

# VOICE

LIKE US



Issue 59  
Autumn 2024



Move to digital  
will save money  
and help the planet



Important  
news on  
energy bills



Tips for looking  
after your home  
this winter



## Inside Your Autumn Voice

Sign up to keep receiving Voice



Newsletter for tenants of Melville Housing Association  
The Corn Exchange • 200 High Street • Dalkeith • Midlothian • EH22 1AZ  
T: 0131 654 2733 • [info@melville.org.uk](mailto:info@melville.org.uk) • [www.melville.org.uk](http://www.melville.org.uk) • Scottish Charity SC032755

## Important news on the future of Voice



We have some important news on the future of our Voice newsletter. This issue will be the last that we send out to all tenants in its current format. But don't worry, Voice will continue to bring Melville tenants all the latest news, it's just that most people will receive it via a link to the digital version found on our website. We will also no longer be posting out Quids In! If you'd like to receive this digitally please let us know.

### Why have you made this decision?

Printing and posting out three issues of Voice every year costs Melville around £20,000 and this figure is going up all the time. A significant chunk of this goes on postage. While in recent years we've reduced the number we send out, we still post around 1,800 copies per issue. This is very expensive, bad for the planet and wasteful as many people will never read their copy.



### Are there other benefits in producing a digital newsletter?

As well as costing far less and being better for the environment, the digital version is also more up to date (without printing times it's far quicker to produce) and includes useful links so you can find out more about the news we feature.



### Will you still post other information?

We are looking at everything we currently post to see if there ways we can get the information to you differently, in order to save money and be more sustainable. However we will never cut letters out entirely and will always provide information in ways that you want it. We plan on continuing to post out the annual diary and handbook in December because of the valuable information it contains, and in future years we are considering combining this with an annual round up of Melville news.



## Our survey says... modernise to save money and the planet!

We carried out a tenant survey earlier this year, looking to find out how we should communicate with you in the future. In particular we wanted to see what you think about the number of letters we post out, given how much postage costs these days, and the importance of looking after the planet.

We also wanted to find out your views on the future of the print edition of Voice. Each issue of Voice that we print and post out (to about 1,800 tenants) costs around £6,500 and we produce three issues a year so that works out at roughly £20,000. Around half of this goes on postage.

So what did you tell us? Well we had an excellent response with 265 digital forms returned. A paper copy was available on request and this was promoted through an article in the Spring issue of Voice.

### You told us that:

- We should definitely be doing more to help the environment
- You agree that Voice should switch to digital for most (88% of you agreed with this)
- Most of you (75%) want to be kept informed by email
- Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram are your most widely used social media apps
- Our current website is decent but you would like more services online and an improved tenant portal



### You said

You could save all that paper you use on a magazine that probably only a few people read. Be environmental please.

As an older tenant who does to a degree use the web I and all my acquaintances still prefer something through our letterbox to keep us informed.

Maybe a yearly newsletter instead of three.

Having an app rather than just a website would be far better and easier to access.

I think it would be nice if the staff at Melville had a photo and a couple of sentences about what they do as their job. I'd be more confident that I was contacting the right person and would be less anxious about emailing or calling.

### We are doing

Agreed. After this issue we plan on only sending out paper copies of Voice to those that ask for one.

We will continue to post out Voice, and other information, to any tenant who wishes to read a paper copy.

This is definitely an option and something we will consider. We intend to keep producing the annual diary and handbook that we post out to all tenants in December. From next year we will look at combining this mailing with a newsletter rounding up the news from the year.

We are making big changes to our IT systems this year and an improved tenant portal, that will work in similar ways to an app, is part of this.

This is a great idea and we already have this on our website for our housing team (just go to the 'Your Home' section and look for the 'Our Housing Team' drop down). We will look at expanding to include our repairs team as well.

## I still want to receive a paper copy of Voice, what do I do?

No problem. We're happy to continue posting out Voice to anyone who can't access it digitally, or who just prefers to receive a paper copy. Just let us know by phoning 0131 561 6466 and leaving your name and address.

## First tenants move in at Oakwood Edge



The first Melville tenants have moved in at Oakwood Edge, a new development on the edge of Mayfield that will provide homes for 39 families when completed.

