



NB Housing

Homes that build community

Tenants Newsletter

ISSUE 29
WINTER 2021

Annual Report

We are delighted to include your copy of NB Housing Annual Report 20/21. You will find information about how the association performed, survey results, new developments, tenant participation and financial reporting for the year.

We would like to hear what you think of the report. Do you have any suggestions or ideas for next years issue, is there anything else you would wish to see included? You can give us your feedback by calling us on 028 90 592110 or sending us an email to info@nb-housing.org The report can also be found on our website at www.nb-housing.org.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Merry Christmas from NB Housing!

Our offices will close at 5pm on Thursday 23rd December. Our offices will be closed on 24th December, 27th December, 28th December and 3rd January 2021.

In the event of an out of hours emergency repair, please call Radius Connect24 on 0800 7313081

Our New Homes

An update from the Development Team

Our Development Team continue to work hard to provide new homes during these uncertain times. We recently provided 5 new family homes in North Belfast. These beautiful homes will provide families with a comfortable and cost-efficient home.



We continue to acquire homes from the open market and complete internal/external refurbishments upgrading the properties to current standards. Below are examples of before and after the works are completed.



Future Developments

197-203 Crumlin Road

We are pleased to confirm that this new build scheme has received planning approval and is currently out for tender. We expect it to be on site in early 2022. The scheme will have 12 houses and 2 apartments. Keep an eye out on our Facebook and Twitter pages for more updates!



Lower Clonard

This small infill scheme will provide two 3 bed family homes in West Belfast. The site is currently disused and the artist impression below shows the benefit this scheme will bring to the area.



Are You Winter Ready?

Advice From National Energy Action

NEA are concerned that the 'perfect storm' of higher energy prices, reduced incomes, and leaky, inefficient housing could put many households in Northern Ireland at increased risk of fuel poverty this coming winter. These increases come at a time when many household budgets are already stretched thin.

However, simple changes to day-to-day activities could make big differences to household bills. Here are 10 energy savings tips that everybody can implement.

- You can save around £30 a year just by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode.
- Save an average of £35 on electricity a year by drying clothes on a clothes line, instead of using a dryer.
- Room thermostats allow you to set the temperature your home heats up to and maintains. Turning it down by only 1 degree could save you £70
- Spending one minute less in the shower every day as part of your grooming routine will save up to £7 per person off your household energy bill each year.
- Only boil the water you need in your kettle. This can save you £6 per year.
- Washing clothes at 30C instead of 40C can save you around £9 a year and 1 less cycle per week can save around £5 a year on energy.
- Don't leave your mobile phone on charge all night - most only need a couple of hours.
- Switch off lights when not in use. This could save your household £14 a year.
- Using a bowl to wash up rather than running the tap could save you up to £25 a year.
- Draughtproofing windows/doors can save £30.

Are you experiencing financial hardship?

Speak to your energy supplier if you are worried about your energy bills and to find out if you are eligible for additional services. To find out if you are claiming all of the benefits you are entitled to call:

Advice NI

- Freephone Advice Helpline: 0800 915 4604
- Email: advice@adviceni.net

Make the Call Service

- Freephone (Network charges may apply): 0800 232 1271
- Email: makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk

Check to see if you are getting the best deal for your energy

You could save hundreds of pounds a year on your bills by switching supplier or changing tariffs with your current supplier. Use a price comparison site.

Consumer Council

Tel: 028 9025 1600

Email: info@consumercouncil.org.uk

Web: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Additional Support

NI Energy Advice offers free independent and impartial energy advice to domestic householders in Northern Ireland - including advice about energy grants and other sources of help.

Freephone: 0800 111 4455

Email: nienergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk

Website: www.nihe.gov.uk/Community/NI-Energy-Advice

Belfast Warm and Well Project is coordinated by National Energy Action (NEA) and is supported by Community Planning Partners from across Belfast. The project is available to vulnerable people who are finding it difficult to keep their home warm. Vulnerable refers to a number of different groups including:

- People aged 65 years or older
- People living with a disability or a long term physical or mental health condition
- Pregnant women
- Households with a young child/children (from new-born to school age)
- People on a low income.

