



NB Housing

Homes that build community

Tenants Newsletter

ISSUE 16
OCT 2018

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Would you like to have the opportunity to make a difference?



CONTACT US



028 90 592 110
028 90 351 131



reception@nb-housing.org



074 9820 2221

We are looking for individuals who would be interested in meeting with us informally regarding issues that affect you, our tenants.

We would like to establish small groups, one to look at Anti-Social Behaviour issues and another for Repairs.

A member of the Housing Team and Maintenance Team will sit in on these small focus groups of three or four tenants to provide information and feedback tenants concerns, ideas or suggestions.

The purpose of the focus groups is to inform tenants of the current procedures in place and to gain information from you on how well our services are delivered from a tenants point of view.

We are always seeking ways in which to continuously improve and we are confident you can provide experiences that have worked well, or not. Lets hear your suggestions and ideas and together we can make a difference.

If you are interested please contact either of our offices and speak to our staff. All we ask is attendance of up to an hour, 4-6 times per year. We will provide refreshments, tenant participation training and travel expenses if required.

Please contact us on 028 90 592 110 or 028 90 351 131, email us at reception@nb-housing.org or text us on 074 9820 2221. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Birthday Celebrations For Flax Foyer!

Flax Foyer celebrated its 20th birthday in July 2018. To find out a bit more about Flax Foyer we have interviewed our Foyer Manager Karen .



What made you decide to work with young people?

I always had a passion to work within this sector and started working in the Homeless sector as a Support Worker in 2003. I have worked with a wide age range in my career but I love working with young people as we can help and support a person to change their life for the better.

What do you like most about your job?

I love working with this age group and seeing a young person taking all the support and training opportunities provided.

It is brilliant when you see a young person moving on to permanent accommodation with the help and support of staff.

Why was the Foyer first opened?

The Foyer was created to transform opportunities for young people experiencing homelessness. We want young people to thrive not just survive. By placing young people at the heart of all we do, we strive to provide safe, affordable temporary accommodation with access to training, education and employment opportunities from which young people

are empowered to become socially and economically active citizens.

What services does the Foyer offer?

The Foyer provides accommodation, training and support for young people aged 18-25 who are homeless. Support is provided to residents throughout their stay to develop the necessary independent living skills required to maintain their own accommodation within the community. Our 9 staff provide a holistic service to residents including drug/alcohol education

and signposting to counselling, personal and life skills, emotional and mental wellbeing, physical health, training, volunteering, literacy skills and a cooking programme. We also work in partnership with many different agencies to provide support with training, employment, addictions and health within the Foyer.

What is a typical day in the Foyer like?

Each morning we have a handover and make a plan for the day. Support staff will meet with residents to support them with their needs and prepare them for independent living.

We also have training going on every day in the Foyer as well as outside the Foyer for residents. It is my job to ensure that the service is operating smoothly and effectively and that all staff are ensuring that residents needs are being met.

How do people apply for accommodation in the Foyer?

To apply for accommodation please contact the Foyer on 028 90593301 or download our application pack from our website. <http://www.nb-housing.org/application-form>

Please see our website for further information.

<http://www.nb-housing.org/flax-foyer-help-for-young-people>

Also check out our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/flaxfoyerbytes



Foyer staff and residents enjoying burgers and birthday cake!



Take Control Of Your Energy Bills

Advice from the Consumer Council

At the beginning of October, four energy companies increased their energy tariffs*. SSE Airtricity, Firmus Energy, Electric Ireland and Power NI put up their gas and electricity prices, ranging from 10.9% to 18.2%.

The Consumer Council has a free online Energy Price Comparison Tool which lets you compare electricity and gas tariffs from every supplier in Northern Ireland, to help you find the best deal. To use the tool, visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk or call freephone 0800 121 6022 where one of our team will help you. The average household can save up to £118 on their annual electricity bill and up to £27 on their gas, by switching tariff or supplier.

Even if you are on the cheapest tariff, there are still things you can do to bring down your bills by reducing how much energy you use. Remember: Less energy means more savings!

Here are some useful tips for reducing your energy use:



Save around **£6** a year by only boiling the amount of water you need.



Save around **£7** a year by spending one minute less in the shower each day.



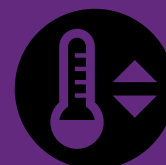
Save around **£35** a year by changing your bulbs to LED ones.