Mum-of-three Linda Millar and her family were among the first to get their keys. Linda's new three-bedroom home, built by Lovell Partnership, features an open-plan kitchen/dining room and solar panels to help reduce energy bills.

"We love our new home," said Linda. "It's bright with the big windows, there's lots of storage and plenty of space for us. Being able to stay in the area was really important for me and

my children so that we could be close to our friends and family and the area we know. We're grateful to Lovell and Melville Housing Association for building a great place to live."

"There's a huge demand for high-quality, affordable homes in Midlothian, just as there is across Scotland, so these new houses at Oakwood Edge are a very welcome boost to the local area," said Melville's Neil Edgar. "We've not worked with Lovell for quite some time and we've been very pleased with how things have gone so far.

"It's also important to stress that projects like this would not be possible without funding from the Scottish Government and the help of our partners. If we're to make further inroads into tackling the national housing crisis, then we must all continue to work together in the coming years."

Construction work began at the Oakwood Edge development last spring with the final Melville homes expected to be handed over by the end of the year.

## Help and support for families



A charity that supports families with young children in Midlothian is calling on Melville tenants who need a wee bit of support to get in touch and find out about the help they can provide.

Home Link Family Support is an award-winning charity that has been delivering effective family support and therapy across the east of Scotland since 1986. They use a range of early intervention approaches, including individual and group services, to improve the well-being of children and parents.

"I cannot thank Home Link Family Support enough for their help, their patience but most of all their listening ears," said one grateful Midlothian Mum. "Not only was my daughter in need of support, I was too and the family counsellor gave me that support when I most needed it. The counsellor listened when no-one else would. Home Link Family Support helps families like ours when they are at breaking point. We'd be no further forward without them."

"Recently I've been running a Stay and Play at the MAEDT Pavilion garden which has been brilliant for stimulating early learning, and supporting both parents and children," said Homelink's Bridget Mackay. "This is just one example of how our charity helps families to thrive by offering emotional and practical support that is also very flexible. We can meet families in their homes or in public places, whatever best suits their needs. We're a small team but we work incredibly hard to minimise the impact of social and economic disadvantages that families may be experiencing."

## Find out more or contact Homelink

[www.homelinkfamilysupport.org](http://www.homelinkfamilysupport.org) | [info@homelinkfamilysupport.org](mailto:info@homelinkfamilysupport.org)

**0131 661 0890**



## Spotlight on our Welfare Advice team

This issue we're shining the spotlight on our welfare benefits advice team, made up of hugely experienced advisers John Scott and Barry Smith. John and Barry do fantastic work sorting benefit claims and maximising the income of customers who come to them for help. Read on to find out a bit more about what makes them tick.

### What attracted you to your current job at Melville?

**John:** It was the mix of energy advice and welfare benefits that really attracted me to the job at Melville. It's usually one or the other but I like to do both so the job was perfect for me.

**Barry:** I only joined Melville about a year ago. I was looking for a new challenge with a better work life balance when I saw this job advertised. I knew I had the right skills for the job and was delighted to be offered the position.



### What does your average office day look like?

**Barry:** I have tenants to contact daily, chase up claims already made, in office appointments and home visits. Every successful claim makes a huge difference but just as important is making sure money gets paid as quickly as possible. Surprisingly enough this isn't always the case...

**John:** There's definitely no such thing as an average day but most days are pretty full on with a mixture of office appointments and home visits. When I'm not dealing directly with tenants my time is spent catching up with messages, casework, and colleagues.

### What do you feel is your biggest contribution to Melville and its tenants?

**John:** Always being available and being able to react to the often difficult financial situations that my clients may find themselves in. These are often directly related to energy costs and changes to their welfare benefits.

**Barry:** Ensuring that tenants are claiming everything they are entitled to. This results in extra money for tenants to cover the everyday essentials like bills and to buy food etc. Every little helps in a cost of living crisis!

### Favourite takeaway dish?

**Barry:** Shredded honey chicken is great but if I'm being honest pretty much anything with honey...

**John:** Chips and cheese (restricted diet enforces this) otherwise a good curry.



### What do you like to do in your spare time?

**John:** When I'm not coaching a boys football team, I like watching sport and socialising with family and friends.

**Barry:** For 6 months of the year I'm an avid (but fair weather!) golfer and the other 6 months I go to Hearts games - both equally frustrating! In any other spare time I enjoy going for coastal walks, meals and cinema with my golf widow wife, son, nephew and any other family members who want to come along.

