



# NB Housing Tenants Newsletter







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## Tenant Participation: Let's Get Involved!



Community engagement is a key aspect of tenant participation and we have held a number of tenant community participation events including community clean up days in Prospect Park and the Tudor area.

NB Housing is keen to set up a group of interested tenants who want to make a difference to the areas in which they live. You can get involved in a number of ways such as:

-  Community clean up schemes
-  Tenant satisfaction surveys
-  Estate walkabouts where you can accompany us on inspections
-  Becoming a Mystery Shopper
-  Help us with creating and reviewing policies & procedures
-  Have a voice to help us assist our tenants through the welfare reform changes

We have included information with this newsletter about how to get involved. You will also find leaflets giving further details on Tenant Participation and a summary of our Tenant Participation Strategy. Please return the enclosed form with your thoughts, we want to hear from you!

If you would like further information on Tenant Participation or would like to get involved please contact us on **02890592110** (Gatelodge Office) and **02890351131** (Crumlin Road Office). Or why not text us on **07498202221** or send an email to [info@nb-housing.org](mailto:info@nb-housing.org)

### Office Closure at Easter

**Monday 2nd April & Tuesday 3rd April 2018- closed**

**We will re-open on Wednesday 4th April 2018**

**In the event of an out of hours emergency repair,  
please call Fold Telecare on: 0800 7313081**





# Advice from our Maintenance Team


## Repair Reporting

You may report a repair either in person, by telephone, by fax, email or in writing. When contacting NB Housing, please ask to be put through to the Maintenance Department. If necessary, NB Housing may contact you for further repair information and access arrangements.

NB Housing tries to ensure repairs are completed as soon as possible; however, we will prioritise the repair into the following categories:

 **Emergency:** Repairs which could risk health and safety or if not attended to, lead to further repairs being required. These repairs will be carried out within 24-hours.

 **Urgent:** Less serious repairs that do not present a health and safety risk but could cause major inconvenience. These repairs will be attended to within 4 working days.

 **Routine:** The majority of repairs will be classed as routine. These repairs will be completed within 20 working days.

NB Housing employs Fold Telecare to deal with out-of-hours emergency repairs. You may contact them on **Freephone 0800 731 3081** to report your repair at any time when the office is not opened including weekends and bank holidays.

## Boiler Services and Access for Contractors



It is vital that all tenants provide access to NB Housing contractors to enable work orders to be completed. It is particularly important that you grant access for your annual Gas Boiler Service. This is a health and safety requirement and is essential to ensure the safer operation of your boiler.

Failure to provide access will result in abortive call outs and NB Housing reserves the right to recharge you the fee. If access continues to be an issue, NB Housing may instruct the capping of the gas supply at your home until the boiler service is complete, please note all additional costs associated with these actions will be deemed recoverable from tenants. We may also commence legal action to gain access and/or potentially seek possession of the property resulting in you losing your tenancy.

If you are unable to facilitate a contractor attending, contact NB Housing so alternative arrangements can be made.

The Association has produced a Gas Safety leaflet which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.nb-housing.org/DatabaseDocs/>

## End of tenancy repairs



When terminating your tenancy, NB Housing expect properties to be left in a good standard. This includes the tenant clearing the property of all belongings. Any gas/electric top up cards should be left in the property for the incoming tenant.

NB Housing will attempt to visit your home prior to the termination to ensure any potential recharges are identified at this stage to give you the opportunity to complete the repairs yourself. Once we receive the keys we will complete a further inspection and if any defects or non-standard items remain in the property, then we will proceed to make the property suitable for relet and will then calculate recharges costs. The link below provides access to the NB Housings termination of tenancy leaflet and we request that these standards are adhered to so situations like this do not occur. [http://www.nb-housing.org/DatabaseDocs/med\\_1098674\\_nbhleaflettermination.pdf](http://www.nb-housing.org/DatabaseDocs/med_1098674_nbhleaflettermination.pdf)



