

# NB Housing Tenants Newsletter

Issue 7

Summer Edition

2016

## *Welfare Reform: What is it all about?*

*Find out at the FREE Event at the Girdwood Community Hub on the 27th June  
between 12pm and 8pm*

### What is Welfare Reform?

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.

Many current benefits are going to be abolished and replaced by a new benefits system.

Universal Credit will replace many existing benefits.

Universal Credit is a new 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 but may not be as much as you receive now for your housing costs.

### NB Housing Invites You...

To visit its stand at the Welfare Reform Drop-In Clinic at **Girdwood Community Hub** in North Belfast on **27th June from 12 noon - 8pm**. The event is free. NB Housing staff will be there to help answer any questions you might have and to offer advice and help. You don't have to register or tell us you are coming, just drop in between 12 to 8pm at a time that suits you.



We want to prepare and help our tenants for any impact of Welfare Reform so please come along to the event.



We have enclosed a leaflet with this newsletter giving further information on the event.



If you can't get along to the event and want more information or want to speak to us then send us a text on 074 9820 2221 or ring us on 02890 592110

### July Office Closure

**NB Housing will be closed on Tuesday 12th of July - Wednesday 13th July.**

**We re-open on Thursday 14th July**

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



# We want to hear from you!

## Tenant Profiling Form

Your tenant profiling form is included with this Newsletter. The information you provide will assist NB Housing in updating our databases to enable us to provide an improved and more targeted service. It will also include monitoring data which will be used to advise NB Housing on equality issues facing the organisation so your participation will be appreciated. Please return in the envelope provided or drop it into one of our offices.

It is our policy to provide housing and associated services to all, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, religious belief or political opinion, race, disability, sexual orientation and age.

## Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Enclosed you will find your Tenants Satisfaction Survey. This is your opportunity to voice your opinion and views on the services NB Housing offers. It will assist us to make improvement where necessary and therefore it is important we get your feedback. Should you require any assistance in completing the form please let us know and a staff member can arrange a visit. As a thank you for returning the survey with your comments before **15<sup>th</sup> July 2016** you will be entered into a free prize draw. The lucky winners will receive;

**1st** prize is **£100**

**2nd** prize is **£50**

**3rd** prize is **£25**

**So do not delay, complete your survey today!!!**

## Introducing our new Texting 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 the association to request a repair, rent balance, complete a tenant satisfaction survey, make an appointment etc.

You will receive an information card, like the one below, that advises you on how to use the texting service



To contact your Housing Officer    Text RENTS *plus message*  
To get latest account balance       Text BAL  
To report a repair                      Text REPAIR *plus message*  
To order a new payment card        Text CARD  
To set up a standing order          Text STD  
To set up a direct debit              Text DD


Send text message to  
**074 9820 2221**


**To assist the process if you have changed your number, or did not receive the Welcome Text please contact us on 02890592110. This will help us to update your contact details so you will receive texts!**


# How is my rent calculated?


Your rent is charged weekly on a Monday. NB Housing has adopted a calculation that will set rents at the lowest possible level. This will be benchmarked against other housing providers in the area with similar properties.


The costs that NB Housing seeks to meet from rental income are as follows:

 All costs including overheads, associated with managing our properties. This includes staff salaries, stationery, office costs, office running costs, etc.

 Day to day maintenance requirements of your property.

 The income lost through void properties and bad debt.

 The association puts aside revenue for future planned and major repair work.

 The costs associated with servicing of loan repayments and interest charges.

 Insurance costs.

The basis of calculating the rents are as follows:

Each new development project will be subject to an economic appraisal and long term cash flow. The cash flow will predict scheme costs, private finance requirements, management & maintenance allowances and voids. Income from rent shall be set to cover all outgoings relating to the scheme.

## Rent Statement

NB Housing has included a copy of your rent statement for your information. This will inform you of the status of your rent account. We plan on delivering the statement quarterly with the latest edition of the newsletter, however should you require a further copy, please do not hesitate to contact us. Likewise, should you have any queries regarding the content of your statement, please contact your Housing Officers Lauren Turner, Amanda Smith and Fiona Kelly at the Gatelodge Office on 02890592110

## Investors in People

In April 2016 NB Housing was the first NI Housing Association to be accredited with the new Generation 6, Investors in People Award.

The Investors in People Award is the standard for better people management and the accreditation is held by 14, 000 organisations across the world. The Standard defines what it takes to lead, support and manage people well for sustainable results.

The Investors in People Standard is underpinned by a rigorous assessment methodology and a framework which reflects the very latest workplace trends, essential skills and effective structures required to outperform in any industry.

This is a great achievement for NB Housing and the accreditation is valid for 3 years.

Our next steps are to review the recommendations from the IIP report and reconvene our employee focus group with the aim of putting improved practices into place.

# NB Housing Tenant Forum

In our last Newsletter we informed tenants of our aim to continue the good practice of Tenant Participation and Involvement via the Tenant Forum.

