in September 2025.

We were also delighted to host a number of Scottish Government MSP visits including one to Old Course Gate by the new Cabinet Secretary for Housing.

As we move into 2026, we will welcome new board members to help us shape a 5-year Strategy and Business Plan for the HfL Group. This will include a 5-year investment programme for existing tenants' homes, expansion of our MMR service offer and development of new homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our Team, our Contractor's, and Consultants, HfL and HfL Plus Board and to our revived Tenants Panel and to wish all our tenants a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Best regards,

Gill
CEO



HfL Assurance Statement 2025:

[www.homesforlife.co.uk/
governance-and-regulation](http://www.homesforlife.co.uk/governance-and-regulation)



Winter Edition

2025

Rent Consultation 2026/27



Enclosed with your Newsletter is our Rent Consultation 2026/27. We would be grateful if you could respond no later than Friday 9th January 2026. Please only complete one response per household. There are three ways

you can provide your feedback:

- ✓ Complete the enclosed survey and return in the prepaid envelope
- ✓ <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/8FIKRD/>
- ✓ Or use the QR code above



CHRISTMAS SHUTDOWN

We closed for our Christmas break at **12:30 pm on Wednesday 24th December** and reopen **Tuesday 6 January at 8:30 am**

To report emergency repairs, call JR Facilities on **0800 774 7183**

For any gas emergencies, call Lothian Gas on **0131 440 4666**

Board Updates

Congratulations to David Leishman and Debby Gillett on their Board promotions and a warm welcome to Otis Berry for joining our Homes for Life Board!

Board David Leishman – Chair

After two years of dedicated service, most recently as Vice Chair, David Leishman was elected Chair of the Board. This is a fantastic achievement and reflects David's commitment to supporting our community and helping shape the future of our housing services.



David is a Qualified Accountant and is currently Head of Finance at Waverley Housing.

As Chair, David will lead the Board in setting priorities, making key decisions, and ensuring that your voices remain at the heart of everything we do. We're confident that his experience and leadership will help us continue to improve and deliver the best possible service for all tenants.

Debby Gillett – Vice Chair



After two years of dedicated service on the Board, Debby Gillett was elected Vice Chair.

Debby is a dedicated housing professional with 20 years of experience delivering services to social housing tenants across the Scottish

Borders. Debby is currently working as a Development Manager at Scottish Borders Housing Association.

As Vice Chair, Debby will play an important role in guiding the Board's work and ensuring that your voices continue to be heard. We look forward to working together to keep improving our services and making our neighbourhood a great place to live.

Otis Berry – Tenant member

We're delighted to announce that Otis Berry has joined our Board as a Tenant Board Member.



Tenant voices are at the heart of everything we do, and having Otis on the Board ensures that your perspectives continue to shape our decisions and priorities. We look forward to working closely with him to strengthen our services and make our community an even better place to live.

Rob Hughes (Resigned as Chair)



After a year of dedicated service as Chair of the Board, Rob Hughes has stepped down from the Chair role. We want to sincerely thank Rob for his leadership and commitment during this time, which has helped guide HfL through an organisational shift to

a group structure with set up of our Mid-Market Rent (MMR) subsidiary HfL Plus.

Rob will continue to serve on the Board, bringing his valuable experience and insight to our work. In addition, Rob has also joined the Homes for Life Plus Board, where he will help shape housing opportunities for a wider range of residents.

David Rose

David joined the Board in 1998, being one of the original members of the HfL Board. During his 27 years' service to HfL he has held various positions including Chair of our Audit and Compliance Committee.



At our AGM on the 24 September to show our appreciation for his longstanding service he was presented with a gift from HfL thanking him for his contribution to the Partnership.





Planned Maintenance Update 2025

So far this year we have delivered:

Muirfield, Gullane	18 kitchen upgrades completed 1 gas boiler upgrade completed 2 further kitchen upgrades to be completed
Trickle Transfer Properties	7 kitchen upgrades completed 2 gas boiler replacements completed 8 gas boiler replacements planned for Quarter 3
MacFarlane Court, Elphinstone	8 Bathroom upgrades completed, 1 further upgrade to follow
Walden, Gifford	15 fully funded fabric first heating upgrades 4 to further upgrades to follow
MacFarlane Court, Elphinstone	29 fully funded fabric first heating upgrades at survey stage – pending planning confirmation and funding release.
Limeylands, Ormiston and Trickle Transfers	Exterior painting projects – under review for Quarter 4
Davidson Terrace/Place, Haddington	Communal internal door replacements – at procurement stage to be completed in Quarter

More investment will be targeted by area over the coming years in line with our Asset Management Strategy. To achieve value for money this will include:

- ✓ Procurement of bulk contracts for planned work.
- ✓ Securing grant funding for energy efficiency and heating improvements
- ✓ Aligning our heating upgrade investment with net zero standards and; East Lothian Council's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy.

