







# NB Housing Tenants Newsletter

Issue 13  
Winter Edition  
2017

## *Annual Report 2016/17*

NB Housing are very excited and proud to distribute our Annual Report for 2016/17 with this quarters newsletter. Our Annual Report highlights the key outcomes that we achieved last year, and provides information on performance within our five strategic themes.

Within NB Housing we encourage tenant participation at every level, and would like to encourage tenants to join our editorial team which would help to inform publications like our Annual Report and quarterly newsletters. If this does not tickle your fancy, we have a number of other ways that tenants can help to shape our services like:

-  Estate walkabouts where you can accompany us on inspections
-  Tenant satisfaction surveys
-  Mystery Shopper
-  Community Clean Up Days

By participating in these activities, our tenants will be making a difference to the areas in which they live. Whatever way you want to get involved please speak to your Housing Officer. If you have any ideas as to how to get more of our tenants involved then please let us know.

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)

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## *Office Closure at Christmas*

Monday 25th December– closed  
Tuesday 26th December– closed  
Wednesday 27th December– closed  
Monday 1st January– closed

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

NB Housing would like to wish all of our tenants and their families a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year!**

# Winter 2017

**Be prepared for winter: Below are some maintenance tips for the winter period**






## Find the stopcock

The stopcock is a valve for turning off and on the cold water system in your home. It is usually located underneath the sink. 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.



## How to prevent pipes



-  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 **Telecare** on **080 0731 3081** if our office is closed





## Weather Conditions & Limitations of Works

During the winter period contractors may 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. If you have any concerns please contact NB Housing on 028 9035 1131 and our staff member will help to address any concerns.

## 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 for contractors to be calling 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.

## Contents Insurance

NB Housing shall 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(s) belonging to the tenant that may be damaged or destroyed as a result of unforeseen circumstances. Please ensure that your insurance covers broken glass as NB Housing is not responsible for replacement glazing regardless of the cause.

## Waste Management

It is vital that we all properly dispose of our waste appropriately over the Christmas period due to changes in collections to accommodate the holidays. Ensure all recyclable materials are separated and disposed into the correct bin/box. All other items should be disposed into the appropriate bins. See Belfast City Council website for some helpful tips/information.



## Please inform us if you are terminating your tenancy

Recently we have had tenants who have moved to another property and have not told us. We would remind you that it is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you inform us that you will be ending your tenancy. If you do not we will require 4 weeks' notice from the date that we find out you have moved, that means you will have to pay for two properties at once. We also carry out an end of tenancy inspection during the notice period of 4 weeks and if we find any damage done to the property we will invoice you the cost of the repair work. We would much prefer to work through both these processes with you as this should make things easier for you and for us. So please tell us before you move. Thank you.



# Community Clean-Up Day

On 30th November we held a community clean up day in the Tudor Area. It was great to see so many tenants and staff members getting involved despite the cold weather. NB Housing provided skips, brushes and tools so that everyone could help clean up the area. We wanted to say a big thank you to everyone who came along and we look forward to holding more of these events in Spring/ Summer 2018. If you would like your local area to be considered for a 'Clean Up Day' in Spring/ Summer 2018 please contact us on 02890592110 or 02890351131.



30.11.2017



In the meantime, keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter pages for our next events! If you would like further information on how you can get involved and shape our services in NB Housing, please contact our Gatelodge Office on 028 9059 2110.

# Fire Safety This Christmas

Christmas is a special time of the year for celebrations, with family and friends coming together to enjoy the festivities. However, candles, overloaded electrics and cooking all increase the risk of fire within the home at this time of year.

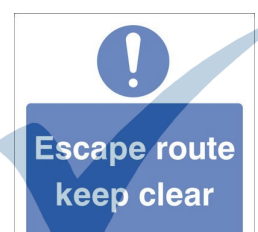
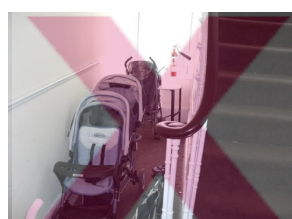
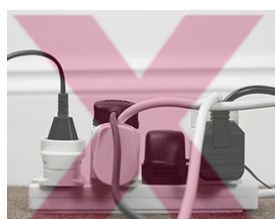
Please consider this fire safety advice for keeping you and your family safe this Christmas and New Year.

- Have a working smoke alarm fitted on all levels of your property. A working smoke alarm will give you and your family the vital time needed to escape a fire
- Never leave cooking unattended and avoid cooking whilst under the influence of alcohol
- Check your Christmas lights are in good working order and conform to the British Standard. Look for the BS Kitemark to ensure that your lights meet the appropriate standard
- Never overload sockets and always turn Christmas lights off before going to bed or if you are leaving the house. **Remember** one plug per socket
- Don't buy fake electrical goods. Look for the British Standard or CE mark to ensure equipment and chargers comply with UK or European Safety Standards.
- If you are using extra heaters during the winter months, make sure they are kept away from soft furnishings and Christmas decorations.
- Keep candles away from soft furnishings, decorations, Christmas trees and wrapping paper. Ensure they are out of reach from pets and children unattended.
- Make sure cigarettes are extinguished correctly and never smoke in bed, particularly if you have been drinking alcohol. Empty ashtrays safely.
- Make a fire escape plan and discuss it with your family. Ensure any visiting family and friends are aware of the escape plan too; tell them where you keep door keys.
- Keep your escape routes clear; it's easy for exits to get blocked with Christmas trees and presents.
- Check on older relatives and neighbours this Christmas to ensure their safety at this time of year.



