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★★★★★ 5 star customer service



Contents



Editor's note

Laura Mearns

I don't know about you, but for me there's a freshness about February – a hint of springtime in the air (although there's probably still snow to fall!) and a sense of optimism about the months to come.

To capture that sense of excitement, this issue of ESPC Magazine is packed with helpful tips and advice to help you on your property journey and freshen up your home and garden in the process.

If you're starting out on your buying journey, don't miss the return of ESPC's 'Ask the Expert' sessions – turn to page 6 for the details – and get your admin in order with helpful tips from ESPC Mortgages on page 20, and Thorntons Property on page 18.

For those who are thinking about making a move this year, we've got plenty of advice to help you prep your property for sale – including which room to renovate to add thousands in value to your property, and how to stage your home in style when it's time to sell.

And as always, we've shone a spotlight on some of the most fabulous properties currently for sale with ESPC – perhaps you might find your dream home among these very pages. Plus, you can find hundreds more incredible properties each week at espc.com – the home of property.

Happy reading!

Laura



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ESPC's expert events relaunch in 2022

Got a burning question about buying or selling property? You can speak to an ESPC expert agent for free!

After pausing our popular Ask the Experts drop-in service due to the Covid-19 pandemic, ESPC is delighted to be relaunching this service for 2022.

Launching this February, make sure you keep an eye on espc.com to be the first to know about dates, topics and times.

So, if you have a question about buying or selling a property, we have a great range of opportunities to speak with a property expert from one of our member firms, who can give you the answers you need – for free!

Weekly drop-in sessions

Want to find out how to buy your first home, or need to know more about selling a property? Attend one of our free drop-in sessions, hosted by an ESPC member firm expert at our Property Information Centre at George Street, Edinburgh, on Wednesdays and Saturdays to get answers to your questions.



ESPC virtual events and webinars

Virtual events

Our virtual events are all focused on important topics related to buying and selling. Upcoming events include ones tailored to first-time buyers, buy-to-let investors and buying in specific areas of Scotland, as well as general property market updates.

On-demand appointments

With over 150 member firms who'll be happy to help you with buying and selling property in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife, the Borders, Dumfries and Galloway or the west of Scotland, we can put you in touch with the right person for your individual needs. Simply call us on 0131 624 8000 to arrange an appointment.

Independent mortgage advisers

The ESPC Mortgages team are experts in the property buying process. They can answer all your

mortgage-related questions and help you with your home and personal protection needs. We're proud to say our award-winning team is friendly, approachable and really cares about their clients.

Expert buy-to-let advice

As an expert letting and property management company, ESPC's team of rental and buy-to-let market specialists can help at all stages of renting out a home – from advice on where to purchase a buy-to-let property, to offering a full property management service.

Free pre-sale property valuations

Thinking of selling? You can arrange a free pre-sale valuation from an ESPC solicitor estate agent firm – simply head to espc.com to get the ball rolling.

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A TIMELESS CLASSIC REINVENTED

Melville Crescent offers eleven high spec, spacious apartments set in Georgian townhouses in the heart of Edinburgh's prestigious West End, within easy walking distance of all of the city's many attractions.

Just a few minutes downhill sits the charming village of Stockbridge, an area packed with dozens of independent boutiques, restaurants, cafés and pubs, plus the historic Dean Village and the Water of Leith's idyllic riverside locale.



These four-storey townhouses comprise a classic terrace building which has been converted into lavish modern apartments. These impressive apartments promise high ceilings and delicate interiors suited to contemporary tastes.

All eleven apartments maximise the palatial proportions of their West End setting in Edinburgh's city centre. Living areas are generously proportioned with lofty ceilings and ornate cornicing, which cements the sense of grandeur. Two of the apartments benefit from a private garden and terrace.

Apartments come complete with focal point gas fireplaces alongside floor to ceiling sash and case windows that flood the living spaces with natural light. There is also direct access to a large kitchen for maximum convenience.

A sensitive, design led approach to the interiors has been taken, converting these wonderful townhouses to create exciting new residences. Apartments are perfectly geared towards spacious, contemporary living with many of the building's charming original features retained.

To find out more about these stunning conversion apartments, please call 0131 603 8357 or visit www.melville-crescent.co.uk

THE DEVELOPER

Square and Crescent is a residential developer and contractor with a primary focus on the acquisition, development and refurbishment of prime Georgian and Victorian properties and the creation of spectacular new-build apartments within their grounds.

www.squareandcrescent.com



SQUARE
AND
CRESCENT



Back at *the ranch...*

This truly unique West Lothian ranch offers the opportunity to build a blossoming hospitality business, and live in luxury on-site.

Have you always dreamed of running your own hospitality business? How about a countryside spa retreat, complete with gym, pool, acres of land, luxury guest accommodation and even a stunning home for yourself? This rare ranch in Blackridge, West Lothian, offers you the chance to own just that.



Raiziehill Farm, Airdrie Road, Blackridge EH48 3AG
 Offers over £2,500,000
 Selling solicitor: McEwan Fraser Legal, call 0131 253 2263

4 bed | 3 bath | 3 lounge
 (in main accommodation)

Raiziehill Farm and Ranch is a retreat set within 10 acres of countryside, and includes a four-bedroom farmhouse bungalow, separate chalet and a ranch retreat kitted out as a full gym and spa.

The four-bedroom farmhouse is a spectacular family home that offers flexible accommodation and luxurious finishings throughout. Accessed via French doors, the property opens onto a stunning open-plan kitchen/dining/lounge area, where every fine detail has been taken care of. Boasting an AGA, pizza oven and wine fridge among its appliances, alongside rustic granite worktops and exposed wooden beams, the space beautifully ties together the contemporary with a classic farmhouse feel. Already ideal for entertaining, the open-plan lounge then opens onto a pool and sauna with panoramic views of the grounds – the ultimate in luxury. The farmhouse also has four spacious bedrooms (two with en suite), a glossy family bathroom, and a generous games room with floor-to-ceiling windows, which could be adapted for a multitude of purposes. Externally, this property also enjoys a spacious garden, with lawn, decking and patio area – perfect for taking in the true tranquillity of your surroundings.

Moving onto the ranch, this detached chalet-style building was once a popular spa retreat, and retains all the features needed to reinstate this part of the business. With a fully equipped gym, two treatment rooms, shower rooms, bathroom facilities and a dedicated 'relaxation room', it's easy to see how quickly this exciting space could be re-established as a spa sanctuary. This building also offers

ample storage rooms, a generous sun room with kitchen amenities and a stunning office with its own bar – so the business can be kept entirely separate from the home.