National Energy Action (NEA) will work with local community and voluntary groups, to provide helpful independent and confidential advice and practical support. If you or someone you know is vulnerable and finding it difficult to keep your home warm, contact NEA on 028 9023 9909 or warmandwell@nea.org.uk to see if they can help.

House Sales Scheme

On 28 August 2022 the statutory House Sales Scheme for NB Housing tenants will permanently and completely close. This scheme enables eligible tenants to purchase their social home supported by a discount.

From this date, no new applications can be made to the House Sales Scheme. To be clear, applications to the Sales Scheme must be made before midnight on 27 August 2022. No applications can be accepted after that time. As long as an application is made before midnight on 27 August 2022, the application may be processed and the sale may complete after that date.

The closure of the House Sales Scheme on 28 August 2022 reflects legislation passed by the NI Assembly on 30 June 2020 and given Royal Assent on 28 August 2020. Further information from the Department is available on NI Direct."



Money Management

Do you find it difficult to manage your money?

If so, NB Housing may be able to help. We can arrange a short Money Management/Help with Budgeting course if we get enough interest.

Please contact Sadie Reid on 028 90592110 if you would like further information.

Anti - Social Behaviour

Parents, do you know where your children are when they leave the house? We recently had a wave of Anti-social behaviour where youths were behaving in an unacceptable manner, frightening residents in Flax Street and Holyrood House. We would encourage all parents to highlight this to their children and make them aware of the impact upon residents, some of whom are elderly and vulnerable. We also encourage and remind residents who are affected by such behaviour outside office hours to contact either the PSNI on 101 or INSEC security services on 028 90200080.

Do Your Neighbour A Favour



Winner of do your neighbour favour

The winner of our 'Do Your Neighbour A Favour' Campaign was Evelyn Watson.

Evelyn was nominated by her neighbours as she helps them with their shopping, gardening and helps them put their bins out.

Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for any future campaigns!

An Update From Our Maintenance Team

Access for contractors

It is vital that all tenants provide access to Association contractors to enable work orders to be completed. Please note that our contractors may call from withheld numbers. Failure to provide access will delay the repair and may result in a recoverable charge. If you are unable to facilitate a contractor attending; please contact the Association so alternative arrangements can be made.

Keys

Tenants are responsible for their own house keys. NB Housing does not hold a second set.



Cleaning of Shared Areas

You have an obligation under your tenancy agreement to keep any shared entrance or hallway clean and free from rubbish. Our schemes benefit from cleaning services which residents pay for within their service charge. We monitor the quality of service provision during our inspections and ensure that cleaning services are efficient, cost effective and completed at a frequency agreed for that scheme. Please report any concerns you have with scheme cleanliness to our maintenance department.



Waste Management

It is vital that we all dispose of our waste appropriately over the Christmas period. Ensure all recyclable materials are separated and disposed into the correct bin/box.

All bulky waste should be disposed of at your local council amenity site or via special collection. Please see your local Council website for some helpful tips/information.

Removal of Fly Tipping

Fly tipping is not only illegal and unsightly but can also be a health hazard. If you notice any items that have been left on land belonging to NB Housing you should contact us, and we will arrange for them to be removed. We aim to remove fly tipping within four working days. If you can provide details of those who have dumped the items, this will help us to act against them. This could involve us asking those responsible to remove the items; recharging the cost of removal to them; or addressing the issue as a breach of tenancy.

Removing fly tipping costs, the Association, and your local council a lot of money, so please help us to help you. By reporting fly tippers, not only can we save money, but you will enjoy a healthier, safer, and more pleasant environment in which to live. If the fly tipping is on land which is not owned by the Association it should be reported to your local council's environmental services department, who will arrange for it to be removed.

