



NB Housing

Homes that build community

Tenants Newsletter

ISSUE 20
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Delivering New Homes

The Development Departments role within NB Housing is to source and deliver new housing for those in need. We recently handed over 5 homes in Ballygowan. We have also purchased a number of homes in Ballymena and Coalisland. Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter pages to see updates of these schemes!





Community Development & Tenant Support Officer

Patricia chats about her role and provides advice on some common queries that she has come across...

Hi, my name is Patricia Lyons, I am the new Community Development and Tenant Support Officer since June 2019. The new role aims to develop our communities and to support tenants as they become more involved in the processes and services of the Housing Association. I also support our tenants in relation to welfare reform/benefit queries.

I have been working in the voluntary sector for the last 25 years, mostly within Citizens Advice providing advice and advocacy on benefits/employment/consumer and housing issues. I really enjoy helping and advising people experiencing problems.

My daily duties include developing tenant forums throughout the local communities where our tenants live, providing information to tenants regarding local activities and services and furthermore supporting our tenants in relation to welfare reform/benefit queries.

In regards to benefit/welfare reform queries most enquiries from tenants at present are around Universal Credit/Housing Benefit and PIP.

I am trained to Appeal level and can provide representation at Social Security Appeal Tribunals.

Below is a snapshot of common queries:

If I move home do I have to claim Universal Credit instead of Housing Benefit?

No, when moving home and already in receipt of Housing Benefit, moving within Northern Ireland should not trigger Universal Credit.

Furthermore, a new tenant may still be able to claim Housing Benefit and keep their legacy benefits if they have a severe disability premium or did have within the last month built into their benefit entitlement. Please seek advice before any claim to Universal Credit as it may be financially better off for some claimants to remain on legacy benefits.

Can I claim Personal Independence Payment while in work?

Yes, as PIP helps towards some of the extra costs arising from having a long-term health condition or disability that is expected to last for 12 months or longer. Entitlement to PIP is based on the effect a long-term health condition has on your daily life, not the condition itself.

PIP is made up of two components (parts); a 'daily living component' and a 'mobility component'.

Each component has two rates; standard and enhanced. If you qualify for PIP, you will get money for one or both components. PIP is not affected by income or savings, it is not taxable and you can get it whether you are in work or not.

If you require welfare benefit advice please contact myself on 028 90 592110.

Family Support Hubs

A Family Support Hub is a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organisations that provide early intervention services, or work with families who need support. The network accepts referrals and uses their knowledge of local service providers to signpost families with specific needs to an appropriate service.

- To improve access to early intervention family Support services by matching the needs of referred families to family support providers
- To improve coordination of early intervention family support services by creating a collaborative network of community, voluntary and statutory providers

- To improve awareness of early intervention family support services
- To assess the level of unmet need for early intervention family support services and inform the Trust Outcomes Group

There are currently 29 Family Support Hubs in operation covering all of Northern Ireland. Hubs coordinate existing statutory/community and voluntary services. Some hubs have attached services but this is separate from the hub function which is about coordination.

Examples of services which family support hubs can make referrals to are counselling services for parents and children, mentoring for young people, complimentary therapies to relieve stress, sure start etc.

If you need further information on the hubs please contact Patricia on 028 90592110.

Tenant Meetings

Tenant Participation means that all tenants have a range of opportunities to have a say about how their housing services are delivered. It is a two-way process where landlords value the engagement and recognise it as a vital component to improving their business. One way to achieve this is through tenants' forums.

We have one forum already established and are looking to establish a second one based in our Crumlin Road office.

Issues discussed at tenants meetings have included anti-social behaviour, over grown paths, activities within the local area.



Some members of our Tenants Forum in our Gatelodge Office.

If you are interested in attending any tenants' meetings or setting up one in your area please contact myself by phone on 02890592110.

When We Were Young...

On the 10th August, some young people from Ardoyne Youth Club and their leaders, came to Holyrood House and put on a tea party for the tenants. Stories were swapped on how Ardoyne community was when our tenants were growing up and comparisons were made to how it is now, for young people.

