



Autumn Edition

TENANTS NEWSLETTER

2015



Tenancy Fraud



The demand for social housing is increasing and those seeking a home have to wait longer. A recent Government initiative to reduce and remove those tenants who claim to need a property and remain as a tenant while living at another address and sub-letting the property, has already become a criminal offence in England with the introduction of new legislation.

North Belfast Housing Association seeks to provide suitable homes to those in housing need. We will not tolerate an abuse of this vital resource and have individuals gain at the expense of others within our community. We use this opportunity to highlight this issue and invite our tenants to raise their concerns about tenancy fraud with us.

If your circumstances have changed and you no longer require social housing, please terminate your tenancy and we will offer the opportunity you were given, to someone else.

Do not move out and sub-let.

If you have information of North Belfast Housing Association tenants sub-letting, please notify the Director of Housing, contact details below. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence and all notifications will be investigated.

Mr Dermot Leonard

Director of Housing and Services

North Belfast Housing Association

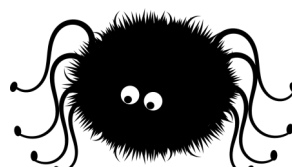
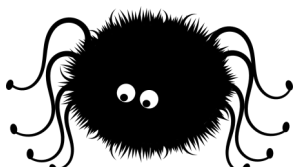
Gatelodge

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Welfare Reform: How will it affect me?

In your newsletter pack you will find a letter which outlines the impact that Welfare Reform may have to you and your household. Along with this letter is a questionnaire which we are asking that you fill in and return back to us in the envelope provided. This questionnaire will help us at NB Housing to identify any household that may be affected by the changes and will help us to advise accordingly.



What is Welfare Reform?

Welfare Reform will result in changes to the benefits system. Many of the current benefits will cease to exist and new benefits and payment systems will be introduced. If you pay all or part of your rent through housing benefit you may be affected. If you have one or more “spare” bedrooms you may lose part of your housing benefit.

What is a “spare” bedroom?

You will be allowed one bedroom for each of the following categories:

Each adult couple

A person aged 16 and over

Two children of the same sex under the age of 16

Two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex

Any other child

A carer providing overnight care

Any extra bedrooms that are unused or do not fall into these categories will be considered to be “spare” bedroom

How will this affect my Housing Benefit?

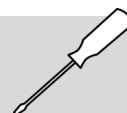
If you have one “spare” bedroom your housing benefit will be reduced by 14%.

If you have two (or more) “spare” bedrooms your housing benefit will be reduced by 25%.





Maintenance



Most repairs are carried out by the Association, but there are a number of instances where the nature of the repair means that it is the responsibility of the tenant to carry out the repair. Examples of these repairs are :

Care and upkeep of gardens and hedges	Replacement of toilet sets and lids
Cleaning out of internal and external gully traps	Curtain Rails
Keeping the property in reasonable decorative order	Coat/hat hooks
Replacement of bins	Fuses, except main fuses
Internal plaster cracks	Oiling of window hinges
Washers on taps	Replacement of broken glass
Stoppers and chains for baths sinks and basins	Clearing airlocks in pipes and radiators
Internal door hinges, locks and handles	Draught proofing, etc.

A full list of the repairs that tenants are responsible for is included in your General Conditions of Tenancy. Should you need any further clarification or information please do not hesitate to contact our maintenance team on 028 90 351131



Rent Statement



The Association has included a copy of your rent statement for your information. This will inform you of the status of your rent account. We plan on delivering the statement quarterly with the latest edition of the newsletter, however should you require a further copy, please do not hesitate to contact us. Likewise, should you have any queries regarding the content of your statement, please contact your Housing Officers: Amanda Smith and Sheena Hall at the Gatelodge Office on:

028 90592110





Tenant Satisfaction Survey



Thanks to all NB Housing Association tenants and residents who returned their completed Tenants Satisfaction Surveys 2015.

The results this year were very positive with 153 respondents reporting they were either very or fairly satisfied in the following areas.

Performance Area	% of Tenants Satisfied
NB Housing overall performance	82%
Rent represents good value for money	83%
Your Accommodation	91%
Condition of Property	77%
Area/Location	76%
Repairs:	Very/Fairly good
Staff responding to repairs requests	91%
Ease of reporting	74%
Staff knowledge	72%
Attitude of workers	81%
Quality of Repair work	78%
Communication:	
Your views are taken into account	83%
Keeping you informed	87%
Opportunities for participation in decisions	77%
Helpfulness of staff	89%

Whilst the above satisfaction levels are very positive, your responses will also give us an opportunity to make improvements in certain areas that were not as positive. We welcome any ideas you may have to help us improve our services and encourage tenants to make suggestions by contacting us by phone, letter, email info@nb-housing.org or using the comments leaflet which can be downloaded from our website www.nb-housing.org

We encourage tenants to complete surveys to keep us informed of your views and once again thank all those who participated in this year's survey.