We are continually reviewing our planned and cyclical maintenance objectives against the full thirty-year business plan. Projections have been made for the next 5 years subject to budget and funding approvals made on an annual basis. Please do not hesitate to contact HfL Maintenance and Asset team if you would like to discuss the framework of planned maintenance for your property.

We were awarded £50k grant funding in 2025-2026, to support major medical adaptations to tenants' homes following referrals from East Lothian Council's Occupational Therapy team. If you think you require and would qualify for a medical adaptation please contact the housing management team at HfL.

Tenancy Sustainment News

This section provides an update on assistance we have provided to tenants and upcoming opportunities you can get involved in. We also shine the spotlight on support offered by other organisations across East Lothian.

For information contact our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, caitlin.rodgers@homesforlife.co.uk or text/ call/ WhatsApp on **07394 801 595**.

Winter Warmer Programme Kicks Off with Home Energy Support



We launched our **Winter Warmer Programme** in November with a Home Energy Drop-in Session delivered in partnership with **Changeworks**.

Tenants joined our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Caitlin, along with Lesley from Changeworks, for a friendly coffee morning focused on saving energy and staying warm this winter.

Changeworks shared their Top Ten Tips for reducing energy usage, followed by advice and guidance tailored to tenant's individual needs.

During the session, tenants received support to:

- ✓ Apply for the Warm Home Discount
- ✓ Access home energy credit and heated throws
- ✓ Arrange follow-up support for managing energy debt

Through this single session, we estimate over £1,100 in energy savings among the tenants who attended – a fantastic start to our Winter Warmer Programme!

One tenant said: **"I enjoyed a nice time, chatting over a coffee and got helpful advice on my utilities"**.

Warmer Winter Event Programme

We are delighted to share our programme with you.

Warmer Winters

Join our friendly monthly coffee mornings.
Meet new people, get home energy advice &
learn simple ways to stay warm and cosy.



📅 First Wednesday of the month, 10am - 12pm (except December)

📍 Homes for Life, 57 Market Street, Haddington, EH41 3JG

📞 For info contact Caitlin | 01620 829 300 | caitlin.rodgers@homesforlife.co.uk

We can cover your travel costs if needed – just ask!

WED

05
NOV

Join us for home energy support from Changeworks. Find out about fuel funding and ways to save on fuel bills.



WED

03
DEC

Festive Wreath Workshop, **4:30-6:30pm**
@ Wilder Florist. **Booking essential.**
Contact Caitlin by 15th November



WED

07
JAN

Join us for new year goal setting,
find out about health & wellbeing,
volunteering & employment opportunities



WED

04
FEB

Make your own draught excluder
and get friendly home energy advice
& support from Changeworks



WED

04
MARCH

Bulb planting and garden
planning - create your own
greenspace and boost your mood



WED

08
APRIL

Recipe sharing and food shopping on
a budget. Find out about free and
low cost food services in East Lothian



In partnership with Changeworks: www.changeworks.org.uk

CHANGeworks.

Drop in to an upcoming session or email Caitlin on caitlin.rodgers@homesforlife.co.uk
or text/ call/ WhatsApp on **07394 801 595** for more information.

Funding Available!

We know that winter is a tricky time financially for many households. There is assistance out there, but it might not always feel easy to access. Through our Tenancy Sustainment service, we can help you access funding and help ease the pressure this winter.

Household Items

We have funding available for household items to help you stay warm and comfortable at home whilst reducing costs. The fund can be used for a wide range of items, including heated clothes drier, thermal curtains, air fryer, etc. You can also request an energy saving item of your choice. To apply please complete this short form by 31st January 2026: <https://tinyurl.com/Homesforlife> or scan the QR code:



Fuel Funding and Home Energy Assistance

If you are concerned about the cost of staying warm at home this winter contact Caitlin, you may be eligible to apply for **fuel vouchers**.