Some tenants taught the young people how to do the 'Slush' and the young people played current dance tunes. Local councillor Paul McCusker did DJ and helped to organise the activity.

The day was such a success that we are going to make it a regular event at Holyrood House.



Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

Thanks to all NB Housing tenants and residents who returned their completed Tenant Satisfaction Surveys and tenants who responded to our Telephone Surveys in 2019. NB Housing values feedback from our tenants on the services we provide.

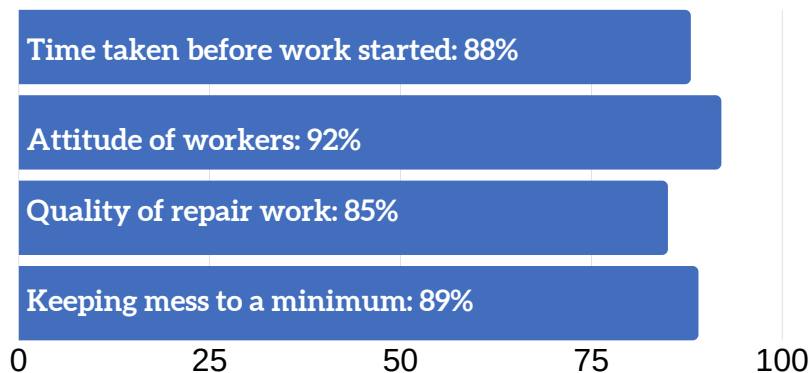
Our 2018/19 survey has demonstrated high satisfaction levels across all our services. A total of 154 tenants responded to the surveys which represents an 16% return. We seek to continually engage with our tenants to ensure that they are kept informed of our services and that their views are taken into account.

Whilst the 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 or by email (info@nb-housing.org). Alternatively, you can use the comments leaflet which can be downloaded from our website www.nb-housing.org.

91% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the overall service provided by NB Housing

82% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with their area/ location

Contractor Performance



89% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with their accommodation

87% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the ability of staff to deal with their query quickly and efficiently

82% of tenants surveyed were satisfied that their rent represents good value

89% of tenants surveyed were satisfied that NB Housing keeps them informed

Holyrood House Refurbishment Works



Recently, refurbishment works have been completed at our sheltered scheme Holyrood House in Flax Street. Extensive works included replacements of the communal lighting system, fire alarm system, suspended ceilings along with redecoration to the communal areas. In celebration of these works being completed the project contractor JMC Mechanical & Construction provided a lunch event for the residents which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. We are sure you will agree that the transformation has been wonderful.

An update from our Maintenance Team

Planned Maintenance

We are currently carrying out a number of inspections for potential planned maintenance projects to our stock:

- External cyclical maintenance to 100+ properties
- Kitchen replacements to 40+ properties
- Heating/ boiler replacements to 40+ properties

Consultations will take place with tenants that have been selected for these projects and additional properties may be added during the remainder of the financial year.



Replacement Glazing/ Glass

NB Housing is not responsible for replacement of glazing/glass to windows or doors. This is deemed as tenant's responsibility.

Please refer to your Tenants Handbook: Section 4, Point 22, Pages 12 & 13 for information on repairs that NB Housing deem is tenant responsibility.

Repair Reporting

You may report a repair either in person, by telephone, email or in writing. When contacting NB Housing, please ask to speak to our Maintenance Department. NB Housings emergency contact service is provided by Radius CONNECT24 and is available outside of normal office hours to deal with out of hours emergency repairs. They can be contacted on Freephone 0800 731 3081.

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It's Time to Talk about Atrial Fibrillation (AF)

Our charity partners, Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke (NICHS), are currently running a campaign to make people aware of Atrial Fibrillation and how it increases your chance of stroke. Here is a quick summary of what you need to know about this heart condition.

What is Atrial Fibrillation?

There are almost 40,000 local people who are diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, or AF as it is more commonly known, making it the most common type of irregular heart rhythm in Northern Ireland. It causes an irregular and often abnormally fast heart rate.