### Where's your dream holiday destination?

**John:** I love Malta but I could also be persuaded by New Zealand or Sardinia.

**Barry:** I'd love to take a US golfing holiday. They have some amazing courses (including one or two owned by Mr Trump...), however my wife would prefer the Maldives.



### Who would be your 3 famous (living or dead) desert island companions?

**Barry:** Micky Flanagan for the banter, Tiger for golf tips, and Bear Grylls to keep us alive...

**John:** Kurt Cobain, Walter Smith and Robin Williams.



## £660k for 400 struggling households



400 struggling households are £660,000 better off thanks to the hard work of Melville's life-saving housing support service.

Melville helped tenants claim grants and benefits worth £660,560 over the past 12 months, working out at an average of £1,647 for each of the 400 households supported.

"I've found myself on hard times recently due to the cost of living, and Melville Housing are one of the only people that helped me and my children," said one grateful tenant. "Not one other charity or organisation were willing to help, so I thank Melville for being there when I was in need."

The dedicated Melville team, made up of six housing officers, three housing assistants and two welfare benefits advisers, helped tenants access benefits to which they were entitled, and tap into LACER (Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery), HACT (Housing Association Charitable Trust) and Fuel Bank funds. Melville tenants also received funding from children's charity Aberlour and Edinburgh and Lothian Trust Fund.

"The whole team has worked fantastically hard for tenants over the past 12 months and these results are testament to their efforts," said Jane Burnett, Melville's Head of Housing. "To have helped almost one in five of our households is remarkable and has gone some way to mitigating the impact of the rise in the cost of living that has affected us all over the past couple of years.

"This help hasn't just put food on the table and allowed tenants to heat their homes over the winter, we often also hear about the positive impact it has on fragile mental health and in some cases can quite literally be life-saving. We appreciate the continued support of our partners and the fund providers and with their assistance we will continue to help wherever we can."

As well as assisting with benefits, funding and fuel vouchers, Melville has also helped out by providing kitchen items such as fridges, and cost-saving air fryers and slow cookers, worth roughly £4,500.

## Carol's story shows how Melville can help



"No one has ever helped me as much as Melville Housing. From making adjustments to my kitchen units to applying for grants for carpets and an air fryer, I am really grateful to Melville for helping make this my forever home"

Fleeing domestic violence, Carol had been living in homeless accommodation before she moved into her Melville home in early 2024.

As part of our new tenant engagement strategy, we referred her to our welfare team when she signed up to help her settle in as quickly as possible.

When carrying out her benefit health check, our adviser established that Carol was on a zero-hour contract, and had weeks where she received no income. He helped her to make a claim for Universal Credit to get her through these difficult periods.

An additional problem was that Carol started her tenancy with nothing. As is often the case with those fleeing domestic violence she had no furniture and no household items to take with her to her new home. We helped her to make a community care grant and she was given funding for a washing machine and a cooker, however not for carpets which weren't considered a priority, despite an appeal by our Adviser.

Undeterred, our Adviser then applied to the Edinburgh and Lothian Trust Fund who awarded Carol £200 towards the purchase of carpets. Not enough on its own to provide flooring for her new home, Melville dipped into its own tenancy sustainment fund to pay for additional carpets in the living room and hallway.

There's still work to do for Carol, and we'll help where we can, but from starting out with nothing she now has a new home and a stable income. With the help of Melville's welfare team she also has flooring and appliances and is well on her way to a more positive and secure future.

### Need help or advice?

**Melville tenants looking for help, advice or support should phone 0131 654 2733 and speak to the housing section. Help is also available from independent organisations such as Citizen's Advice.**

## Hardy volunteers donate time to community



Eleven hardy volunteers have donated 44 hours of their valuable time to a fantastic charity that serves disadvantaged communities in a corner of Midlothian.