**Remember, if a fire starts, get everyone out of the property and close all doors behind you.**

**Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service.**





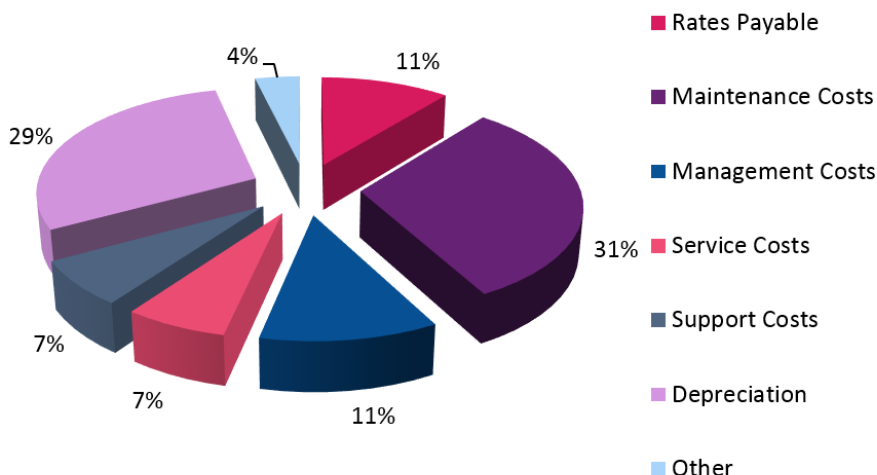
# How is my rent calculated?

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.
- NB Housing puts aside revenue for future planned and major repair work.
- The costs associated with servicing of loan repayments and interest charges.
- Insurance costs.

Each April NB Housing will review its future expenditure and will set an increase applicable to all tenants who's rent is not controlled. NB Housing will consider the affordability of the increase for our tenants and compare to the rent increase proposed by the NIHE.

## Where does my rent go?



If you would like any further information on your property charges please contact our Gatelodge Office on 028 9059 2110 and our Housing Team would be happy to discuss with you.



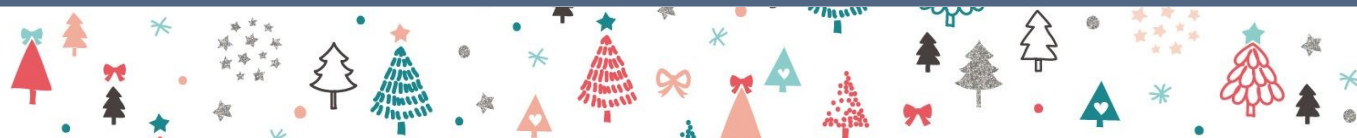
## Flax Foyer have vacancies!

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>

# Christmas: the most expensive time of year



Everybody knows that Christmas is an expensive time for families but if you currently pay your rent, you must make payments over the Christmas & New Year period. If you fail to make a payment – you are putting your home at risk. So now is the time to prioritise over Christmas so that you can celebrate and cover the costs.

## Action you can take to avoid getting into arrears:

Budget carefully over Christmas – the temptation is there to buy a bigger present, but don't put off paying your rent as it will only lead to greater problems in the future

Ensure that you make your payments regularly - if you work and don't get paid weekly we are happy to accept fortnightly or monthly payments but these must be made in advance. Talk to us about your payment frequency

Check your enclosed rent statement to make sure that your rent is being covered by either your payments or by help from Housing Benefit (or both)

If you have agreed a repayment plan and you think you may have difficulty making a payment, contact us immediately to avoid further action being taken

Seek independent financial advice about any debts you may have - contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau

## What should I do if I have difficulty paying my rent?

Please contact your Housing Officer on 028 90 592 110 in complete confidence as soon as possible or use our texting service by texting **RENTS to 074 9820 2221** and your Housing Officer will contact you. We are here to help and the earlier you contact us the easier it will be for us to help you. Ignoring your debt problems will only make them worse.

If you do get into arrears we will try to negotiate an agreement to help you pay off the arrears without incurring other debts. We can also refer you for specialist advice to make sure you are getting all the benefit and tax credits you are entitled to, or to help

you if you have high levels of debt and just can't cope.

## What will happen if I don't pay my rent?

If you don't pay your rent and fail to get in touch with NB Housing, we will make every attempt to contact you and help you with any difficulties that might be stopping you from making a payment.

However, if you won't work with us then we will have no alternative but to start arrears recovery action which can include a Notice of Seeking Possession served on you. This is the first stage of legal proceedings, which may result in you losing your home. We will continue to try and help you, but if you do not pay your rent, or if you continually fail to keep to a repayment plan to clear any arrears, you may end up being evicted from your home.

## How can I pay my rent?

You can pay your rent in a number of ways, including:

By Standing Order. This is the easiest way to pay and money can be transferred from your bank account to NB Housings on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly basis.

At Paypoint outlets if you have a Paypoint swipecard. To order a new payment card text **CARD to 074 9820 2221**

By calling into either office on the Crumlin Road or at Flax Street and paying by cash or cheque and you will be issued with a receipt.

**Remember, NB Housing is here to help you, so if you're having trouble clearing your arrears please contact the Housing Team.**



## Kids Corner!

With Christmas right around the corner, we thought that we would put your 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!

# Merry Christmas



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<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