Offering an exciting opportunity for additional income, the sale of Raiziehill Farm also includes a detached two-bedroom chalet, ideal for guest accommodation and thoughtfully decorated in true 'ranch' style, with wooden panelled walls and ceilings, and rich mood lighting throughout for a welcoming, cosy vibe. Both double bedrooms enjoy spacious proportions and fitted wardrobes, plus there's a modern shower room, open-plan lounge and kitchen, and private outdoor decking area, so that guests can feel right at home.

The property is completed by 10 acres of land, which offers a variety of uses, and ample parking for visitors.

For the right owner, Raiziehill Farm offers a rare opportunity to own both a stunning home and a flourishing business, just 30 miles from the Capital.





A peaceful haven with great connections

Westpoint Homes reveals a stylish new development on the edge of Kirkliston.

Situated within a beautiful woodland setting just nine miles from the centre of Edinburgh, Westpoint Homes' latest development of eleven beautifully designed, five-bedroom detached family homes offers a luxuriously tranquil countryside idyll.

Meadow View Grange is situated on the rural green edge of Kirkliston, a peaceful and prosperous community close to the Capital, where you will find an abundance of shops, bars and restaurants, as well as many historical landmarks, an international airport and tram network.

All of these stunning homes at Meadow View Grange boast beautiful country stone features to the front elevations, garages, stylish bi-fold doors and generous gardens, all set within a beautiful secluded, landscaped environment.

One of the styles available, The Cornflower, is an impressive five-bedroom detached home with integral double garage. The welcoming hallway leads to the stunning open-plan kitchen,

dining and family room and features stylish bi-fold doors leading to the garden. The separate lounge offers a more formal setting to host family and friends. For home-working, the study offers the perfect spot to escape to the office or revise for exams. The convenient WC is located within the hall and the utility is just off the kitchen, giving access to the garage.

Featuring a stunning Juliet balcony, the principal bedroom also benefits from fitted wardrobes, dressing space and a luxurious four-piece en suite. Bedroom two boasts an en suite shower room and fitted wardrobes. A large four-piece family bathroom is suitably located adjacent to the remaining three bedrooms and completes this impressive home.

Part exchange is available on selected properties.

For the latest information on Meadow View Grange, please contact 0800 587 0333 Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm or visit westpointhomes.net



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HOMES. 

The House Price Report: January 2022

Average selling prices and demand continues to rise in out-of-town areas.

The average selling price of property in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders experienced a modest 2.3% rise during November 2021-January 2022, taking the new average to £271,131.

Homes in West Lothian saw the biggest increase, as a 37.5% increase meant the new average selling price was £292,394, compared to £212,426 twelve months prior.

Overall, Edinburgh's average selling price rose 1.5%, to £286,147. However, there were variations within the capital - the city centre saw prices decrease 5%, while the south western suburbs experienced a 17% increase, to £400,816.

The most affordable property type was two-bedroom flats in Galashiels, with an average selling price of £82,553.

Despite a quieter period for the market, properties continued to attain well over their Home Report valuations, with buyers paying 106% on average. All regions within Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders saw an increase in the amount over Home Report valuation paid, signifying strong demand.

35% of properties went to a closing date, which is likely to have contributed to this.

Buyers paid the most over Home Report valuation for homes in East Fife and East Lothian, both of these areas saw an increase of 6.4 percentage points in comparison to November-January 2020/21. On average, properties in East Fife attained 108% of Home Report valuation, while East Lothian homes achieved 110%.



Despite November-January typically being a calmer time for the property market, homes sold two days quicker year-on-year, with a median selling time of 17 days. Buyers in West Fife and Kinross were the fastest, with homes going under offer in just twelve days.

The fastest-selling property type overall was three-bedroom houses in the Midlothian town of Gorebridge, where median selling times dropped to just seven days.

Sales volumes across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders were down 22% year-on-year during November-January, as the market cooled in comparison to the exceptional levels of activity seen in the previous year, thanks to pent-up buyer demand. These levels are more in line with the pre-pandemic figures seen at the end of 2019.

Leith had the highest volume of property sales, with two-bedroom flats leading the charge - however levels were down 18% year-on-year. The level of new properties being listed for sale was also lower, with figures 11% lower than the same time last year.

Paul Hilton, CEO of ESPC, said: "The three months of November-January are typically a slower period for the property market, but the market across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders has remained buoyant on the whole. There have been positive signs of growth in comparison to the year before, when

150

solicitor estate agents

ready to help you buy and sell homes

Over

1200

homes for sale

500,000

My ESPC emails sent during January

the market was affected by lockdowns and heightened competition.

"The market has seen lower sales volumes overall, and modest price increases on the whole, but we've seen a clear separation in the level of demand for family homes in the suburbs versus city-centre properties, with homes in Edinburgh's South West and West Lothian becoming particularly sought-after.

"Overall, Edinburgh's market has seen signs of slowing down over this period, but out-of-town areas across the Lothians, Fife and the Borders have remained popular even during the typically quieter months.

"If you are thinking of buying or selling in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife or the Borders, contact your local ESPC agent today."

Key points

£271,131

average selling price

The average property selling price rose 2.3% to £271,131 across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders during November 2021-January 2022.

106%

average percentage of Home Report valuation achieved

On average, buyers paid 106% of Home Report valuation, up 2.8 percentage points.

17 days

median time to sell

The median selling time for properties in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Borders fell to 17 days, two days quicker than in 2020.

You've had an offer accepted – but what happens next?

Graham Taylor, Associate Solicitor at Thorntons, shares what happens after your search comes to a successful end.

Congratulations – you've had an offer accepted on a property. But what comes next?

First, finances. If you require a mortgage, you'll need to submit a full mortgage application to your mortgage lender.

The seller's solicitor will discuss the terms of your offer with the seller, and take instructions to issue a formal acceptance letter, which confirms the agreed price, date of entry and any requested amendments to the written offer. This is called a 'qualified acceptance', and your solicitor will explain its terms to you.

Further letters may be exchanged, and once all parties are satisfied, you may instruct your solicitor to issue a formal letter that creates a binding contract – known as 'concluded missives'.

Your solicitor will examine 'title deeds' documents, to ensure that the seller owns the property, that the property is described accurately, that you are aware of the obligations imposed on you (for example, paying for maintenance of a boundary wall), and that the necessary rights are in place (such as rights of access).

