



NB Housing Tenants Newsletter

Issue 10
Spring Edition
2017

Tenant Participation: Lets Get Involved!

How do I get to know my Housing Officer?

Feel free to ask our Housing Officers for advice or if you are experiencing any difficulties with your tenancy at any time - this could be anti-social behaviour, rent, litter, transfers and general advice. Better still - come along to one of our tenant get together events and meet them, you can also meet our Housing Manager George there too.

Come along for a **chat, cup of tea, sandwich and a bun** and you might **win a spot prize on the day**.

There are different dates and venues for these informal events and you are welcome to attend one near you or as many as you like!

The first one is at our sheltered scheme in Ardoyne called **Holyrood House, 30 Flax Street** and it will run from **4.30pm to 6.00pm** on **Tuesday 25th April**. Lauren, Sheena and George will be there.

Two weeks later on **Wednesday 10th May** we will have the event at our **Crumlin Road Office** (282-290 Crumlin Road) from **4.30pm to 6.00pm**. Amanda and George will be there.

The last event will take place at **Girdwood Community Hub, 10 Girdwood Avenue, North Belfast** on **Tuesday 6th June** from **4.30pm to 6.00pm**. All members of the Housing Team & Maintenance team will be at this final event.

Remember your Housing Officers are here to support you both in your home and in the community in which you live. We represent tenants at local community events and want to hear from you what you consider to be important. So give us a ring, or stop by at any of the listed events and we can have a chat.

We would ask that you phone and let us know if you plan on attending any or all of the above so we can make arrangements for refreshments!



In this issue...

- 02 Your Housing Officers
- 03 Development Update
- 04 Flax Foyer Vacancies
- 04 Welfare Reform Advice
- 05 We're on Facebook & Twitter
- 05 Travel Advice from the Consumer Council NI
- 06 Advice from our Maintenance Team
- 08 Emergency Contact Numbers
- 09 Kids Corner
- 10 Useful Information

Office Closure at Easter

Monday 17th April & Tuesday 18th April 2017- closed

We will re-open on Wednesday 19th April 2017

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



Your Housing Officers

At NB Housing, our Housing Team are here to help you from the very first day you move in. We would encourage you to get to know your Housing Officer which means that if you have a problem it will be easier for us to help you. NB Housing have a dedicated team of 3 Housing Officers, Amanda, Lauren and Sheena. If you are unsure of who your Housing Officer is, then please contact the office and we can advise.

Amanda



I have worked at NB Housing for the past 4 years throughout all aspects of housing and tenancy management. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know my tenants individually and I am always only a phone call or a home visit away. I aim to deliver a first class service to all our tenants with a personal and helpful approach. I love housing homeless tenants and families with NB Housing, it is the best part of my job! I welcome all new tenants warmly with hands on support. From assisting with their Housing Benefit applications, home induction visits and a 6 week settling in visit, I want to be at hand for every step of their NB Housing journey. Moving house, changing benefits and housing benefit changes can be very stressful. I am here to assist and de-stress the process in any way that I can. Our housing team are all here to help and want to hear from you with any queries you have. Don't hesitate to pick up the phone, call into our offices or text us.

Sheena



Having graduated from the Ulster University in Community Youth Work, I was employed by NB Housing in 2011 as a Support Worker in the Flax Foyer. I enjoyed working with homeless young people, helping them prepare for tenancies and equipping them with the skills required for living independently. I have always had a passion for helping vulnerable people in the community. I enjoy being a Housing Officer as the job is diverse, from allocating properties to collecting rent and resolving neighbour disputes. I have a passion for keeping up to date with housing legislation to ensure that tenants are aware of changes to the benefit system such as the impact Welfare Reform will have on their household. Should you need any information regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact me today!

Lauren



I completed a degree in Housing Management with Industrial Studies at the University of Ulster, and I have now worked in housing for 8 lovely years. I have spent the last 4 years working for NB Housing as a Housing Officer. No two days are ever the same and I really enjoy the day to day interaction with our residents, and so I look forward to assisting you with all aspects of your tenancy during your time with NB Housing!

Our housing team look after the allocations of properties, carrying out regular estate inspections, dealing with reports of anti-social behaviour, transfer assessments, and rent collection to name a few! We also offer assistance with any housing benefit queries you might have. I quite enjoy trying to untangle the world of housing benefit, so please do feel free to contact us should you need any support – we are always here to help! We can refer our tenants to money advice services for general money management and budgeting advice, as well as guidance on benefit maximisation - and with welfare reform now impacting across the social sector, tenancy sustainment is more important than ever.