## Security of Properties



Security of your property is solely down to you the tenant. NB Housing are not liable for any loss in your home as a result of burglary or vandalism. Please note tenants are responsible for the actions of their visitors. Advice on home security is available from the PSNI Crime Prevention team on 101. If you have any maintenance concerns about your doors/ windows please contact NB Housing and we will visit your home to complete an assessment. Further advice is available via the PSNI website: <https://www.psnipolice.uk/crime/theft/house-security>

## Access for Contractors

It is vital that all tenants provide access to NB Housing contractors to enable work orders to be completed, especially Gas Boiler Servicing. It is possible that contractors may call from withheld numbers so please answer all calls to ensure access is permitted. Failure to permit access may result in NB Housing charging you. If no access continues, services may be halted, or legal action may be initiated to take possession of the property. It is important you contact NB Housing if you are unable to facilitate the contractor calling so that alternative arrangements can be made.

**NB Housing has undertaken a vast amount of Cyclical & Planned Maintenance to our housing stock. The following projects are due to be completed by the end of 2017/18 financial year:**

- External redecoration to 300+ properties
- Kitchen Replacements to 78 properties
- Boiler and Heating Upgrades to 40 properties
- External Front & Rear Door replacements to 20 properties
- External Gutter/Fascia/Soffit replacement to 12 properties
- Replacement Windows to Rowan Houses at Thorndale Family Centre
- External Gutter/Rainwater Goods cleaning to our high rise buildings
- Carpark Marking/Lining to Holyrood House



NB Housing are preparing Projects for the 2018/2019 year and future tenant consultations shall take place prior to works commencing onsite. Updates on these works shall be highlighted in forthcoming Newsletters.



# Top Tips for being a Top Tenant



## Rent

Pay your rent and other charges when due. You can pay your rent by the following options:



By standing order or direct debit



Using Allpay



By cash or cheque



## Pets

You must seek written consent to keep any pets. Cats and dogs are not permitted in apartment blocks. If you do have a pet, please pick up the waste and put it in the bin. Do not put waste in your blue or brown bins as this can contaminate them. If you would like to report excessive dog fouling in your area please contact the dog warden on **028 9027 0431**.



## Apartment living

Tenants living within NB Housings apartment buildings must respect the shared spaces within which they reside. In the interest of Health and Safety, tenants are not permitted to clutter communal areas/ stairwells as these are escape routes. Tenant belongings are not to be stored or disposed of in the communal areas within apartment blocks, HMO's and Access Alleyways. Communal areas are a shared space and we wish that all tenants respect this and comply with these guidelines. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in items being removed with no notice to ensure this Health and Safety requirement is adhered to.



## Access

You must allow NB Housing Officers to their contractors access to your home to inspect or to complete works. We will attempt to notify you at least one day before our intended visit.

**If you have any further questions or would like any further tips on how to be a top tenant, please contact our offices on 028 9059 2110 or 028 9035 1131**



## Insurance

NB Housing will maintain the structural Insurance on your home. We strongly recommend that all tenants insure their contents against loss, theft and damage. NB Housing is not responsible for any item belonging to the tenant.



## Nuisance

You must not cause or permit others visiting your home to cause annoyance or nuisance to other people. If you wish to report nuisance or anti social behaviour please contact our office on 028 9059 2110.



## Bins / Rubbish

When you commenced your tenancy you were provided with a wheelie bin, this is now your responsibility. As a tenant of the association you are reminded to:

- Deposit recycling into the receptacles provided. Proper separation of recycling items will free up space in the large Eurobins for other waste
- Ensure any black bin bags are tied up securely and deposited in the Eurobins provided
- Bin bags are **not** to be left on the ground of the bin area, this poses a health and safety risk for all tenants and will attract vermin
- Discarded household items are **not** to be left at the bin area. Tenants have a responsibility to dispose of large items appropriately. Belfast City Council can be contacted on **028 9027 0230** to arrange the collection of items such as sofas, mattresses, etc
- If you live in an apartment building ensure all corridors and landing areas are free from rubbish and or obstruction
- Please contact our office on 028 9059 2110 or 028 90351 131 and report anyone found illegally dumping on NB Housing property .

