



# NB Housing

Homes that build community

## Tenants Newsletter

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### Stay Safe & Well This Christmas

As we approach Christmas, we are reminded of the difficult time we have all had to endure over the past 9 months with the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage everyone to keep each other safe by following the guidelines, by keeping a safe distance, wearing a face covering and washing our hands. The NB Housing Team are complying with guidelines by continuing to work from home where possible and are ensuring we provide our tenants with the services they need. Whilst our offices remain closed until restrictions are lifted, we can still be reached on 028 90 592 110, by emailing [info@nb-housing.org](mailto:info@nb-housing.org), texting us on 0749820221 or sending an enquiry on [www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org).

Out of Hours emergency repairs can also be called through to Radius Connect 24 on 0800 731 3081. We want to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and will keep you up to date should office arrangements change. Take care everyone!



### Community Development & Tenant Participation Update

We hope all our tenants are keeping well in these very different times. NB Housing staff are here to help you. Our Community Development and Tenant Support Officer, Sadie Reid, can help you apply for benefits such as Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, carry out benefit and income checks, and has a local knowledge of events, community programmes and community grants which might be of interest to you. So why not give Sadie a ring on 028 90 592 110.

You can also join us online. Our Cook It programme will commence soon giving demonstration on how to prepare and cook a healthy dish for you and your family. Or join our Christmas Craft Classes online to help you to create festive items and ideas that will brighten up your home.

We are also seeking interest for Health and Wellbeing training. These sessions will look at lifestyles and examine life maps. This is a programme to address physical and mental wellbeing and your journey in life, including where you are now, where you want to get to and the barriers that are preventing you from getting there. This programme will be delivered by experienced facilitators.

These are just some of the ideas for our upcoming programmes and we welcome any other suggestions from our tenants. So, if you have an idea please contact Sadie and we will be in touch. All ideas are welcome.

We now have a WhatsApp group for tenants who would like to chat about any issues or report concerns in their area. Why not get in touch with Sadie and give this a go! Remember that Sadie can help you on a one to one basis with any housing issues you may have and give support and advice.

We also have access to local food banks and other services that can help any of our tenants who are experiencing financial hardship. This includes Christmas food and gift appeals.

Finally, we wish to reinvigorate our tenant's forum to give you another option to tell us about your issues and about the community in which you live. We plan on holding meetings via Zoom or remotely. If you are interested in any of our programmes or if you feel you want to talk to Sadie please contact our office on 02890 592110. We are more than happy to help.

# Advice from our Maintenance Team

## Repair Reporting

Please note when a repair is being reported a staff member will carry out a risk assessment over the telephone to the person reporting the issue. Social distancing rules should always be employed when a contractor is in your property and should always be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).

We ask all tenants to follow government guidance in place and advise contractors to wear face coverings when attending your home. If face coverings/PPE are not worn or not available, you have the right to refuse the person entry into your home. If this happens, please let the Maintenance Team know immediately on 028 90351131.

We ask you to advise if anyone in your household is self-isolating. We need to ensure both our contractors and tenants are safe as we make every attempt to minimise the spread of the virus.

If you are unable to allow access for either shielding or self-isolation reasons, please advise our Maintenance team at the earliest opportunity and we will seek to make alternative arrangements.

NB Housing endeavour that repairs are completed in accordance with the time categories below; however, some repairs may take longer than usual and we appreciate your understanding at this time.

## Our Repair 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 Radius Connect 24 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.

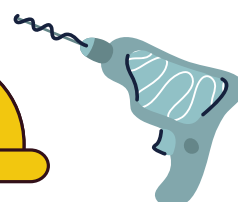
## Waste Management

It is vital that we all dispose of our waste appropriately and avoid waste building up. Please ensure all recyclable materials are separated and disposed into the correct bin/box. All other items should be disposed into the appropriate bins. Please refer to your local council website for some helpful tips/information.

## Planned Maintenance (Update)

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 our internal planned maintenance works are on hold until further notice. Any tenants in properties that had planned maintenance works suspended due to COVID-19, will be provided with updates at the earliest opportunity.

All non-invasive planned maintenance is continuing and tenants will be contacted in the near future if works are planned at their home.



## Weather Conditions & Limitations of Works

During the winter period weather conditions may cause health and safety issues, restricting access to external parts of the property. Temporary repairs may be considered until such times a full repair can be safely completed.

Travel to properties may also be impacted due to weather conditions so appointments may be delayed. We ask our tenants to be understanding in such cases and our contractor will make every effort to get to your home.

During holiday periods, 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 maintenance team on 028 9035 1131.

## Broken Glass

Broken Glass is tenant's responsibility regardless of cause. We urge all tenants to ensure that they have adequate home insurance in place.

## Triton Safeguard+ Electric Shower Product Recall

There is an ongoing safety recall by Triton that affect a small number of shower units manufactured between May 2014 and December 2016. An image of the shower is shown below:



We are currently reviewing all showers fitted by NB Housing, however please contact us to arrange an inspection if you have any concerns. We acknowledge that some tenants fit their own showers and therefore please follow the guidance below:

## Risk

It was recently uncovered that some Triton Safeguard+ electric showers may develop a fault which could lead to overheating and to a potential risk of electric shock or fire.