The seller will sign a deed, called a 'disposition', to transfer the property to you. If you have arranged a mortgage, you will sign a standard security mortgage document which gives the lender certain rights, including a right to take

possession of the property if you cannot keep up with mortgage repayments.

Prior to completion, you will provide your solicitor with the balance of the purchase price and the legal costs. Your solicitor will also request loan funds from your lender.

On the date of entry, your solicitor will pay the purchase price to the seller's solicitor, in exchange for the signed disposition, keys and required documents.

And that's it – you can now collect the keys for your new home!

For more help and advice from Thorntons, visit thorntons-law.co.uk or call 03330 430150.



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SPRINGWELL
www.amahomes.co.uk/springwell-house



When Quality Matters

What do you need for a successful mortgage application?

ESPC Mortgages' Shirley Mushet shares her expert advice on the prep you need to do to have the best chance of a successful mortgage application.

Residential mortgages are regulated to protect both you and the lender, to ensure that you're being offered a mortgage responsibly. However, some applicants can find that the application is a frustrating part of the process.

Lenders need to know who you are, therefore being able to identify you is very important. They need to ensure it isn't a fraudulent application – so there's quite a bit of paperwork involved, and evidence required.

To make the process easier, you should do some 'life admin' prior to making a mortgage application. Make sure your passport is in date, and update your driving licence, wage slips, bank statements and credit agreements (i.e. credit cards, loans or car finance) with the correct name and address. Making sure you're on the electoral roll also helps. They sound like simple things, but you'd be surprised how many people don't keep these key details up to date!

Lenders want to know that you can manage your finances before they'll lend. Credit agencies give them the equivalent of your financial CV – the credit report! You should be aware that your credit score doesn't reflect what a lender will consider.

ESPC mortgages offer expert independent mortgage advice in Edinburgh. Whether you are looking for first-time buyer mortgage advice, are interested in finding out more about buy-to-let mortgages or would like to re-mortgage, get in touch with the team on 0131 253 2920 or fsenquiries@espc.com.

The information contained in this article is provided in good faith. No advice is being given in this article, nor intended to be given. Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation

Some things to consider:

- Check your credit report, and flag any errors with the provider immediately.
- Keep payments up to date.
- No credit isn't necessarily good credit – lenders want to know that you can manage credit. Getting a credit card and putting a small amount onto it, paying this off every month is a good idea.
- Don't have too much available credit (i.e. big credit limits), as this can cause a lender concern.
- Keep out of your overdraft, as some lenders view this as a lack of financial resilience, and a risk to their loan.

All lenders differ in their requirements, and it's worth speaking to an ESPC Mortgages consultant to help you on your journey and to obtain financial advice specific to your circumstances.

of the information, no responsibility is accepted for any errors which, despite our precautions, it may contain.

The initial consultation with an adviser is free and without obligation. Thereafter, ESPC Mortgages charges for mortgage advice are usually £350 (£295 for first time buyers). **YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOANS SECURED AGAINST IT.**

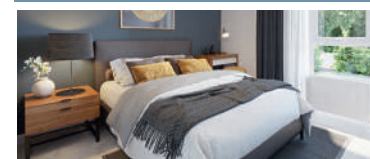


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DAVID WILSON HOMES

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A number of properties at Cammo Meadows are 'Golden Share' homes meaning that the for sale price is capped at an affordable level – you will own 100% of the property but the price is capped at 80% of the market value on the first sale and all subsequent re-sales.

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TORWOOD

Make Murrayfield Home



32 CORSTORPHINE ROAD MURRAYFIELD EDINBURGH

At the heart of this new development from AMA Homes lies a grand Victorian villa, which has been sympathetically restored and converted into 2 magnificent homes.

Due for completion this spring, these four and five bedroom houses retain the majestic proportions of the original rooms and are beautifully detailed throughout.

Each home offers a spacious garage and private landscaped gardens.

For full details call Behnam Afshar on 07967 322 025

or email behnama@amanewtown.co.uk

Prices on application

www.amahomes.co.uk/torwood-house



When Quality Matters

Luxe living

in Liberton

This stunning five-bedroom villa has been extensively renovated to create a dream family home.



26 Alnwickhill Drive has been thoughtfully renovated, generously extended and beautifully decorated, creating a stunning family home. Blending practical details with luxurious finishes, this magnificent five-bedroom villa is located in the popular Edinburgh suburb of Liberton.

This imposing double-fronted villa has been fully upgraded to an exacting specification, including wiring, plumbing, heating system, windows, roof, driveway and gardens – so its new owners can settle straight into life here, without having to lift a finger.

The property opens with a welcoming central hallway. To the right, a cosy family room, while to the left sits bedroom four, currently used as a home office, and a chic shower room, clad in herringbone tiles with matte black accents. There's also a handy utility room, but the star attraction is the jaw-dropping 30ft open-plan lounge/kitchen/diner, which opens onto the garden.

This stunning space is flooded with natural light, thanks to bifold doors, plentiful windows and double skylights.

The fully-integrated Stormer kitchen is sleek and stylish, in a luxe charcoal and brass finish, and is packed with useful features, including a boiling water tap, double oven, warming drawers and a wine fridge, plus a central island/breakfast bar with induction hob. The space divides naturally into a dining area and cosy sitting space, making this room the true hub of the home.

Upstairs, there are four generous bedrooms and a very Instagrammable shower room, finished in marble and brass. The principal bedroom suite offers hotel-style luxury, with an ample bedroom overlooking the front of the property, stretching to the back of the house. The bedroom leads into a cleverly-designed walk-in wardrobe with stacks of storage, before ending at a serene, spa-style Lusso Stone bathroom suite, with freestanding tub and walk-in shower.

The property is completed by a landscaped rear garden with decking, built-in seating and a barbecue area, plus a spacious driveway. The very definition of 'turnkey', this standout property is a sumptuous family home.



“ The very definition of ‘turnkey’, this standout property is a sumptuous family home. ”

26 Alnwickhill Drive, Edinburgh, EH16 6XX
Offers Over £530,000
Selling solicitor: Neilsons, call 0131 253 2858

5 bed | 3 bath | 2 lounge

Property Hotspots:

East Fife

We take a closer look at the most popular areas of East Fife for buyers to call home.