Universal Credit has been introduced for new claims on a phased geographical basis across Northern Ireland from September 2017 to December 2018. However the start dates have recently changed and they are listed below.

When it is introduced in your area, you will no longer be able to make a new claim to the benefits being replaced and you will need to claim Universal Credit instead.

Universal Credit will replace a number of existing benefits including; income support, income related jobseekers allowance, child and working tax credits, income related employment support allowance and housing benefit.

It is important that everyone who will be affected by the new welfare changes prepares for the Universal Credit online application and finds out in advance the measures they need to take to ensure they are Universal Credit ready.

As part of the Universal Credit claiming process it is important to have an email address, photographic identification as well as details on income, savings, tenancy agreements and a bank account in place, as this information will form part of your application.

Universal Credit will ask all claimants to sign up to the Claimant Commitment and it is vital that claimants understand what this means for them, and how can they ensure they meet this commitment in order to maintain their benefits.

## IMPORTANT

We will inform Universal Credit (UC) of any rent, rates and service charges for the property in which you live. You can find these in the annual rent letter you will have recently received. If you are asked by Universal Credit for these figures please refer to this letter.

We want your UC claim to be an easy process. We can help, so please contact us if you have any further questions or queries on Universal Credit. You can contact your Housing Officer on 028 9059 2110 or call into our Gatelodge Office (8 Flax Street) or Crumlin Road Office (282-290 Crumlin Road).

**What if I don't have a computer?** The UC process is an online application. If you do not have internet access or a computer, you are more than welcome to use our IT Hubs located in both the Gatelodge and Crumlin Road Offices.

### ***The Department for Communities (DfC) has published a timetable for the transition phase of Universal Credit:***

- 16th May 2018 Newry and Downpatrick
- 30th May 2018 Lurgan, Newcastle and Kilkeel
- 13th June 2018 Falls and Shankill
- 27th June 2018 Andersonstown and Banbridge
- 5th September 2018 Holyrood Road and Ballynahinch
- 19th September 2018 Newtownabbey and Newtownards
- 3rd October 2018 Shaftesbury Square and Carrickfergus
- 17th October 2018 Knockbreda and Bangor
- 31st October 2018 Lisburn and Larne
- 14th November 2018 North Belfast and Cookstown
- 5th December 2018 Ballymena and Antrim



### **Useful advice services**

#### Welfare Changes Advice Service

0808 802 0020

[welfarechanges@adviceni.net](mailto:welfarechanges@adviceni.net)

#### Make the Call

0800 232 1271

#### Advice NI

02890 645919

[info@adviceni.net](mailto:info@adviceni.net)

# Condensation in the Home

## How do I spot condensation?

- Streaming windows and walls
- Damp areas can appear on walls, especially behind furniture and in corners
- Wall paper can start to peel
- Mould growth, usually black mould, starts to appear on window frames, walls and ceilings
- Soft furnishings and fabrics become prone to mould and mildew
- There is a constant musty damp smell in the property



## Tips for tenants on how to reduce condensation....

- Try to keep the inside temperature reasonably constant for as much of the time as possible
- Avoid drying clothes indoors. If you have no choice place the clothes rack in a well ventilated room keeping the door shut
- Do not try clothes over radiators
- Ensure that any tumble drier is properly vented or the condensate reservoir is regularly emptied
- Do not supplement heating with paraffin/ Calor gas type heating
- Keep furniture away from walls
- Do not disable any extraction units
- Ensure trickle vents are open on windows

## How do I get rid of the mould?

First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you deal with the basic problems of condensation, mould should not reappear. To kill and remove mould, wipe down the walls and window frames with a **fungicidal wash**.

**Do not use bleach to wash away mould, the bleach will only cause the mould to spread and eventually the mould will come back tenfold.**



## Flax Foyer have vacancies!

We provide supported accommodation for young people aged 18-25 who are homeless.