AF in itself does not affect your quality of life. However, it can increase your chance of stroke by FIVE times.

How does AF increase your chance of stroke?

- When your heart beats, blood is pumped out of the chambers of your heart and around your body.
- However, if your heart does not have a regular heartbeat, some blood may be left behind forming a pool of blood in the heart.
- A clot could form in the pool of blood left behind, which can then travel to the brain and cause a stroke.
- You can watch an animation of how AF is linked to stroke here: <https://nichs.org.uk/af/>

What are the symptoms?

Some people with AF have no symptoms and their condition only comes to light during an unrelated medical examination.

Other people may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Feeling very tired
- Feeling faint at times
- Being breathless
- Palpitations or fluttering or "thumping" in the chest

How is AF detected and what should you do?

NICHS now have AF testing as part of its health checks, where your heartbeat is monitored for a short time to see if there are any indications of AF. Anyone showing signs of AF is referred to their doctor.

Your GP can also test you for AF.

With the right treatment for AF, you can live a long and healthy life, but it is important to get it treated. If you are diagnosed with AF your doctor will prescribe medication or other treatment to:

1. Control your heartbeat so that it maintains a regular beat.
2. Thin your blood so that a clot is less likely to form – this reduces the risk of you having a stroke.

If you would like further information about NICHS or the services they offer please visit their website: <https://nichs.org.uk/>

Free First Aid Training!

Are you interested in First Aid? Would you like a training course? We are liaising with the Red Cross to offer a free 2 hour First Aid course on Thursday 14th November at 2pm-4pm in our Crumlin Road Office. If you would like further information on how to avail of this course please contact Patricia on 02890592110.



Step Challenge

In June 2018, we launched our first Step Challenge which saw 23 staff taking part! As staff enjoyed last year's step challenge we decided to hold the event again this year. The step challenge took place from 20th – 24th May 2019, during National Walking Month, with 25 staff taking part. During the week staff cumulatively walked 1,537,958 steps which equated to 728 miles. We took part in the step challenge to increase our physical activity and raise some vital funds for our staff nominated charity NICHS!

Team 5 (Lauren, John & Sheena) won the step challenge by walking an average total of 90,664 steps over the week and our Ultimate Stepper was Eamonn who walked 128,822 steps.



Contents Insurance

NB Housing would advise all tenants that it is their responsibility to take out contents insurance. NB Housing is not liable for any loss or damage caused to tenants belongings. Contents insurance can be obtained from most Insurance Brokers .

Out of Hours Visit Service

NB Housing would highlight to tenants, that tenants can avail of an out of hours visit service. The facility is for tenants who work during our normal opening hours of 9.00am- 5.00pm. Tenants who wish to use this service can contact NB Housing to arrange a more suitable time.

Debt Advice

NB Housing 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 8.00am- 7.00pm 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.

Recycling Centres

- Alexandra Park Avenue (108 Alexandra Park Avenue, BT15 3GJ)
- Blackstaff Way (1 Blackstaff Way BT11 9DT)
- Ormeau (6 Park Road, BT7 2FX)
- Palmerston Road (2-4 Palmerston Road, BT4 1QA)

Civic Amenity Sites

- Agnes Street (between Crumlin Road and Shankill Road)
- Springfield Avenue (off Springfield Road near Falls Road)
- 368 Cregagh Road

Useful Numbers

Radius CONNECT24 (for out of hours emergency repairs) 0800 731 3081

NIHE: 03448 920 900

Belfast City Council Pest Control: 028 9027 0431

Phoenix Gas: 0345 455 5555

Noise Control: 028 9037 3006

Power NI: 0345 745 5455

Waste Management: 028 9027 0657

NB Housing Contact Details

Gatelodge Office

8 Flax Street, Belfast, BT14 7EQ
Tel: 028 9059 2110

Crumlin Road Office

282-290 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 7ED
Tel: 028 9035 1131

Did you know you can contact us through the 'Getting in Touch' tab on our website (www.nb-housing.org), can contact us via email: info@nb-housing.org or can text us on 074 9820 2221