Finally, the best part of my job is seeing our tenants enjoying their new homes and settling into the community. It gives me a great sense of fulfilment and reinforces that NB Housing continue to deliver our mission of providing affordable rents and homes that build vibrant neighbourhoods and communities.

Introducing our Texting Messaging Service



NB Housing has introduced a new texting service which will provide a quick and easy communication tool for all our tenants. Tenants are able to text NB Housing to request a repair, rent balance, complete a tenant satisfaction survey, make an appointment etc. To assist the process if you have changed your number, or did not receive the Welcome Text, please contact us on 028 9059 2110. This will help us to update your contact details so you will receive texts!



To contact your Housing Officer → *Text RENTS plus message*

To get latest account balance → *Text BAL*

To order a new payment card → *Text CARD*

To set up a standing order → *Text STD*

To set up a direct debit → *Text DD*

Development Update



2016/17 proved to be a busy year for the development team, with the acquisition of a further 28 properties throughout North & West Belfast and our first acquisition outside the Belfast area.

NB Housing submitted our Forthriver scheme for planning approval during the year and had hoped that this would have commenced on site in March 17, unfortunately due to delays incurred in the planning system, this commencement of this scheme has been delayed.





Flax Foyer currently 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 or find out more on our website: <http://www.nb-housing.org/flax-foyer-help-for-young-people>.

Do you need Welfare Reform Advice?

The Welfare Reform Act is introducing a range of changes to the benefits system in Northern Ireland. You may have received a leaflet or heard about it on your radio or television.

Universal Credit is a single benefit for working-age people. From 2017 it will gradually replace most means-tested benefits such as income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, tax credits and Housing Benefit.

Please be advised that Welfare Reform could reduce the amount of benefit you receive. This includes housing benefit which will be paid as part of your universal credit payment and may not be as much as you receive now for your housing costs.

For further information contact NB Housing on **028 90592 110**, email us at info@nb-housing.org or contact the Welfare Changes Advice Service on **0808 802 0020**



Do you need Welfare Reform Advice?



Help is available through face to face advice or by telephone from your local Citizens Advice or Advice NI independent advice centre.

Call our free independent welfare changes helpline Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm.

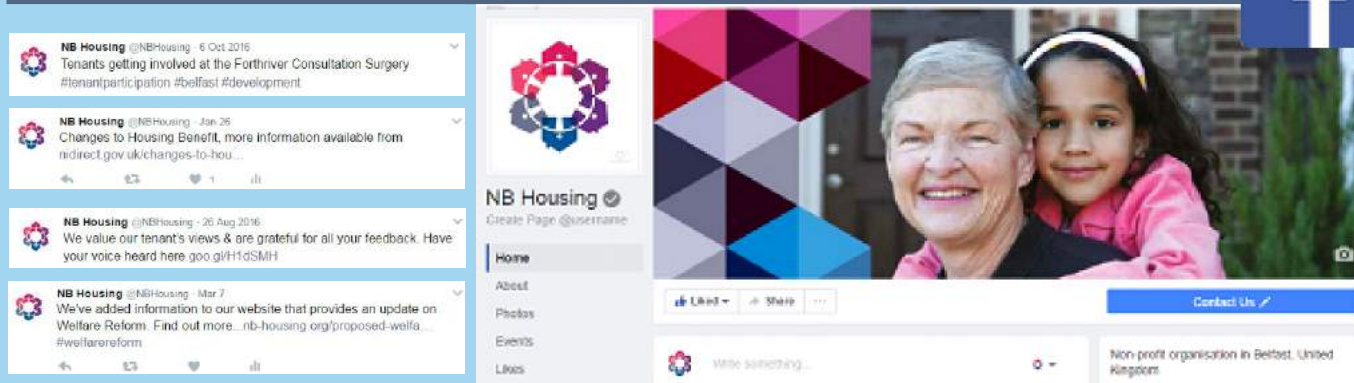
0808 802 0020

welfarechanges@adviceni.net



We're on Facebook and Twitter!

Since August 2016 we've been posting statuses and photographs so that our tenants can keep up to date with what is happening at NB Housing. We would love as many tenants as possible to like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. To like us on Facebook simply type NB Housing into the search box at the top of the page. To follow us on twitter, search @nbhousing and click follow.