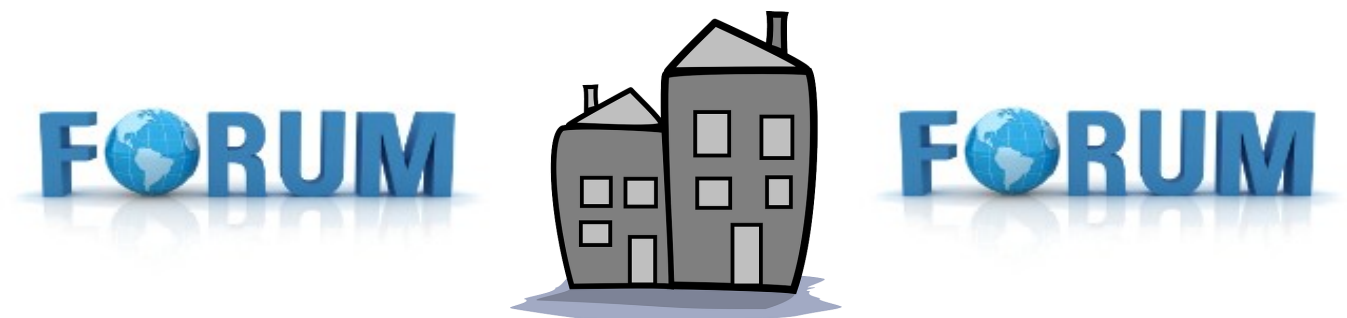
Tenant Forum



In our last Newsletter we informed tenants of our aim to continue the good practise of Tenant Participation and Involvement via the Tenant Forum. We plan on having our next meeting on

Tuesday 17th November at 4pm in the Gatelodge Office.

We would be grateful if you would indicate your interest in becoming involved in the upcoming Forum meetings which will be held quarterly. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!



Anti-Social Behaviour can put your tenancy at risk!

All NB Housing tenants wish to enjoy the comfort of their own home without encountering problems associated with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). ASB can take many forms for example, **noisy neighbours, graffiti, drinking or drug use which leads to unwelcome behaviour, litter problems, racism, etc.** The Association will provide assistance to tenants who encounter problems in relation to ASB by investigating and dealing with their complaint. If it is found that an NB Housing tenant is involved in ASB, appropriate action will be taken by the Association to ensure their behaviour does not continue to impact negatively on others. All tenants are reminded that it is not just their own behaviour they are responsible for, but also for visitors to their home, and may be putting their tenancy at risk. We therefore ask all our tenants to be considerate of your neighbour's space and privacy, and their right to enjoy a comfortable, secure environment.

Useful contacts numbers include:

If you believe a crime has been committed should contact PSNI on **101**

Noise nuisance between 8pm and 4am, report to the Belfast City Council on **028 90 373006**

Dog fouling at Belfast City Council on **028 9027 0431**

NB Housing can be contacted on **028 90 592 110**, or emailed on info@nb-housing.org should you have a complaint about Anti Social Behaviour.



CONTENTS INSURANCE	USEFUL NUMBERS	OUT OF HOURS VISIT SERVICE
<p>The Association would advise all tenants that it is their responsibility to take out Contents Insurance.</p> <p>The Association is not liable for any loss or damage caused to Tenant's belongings.</p> <p>Contents Insurance can be obtained from most Insurance Brokers.</p>	<p>NIHE: 03448 920 900</p> <p>Phoenix Gas: 08454 55 55 55</p> <p>POWER NI: 08457 455 455</p> <p>Belfast City Council - Pest Control: 02890 270431</p> <p>Noise Control: 02890 373 006</p> <p>Waste Management: 02890 270 657</p> <p>Fold Telecare (Out of hours repairs) 0800 731 3081</p>	<p>The Association would highlight to tenants, that tenants can avail of an out of hours Visit Service.</p> <p>The facility is for tenants who work during our normal opening hours of 9.00am - 5.00pm.</p> <p>Tenants who wish to use this service can contact the Association to arrange a more suitable time.</p>

North Belfast Housing Association wishes to highlight the availability of an independent debt advice charity that offers guidance for people in debt.

The charity Debt Support Trust is open from 8am – 7pm Monday to Friday and can be contacted on 0800 085 0226 or online at www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk

You will not be charged for their advice and any information that you give or receive is treated in the strictest confidence.

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