The team, made up of staff from Melville, housebuilder Lovell Partnerships and property and construction consultants Hardies, braved less than ideal weather conditions to help out at the Mayfield Pavilion and Pantry, run by Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust (MAEDT).

Already working together on the new Oakwood Edge housing development at Oak Place, Mayfield, volunteers from the three organisations teamed up to sort clothes and stock at the Pantry, prepare ground and lay slabs at the Pavilion garden as well as paint furniture and shift top soil in preparation for the new growing season.

“We couldn’t continue to operate without the hard work of volunteers so to have this much help was fantastic,” said Sharon Hill of MAEDT. “We’ve got big plans for both the Pavilion and Pantry so any help we get helps move these forward. We’re extremely grateful to everyone who helped out, it’s much appreciated.”

“We were delighted to be able to give up a wee bit of our time to help out,” said Melville’s Neil Edgar. “To be honest, the work was a bit more physically strenuous than we’re used to on an average week day however we all enjoyed it and were happy to make a small contribution to the really valuable work done by Sharon and her team.”

### Did you know?

**Melville has a long-standing relationship with MAEDT and this latest partnership follows collaboration on an innovative Polycrub at the Pavillion garden in 2022. Installation of the sustainable polytunnel/ greenhouse hybrid, that makes locally grown fruit and veg available all-year-round, was paid for with funding from Melville.**

# Help and advice

**Make sure you don't miss out on the latest benefits news. To get up-to-date information, including breaking news on benefit changes, visit our website or 'like' our Facebook page.**

## New carer payment to reach Midlothian in November

Carer Support Payment, the replacement for Carer's Allowance in Scotland, is expected to go live in Midlothian from November, having already rolled-out in Lanarkshire over the summer.

The new benefit, provided by Social Security Scotland (SSS), will be available for the first time to young carers (aged between 16 and 19 and in full time 'advanced' education and carers aged over 20 in full-time education at any level) who couldn't previously apply.

There are also new rules that mean carers who are not getting Carer's Allowance but are eligible for Carer Support Payment can have their payments backdated to the date Carer Support Payment first became available. To get their fully backdated payments, carers must apply within 13 weeks of the benefit becoming available in their area.

Anyone in Scotland who currently gets Carer's Allowance will have their award automatically transferred to Carer Support Payment. The amount paid will not change. SSS will write beforehand to let people know that their award will be moving.

SSS hopes to complete the transfer of all payments by Spring 2025.

**Find out more**

Visit [www.mygov.scot](http://www.mygov.scot) | Or call 0800 182 2222

## Difficult winter ahead as payments end and energy prices rise



The Scottish Government is to follow the lead of the UK Government and end winter fuel payments for most older people in Scotland while gas and electricity prices will rise by 10% from October. Under the new energy price cap, the typical annual dual-fuel bill paid by direct debit will be £1,717 per year.

Until now, winter fuel payments have been given to all pensioners but this winter just 130,000 people in Scotland will be eligible for the payments under the new means-tested regime - and 900,000 who had previously been entitled will lose out.

Those not on pension credit or other means-tested benefits will no longer get the annual payments worth between £100 and £300, depending on the age of the recipient and whether or not they live alone.

Winter fuel payments in Scotland are due to be replaced with a new benefit called the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment but this is not now due to happen until next winter at the earliest.

Those eligible for a winter fuel payment should receive it automatically. If you're not sure whether this will affect you, or if you're worried about how you'll cope this winter, get in touch and we'll help if we can.



## New disability benefit for pensioners



Pensioners in Scotland are set to have a new disability benefit that's being rolled out across Scotland over the next six months or so. The new Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP) will replace Attendance Allowance (AA) and is expected to be available for new applications for Melville tenants (Midlothian and Lanarkshire) before the end of April 2025.

PADP is a non-means-tested disability benefit for people of pension age who have a long-term health condition or disability that requires supervision or self-care. The amount paid ranges from £290 to £434 per month, depending on the need.

The 150,000 people in Scotland who currently get AA shouldn't have to take any action as their awards will be automatically moved from the DWP to Social Security Scotland. This will happen in phases, with the first expected to be transferred in early 2025.

The rules for qualifying for PADP will be similar to those for AA, but there will be some differences, such as the definition of a terminal illness. PADP applications can be submitted online, by phone, by mail, or in person.