St Andrews

Over the past two years, demand has grown for properties in the towns and villages of East Fife, as changing lifestyles and new priorities have drawn buyers into making their dreams of a new pace of life a reality.

From busy market towns to quaint coastal hamlets, East Fife has it all, and it's no wonder that the region has seen an influx of new residents. After two years of increasing demand, there seems to be no end to the desire for starting afresh in this corner of the country.

Based on ESPC data, we take a look at the six most popular areas of East Fife from 2021 – could one of them be where you find your dream home?

St Andrews

Historic St Andrews was the most popular spot for East Fife buyers during 2021, with the highest volume of property sales recorded in the region. It's no surprise that this particular location is so highly sought-after – with the stunning West Sands beach and a number of historic golf courses, not to mention a plethora of bars and restaurants, independent boutiques, lavish hotels and of course, the world-famous University and excellent schooling options, St Andrews offers just about everything a buyer could hope to find.

House prices in St Andrews are usually above those of its neighbours, with the average selling price for 2021 at £361,988.

Kirkcaldy

The largest town in Fife, Kirkcaldy is popular with commuters thanks to its great links to Edinburgh and Dundee – just 50 minutes by road to either destination. Offering a wealth of great amenities including museums, theatres, art galleries, leisure centres, parks and even an ice rink, Kirkcaldy is a great place for families in particular, so it's no shock to see it as the second-most popular place for East Fife buyers last year. There's an abundance of schools to choose from, including independent and assisted-learning options, plus Fife College is also in the town.

Kirkcaldy's house prices are generally more affordable than the Scottish average, which is great for first-time buyers. The 2021 average was £167,496.



Anstruther



Crail

Cupar

Cupar is one of the oldest market towns in Fife, but it's increasingly in demand with buyers searching for a more relaxed way of life. Sales volumes were up 121% in 2021 compared to the year before, as buyers snapped up homes in the town. Much of Cupar's popularity is thanks to its enviable location, offering great links to Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh by road and rail, easy access to the countryside and just a 20-minute drive to the coast.

The average property price in Cupar for 2021 was £217,062, making it a good option for many family buyers.

Crail

For those dreaming of a life beside the water, Crail is a stellar choice. Perfectly positioned on the East Neuk of Fife, just ten miles from St Andrews, Crail is a charming harbour town that has much to offer. Crail has a particular wealth of beautiful buildings, including many restored and cared for by the National Trust for Scotland, which adds to its picturesque feel. Crail is one of the smaller locations on our list, but that only adds to the demand to live in this fashionable postcode.

In 2021, the average property price for a home in Crail was £290,684.

Glenrothes

The 'administrative capital' of Fife, Glenrothes has long been a popular choice for buyers of all ages and stages, thanks to its affordability, excellent amenities and strong transport links across Fife and the Central Belt. There's lots to do in this thriving town, with a busy shopping centre, sports and leisure options, and a selection of nationally-recognised parks to enjoy. Glenrothes also offers a variety of property options, making it ideal for many buyers - from town-centre apartments to grand detached homes on the outskirts.

Glenrothes is a more affordable option for those looking for a new home in East Fife - the average property selling price here in 2021 was £119,113.

Anstruther

Another fabulous option for buyers searching for a coastal property is the beautiful Anstruther. Positioned in the sought-after East Neuk, Anstruther is the largest in a string of charming fishing villages in the area, and is popular with holidaymakers as well as house-hunters. Perfectly picturesque, Anstruther is a great choice for downsizers and family buyers looking for a more relaxed pace of life.

The average property selling price in 2021 for homes in Anstruther was £254,512.

Feeling inspired? You can find hundreds of dream homes in East Fife at [espc.com](https://www.espc.com).



The Scottish Rental Market Update: Q4 2021

The latest Cylets data is in, and Nicky Lloyd, Head of ESPC Lettings, takes us through the stats for the final quarter of 2021.

The latest report from Cylets presents a frenzied picture of the Scottish rental market for the final quarter of 2021, with stock levels at record lows (just 32% of the levels seen in Q4 2018), time to let dramatically declining, and competition and prices rising.

The Scottish average rent rose 5.9% to £869pcm, while the average time to let dropped to 17 days, down 11 days on the same time in 2020.

Demand was high for properties of all sizes across Scotland, but in particular, for one-bedroom flats. Across the country, 46% of one-bed properties were let within a week, and their average time to let was the lowest at just 16 days. There was also huge demand for larger family homes, with three-bedroom properties reporting the highest year-on-year rental growth of 7.3%, and all property types letting in under 20 days.

According to the Cylets report, rental rates in Edinburgh grew by 9.8% year-on-year, to create a new average all-time high of £1191 per month. Four-bedroom properties saw the biggest annual growth of 17.8%, taking their new average to £2142. Edinburgh's time to let dropped to 11 days on average – 22 days faster than 2020 – while one-bedroom properties let the fastest at an average of just 10 days, with 59% letting within a week.

Combining Cylets and ESPC data, we can reveal that two-bedroom properties in EH4 produced the best rental yield at 7.1% on average, closely followed by three-bedroom properties in EH11, with an average yield of 6.7%.

Outside of the Capital, West Lothian saw more modest growth over Q4 2021, with a seemingly more manageable level of demand. The average rental rate was up 2.6% year-on-year, to £769, while the average time to let dropped by three days to 13 days on average, with one-bed properties letting in 11 days.

ESPC Lettings is an Edinburgh letting agent. We can help with marketing your rental property and finding the right tenants. Contact the team on 0131 253 2847 or landlord@espc.com.

Dressed for *success*

Planning on selling this year? Read these top tips first, to make sure your home stands out from the crowd.

If you're thinking about making a move to a new home, chances are, you're also thinking about selling your current property. But with so many people on the move (property sales volumes were up by over 40% in 2021), it's more important than ever to ensure that your home is 'dressed for success'.

The need for your home to stand out from the competition is compounded by the presence of virtual tours, which allow prospective buyers to analyse your home (and potentially dismiss it from their shortlist) without stepping foot in the door. To entice buyers, your home needs to look its most desirable from every angle, so you can show it off in all its glory, whether online, in the photographs or in person.

Declutter

Decluttering is an essential part of the pre-sale process. "It's the most impactful way to create a sellable home and it's amazing how it changes an environment," says Amy Stansfield, content creator at Wallsauce.com. "Not only



this, but it makes moving so much easier! To declutter effectively, look at items in batches, such as papers (like receipts, bills or old greetings cards), books and clothes. Being practical but ruthless means you'll soon minimise your clutter."