Save around **£15** a year by switching off the lights you aren't using.



Save around **£30** a year by switching off appliances at the wall instead of leaving them on stand-by.



Lowering your room thermostat by just one degree can save you up to **£75** per year and if you install a timer and thermostatic radiator valves, you could save much more.

Heating your home is easier to do when you have efficiency measures in place such as insulation and draught proofing. Your rooms heat up more quickly and it costs less to maintain the comfortable level of heat, which is 21 degrees for your living space and 18 degrees for all other rooms.

The Energy Saving Trust website (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) has some further information and tips on how to save money on your energy bills.

Heat your home with oil? Bryson Energy (www.brysonenergy.org) has established Oil Clubs across Northern Ireland which allows householders to buy oil at a reduced price and make savings. You can also shop around for the best oil prices. The Consumer Council conduct an oil price survey each week and publish the results on our website. These let you see the cheapest and dearest costs for your area.

For more information about energy efficiency and shopping around for your home energy costs, visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk or call freephone 0800 121 6022.

*Budget Energy and Click Energy had not announced tariff increases at time of this article going to print. However, please check The Consumer Council's website to see the most up-to-date tariffs from all suppliers.

Fire Safety In Your Home

It is vital that you have a fire escape plan in place so that everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire. As the best course of action will change according to your location, the type of building and the extent and whereabouts of fire, it is important that everyone knows what to do in different situations. It is therefore recommended to plan and practice multiple escape routes, and follow a defined course of action should you find a fire in your home.

What steps can I take to prevent fires occurring in my home?

Smoking

- Never leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended- it may fall onto an armchair or carpet which will soon catch fire and give off dense smoke and fumes.
- Never smoke in a chair if you think you may doze off.
- Never smoke in bed.

Candles

- Never leave a candle unattended.
- Use a suitable holder that will not allow heat to pass through.
- Do not place candles on plastic surfaces or leave near soft furnishings.

Electrics

- Do not overload electric sockets or use multiple extension leads.
- If a socket is heat damaged, there is a fault; get an electrician to check it.
- Use the correct fuse.
- Only professional tradesmen should repair faulty electrical appliances or wiring.

Alcohol

- Do not cook chips or fried food as you might fall asleep before you finish cooking.
- Take extra care if smoking. Do not smoke in bed or in a comfortable chair; it is too easy to fall asleep.

Matches

- Keep matches and lighters away from children so that they cannot play with them.

Recommended steps to take in the event of a fire at home:

- Stay Calm
- Alert everyone inside the house
- Using a pre-planned escape route, get everyone out as quickly as possible. Do not delay by gathering possessions. You need to act quickly.
- Try to keep windows and doors closed when evacuating (only open them to escape) - if possible close the door to the room where the fire is located and close all doors behind you - this will delay the spread of fire
- Never use a lift
- If there is a lot of smoke stay close to the floor - smoke rises so the lower air is cleaner and easier to breathe
- If you are unsure as to the whereabouts of the fire, make sure you check doorknobs with the back of your hand before opening it (the fire could potentially be on the other side).

What do I do once i am outside?

- Once you are outside and safe, call 999
- Give your full address, details of where you are
- Details of the building on fire
- Details of anyone still inside and their whereabouts (if known)
- Don't go back into the building. Wait for the Fire Service to arrive. By going back into the building you may hinder the Fire Service efforts to put out the fire, and put your life at risk.

Further information on fire safety can be found on <https://www.nifrs.org/>

Advice from our Maintenance Team

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. During this interaction the Maintenance Team will ask for information on the defect and will require a contact telephone number for contractor access arrangements.

NB Housing endeavour that 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 **0800 731 3081** to report your repair at any time when the office is not opened including weekends and Bank Holidays.

Below are some typical repairs that are tenants responsibility:

- Replacement of lost/broken door keys
- Care and upkeep of gardens and hedges
- Replacement of bins and rotary dryers
- Clearing airlocks in pipes and radiators
- Replacement of broken glass
- Replacement of toilet seats and lids
- Repairs to electrical appliances, fires and heaters not installed by NB Housing
- Replacement of defective/blown light bulbs



WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THIS YEAR

We are currently due to commence a number of Planned Maintenance Projects to our stock which includes:

- External Cyclical Maintenance to 90+ properties
- Kitchen Replacements to 70+ properties
- Heating/Boiler Replacements to 50+ properties
- External Door Replacements to 25+ 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.