## With Tax credits ending – act quickly so you don't lose money

Tax credits are coming to an end, and most people will now need to apply for Universal Credit instead.

Look out for a letter called a UC migration notice from the DWP explaining what you'll need to do, and by when. To continue to receive financial support, you will need to claim UC by the deadline stated in your migration notice letter, even if you have just renewed your tax credits claim.

If you are claiming tax credits and are aged 65 or over, DWP will write to you to ask you to apply for UC or Pension credit, depending on your circumstances. This is a 'tax credit closure notice'.

You should claim Universal Credit or Pension credit by the deadline in the migration notice. You won't be moved automatically, so it's important to act quickly and follow the instructions in the letter as your old benefits will stop after the deadline, whether or not you've signed up for the replacement benefit.

**Make sure you act quickly as delaying could cost you.**

## Get in touch



If you need any advice on benefits, or if you have energy debts or are struggling with money, please get in touch. John Scott and Barry Smith, Melville's two dedicated Welfare Benefits Advisers, are available to help all Melville tenants and members of their households. Help is also available from independent organisations such as Citizens Advice.

John Scott ([jscott@melville.org.uk](mailto:jscott@melville.org.uk)) 0131 561 6481

Barry Smith ([bsmith@melville.org.uk](mailto:bsmith@melville.org.uk)) 0131 561 6482

## Property News



### Helpful tips for looking after yourself and your home this winter

We've all seen the 'helpful' articles at this time of year, telling you to keep your heating on all winter, only dry clothes outside or in a tumble dryer and spend thousands to make sure your home is fully insulated. Advice like this is probably sensible, but unrealistic for many of us when money is tight and energy costs are through the roof and due to go up again in October. We've spoken to our own experts and come up with a few suggestions for looking after yourself and your home that hopefully won't break the bank.

1. Use the heating if you can afford to do so, but if you are struggling then try to only heat the rooms you use the most. If you have spare rooms then turn the radiators off and keep the doors closed.
2. To reduce the risk of damp and mould dry clothes in the bathroom or kitchen ONLY with windows open or your extractor fan on but IMPORTANTLY with doors closed to the rest of the house.
3. Keep your curtains open during the day to let in free heat when it's sunny. Make sure you close your curtains at night to keep the heat in.
4. If your house is really draughty speak to us and we'll see what we can do.
5. Keep your showers short to save energy.
6. Run machines at lower temperatures:
  - For everyday washes use the 30°C setting on your washing machine as this uses around 40% less electricity a year than washing at higher temperatures.
  - Use the 'eco' programme on your dishwasher. This may take longer but uses less energy.
7. When buying new appliances, choose the best energy rating you can. It's worth paying a bit extra for better energy efficiency as this could actually save you hundreds of pounds over the life of the appliance.
8. If you're struggling with your energy bills then contact your Melville housing officer. We might be able to help, particularly if you're someone who hasn't asked for help before.
9. Check you're getting all the help you're entitled to. See page 9 for details of how to get in touch with one of our two Welfare Benefits Advisers.

## Smarter working earns Melville pay out



Smarter working and a partnership with the Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) has paid off for Melville with a payout that will be put towards improving services for tenants and their communities.

Melville has worked with social housing specialists SPA, who operate an innovative cashback scheme, on a number of contracts over the past 12 months including the installation of fire doors and air source heating.

SPA, a not-for-profit organisation, helps organisations like Melville quickly and smoothly fill contracts in areas like construction, refurbishment, consultancy, and maintenance whilst following all legal requirements.

Rebates are generated based on individual framework usage and total spend. Designed to support projects that might otherwise struggle for funding, the scheme is helping to improve and sustain vital services and facilities despite financial challenges.

### Did you know?

**SPA's Community Benefit Fund (CBF) has been a key player in community support, investing more than £2m in grants and match funding to 102 community groups and charities since 2017. These initiatives have improved the lives of at least 27,931 people, delivering over £5.1m in social value.**

## Keeping XL Bully dogs



Melville allows all tenants to keep pets as long as they are legal breeds and don't cause a nuisance, however it is now a criminal offence to own an unregistered XL Bully dog, and the date for applying for an exemption certificate has now passed. This is the law across the UK, including Scotland.