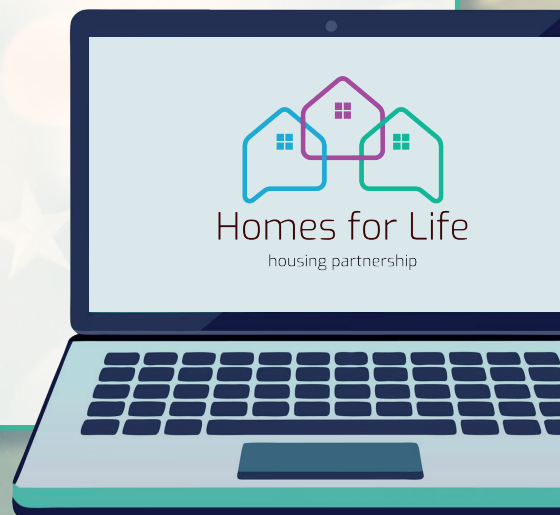
This winter, everyone in Scotland who has reached pension age will get the new **Pension Age Winter Heating Payment**. Other people who are receiving a means tested benefit and have a health benefit or children under 5 in the home may also be eligible. Check with your provider.

Our partners at Changeworks can provide further home energy advice and support. They can also help you deal with energy debt and utility issues.

Digital Devices

We are now working in partnership with **The Edinburgh Remakery**, a brilliant social enterprise, who receive donated laptops which they refurbish and gift to people experiencing digital exclusion.

Homes for Life can now access **free refurbished laptops and tablets** for tenants who need them. If you are unable to get online, because you don't have a device or have a device but need help to use it, contact Caitlin. Please note, we have a limited supply, devices will be allocated on an individual basis.





Spotlight on...

In this section we shine the spotlight on services which may be of interest to tenants.

East Lothian Wellbeing Resource Day at East Lothian Community Hospital

Every Wednesday, 12 – 2pm

If you or someone you are supporting is facing a challenge, is feeling a bit down, or just wants to know how to get more involved in the local community, the Wellbeing Hub is here to help.

Every week, they have friendly staff from:

- ✓ NHS Psychological Services
- ✓ Citizens Advice Bureau
- ✓ Volunteer Centre East Lothian
- ✓ East Lothian Works

Monthly visits from:

- ✓ Community Learning Disability Team
- ✓ Improving the Cancer Journey
- ✓ Other organisations



For full details see: <https://www.volunteereastlothian.org.uk/east-lothian-wellbeing-hub>

Eastspace - East Lothian's online source of mental health and wellbeing information

The Eastspace support directory can help you find support available for adults living and/or working in East Lothian. See their website: www.eastspace.org.uk

Eastspace

Self-help Find support News Your stories

Need help now

I need help with...



**East Lothian's
online source of
mental health and
wellbeing
information**



**WIN
£100**

Competition Time

Follow us on Facebook to keep up to date with our latest news and for a chance to win **£100** in food vouchers for your supermarket of choice! *

*The winner will be picked at random and notified by the end of January 2026



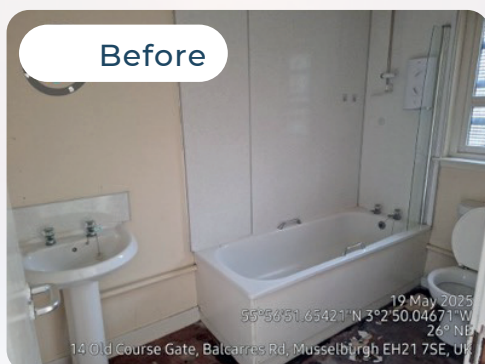
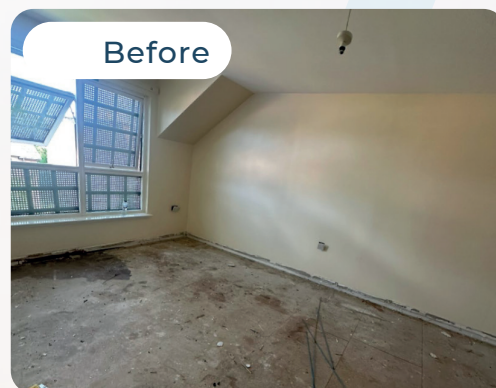
Follow us to keep up to date

Homes for Life+ Update

Homes for Life+ is a subsidiary of Homes for Life Housing Partnership, created to help deliver affordable mid-market rent (MMR) homes across South East Scotland.

Mid-market rent housing provides good-quality, affordable accommodation for people who may never be offered social housing but are also priced out of the private rental sector.

Earlier this year, sixteen properties in Musselburgh, previously leased to East Lothian Council were fully refurbished and let following advert on Citylets as MMR tenancies in mid-September.



HfL+ Board

Community Housing Officer **Zoe Stevenson** and Housing Manager **Donna Dougal** lead the Homes for Life+ service.

All future Homes for Life+ vacancies will be advertised on **Citylets**.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about Homes for Life+, please contact the team at enquiries@homesforlifeplus.co.uk.