RECOVERABLE CHARGES

As per your tenancy agreement, you have an obligation to maintain the property in which you live. You should ensure it is clean and tidy, that no damage is caused by you or your visitors and that you adhere to maintenance items that are your responsibility as detailed in your handbook. Should repairs need to be carried out because your responsibilities were not adhered to, then a "recoverable charge" will be due. This may be while you are a tenant, or even when you move out.

Recoverable charges will also include for additional costs such as a skip and labour to clear out a property at the end of a tenancy. A recoverable charge will also apply if you fail to keep an appointment, when a tenant fails to grant access to our contractors to complete maintenance calls, or if a contractor has had to call out in an emergency which later turns out to be a repair which is classified as tenant responsibility.

Please note that NB Housing will always follow up on any recoverable charges

regardless of when they occurred. An opportunity will be provided to discuss the charge and come to an agreement for repayment. However, should no response be received or an agreement fails to be maintained, NB Housing may instigate legal proceedings. This may ultimately result in Court action, the costs of which the tenant will be held liable to pay.

How are recoverable charges calculated?

Recharges will be made to the tenants at the true cost to NB Housing, this will include the costs incurred with recovering the costs such as legal fees. NB Housing reserves the right to add an administrative charge. Where it is not possible or practicable for NB Housing to determine the minimum expected life of an item, necessitating repair or replacement due to tenant neglect or abuse, the full replacement/repair charge may be raised as a recoverable charge against the tenant.

Insurance

NB Housing is only responsible for undertaking any necessary repairs to the

building; tenants are strongly advised to take out a comprehensive contents policy to insure their personal possessions and belongings.

Recharging Process

There are two methods of recharging. Method 1 will be NB Housings preferred option. Method 2 is used only where emergency health and safety repairs have to be ordered or the recharge is identified after a repair is carried out.

Method 1

Payment in full before the repair is carried out (e.g. where the repair can wait until payment is made)

Method 2

Invoice after the repair has been carried out on the basis of a deposit of 50% where costs exceed £200. (Unpaid bills will be recovered in accordance with NB Housings policy). NB Housing will only undertake a repair that is required to make your home safe, for example boarding up a window or installing a new door lock.

If you have any further questions on recoverable charges please contact our offices on 028 9059 2110 or 028 9035 1131

GAS & OIL BOILER SERVICING

It is vital that all tenants provide access to NB Housing contractors to enable boiler services to be completed. Boiler Servicing is a legal requirement and NB Housing has a zero tolerance on servicing not being carried out.

If failure to do so NB Housing may recharge for this aborted call out and if access issues continue then possible capping of services or legal action could take place to take possession of the property. If you are unable to facilitate a contractor attending, contact NB Housing so alternative arrangements can be made.