If you own an XL Bully and have an exemption certificate (or applied for one before the 31 July deadline) then you must follow new safeguarding regulations introduced by the Scottish Government in February. These regulations are for the safety of the public and make it an offence to:

- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle, this includes in a car
- breed from an XL Bully
- rehome, sell, buy or transfer ownership of an XL Bully
- abandon an XL Bully or let it stray
- give away an XL Bully

The penalty for anyone convicted of these offences is up to 6 months in prison and/or a fine of up to £5,000.

If you have an XL Bully type dog, please make sure your dog is muzzled in an appropriate secure area before a member of Melville staff or anyone working on our behalf (such as a repairs contractor) enters your home.

### What should I do if I haven't exempted my XL Bully or am unsure if my dog is an XL Bully?

If you think your dog might be an XL Bully but haven't gone through the exemption process then you will need to contact Police Scotland. You might also want to contact the SSPCA for guidance and advice.

### Can I report an XL Bully dog to you?

If you are worried about any dog behaving dangerously then you should report it to Police Scotland in the first instance. You can then choose to report it to Melville (if you believe the owner to be a Melville tenant) but you will need to have a police incident number. There is no need to report an XL Bully type dog to Melville or to the police unless you are concerned about its behaviour.

For more information on XL Bully dogs visit:  
[www.scottishspca.org](http://www.scottishspca.org) | [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

# Melville in the community

## Latest from our tenant reps



Hi my name's Andrew and I'm one of Melville's reps looking after tenants in the Bonnyrigg area. I'm delighted to be a Melville tenant and I'm always interested in what they're up to so I try to get along to as many meetings as I can.

At our most recent get together (back in June) we talked about loads of things, including changes being made to tighten up on the way Melville deals with people who make things difficult for their neighbours. We all agreed that this was a good move which probably should have been brought in before now.

We also had a wee chat about new repairs company R3. I've had them out for a few small jobs at my house and have found them polite and helpful. I know not everyone's experience has been quite as positive which is why it's really important that you let Melville know if you've had a repair carried out and you've been particularly pleased or disappointed.

We also talked about plans to stop sending Voice out to all tenants. I already choose to get my copy via email so it won't affect me, but we all agreed that the time was right to do this given how much stamps cost these days. However we also agreed that some tenants will like to continue getting a paper copy of Voice through the post so this option should remain available.

Finally we discussed involvement and whether Melville should be doing more to encourage tenants to take part in decision making. Overall we agreed that you can't force people to get involved when they really don't want to and that Melville does enough already, although it would be nice to see more younger people come forward. If anyone does fancy joining up as a tenant rep then you'd be more than welcome. We could use some new faces and meetings can be a good laugh. Plus we get a bacon roll and shopping voucher for coming along!

Remember we're here if you need help but don't want to contact Melville directly. Just get in touch using the contact details below

*Andrew*

Area	Tenant rep
Gorebridge, Newtongrange	Ellie Cairns
Penicuik, Bilston, Loanhead	Steven Jamieson
Bonnyrigg, Poltonhall, Rosewell	Andrew Hiddleston, Gill Pennie, Liz Coyle and Janet Harvey
Mayfield, Easthouses	Belinda Maciver and Barbara Shearer
Westhouses (Mayfield), Pathhead	Diane Gamrot
Pathhead	Position vacant
Dalkeith, Woodburn, Danderhall	Eileen McLaren
Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian	Position vacant

Fancy becoming a rep and getting £20 for every meeting you come to? Email [mytenantrep@melville.org.uk](mailto:mytenantrep@melville.org.uk) or call 0131 561 6466

# Cooking on a budget

With autumn upon us, the nights drawing in and the temperature starting to dip, what we're all looking for is a warm, filling and comforting meal that doesn't break the bank. Even better if you can make it with ingredients from the cupboard! This quick and easy tuna noodle casserole ticks all the boxes and should work out at not much more than £1 per portion. Why not give it a try and let us know how you get on.