Repair and replace

Before the Home Report is ordered, make a list of any necessary repairs. There might be some bigger jobs,

but small tweaks can help your home look its best. Fix creaky floorboards and hire a carpet cleaner, and think about the walls – fill any holes from picture hooks and touch up paintwork scuffs for a pristine finish.

"The kitchen is one of the main rooms buyers will look forward to viewing, so if yours is looking a little tired, consider a revamp," says Ally Dowsing-Reynolds, co-CEO at Dowsing & Reynolds. "Repainting the units and replacing the door handles will instantly give the space a fresh look and will be attractive for buyers searching for somewhere they can move straight into."



Create light and space

Light and space are two of the most important things for many buyers, so you should make sure your home offers as much of both as it can.

“Anything to give a room a sense of space!”, says Ally Dowsing-Reynolds. “Add mirrors to create brightness, especially if they are oversized or particularly unique. You could also consider reducing the amount of furniture in a room to create more space, but leave one or two statement items, as these could be what makes your home memorable to a prospective buyer.”

Make the most of your windows to help your home feel bright and airy. Frame them with luxurious curtains, and open the blinds or shutters wide.



“Making potential buyers feel happy when they look at photos of your home will make a lasting impression.”

Stage the home

‘Staging’ is a term for styling the home so it looks as beautiful as possible – think about showhomes for inspiration. Clever use of artwork, accessories, lighting and greenery can all make your home seem extra-appealing, so light some lamps, and use houseplants to breathe life into the space.

Fresh fruit or flowers can make the home look lived-in but not messy, and don’t forget the bedroom – dress the bed like one in a fancy hotel. Think clean, ironed white linen, and add plumped-up pillows and a sumptuous throw, to create a space that feels inviting.

Don’t forget the emotion

Think about your home as you did when you first bought it. What did you love about it, what excited you? Emphasise those features, so that you can point them out to viewers. Buying a home is an emotional process, and buyers will want to feel that your property has been well-loved, so it’s worth adding in those extra touches that show how joyful a home it’s been.

Ally Dowsing-Reynolds agrees: “Making potential buyers feel happy when they look at photos of your home will make a lasting impression.”

Ready to sell your home? You can get started with a free valuation – head to [espc.com](https://www.espc.com) to find out more.



'Be Nice, Be Kind' poster, from £16, Albert Moon at etsy.com

Think Pink (and Red)

Sweeten up your interiors with a pop of pink and red in your accessories – it's just the right side of kitsch, and adds a deliciously retro flair to your home.



Ceramic oil decanter, £65, styleyourspaces.co.uk



Whitney wall lamp, £69, made.com



'Hide and Seek' wallpaper in red and pink, £42, lusthome.com



Doormat, £24.50, bombayduck.com



Striped velvet cushion, £54, cielshopinteriors.com



Soufflot armchair, Book and Look sideboard, All the Way rug, POA, ligne-roset.com

Gardening trends

to look out for
this year

Dobbies Garden Centres shares expert tips on the hot horticultural trends to get on board with in 2022.



Above image: Delphinium light blue/white £9.99; Echinacea 'Sensation Pink' £12.99; Digiplexis 'Falcon Fire' £12.99; Heuchera 'Marmalade' £9.99; Nepeta 'Purrsian Blue' £9.99; Terracotta cylinder from £9.99; Weave pot from £12.99; Fuji pot from £12.99; Speckle egg pot from £9.99; Spirit pot from £12.99.

With spring just around the corner, we're starting to think about how we can make the most of our outdoor spaces in the season ahead.

Dobbies' Horticultural Director, Marcus Eyles, has some insights into what's expected to be popular for gardeners in 2022, and how you can get the look with Dobbies' new Spring/Summer 2022 collections.

From on-trend grasses such as pampas, to growing your own, to planting for every size of space, these are some of the top trends we're likely to see more of as our outdoor spaces bloom into life in the coming months.

Grasses in beds and borders

As we approach the warmer months, Marcus expects an increase in demand for grasses, with more people incorporating the likes of pampas grass into both their gardens and homes. Definitely a trending look, grasses have risen in popularity over the past year and come in a variety of sizes, making them great for both large and small spaces. Tying into Dobbies' 'Slow Living' theme for Spring/Summer 2022, grasses are low maintenance and create a relaxed, calming look and feel in both indoor and outdoor spaces.



Grow your own

When it comes to growing produce, Marcus expects a rise in those growing their own, even in compact spaces, with more people than ever taking a sustainable approach to gardening. Due to a flourishing interest in grow-your-own and innovations in how produce can be grown in small spaces, Marcus expects to see more unusual fruit and vegetables, such as spaghetti squash and chillies, being grown in spaces like balconies and windowsills.

This trend ties in with Dobbies' 'Contemporary Country' theme, which focuses on grow-your-own, with a nostalgic nod inspired by a country cottage feel. Sustainability is key in this theme, with Marcus recommending mini meadows and wildflower turf to attract pollinators, for those hoping to get the look.

Blurring the lines between indoors and out

In terms of how people will be treating their spaces in 2022, Marcus expects the trend of blurring the lines between indoors and out to be strong as we approach spring - and not just for furniture, but for plants too. Having plants in pots will be a key trend, with houseplants outside in the warmer months being brought inside to enhance our homes in the winter. Tying in with Dobbies' 'Global Fusion' theme, which offers a jungle vibe with lots of big foliage, plants such as citrus and cacti will be popular this year and can be alternated between indoors and out, allowing people to blur the lines and create a natural flow from home to garden.

Not your average garden centre, Dobbies has a range of new collections for Spring/Summer 2022, with something to suit every style and space. Find out more at www.dobbies.com.

Left image: Echinacea 'Sensation' £12.99; Digiplexis 'Falcon Fire' £12.99; Dianthus 'Cocktail Shirley Temple' £7.99; Echinacea 'Sunseeker Tequila' £12.99; Rudbeckia 'Smileyz' £16.99; Two tone cylinder pot from £9.99; Heritage pot blue £8.99; Pastel pink pot £19.99; Pastel egg pot £34.99. Right Image: Cordyline 'Torbay Dazzler' £99.99; Citrus on stem £49.99; Carex 'Ice Dance' £12.99; Phormium 'Pink Stripe' £34.99; Blue Chevron pot from £12.99; Rusty square pots from £9.99; Green Maroc Pot from £12.99.