New Contractors

The Association has appointed CTS contracts to provide maintenance services. We are currently assessing the backlog of repairs left after the unfortunate demise of our previous maintenance providers and will work hard to have the backlog cleared as soon as possible.



Boilers

All boilers need serviced annually. Failure to allow access to your home will result in your gas supply being shut off and it will lead to legal proceedings.

To keep you and your family safe, follow Gas Safe Register's top tips:

- Know the symptoms of CO poisoning, headaches, nausea, breathlessness, collapse, dizziness and loss of consciousness
- If you smell gas or think there might be a gas leak, call the free 24-hour national gas emergency number immediately on 0800 111 999
- Never attempt to work on a gas appliance yourself, always seek the help of a qualified Gas Safe registered engineer who can work on your gas cooker, boiler or fire in a safe way
- Don't cut corners - we only employ a suitably qualified Gas Safe registered engineer when having gas work carried out in your home - always ask to see the engineer's Gas Safe ID card.

If you are having a gas appliance installed; such as a cooker; please ensure that you employ a suitably qualified Gas Safe Register engineer. You can find a registered engineer in your area by visiting the Gas Safe Register website at GasSafeRegister.co.uk. Make sure you check the back of the engineers card, which will state which gas appliances they are qualified to work on.

Communal Areas

Communal areas are those parts of a block of apartments, street or estate which tenants have a right to use along with other tenants. These include: communal hallways, gardens, shared stairways, balconies and access paths.

As detailed in the Tenants Handbook you should not block shared areas, exits and entrances or leave rubbish in shared areas. Leaving clutter/furniture in the communal areas can:

- Obstruct an emergency escape route
- Block fire doors - create slipping or tripping hazards
- Pose a climbing danger for children
- Be unpleasant to look at for other residents.

If we find any clutter/furniture in communal areas, we will ask the tenant to remove it as soon as possible. If the owner does not remove it, we will remove and dispose of the item at a cost to the owner.

Things you should never keep in communal areas:

- **Prams or buggies:** Prams or buggies must not be kept in communal areas because they can obstruct others from getting out of the block quickly in an emergency, block fire doors, give off toxic fumes and smoke if there was a fire. Prams and buggies must be kept in your home.
- **Pets:** You must not allow your pet to roam about unsupervised or leave food, litter trays or other items in communal spaces.
- **Bikes** can get in the way or topple over and hurt someone. If you chain your bike to stair rails it can be particularly dangerous, as it can get in the way during an emergency and restrict other residents from holding onto the handrail. If there is a bicycle rack or storage space available, you should use it.
- **Rubbish:** You must not leave any rubbish or waste outside your door, even if it is securely sealed and bagged up. Keep all rubbish inside your home until you are ready to take it to the bin area. If you have any large or bulky items of household waste, you must apply to your Council to arrange for collection - if you are leaving items at the scheme to be collected please notify NB Housing.

Home Contents Insurance

NB Housing strongly recommends that tenants' arrange their own Home Contents Insurance. You can source affordable home insurance via a quick internet search. Also Supporting Communities offer the Just for You policy. Please visit their website for further information.

Belfast City Council Security Packs

Belfast City Council, Community Safety Team, have provided us with some home security packs for use in tenants homes. The packs include a window and door lock and a personal security alarm. If you would like one of these free packs please contact Sadie, our Community Development and Tenant Support Officer on 02890592110 and we can arrange to get you one. But please hurry, numbers are limited!



Re- Imaging Programme

We are currently seeking tenants to participate in our January Re-Imaging programme. This programme is designed to use positive images to promote mental health .

Do you know of a local place that makes you happy?
Why not have an image of this in your home?

Why not get involved by identifying a local area that needs some sprucing up to create a more positive space. This can involve a clean-up by adding some fresh paint and flowers to reimage the area.