## Tuna noodle casserole

**Serves: 6 - 8**

**Prep time: 20 mins**

**Cooking time: 10 mins**



### Ingredients

- 6 oz egg noodles
- 2 cans tuna in water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tins of condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 8 oz cheddar cheese
- 4 oz frozen peas
- 4 oz crushed crisps (flavour of your choosing)

### Directions

#### Step 1

Preheat oven to 450°F. Cook egg noodles according to package directions. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water, drain and return to the pot. Stir in soup and up to 1/2 cup reserved cooking water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached.

#### Step 2

Meanwhile, heat oil in a small pan over medium heat. Add onion and celery. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft, 5 to 7 minutes. Add vegetables, cheese, tuna and peas to pot with noodles and stir to combine. Transfer to a 9-by-13-inch baking pan and topped with crushed crisps.

#### Step 3

Bake until top is browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve hot.

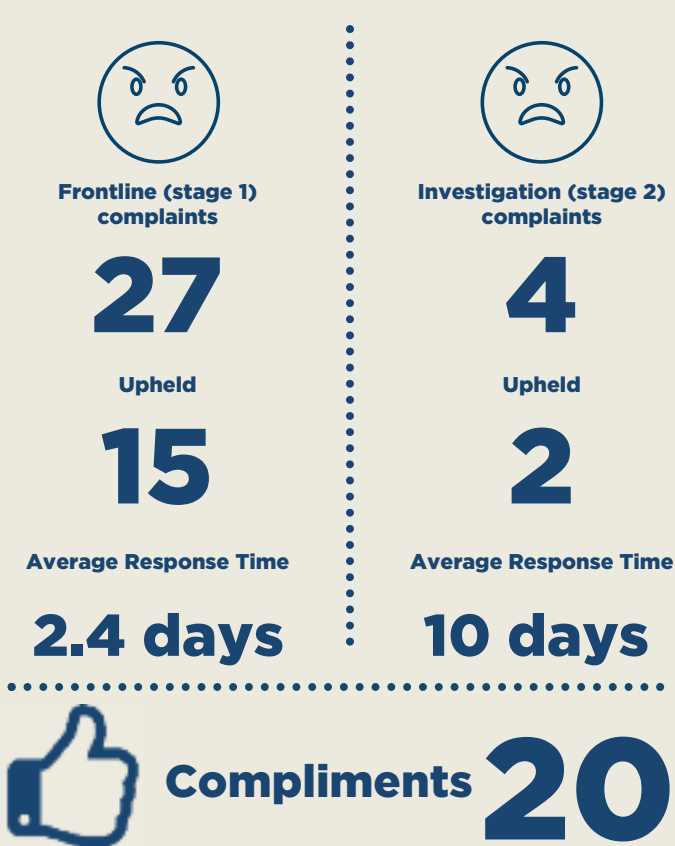
**Got any tasty and affordable recipes you'd like to share?**

It could be a trusted family favourite, your go-to meal for one, or a new air fryer creation that's delicious and cheap and ready in minutes. Pass it on (in any of the usual ways) and we'll gladly share.

# Over to you...

Over the past few months we've seen complaints continue to fall following the move to a new repairs provider, with numbers down on the previous period and also compared to the same time last year. However we can still do better so if you experience good or poor service, please let us know. We don't have room to give a response to your comments and complaints here but as long as you provide contact details we always reply directly when issues are raised.

## March to June complaints



## What you told us

“ I must say as a first time Melville tenant I am over the moon with everyone who I have spoken with or dealt with so far. Always pleasant and wanting to help where possible. This is a huge benefit for me as I suffer with mental health and when people have this approach it helps me massively. 10/10 Melville Housing especially Linda my housing officer. ”

“ Very happy with the service. Feel confident if I have any problems or concerns. ”

“ Takes so long to get any sort of repairs done to the outside of homes. ”

“ Housing officer needs to do a walkabout. ”

“The benefit welfare advisor was a great help. He always kept me in the loop, with updates on my case. He was easy to understand and made me feel listened to. He explained things in a way which eased my anxiety.”

“I've heard of other councils and HAs doing a bidding online to bid for properties people are interested in. I would definitely be very interested in that as I really need all level now and only 2 bedrooms.”

“Would be better if rents were in line with Midlothian Council. Repair service could be improved.”

“Very helpful and understanding staff who go above and beyond to help you.”