Into the *Light*

First-time buyer Alice Parr shows us around her dream Edinburgh flat, that she found using ESPC's email alerts.

Veterinary nurse and social media influencer Alice Parr, 32, bought her first property, a flat in Edinburgh's Merchiston, after over a year of searching for the perfect place in just the right location.

Almost three years after getting the keys, Alice has lovingly renovated her flat and created a space that truly reflects her personality and interests. Here, she shows us around the space that she's made into her ideal first home.

What was your criteria for your first property purchase?

I always wanted an older property – I love Edinburgh flats for their character and period features. As well as that, I had very specific criteria for the location of my flat – having rented in Bruntsfield for 10 years, I really wanted to stay in the area, but I couldn't afford the Bruntsfield price tag. I

started looking at smaller flats in the surrounding areas that fit the criteria, and when a property in my price range and desired location became available, I would view it immediately.

What was your property search experience like, and how did ESPC help?

My search ended up taking just over a year. I viewed nine properties, and bid on three that I missed out on, before finally getting this place. Before I started looking, I remembered a friend saying she would check ESPC daily for new properties until she found her place, so I always knew I was going to use ESPC to find my flat. I used ESPC's email notification feature, adding the street names of where I wanted to live, and then I got an email notification every time a property was listed, so I could be on top of what was happening in the market.



That's great to hear. Did the email alerts help you to find your flat?

Yes! I'd gotten an email notification on the Thursday when this flat came up for sale, and I called the agent and booked a private viewing for the Saturday, ahead of the open viewing the next day. It allowed me to view on my own, take my time and build up a rapport with the seller. I ended up asking them if I could make an offer before the property went to closing, and they were thankfully open to the idea. I'd lost out many times before, as well as finding out I was the second-highest bid multiple times with previous flats, so I was getting disheartened with the process. On the Monday morning after the viewing, I made an offer to the seller to take the flat off the market, and they accepted!

How exciting for you! How did you know it was ‘the one’ for you?

I viewed this property and one around the corner on the same day. They were both in my ideal location, and had almost identical asking prices, but this one felt more private. It had a small garden, only accessible to residents in our building (instead of a communal garden for four tenements to share), and this one had a kitchen with a large window, whereas the other one’s kitchen was internal. The flat needed a lot of work, and I viewed it on a really dark and rainy day, but I could instantly see its potential and visualise what I could do with it.

How did you get started with making the property feel like your own?

Everything needed a good coat of paint to begin with! I also changed the carpet in my bedroom before I even moved in, as there was mould growing underneath it. About six months after I moved in, I renovated the kitchen and replaced the floors in the hallway, kitchen and living room. This hugely helped with draughts, as I invested in decent insulation and floorboards that completely sealed any gaps.

If I were to do anything else to the property, I’d change the bathroom. It works perfectly fine, but it isn’t fully to my taste.

Three years on, what’s your favourite thing about your home?

I love that every room has a big window, no matter how small the room! It brings so much light into the property.

What are the biggest lessons you’ve learned since renovating your home?

Spend as much as you can afford on longer-term items. I regret buying a cheap couch from IKEA as soon as I got my keys, as I thought I would need it immediately. I ended up not even using my living room for the first four months, as I had no other furniture or a TV! I should have waited and saved up during that time for the couch I really wanted, as I’ve now replaced it anyway. You can save money on smaller furnishings instead – I bought my coffee table and side tables from a second-hand furniture shop for £5 each!

What advice would you give to fellow first-time buyers?

Add your desired locations to the ESPC email alerts – it definitely helped me when this flat came up for sale.



You can follow Alice’s home renovations on Instagram @thepaleopeach.

Four ways to create a mid-century modern look

The mid-century modern aesthetic is still a much-loved choice for interior schemes and we continue to inject this design into the home. Victoria Atkin from Atkin & Thyme shares her tips on how to bring this trend to life.

Where there's wood, there's a way

"High quality wood is the go-to material for mid-century modern style. It helps to ground the scheme in nature and calls back to the teak synonymous with the original era. Use this material for tables, desk and storage pieces to give a heritage touch. Mix and match different styles of wood when coordinating drawers, side tables, media units or shelving. This will create a sense of uniqueness and an informal feel."

Add metallic flair

"When styling your new mid-century look, give it a contemporary hint with metallic. You can do this via lighting, or with vases and ornaments. This aesthetic is all about being cosy and familiar, so try rich tones like copper and brass to add depth."

Sleek and chic

"Mid-century is defined by its clean, well-designed lines and timeless appeal. Choose furniture pieces that have a sleek presence with smooth lines, and pair with abstract accessories or artwork for contrast and interest."

Introduce pattern and comparison

"Mid-century modern has a playful side. Use contrasting materials such as wood and marble, and don't forget to add in pattern and colour. Pared back rooms can be warmed using hallmark designs such as geometrics, and if the classic retro tones of mustard and orange seem too overpowering, take it back to nature with blues and greens."



Find all products at atkinandthyme.co.uk

Clockwise from top left: Oscar Sideboard £749, Calvin Armchair in Moroccan Printed Cotton £499, Dexter Ceiling Pendant Light in Burnished Copper £49, Berkley Marble Console Desk £599

Snooze your way to a *healthier lifestyle*

Dreaming of a better night's sleep? Sarah Biddlecombe, Lifestyle Editor at John Lewis & Partners, shares expert-approved steps to help you slumber better this season.

Hands up if you'd like to get more sleep? Around a third of us struggle with insomnia, but if counting sheep doesn't work for you, then fear not – the simple act of creating a relaxing bedtime routine could be just what you need to lull you into a deep slumber.

“When you're stressed or anxious, it is much more difficult to sleep,” explains sleep expert Dr Lindsay Browning, a chartered psychologist, neuroscientist and author. “Without a night-time routine before bed you might find that you're still alert from late-night working or gaming, which makes falling asleep harder. But if you implement a wind-down routine, it can help you put the day to rest and get your body and mind in a calm and relaxed state before bed.”

Read on to discover the five simple steps you can take to create a relaxing bedtime routine for yourself.

Go to sleep and wake up at the same time, every single day

Yes, even at weekends. It might sound boring, but sticking to a bedtime and wake time can be an effective way of programming our bodies to sleep when we need it. “Having a regular bedtime and wake time helps your circadian rhythm to send strong signals to make you feel sleepy at night and alert in the morning,” explains Lindsay. “If you change your bedtime or wake time significantly, you are effectively giving yourself jetlag.”