We will partner this with a photography class to use the images as something that can promote positive mental health . We also have some cameras that you can use, so don't worry if you do not have one!

If you would like to be involved please contact Sadie on 02890592110 or you can email her at Sadie.Reid@nb-housing.org




FOOD RECIPES

CODDLE



This is a traditional Irish dish that costs £5 to make. It feeds a family of 4, takes 15 minutes to prepare and 3 to 4 hours to cook.

Ingredients



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- 1 bag of baby potatoes
 - 1 bag of carrots
 - 1 bag of parsnips
 - 1 packet of diced beef
 - 1 chopped onion
 - 1 packet of beef casserole mix




Utensils Required

- 1 knife
- 1 chopping board
- an oven proof dish preferably with lid if not seal with foil

Directions

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- 
1. Wash the baby boil potatoes and chop in halves
 2. Wash the carrot and parsnips. Cut off the top and bottom of the vegetables and dispose of them. Cut into chunks no need to peel
 3. Add the diced beef, the washed potatoes and the chopped vegetables to the oven dish
 4. Make up the beef casserole mix in a pint of water. Pour into the dish insuring vegetables are covered
 5. Pre heat oven to 200 and cook on high for 30 minutes
 6. Turn oven to 150 degrees and cook for a further 3 hours until meat is tender and vegetables are soft

This is a winter warmer is beautiful served with sour dough bread





LENTIL & LEEK SOUP

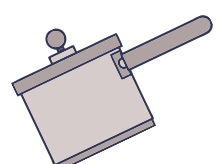



This dish costs £5 to make and feeds a family of 6



Ingredients

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- 1 bag lentils
 - 1 leek
 - 3 ham cubes
 - Packet of bacon lardons
 - Tin chopped tomatoes
 - Two knobs of butter
 - 3 pints of water
 - Salt and pepper
 - Worcester sauce

Utensils Required

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- 
- 1 chopping board
 - 1 knife
 - 1 handblender
 - 1 large pot

Directions

- 
- 
1. Fry bacon lardons in butter until crispy remove and put to the side
 2. Fry the leek in the same butter
 3. Add the leek and bacon to a large soup pot
 4. Add a tin of tomatoes
 5. Add three table spoons of the Worcester sauce
 6. Add half a bag of lentils stir well
 7. Add water ham cubes boil for 1 hour until lentils look soft
 8. Add salt pepper and blend serve with crusty bread



Be Prepared For Winter

Advice from our Maintenance Team

Below are some maintenance tips for the winter period:

Find your stopcock

The stopcock is a valve for turning off and on the cold-water system in your home. When you turn the stopcock in a clockwise direction the water supply will be cut off. You can turn the water supply back on by turning the stopcock in an anti-clockwise direction.

Your stopcock is normally located beneath your kitchen sink, however if you can't locate, please contact the maintenance team for advice.

Prevent your pipes from freezing

The following precautions will help stop the pipes in your home from freezing

- Set your central heating to come on for short periods throughout the day to make sure the temperature in each room is reasonably high
- Lift the trap door slightly from the roof space to allow hot air from the main house to get into the loft
- Open the doors to the sink unit to allow warmer air to circulate round the pipes
- Allow warm air to circulate round the house by slightly opening the doors to the individual rooms
- If your home will be empty during the colder weather ask someone to go in and turn the heating on for a short time and check for frozen pipes or drain down the cold water tank

Dealing with frozen pipes

- Most frozen pipes are found in the roof space and below sink units
- Turn the water supply off at the stopcock
- Thaw along the pipe starting from the end nearest the tap
- Put hot water bottles or a thick cloth soaked in hot water over the frozen pipe
- Don't use a blow lamp or any naked flames this may cause damage to your pipes or lead to a fire in your home

If you have a burst pipe

- Turn off the water supply by turning the stopcock clockwise
- Try and block the escaping water with thick cloths like towels
- Drain the system
- If the water has come into contact with electrical fittings the electricity should be turned off at the mains

If you are unable to resolve any issues with freezing pipework then please contact our office on 028 9035 1131 or Radius Connect 24 on 080 0731 3081 if our office is closed.