Turkey, Ham and Stuffing Pie

Method

1. First make the pastry. Rub the flour, butter and lard together until it resembles fine breadcrumbs and add a good pinch of salt.
2. Add just enough iced water to bind the pastry together without it being too crumbly, then form it into a ball, wrap it in cling film and chill it in the fridge.
3. To make the filling, heat the butter in a casserole and add the leeks. Season with salt and pepper, then add the wine. Cover and leave on a low heat until the leeks are just tender, then remove the leeks with a slotted spoon and reserve any liquid.
4. For the sauce, melt the butter in a separate saucepan and add the flour. Stir until you have a thick roux, then gradually add the stock, milk and cream, stirring thoroughly with each addition to make a creamy béchamel. Add the reserved liquid from cooking the leeks.
5. Add the turkey, ham, stuffing and leeks to the béchamel and stir very gently – be careful as you don't want the meat or leeks to break up. Leave to cool completely.
6. Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6 and put a baking tray in the oven to heat up.
7. To assemble the pie, take two-thirds of the pastry. Roll it out to line a large pie dish – around 25cm/10in in diameter. Add the filling – it should more than fill the pie dish and give you a slightly domed top.
8. Roll out the remaining pastry. Brush the edges of the bottom piece of pastry with beaten egg, then place over the top piece. Trim the edges and crimp together. Use the trimmings to make any decorations you like, then brush the whole thing with egg wash. Cut two small holes in the centre of the crust.
9. Bake for 35–40 minutes, or until the pie is a rich golden-brown colour and the filling is piping hot.

Ingredients

For the pastry

- 350g/12oz plain flour
- 125g/4½oz butter, chilled and diced
- 75g/2½oz lard, chilled and diced
- iced water
- salt
- 1 free-range egg, beaten, to glaze

For the filling

- 15g/½oz butter
- 3 leeks, thickly sliced
- 100ml/3½fl oz dry white wine
- 500g/1lb 2oz leftover turkey, diced
- 200g/7oz cooked ham, diced
- 200g/7oz leftover stuffing, broken up
- freshly ground black pepper

For the sauce

- 50g/1¾oz butter
- 50g/1¾oz plain flour
- 400ml/14fl oz turkey or chicken stock
- 200ml/7fl oz full-fat milk
- 100ml/3½fl oz single cream
- few tarragon leaves, finely chopped





Cornflake Cakes

Method

1. Place cornflakes in a large mixing bowl, set it aside along with a sheet of parchment paper for the completed trees
2. Place a large saucepan over medium heat then melt the butter. Once the butter has melted, add marshmallows, stirring constantly until completely melted. Remove from heat then stir in vanilla, salt and enough green food colouring to achieve the desired colour.
3. Pour the marshmallow mixture over the cornflakes and stir gently to combine. Mix thoroughly so the colour is somewhat uniform but try not to break up the cornflakes. Allow the mixture to cool until it is safe enough to handle, but still warm.
4. Rub a generous amount of butter on your hands to prevent sticking then shape half a cup of the mixture into the conical shape of a Christmas tree. Repeat with remaining cornflake mixture, reapplying butter as needed. Go back every now and then to reshape the trees until they are cool enough to hold their shape.
5. While the trees are still warm, decorate each tree with red and yellow sweets. You may also find that placing the sweets in the cavities between the cornflakes or shaping the tree to hold the ornaments is an easy way to keep them in place.
6. Allow them to cool completely before serving.

Ingredients

- 6 cups of Cornflakes
- 6 Tbsp unsalted butter plus extra for shaping
- 100g bag of mini marshmallows
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Green food colouring
- Smarties for decorations - or alternative





Christmas Word Search



C H R I S T M A S T R E E F
G J R P L A N T E R N O O R
F I I M I S T L E T O E W E
S N N A T I V I T Y K A C L
N G I N G E R B R E A D A O
O L T H L E S N I T I K N P
W E Y N A U A T E D P E D H
M B L R E I N D E E R P Y T
A E L D O C T H T C E D C R
N L O O S C A R O L S R A O
W L H W C A T R I S E S N N
S S L E I G H T O E N E E A
E L R O R N A M E N T A L P
N Y T G N I K C O T S V E F

Christmas Wordsearch

Find these words in the puzzle above:

Santa
Reindeer
Elf

Stocking
Presents
Sleigh
Mistletoe
Gingerbread
Snowman

Candy cane
Jingle bells
Christmas tree
Ornament
Carol
Holly
Tinsel
North Pole
Nativity



Exciting Update!

In 2026, our Newsletter will transition to a digital format to make it easier to access and more environmentally friendly. For those who prefer a printed copy, paper versions will still be available upon request.

Christmas Colouring-In