“ Having a regular bedtime and wake time helps your circadian rhythm to send strong signals to make you feel sleepy at night and alert in the morning ”



Avoid devices before bedtime

“Blue light, such as that emitted from LED devices like tablets or phones, actively suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone that promotes sleep,” says Lindsay. “When you experience darkness your body starts to produce melatonin, which helps you feel sleepy. Conversely, when you see bright light, your body will stop producing as much melatonin, because it thinks that it is still daytime.”

If you think you’ll struggle to leave your phone outside of your bedroom because you use it as an alarm, invest in a good old-fashioned analogue clock, such as

the Acctim Ramsey Curved Silent Sweep Analogue Alarm Clock, instead.

Reduce that caffeine intake

It will come as no surprise to hear that reducing the amount of caffeine you drink throughout the day can improve your sleep. “Caffeine has a six-hour half-life, which means that six hours after your last cup of tea or coffee, half of that caffeine will still be in your system, potentially stopping you from sleeping,” explains Lindsay. “If you reduce how much caffeine you’re drinking, especially towards bedtime, you will likely find yourself less alert when it’s time to sleep.”



Have a warm bath or shower

“A warm bath or shower before bed is an excellent way of artificially raising your body temperature,” says Lindsay. “When we get out of the warm bath or shower, we will start to cool down, which mimics what happens just before we fall asleep, helping us to feel more sleepy and ready for bed.” Not only that, but adding a warm bath or shower to your bedtime routine can be incredibly relaxing, especially with a few drops of a soothing bath and shower gel like Molton Brown Blissful Templetree Bath & Shower Gel.

Yoga or stretching before bed are both great wind-down activities, because they can help to calm your brain and relax your body before bed.

Practise yoga or stretching

One of the silver linings of the pandemic is the huge number of brilliant workout videos that are now available online. If you want to add some gentle yoga or stretching to your night-time routine, try searching YouTube or look for a daily subscription. “Yoga or stretching before bed are both great wind-down activities, because they can help to calm your brain and relax your body before bed,” says Lindsay. Need an incentive? Why not treat yourself to a new yoga mat, such as the M Life Mendhi 5mm Yoga Mat.



You can find everything you need for a relaxing bedtime routine in John Lewis & Partners stores, or online at johnlewis.com.

Green Daze



Madison green marble coffee table, £299, cultfurniture.com



Eden candle, £10, habitat.co.uk

Bring the outdoors in with a splash of green in your interiors! Perfect for any room of the house, here's our pick of the best green accessories to give your home a natural lift.



Brisa linen bed set in Peacock Green, from £130, Made.com



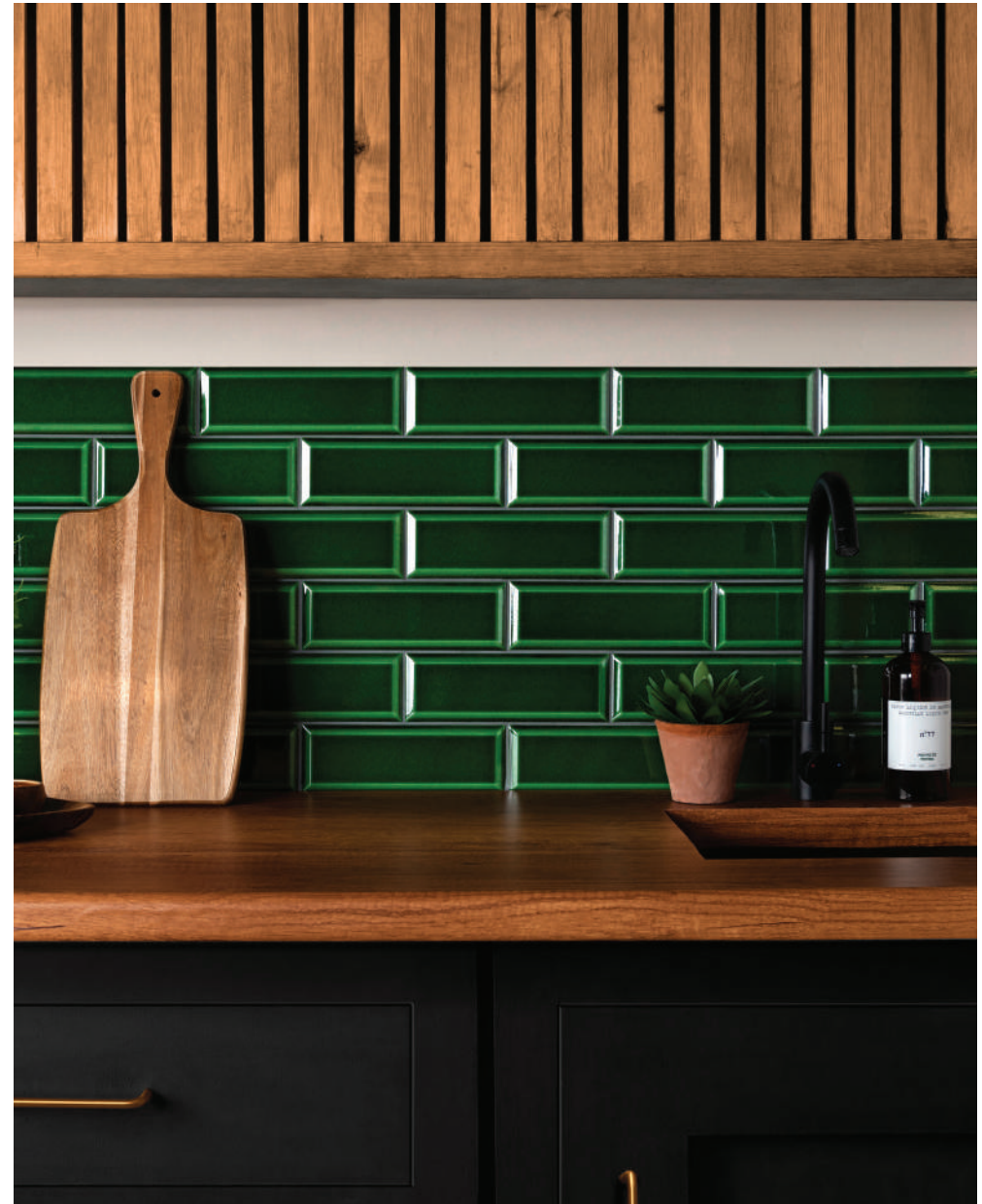
Kaleido cluster pendant lamp in green, £175, made.com



Twisted moss green candles, £30 for 6, rockettstgeorge.co.uk



Cotton velvet linen mix cushion, £9, direct.asda.com



Plush Victorian green crackle glaze tiles, £57.95 per sq. m, wallsandfloors.co.uk

Make a *splash* on the market

Expert advice on how updating your bathroom could add thousands to the value of your property.