Fighting for a Gas Safe Nation

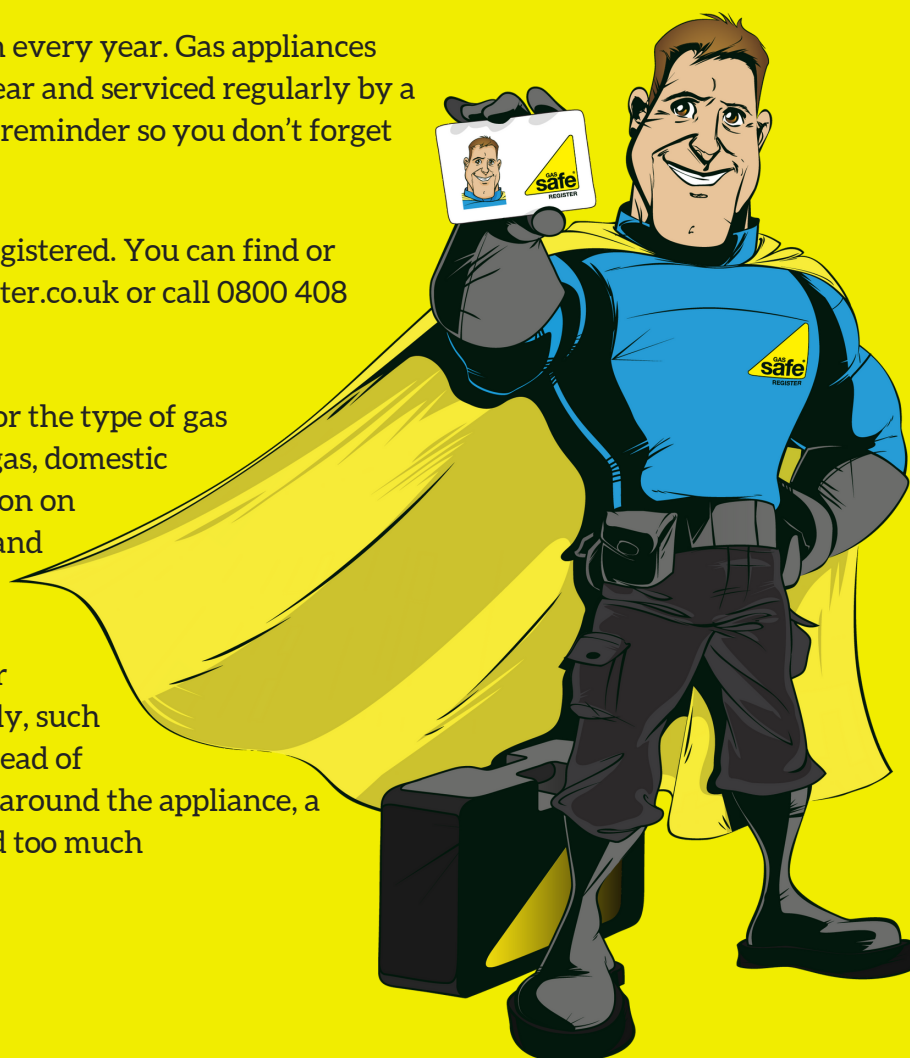
Keeping our nation safe

We were proud to support Gas Safety Week 2018, which took place between 17th – 23rd September. Gas Safety Week is an annual safety week to raise awareness of gas safety and the importance of taking care of your gas appliances. It is co-ordinated by Gas Safe Register, the official list of gas engineers who are legally allowed to work on gas.

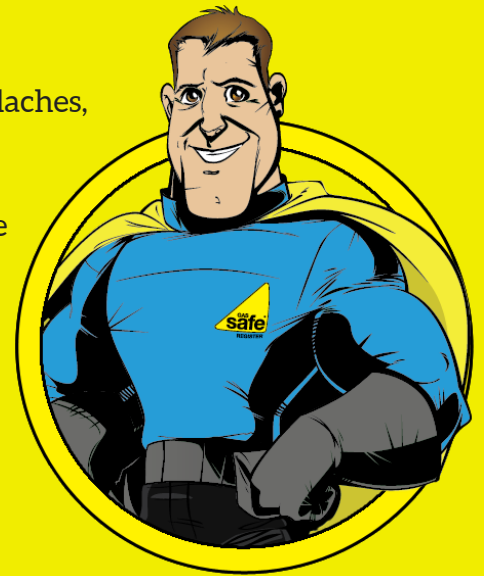
Badly fitted and poorly serviced gas appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning. Every year thousands of people across the UK are diagnosed with carbon monoxide poisoning. It is a highly poisonous gas that can kill quickly with no warning, as you cannot see it, taste it or smell it.

By taking care of your gas appliances properly you are taking care of your home and your loved ones. Follow these few simple checks to keep you and your family safe.

- Check your Landlord's Gas Safety Record. By law, your landlord must keep gas pipework, appliances and flues supplied for you to use in good condition. They must arrange a gas safety check of the appliances and flues every 12 months and give you a record of the check.
- Check any gas appliances you own every year. Gas appliances should be safety checked once a year and serviced regularly by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Set a reminder so you don't forget at StayGasSafe.co.uk.
- Check your engineer is Gas Safe registered. You can find or check an engineer at GasSafeRegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 5500.
- Check your engineer is qualified for the type of gas work you need doing e.g. natural gas, domestic boiler. You can find this information on the back of their Gas Safe ID card and the Gas Safe Register website.
- Check for warning signs that your appliances aren't working correctly, such as lazy yellow /orange flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks on or around the appliance, a pilot light that keeps going out and too much condensation in the room.