Travel Advice at Easter

Easter Travel

Easter is a busy time for travel as people fly or sail home to be with their families or to get away for the break.

Make your travel plans this Easter less stressful by ensuring you know your rights if you are affected by delayed or cancelled flights or sailings.

Delays/ Cancellations

If your journey is delayed or cancelled, you may be entitled to assistance and in some cases compensation. In terms of assistance this could be meals and refreshments, free telephone calls and emails and overnight accommodation while you wait.

Travelling with a disability or reduced mobility

Airlines, airports, ferry companies and port operators provide special assistance services for passengers travelling with a disability or reduced mobility.

Special assistance services are provided to ensure journeys are as convenient for passengers with a disability or reduced mobility as it is for passengers without. Assistance can be in the form of helping passengers to check in luggage, assisting passengers through the terminal or helping with boarding or disembarking.

You should request special assistance at least 48 hours before you travel to ensure all assistance needed, including any relevant equipment, is available.

Travelling via public transport

Alternatively if you are staying closer to home and using public transport check you are getting the best fare available by visiting the 'What Ticket' section on the Translink website

(www.translink.co.uk) or contact the Translink Contact Centre on 028 9066 6630.

Further Information

The Consumer Council encourages all consumers to check their passenger rights before they travel.



Travel Guides

- Plane Facts
- Plain Sailing
- Access to Air Travel
- Access to Ferry Travel
- Additional Airline Charges Table


For further information or advice contact us on Freephone 0800 121 6022, email contact@consumercouncil.org.uk or via Facebook and Twitter.


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 a further description 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 public holidays.

End of Tenancy Repairs



When terminating your tenancy, NB Housing expects properties to be left in good standards including the property being cleared from belongings and any gas/electric top up cards provided for the next 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 recharge costs.

The link provides access to 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

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/>

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.psni.police.uk/crime/theft/house-security>



NB Housing has the following upcoming projects for 2017, the proposals are as follows:

- External redecoration to 204 properties
- Kitchen replacements to 81 properties
- Boiler and heating upgrades to 40 properties
- Door replacements to 20 properties
- External redecoration to Rosemount House

NB Housing has undertaken a vast amount of Cyclical & Planned Maintenance to our housing stock. The following projects have been undertaken over the past 12 months:

- New entrance door at McCorry House
- New entrance door at Holyrood House
- External redecoration of railings at Holyrood House
- Internal redecoration of 68 Ardglan Place
- New external railings at Ardglan Place
- Brookfield Mill internal redecoration of communal areas
- 28 Flax Street internal redecoration areas
- Replacement communal ceilings, internal lighting and internal redecoration within Flax Foyer
- Replacement communal ceilings, internal lighting and internal redecoration within McCorry House
- External redecoration Thorndale Family Centre
- New floor covering and internal redecoration of Rosemount House
- Additional CCTV installations



Emergency Contact Numbers

Cut out and keep these emergency contacts so that you can get help in any emergency situation.



Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Tel: 101 (Non-Emergency)

Tel: 999 (Emergency)

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS)

Tel: 028 9031 0360 (Non-Emergency)

Tel: 999 (Emergency)

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)

Tel: 028 7134 7134 (non-emergency)

Tel: 999 (Emergency)

Utility Providers

Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE)

Tel: 03457 643643
(Customer Helpline)

Phoenix Natural Gas

Tel: 0800 002 001
(24hr gas emergency service)

NI Water

Tel: 03457 440088

Tel: 0300 2000 100
(Flood Incident Line)

www.niwater.com

NB Housing

Tel: 028 9059 2110 (Gatelodge Office)

Tel: 028 9035 1131 (Crumlin Road)

Tel: 0800 7313081 (Out of Hours)



Kids Corner!

With the release of Disney's remake of Beauty and the Beast, we thought that we would put kids colouring skills to the test! Why not colour in the picture, return to our offices (Gatelodge or Crumlin Road) and we'll put the returned entries on our Facebook and Twitter pages! Happy colouring!

Disney BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



<http://www.coloring-book.info>

Name: _____

Age: _____

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
180 Alexandra Park Avenue, BT15 3GJ | → Ormeau
6 Park Road
BT7 2FX |
| → Blackstaff Way
1 Blackstaff Way
BT11 9DT | → 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

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.

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), can contact us via email: info@nb-housing.org or can text us on 07498202221