The bathroom is an integral part of the home, but did you know that updating it could potentially add over £10,000 in value? Adding stylish fixtures, fittings and finishing touches to your bathroom not only makes it a more luxurious experience for you, but when you come to sell your property, it can make your home even more appealing to buyers.

Shaf Member, Purchase Director at QS Supplies, explains, “The great thing about updating your bathroom is that you can spend as much or as little as you like. It’s inevitable that you’re only going to be able to add thousands onto the asking price if you extend your bathroom and have a higher budget, but there are many ways you can make the space look appealing to buyers without spending large amounts. By simply adding a touch of colour to the bathroom walls, adding more storage or replacing the shower head and taps, you can make your bathroom feel more homely and attractive to potential buyers, which will help speed up the selling process.”

Here are just five ways that altering your bathroom can add value to your home.

Extend your space

If finances allow, extending your bathroom, or adding an extra one, can increase your property’s value by around 5%. A downstairs WC is now a must-have for many buyers, and it’s also a cheaper option than extending your main bathroom.



Add extra storage

There can never be too much storage in a family home, and this is particularly true in the bathroom, which can often be the smallest room in the house. There are a number of clever ways that you can add storage to the bathroom: think cupboards, shelves, baskets and mirrors with hidden storage, which will hide away clutter.

Upgrade the fittings

Buyers will place extra importance on a bathroom, so refurbishing before selling can make a big difference on how they perceive your home. Adding a walk-in shower as well as a bath, is one of the best ways to add value (and a touch of luxury) to your home.

Install underfloor heating

Underfloor heating is an opulent touch, and can make your property more desirable to buyers. One of the biggest advantages of underfloor heating is that it can help to reduce energy bills, which is sure to be an appealing factor when selling your home.

Update your décor

Your fixtures and fittings might be fine, but a lick of paint can really lift your bathroom. A simple refresh of your colour scheme, and adding new accessories, is a budget-friendly and fast finishing touch that can take your bathroom to the next level.



Your search starts here

Our property section highlights just some of the stunning homes now available with ESPC solicitor estate agents. Which one of them could be yours?

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[espc.com/valuations](https://www.espc.com/valuations)



LADYRIG HOUSE & LODGE, KELSO, TD5 8JP

OFFERS OVER £950,000



A striking traditional farmhouse set in rolling countryside positioned just outside Kelso, Ladyrig House is an exceptional find. Incredibly well connected to amenities while retaining a coveted countryside lifestyle, the property is full of period charm - and with a separate Lodge and array of outbuildings, this is an excellent opportunity for those looking to put down roots in the Borders and develop this handsome historical property into a modern family home with income and development potential.

VIEWING INFORMATION

Contact Hastings Legal & Property
01573 225999



SOUTH KNOWES, GLEBE LANE, KELSO, TD5 7BH

OFFERS OVER £675,000



Arguably occupying the quietest and most secluded position right in the centre of Kelso, only a stone's throw from the riverside walk along the Tweed, South Knowes is on the market for the first time since it was built in 1993. This impressive home sits in a generous plot fully enclosed with sheltering trees and hedging allowing absolute privacy from the vibrant town beyond, this striking detached property is a truly unique find for a lucky buyer hoping to secure a rarely available corner of Kelso.

VIEWING INFORMATION

Contact Hastings Legal & Property
01573 225999



15 WATERFRONT AVENUE, GRANTON, EDINBURGH, EH5 1RT

OFFERS OVER £415,000



Extremely spacious four bedroom mid terraced townhouse offering well-proportioned family accommodation over four levels. Forming part of an exclusive modern development the contemporary property has been finished to a high specification with easy access to both The Shore district as well as the City Centre.

VIEWING INFORMATION

By appt - Contact GG 0131 253 2993



DEVELOPMENT SITE, BURNMOUTH, EYEMOUTH TD14 5RT

OFFERS OVER £230,000



Development site on the edge of this established coastal village with excellent road links via the A1 as well as regular rail connections on the main East Coast Rail-line at nearby Berwick Upon Tweed. Potential to accommodate approx. 12 residential units and presents a rare opportunity for a developer within this sought after coastal area. Given the proximity of Edinburgh and the ease of travel south the finished units are bound to appeal to those seeking a lifestyle change and a quiet coastal village position whilst still retaining the option of being well connected to the city.

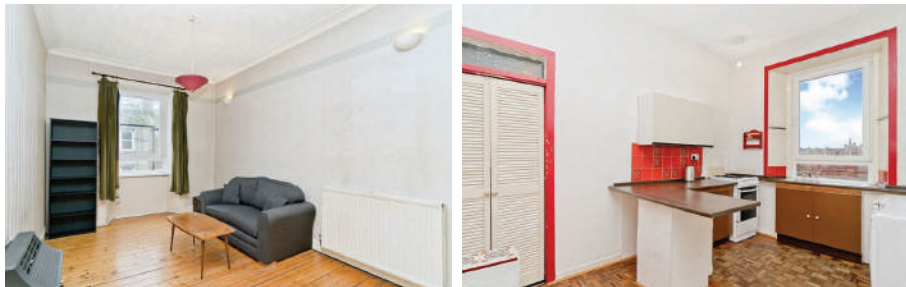
VIEWING INFORMATION

Contact Hastings Legal & Property
01573 225999



24 (3F3) THORNTREE STREET, EDINBURGH, EH6 8PU

OFFERS OVER £155,000



Ideal for first-time buyers, couples, or as a buy-to-let rental investment. This top floor flat offers spacious accommodation and comprises a south-facing living room, a large kitchen and dining area, one double bedroom, and bathroom.

VIEWING INFORMATION

Tel VMH 0131 253 2964



42 FOWLERS COURT, PRESTONPANS, EH32 9AT

OFFERS OVER £105,000



This attractive, one-bedroom plus box bedroom, second-floor flat is part of a modern development in the coastal town of Prestonpans, situated directly beside the beach and a stone's throw from amenities and transport links.

VIEWING INFORMATION

Click 'Register to View' & select a time



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