## Model numbers affected

Affected units start with the product code CSGPO and have a date code stamp between 05/14 (May 2014) and 12/16 (December 2016). This date code is on the product rating label located on the underside of the product. No other Triton shower is affected. If your shower is showing any signs of discolouration you MUST stop using it immediately.

## What to do...

If you believe you may have a Triton Safeguard+ electric shower please contact our maintenance team on 028 90351131, who will then contact Triton Service Centre. If the shower is one listed, Triton will then (if required) arrange a mutually agreeable time for an engineer to call and carry out a safety inspection to check and correct any issues. This visit would be free of charge, will be undertaken by one of their qualified engineers and it should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

It is important to have a valid daytime telephone number for the team to make contact on.

Full details can be found at: <https://www.tritonshowers.co.uk/help-and-support/support/safety-information>

## Merry Christmas from NB Housing!

Our offices will close at 5pm on Wednesday 23rd December.  
Our offices will be closed on 24th December, 25th December,  
28th December and 1st January 2021.

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

## NB Housing Annual Report 2019/20

You will find our latest Annual Report  
accompanying this Newsletter. It details  
how we have performed over the past year.  
Should you require any further information  
or would like to give us some feedback  
please call us on 028 90 592 110.

## Be Prepared For Winter

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 or by pressing a button if your home is fitted with a sure stop device. This is very important action to take in event of a leak to the property and turning off the water supply will prevent further damage to your home.

### 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 on 0800 731 3081 if our office is closed.

# Condensation or Damp

Condensation occurs when moist air hits a cold surface. Condensation can lead to mould growth on walls and ceilings and can also lead to damp patches. You will see condensation as water droplets on walls, window glass, around windows and in corners of rooms. Condensation and the problems it causes are often mistaken for damp.

## How to prevent condensation & remove moisture from your home

As part of your tenancy it is your responsibility to prevent condensation in your home. These simple steps will help you produce less moisture in your home:

- Dry washing outdoors if possible
- If drying wet washing indoors, put it in the bathroom with the door closed and windows left open
- Do not dry wet clothes on the radiators
- Vent tumble driers outside
- Keep trickle ventilators open when someone is in the room. Good ventilation helps protect your health and home from damage by working to eliminate excess moisture from the air.
- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom when in use by opening the windows and using extractor fans if you have them
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when in use. This will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms which are often colder and more likely to get condensation
- Do not block off any air vents in your home
- Wipe excess condensation off windows and surfaces with a towel each morning

## How to remove mould

- Wipe mould off immediately with water using a sponge or cloth
- Do NOT use washing up liquid or bleach!
- Apply anti mould removal liquid to remove mould; available from most high street stores (Read all instructions carefully before use)
- Dry clean clothes and shampoo carpets affected by mould
- DO NOT simply paint over mould. Properly clean/remove it first then use a special fungicidal paint to help prevent it recurring.

NB Housing staff members are more than happy to discuss the above guide or to help with diagnosing Condensation.





# Shop Safely Online

## • Advice from the Consumer Council •

Research shows that almost two thirds of Northern Ireland shoppers are doing more shopping online due to the impact of COVID-19. Therefore, The Consumer Council is using this opportunity to remind NB Housing tenants to shop safely online, especially with the upcoming festive period and tempting January sales.

With the growth and reliance on online shopping in 2020, it is more important than ever for you to know your rights if you are undertaking more of your shopping online.

In addition to knowing your rights, you should also ensure that you are getting the best value for your money. It is important that you shop around for the best deal before buying a good or service.

The Consumer Council is providing some do's and don'ts to consider before doing your shopping online:

- **Do claim for standard postage costs:** If you have notified the seller and returned your online item within the 14 days cooling off period after the date of delivery, you should be entitled to a refund for the item plus the cost of the least expensive delivery option (regardless of whether you purchased a more expensive delivery service);
- **Don't assume you can always return goods from private sellers trading on online marketplaces:** Shopping online can give you extra protections if you wish to return goods purchased. However, this isn't always the case when buying from a private individual, such as marketplace sellers. Always check the seller's return policy before buying;

- **Do consider how you can protect your purchase if the seller goes out of business:** If you are buying goods over £100, consider using your credit card for added protection; and
- **Don't always assume all sellers deliver to Northern Ireland:** Online retailers that do not sell to Northern Ireland must make this restriction visible on their website to inform you before you might place an order.

These are just a few handy tips that you can use to stay safe online this festive period. For more information, download and read 'Your Guide to Shopping Safely Online', The Consumer Council's free guide that gives tips and information on protecting your computer, money, rights and parcel deliveries when shopping online.

Download 'Your Guide to Shopping Safely Online' by visiting:  
[www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/shoppingsafelyonline](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/shoppingsafelyonline)

If you would like a printed copy of this guide, contact The Consumer Council on Freephone 0800 121 6022 and they will arrange a printed copy to be posted out to you.





# Fire Safety this Christmas!

Christmas is a special time of the year and we hope all NB Housing tenants enjoy the festivities and stay safe. However, candles, overloaded electrics and cooking all increase the risk of fire within the home at this time of year. We ask our tenants to be mindful of the following safety guidance.

- 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**

### 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](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.

### 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](http://www.nb-housing.org)), can contact us via email: [info@nb-housing.org](mailto:info@nb-housing.org) or can text us on 074 9820 2221