

## Stair Lighting Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### Why has the Council withdrawn from providing the Stair Lighting Service?

The Council needs to make savings of £148 million over the next four years and as part of the savings proposal, the Council will no longer repair and maintain common stair lights in tenement blocks where the flats are all owned privately, bringing Edinburgh into line with all other Councils in Scotland.

The decision to withdraw the stair lighting maintenance service was taken by the elected members of the Council as part of the wider budget proposals on 21 January 2016.

### Why were the people affected by this decision not consulted?

The Council is serious about consultation and seeks to reach the largest number of citizens and to positively engage with them during the budget process. To that end, there was a wide consultation campaign covering all budget proposals (including the changes to Stair Lighting), carried out over 11 weeks towards the end of 2015. The Budget proposals were advertised in the local print and online media, on bus shelters and via Council Tax postal correspondence.

### What response did the consultation get?

Respondents to the survey stated their priorities as being: to protect education, care for older people, culture and services for vulnerable children and adults. Over 4,000 responses were received to the consultation, with fewer than twenty people commenting on the stair lighting proposal.

### Is the decision to withdraw the stair lighting maintenance service legal?

The Council has historically undertaken this work as it has the power to do so under Section 90 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 which permits the Council to maintain and repair lighting in common property but does not oblige it to do so. The Council is able to withdraw from providing this service, and has made clear that the control of all maintenance checks and repairs will no longer be the Council's responsibility. The Occupiers' Liability (Scotland) Act 1960 states that occupiers/owners have a legal duty of care to look after people entering their premises. The occupiers/owners have always had this duty and will continue to do so.

### Where can owners obtain security drivers/keys to access the stair lighting installation?

For Health and Safety reasons the Council cannot advise owners where to purchase the security drivers/keys to access the stair lighting installation. However a reputable Electrical Contractor will know where to obtain these security drivers/keys.

### Can the Council recommend a contractor?

The Council cannot recommend an Electrical Contractor. However, you should be able to contact one via the Trusted Trader scheme, or there are two Electrical Industry Trade Associations SELECT and NICEIC and both have a "Find a Contractor" search facility on their websites. SELECT and NICEIC audit their members to ensure that they conform to industry regulations and are reputable.

### What light fittings are installed, what lamps do they take and where can they be purchased?

The actual lights installed in your stairs are likely to be Coughtrie SFB 16 as this is the standard fitting installed in most stairs. This light fitting takes 2 x 8W fluorescent tubes. These lamps and the Coughtrie SFB 16 fittings are widely available from electrical distributors.

### Can LED lights be installed?

Yes. The installation of LED lights will vastly reduce the requirements for maintenance and the consumption of electricity. The current fittings can be converted to LED, (please consult with a reputable electrical contractor). If this conversion is made, please inform the Council so that the unmetered supply information can be updated.

### Can the Council provide the programming information for the time clock?

The time clocks are pre-programmed by the manufacturers to switch at dusk and dawn dependant on the date and in some instances the position within the UK. So the only information that the clocks require programmed in is the time and the date and in some instances the zone within the UK (Scotland is generally zone 4). A reputable electrical contractor should be familiar with these clocks.

### Who pays for the electricity the stair lighting uses?

The Council currently pays for the stair lighting electricity via an unmetered supply and will continue to do so.

### Now that the owners are responsible for the maintenance can they change the specification of the stair lighting installation?

The owners will be able to alter the stair lighting installation as they feel is appropriate, provided that the owners are in agreement. However, the Council will continue to pay for electricity that supplies the stair lighting via an un-metered supply, based on the current installation.

If the owners alter the installation and increase electrical consumption the council will not pay for any additional consumption and the owner's will have to make alternative arrangements with a utilities company. This is likely to include the installation of meter at the owner's expense and at this point the Council will cease paying for any of the electricity used by the installation.

### Will the Council provide Electrical Condition Reports for the stair lighting installations?

No. The stair lighting installations are fixed within the stairs and as such are wholly owned jointly by the owners of the stairs. Under the electrical regulations the requirement to instruct electrical condition reports are the responsibility of the owners of the installation. The Council is not the owner of the installation.

### I rent my property and have to provide an Electrical Condition report for the property, will this now have to cover the stair lighting as well?

No. The Council's Private Rented Services team (0131 529 7454) can confirm that the Council do not consider the stair lighting to be part of the installation that requires to be covered by the Electrical Condition Report, required before a property can be let.

**Do the owners have to do anything?**

Yes. The owners now and have always had a duty of care to anyone entering the stairs to ensure that the stair lighting installation is maintained and continues to operate as it was designed and installed. As the Council will no longer be providing the maintenance the owners are required to make alternative arrangements for maintenance to ensure lights continue to work.

**I live in a main door property within a block that also has stairs. Do I need to contribute to the stair lighting maintenance?**

Even if you live in a main door property, without a second door in to the stairs and have no access to the back of the property via the stairs, you may still have some liability for the stair lighting installation under communal repairs. To clarify this you will need to take legal advice on your property deeds.

**How do I arrange maintenance on stair lighting in my stairs?**

The Council's Shared Repairs service provides useful information on working with your neighbours and other owners to arrange communal repairs. Further information can be found on the Council's website: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/sharedrepairs](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/sharedrepairs)