“Start by not making Mayfield your priority and think of all the other areas. Mayfield is virtually all that's represented.”

“The housing officers should be making more of a conscious effort to make sure their tenants are happy and have everything they need in their home, and not ignore emails, or having no contact or checking in on tenants for months and months on end.”

“Overall I think you do a very good job in managing your properties and tenants and deal with all issues very quickly.”

“Melville are amazing always at the end of the phone for any issue.”

“My son who has ADHD had figured out how to open my windows wide. His room is upstairs and this caused a huge safety concern and worry for me as I didn't have keys. Melville were amazing they came out and changed each handle so that I would have keys and be able to lock the handle so he can't open them wide. What a worry taken off my shoulders! I highly recommend Melville they really do go above and beyond to help when you ask them x”

“Many occupants are getting older so things like garden maintenance and decorating etc become more difficult. Would be helpful if Melville had preferred suppliers at reasonable rates to help.”

“Bit more customer service training for certain members of staff.”

“Been a tenant since I was 19. Over the years standards have declined and keep declining. You had to keep your property to a certain standard inside and out. Nowadays nobody cares. A representative would come round and inspect your garden and tell you get it tidied up. Not nowadays. Furniture, rubbish, all sorts left. Grass overgrown, broken fences. Ridiculous!”

## News in Brief

### Team starts season with new strip thanks to £500 sponsorship deal

Easthouses Football Club have revealed their team strip for the new season, made possible thanks to a £500 Melville sponsorship deal.

"The new strips look fantastic and we're delighted to see our sponsorship money put to such good use," said Melville's John McMorrow. "Stuart and his coaching team do a fantastic job and we're extremely proud that the team will be playing matches this season under the Melville badge. We wish them all the best for the new season."

Easthouses FC is an established part of the Midlothian community, with both junior and adult teams, and plays and trains at Easthouses Public Park, just outside Dalkeith.

"Without the support of the local community we would really struggle so help like this is incredibly valuable," said Stuart Maclean of Easthouses FC. "On behalf of everyone at the club I'd like to thank Melville Housing for their generous donation."

### Does your organisation need a helping hand?

We have a small pot of money to help out clubs and charitable organisations (all sorts, not just sporting ones) that operate in our local areas. So if your organisation could do with a helping hand, get in touch and we'll see what we can do.



### Welcome to Kayleigh

We're delighted to extend a warm welcome to Kayleigh Harper the newest member of the Melville team. Kayleigh joins our housing team with 10 years housing experience and glowing credentials most recently from social housing provider Blackwood where she spent three years as a Housing Officer.



Kayleigh is working hard to get up to speed on our systems and ways of working and we'll be letting her loose in the community shortly.

### Cyber Essential Plus

Melville has achieved Cyber Essentials Plus, the highest level of assurance provided by the National Cyber Security Centre and supported by the UK



Government. No organisation can ever be 100% safe from cyber attack, however by achieving Cyber Essentials Plus, it shows that Melville is doing everything it can to protect systems and data and safeguard the organisation against cyber-attacks.

### Competition winners

Well done to Jane Mercer of Queensway, Penicuik who won our satisfaction and performance prize draw. Jane picked up a £50 shopping voucher for letting us know her thoughts. Thanks to everyone who took part.

Congratulations also to Caitlin Noonin who lives in Bonnyrigg winner of our quarterly satisfaction survey draw. Caitlin picked up a £50 voucher just for replying to our satisfaction survey text and completing a short online form. Remember, almost all Melville feedback is now done digitally so to be in with a chance of winning make sure you let us know how we're doing after you've used any of our services.

### Join us on Facebook



Join our growing Facebook community. We currently have more than 2,000 people following us on Facebook but we're always keen to find more. By joining us on Facebook you get to hear the latest Melville and community news first, tell us what you think of us, and even enter prize competitions. Visit us at [www.facebook.com/melvillehousing](http://www.facebook.com/melvillehousing).

### Want to hear from us differently?

If you have problems reading Voice, we can provide it in large print, as an online audio version or in a language other than English. And if you would like to continue receiving a paper copy just let us know by email to [dhughes@melville.org.uk](mailto:dhughes@melville.org.uk) or give us a call on the usual number.