- Know the six main symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness.
- Have an audible carbon monoxide alarm. This will alert you if there is carbon monoxide in your home.
- For gas safety advice and to find or check an engineer visit the Gas Safe Register website at GasSafeRegister.co.uk. Alternatively call the free helpline on 0800 408 5500.



Gas Safety isn't just for grown ups... kids why don't you help Doug out and see if you can spot the differences between the two pictures below?

**Gas
Safety
Week**
co.uk
Keeping our nation safe

DOUG AT WORK

Doug is checking Mr Smith's boiler to make sure it's working safely. Can you spot the eight differences between the two pictures?



GasSafetyWeek.co.uk



All of the information on gas safety came from the Gas Safe Register. If you would like to find out more about being gas safe there is lots of useful information available on their website:
www.gassaferegister.co.uk/

STEP CHALLENGE 2018

Between the 18th and 22nd June, NB Housing staff held their first Step Challenge. The Step Challenge was part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy as staff had indicated during a recent survey that they were keen to be more physically active. Over the course of 5 days, staff wore pedometers and recorded their steps. 23 staff took part in the challenge, and we walked together in teams to see how many steps we could achieve. Together staff walked, 1,148,093 steps which is the same as walking **543 miles!** Congratulations to Team Bolt (George, Stacey & John) who won the challenge for walking the most steps during the week.



Staff really enjoyed this challenge and found that they could make small changes to their normal routines, that made a big impact on their everyday physical activity. We thought it would be useful to share some of the tips that staff found beneficial when trying to increase their steps with our tenants. The information has been shared by the Northern Ireland Chest and Heart Association and it gives some great information on how you can increase your physical activity in your every day life.

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

Increase your physical activity in everyday life

If you are not usually active, every little helps. Physical activity isn't just about going to the gym or playing sports. Making small changes to your everyday routine will increase the overall amount of physical activity you do, which will help balance the calories you eat and the calories you burn off

Keeping active has many benefits.

- It reduces your risk of a heart attack by 40%
- It lowers your risk of a stroke by 27%
- It reduces blood pressure
- It lowers cholesterol levels
- It builds and maintains a strong and healthy heart
- It improves your lung function
- It helps weight loss
- It builds stronger muscles, joints and bones
- It lowers stress levels
- It improves your frame of mind and builds self-confidence
- It helps you sleep better
- It slows down the ageing process

Think of all the small ways in which you can add more exercise into things that you do everyday:

- Walk up the stairs- don't take the lift.
- Pace up and down while talking on the phone.
- Walk to the local shops or to leave the kids to school.
- Instead of dozing in front of the TV, get up and walk around the room when you feel sleepy.
- Have a quick walk during your lunch hour or after dinner in the evening.
- Get off the bus at least one stop early and walk from there
- If you have a dog start to walk further or faster
- If you have a car, wash it by hand instead of going to a carwash

Kids Corner

Hey kids! We've created this fun Halloween word search and we would love for you to complete it and give it back to us when you've found all the answers. You can leave it back into either of our offices and we'll put the returned entries on our noticeboards and on our Facebook page!

Happy searching!

CARVE

C K K L R A Z I R S J B S G E
O R C B I R Y E B X W E U T V

SCARE

B P I G H A B Q A X Z E S B R

W F T C P O W G M Z J A E S A

BAT

E P S H T P U M P K I N P T C

SPIDER

B L M C C O S S G W O I I M S

A A O T E T G C H K D H Q W Z

WITCH

W L O C Q N I G A E Q X H F B

T J R D A C T W R R O M K T V

A F B F H P U Q B N E S H F X

PUMPKIN

E G Q A B E L E Y P G H O S T

Z I O D R A Z I W T R V L I P

K X Q X L I Y P P B K H U J D

BROOMSTICK

G Y H N Z K C W W A G H G X L

W H U B J Y Y Z C T S W N R I

GHOST

SWEETS

FANGS

WIZARD

OCTOBER

COBWEB

Name: _____ Age: _____

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

NIHE: 03448 920 900

Phoenix Gas: 0845 455 5555

Power NI: 08457 455 455

Belfast City Council Pest Control: 02890 270 431

Noise Control: 02890 373 006

Waste Management: 02890 270 657

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