If you are interested in this service, please contact us for more information or if you have a friend who does not know about this service, please share.

You can contact us on 02890593301, email us at [info@nb-housing.org](mailto:info@nb-housing.org) or find out more on our website: <http://www.nb-housing.org/flax-foyer-help-for-young-people>



## Do You Have a Spare Bedroom?

Are you under occupying your property by one bedroom or more?

Will you be subject to bedroom tax?

Have you thought about transferring?

If you answered yes to the above questions, why don't you phone your Housing Officer today to discuss the options that are available to you.

You can either ring your Housing Officer on 02890592110 or call into our Gatelodge (8 Flax Street) or Crumlin Road Office (282-290 Crumlin Road).

## Safety in Apartment Buildings

NB Housing have become increasingly aware that there are a **number of items being left in the common areas of apartment buildings**. The nature of these items can vary widely but have been known to include:

- Pushchairs/ buggies/ childrens car seats
- Shopping trollies
- Refuse bags
- Childrens toys and play furniture
- Bicycles
- Mobility scooters
- Wooden furniture/ upholstered seating
- Seasonal Items

It is the tenants responsibility to store belongings inside their apartment. Any unwanted items should be disposed of appropriately. We reserve the right to remove or dispose of any items left in the Communal Areas should they be causing a fire risk or be blocking access/exit routes. Please do not dispose of personal belongings that do not fit in a bin i.e. furniture, in the bin stores as this too, is a fire hazard.

Please contact your local council will offer bulky refuse collections:

- Belfast City Council  
028 9027 0230
- Antrim & Newtownabbey Council  
028 9034 0000
- Mid & East Antrim Council  
0300 124 5000

## Want to Improve Your Health & Wellbeing?



Staff in NB Housing have been looking for ways to **improve our health and wellbeing**, so we thought that we would pass some top tips on **how to get your five-a-day** onto our tenants. These top tips are from the Choose to Live Better campaign by the Public Health Agency.

Simple ways to get your five-a-day

- Start the day with a **150ml glass of fresh fruit or vegetable juice or smoothie**—go for an unsweetened variety. Remember you should only count fruit or vegetable juice or smoothie as one portion each day no matter how much you have
- **Top your toast** with sliced banana, or add some strawberries, raspberries, grapes, prunes or apricots to your cereal
- **Add salad to your favourite sandwich.** Crispy lettuce, cucumber, peppers and juicy tomato really liven things up. Better still, enjoy a bowl of salad with your sandwich.
- **Add lots of vegetables** to soups, stews and casseroles to help achieve your five a day
- **Tinned, frozen and dried fruit vegetables also count towards your five a day.** Try adding them to smoothies, yogurt, pizzas, casseroles, pasta dishes, risotto and Bolognese.
- **Add** peppers, sweetcorn and red onion to your favourite pizza topping
- **Keep a tub** of carrot, pepper and cucumber sticks in the fridge for healthy nibbles

If you would like further information on top tips for healthy eating, or would like some healthy recipes you can visit <http://www.choosetolivebetter.com/>

# Useful Information...

## 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

## Useful Numbers & Websites



## 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

## Recycling Centres (Do not accept commercial waste)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| → Alexandra Park Avenue<br>180 Alexandra Park Avenue, BT15 3GJ | → Ormeau<br>6 Park Road<br>BT7 2FX                  |
| → Blackstaff Way<br>1 Blackstaff Way<br>BT11 9DT               | → Palmerston Road<br>2-4 Palmerston Road<br>BT4 1QA |

## Civic Amenity Sites

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

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](http://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.

## Gatelodge Office

8 Flax Street  
Belfast  
BT 14 7EQ  
Tel: 02890592110



## Crumlin Road Office

282-290 Crumlin Road  
Belfast  
BT14 7ED  
Tel: 02890351131

Did you know you can contact us through the 'Getting in Touch' tab on our website ([www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org)), can contact us via email: [info@nb-housing.org](mailto:info@nb-housing.org) or can text us on 07498202221