Weather Conditions & Limitations of Works

During the winter period it may cause contractors to have limited access to external elements of the property; if this is the case Contractors will carry out temporary works to ensure the property is in a safe condition. Additional works will take place when weather conditions permit.

Access to properties may also be affected by weather conditions so appointments may be delayed if there are hazardous conditions on the roads etc. NB Housing can be contacted if you are concerned with any appointments being missed.

Due to Staff Holidays for NB Housing & Contractors some work loads of non-Emergency priorities may not be carried out until after the Holiday period. NB Housing staff members will be able to discuss any concerns you may have by contacting the Crumlin Road office on 028 9035 1131.

Cold Weather Payments

You may be entitled to financial help during cold spells. Find out more about cold weather payments on the NI Direct website



Be Prepared For Winter

Staying Warm

It's important to stay protected during winter with the drop-in temperature.

Cold weather can affect your body's ability to fight off viruses and infections. By keeping warm, you can help yourself this winter.

You're at greater risk of illness in cold weather if you:

- Are aged over 65
- Are on a low income, and find heating difficult to afford
- Have a long-term health condition such as heart, lung or kidney disease
- Have a disability

Tips on how to stay warm at home during the day:

- Heat your main living room to around 18-21°C (64-70°F) and the rest of the house to at least 16°C (61°F)
- Heat all the rooms you use during the day
- If you can't heat all your rooms, make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed
- Set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed
- In very cold weather, set the heating to come on earlier rather than turning the thermostat up, so you won't be cold while you wait for your home to heat up
- Keep the temperature above 18°C (65°F) in your bedroom
- To prevent the risk of electrocution, avoid using an electric blanket with a hot water bottle
- To prevent the risk of scalds or burns, make sure you fill your hot water bottles with warm water - never use boiling water.

If you have an electric blanket:

- Check what type it is – some are designed to only warm the bed before you get in and should not be used throughout the night. Wear warm clothes.

You can help keep warm by:

- Wearing plenty of thin layers rather than one thick one
- Putting on a coat, hat, scarf, gloves and warm shoes or boots when you go outside
- Wearing clothes made of wool or fleecy synthetic fibres (cotton is only effective if the garment stays dry)
- Wearing bed socks and thermal underwear at night. If possible, stay indoors during a cold period if you have heart or respiratory problems.

Eat Well

A balanced diet will help keep you warm and healthy during the winter. Make sure you and your family eat at least one hot meal, such as soup which is nutritious, which will keep you warm and is inexpensive to make or buy.

Stay Active & Stay In Touch

Staying active is good for your health. Walking, for example, can be good for you. If the weather prevents you getting outside, stay active indoors by catching up on all the household tasks you've been putting off. Stay in contact with friends and family, especially if you've been stuck in the house for a few days. If you have elderly relatives or neighbours who might need help, check up on them. It's important to make sure your heating is safe, and your house is properly ventilated, to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. NB Housing will service boilers annually, so it is imperative that you allow engineers access to your home when arranged.

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

Temporarily suspended while lockdown restrictions are in place. We will keep you informed as and when restrictions are eased. However please do not hesitate to contact us on 02890592110 should you require any assistance..

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

- **Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council:**
<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/recyclingcentres/>
T: 028 9446 3113 & T: 028 9034 0000
- **Ards and North Down Borough Council:**
<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/bins-and-recycling/recycling-centres>
0300 013 3333
- **Belfast City Council**
<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/recycling/centres>
0800 032 8100
- **Mid and East Antrim Council**
<https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/resident/waste-recycling>
0300 124 5000
- **Mid Ulster Council**
<https://www.midulstercouncil.org/resident/bins-recycling/recycling-centres>
03000 132 132

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