We plan on having our next meeting at the **Gatelodge Office** on **Thursday 7th July** at **4pm**



We would be grateful if you would indicate your interest in becoming involved in the upcoming Forum meetings which are held quarterly.

We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

## Tenant Participation - Why not get involved!

Tenant Participation is about you becoming involved! We recognise that it is important to offer a range of methods for tenants to participate. There are many ways for you to get involved including simply being an armchair participant and receiving texts, phone calls and emails from us or being a member of the tenant's forum which already exists.

A number of ways that you can get involved:

- Tenant Champion
- Armchair Survey Participant
- Tenant Forum
- Mystery Shopper

We want you to shape the way we deliver our services .

We want to work together to improve the areas in which we live and work.

Likewise we want to reduce the issues that have a negative impact on how we live for example anti- social behaviour, tenancy fraud etc.

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)

## The story so far...

**You said...** you would like to know how your rent is calculated.

**We have...** put this in the Summer Newsletter.

**You said...** that anti- social behaviour in your area needs to improve and that youth disorder is a significant problem.

**We have...** met with the Crime Prevention Officer, community restorative justice, invested in CCTV, met with heads of local youth clubs, met with tenant groups and circulated letters re: ASB. NB Housing attends community meetings including the multi-agency forum in Belfast.

**You said...** that you felt that we could improve on keeping you informed, you said you would prefer to be contacted by letter.

**In addition we are...** introducing a Tenant Participation Strategy and have introduced a new texting service.

**You said...** you found our staff helpful and easy to contact, however 1 in 5 tenants were not satisfied with the outcome.

**We need...** to make sure you are consulted as stated above and that you are listened to via the tenant participation strategy as well as by traditional methods.



# Holyrood House

Holyrood House is a sheltered scheme, consisting of 33 apartments and a live in resident supervisor who provides care and support to residents.

The scheme is purpose built and has additional facilities to encourage community activities.

These facilities include...

- 24 hour emergency call system
- Organised social events
- Furnished guest suite for family/ friends
- Scheme co-ordinator service
- Laundry facilities
- Communal gardens

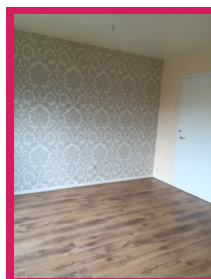
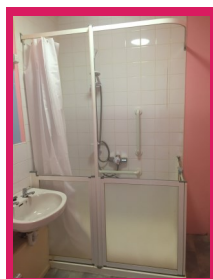


On 3rd May 2016 Holyrood House had an open day to showcase its apartments and facilities.



Pictured above: Bernadette O'Kane (Scheme Supervisor) & George Morris (Housing Manager)

Inside the apartments....



The surrounding area!

The day was a success and if you have any enquiries about Holyrood House contact us on 02890592110!



# Maintenance and Repairs

## All you need to know...

You may report a repair either in person, by telephone, by text, email or in writing. When contacting the Association, please ask to be put through to the Maintenance Department. If necessary the Association may contact you for a further description and to confirm access arrangements. The Association tries to ensure repairs are completed as soon as possible; however, we will prioritise all repairs 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.

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 the Association
- Replacement of defective/blown light bulbs

The Association employs a number of **Caretakers** that carry out daily activities to the Associations stock. Their service is a valuable asset and their time is essential to deliver a service to our tenants however their time lately has been focused on clearing rubbish/waste from a number of communal bin areas. The Association are monitoring this issue and if this continues possible additional service charges may be incorporated into certain schemes. The Association would ask that all tenants dispose of rubbish or recycling materials in the appropriate manner.

The Association 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 open including weekends and Bank Holidays. Please note if your request isn't a genuine emergency, your request will be passed to the Association to address on the next working day.

It is vital that all tenants provide **access** to Association contractors to enable work orders to be completed. If failure to do so the Association will recharge you the cost of the abortive call out and if no access continues then possible disconnection of services and/or legal action will take place to recover possession of the property. If you are unable to facilitate a contractor attending, please contact the Association on telephone 028 90351131 or by email [repairs@nb-housing.org](mailto:repairs@nb-housing.org) so alternative arrangements can be made.

You **should not** make an **alteration** without requesting the Associations written permission. Failure to do so may result in the Association asking for works to be put back to original state and recharges may be involved. If you are unsure if permission is required contact the Association for information.

### Apprenticeships with JMC Mechanical & Construction Ltd

The Associations principle Measured Term Contractor (JMC) will be offering apprenticeships to 16-19 year olds for the upcoming pupil intake for Mechanical, Electrical, Joinery and Plastering trades. JMC will be contacting local colleges with a view to interviewing potential apprentices in June.

Applicants must have GSCE grade C or above in Maths, English, ICT and 2 other subjects to be accepted onto the apprenticeship courses.

For more information contact Tracy on 028 3832 4844 or [tracy@jmcmechanical.co.uk](mailto:tracy@jmcmechanical.co.uk)



# 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

### 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

## 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<br>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