



Spring Edition

2016

TENANTS NEWSLETTER

Working in Partnership



We are pleased to announce that JMC Mechanical & Construction has been awarded our response maintenance contract after an extensive tendering process based on quality and price. The contract shall run for the next seven years.

JMC have extensive experience of providing this service in social housing and we look forward to working in partnership to provide an effective repair service to our tenants.



Debt Management



NB Housing would like to make you aware of the availability of an independent debt advice charity that offers advice and guidance for people in debt. This service is totally confidential and starts with having a discussion with an advisor. During this meeting you can talk about your situation and get advice on the best way forward. You can enter into a debt management plan where you pay an affordable amount every month which is then divided among those you owe money to. The service can also assist to freeze interest and charges to your creditors.

The charity Debt Support Trust is open from 8am to 9am Monday to Friday and can be contacted on 0800 085 0226 or online at www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk

Here's what some people had to say about the service;

"The service we received was excellent and the advice was second to none. We did not feel under any pressure to do anything we didn't want to. It has helped our situation and family greatly. Thanks so much."

I was in a really bad financial position with a risk of losing my home and did not see any way out of the situation. However, with the great help provided by my Debt Support NI adviser my life has turned around dramatically and I cannot thank them enough."

NB Housing would encourage any tenant with debt problems to get in touch with the Debt Support Trust, it's free and confidential.



Easter Office Closure



NB Housing will be closed on
Monday 28th March and Tuesday 29th March.

We re-open on Wednesday 30th March



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



? Recoverable Charges ?

The Association has seen a significant increase in abortive calls and tenant misuse of the property. NB Housing operates a policy on recoverable charges. Where it is deemed that a repair has been the result of wilful damage, neglect, misuse, abuse, or an unauthorised alteration that does not meet NB Housing standards, the Association will implement the policy and pursue the tenant for the costs of the repair.

What is a Recoverable Charge?

A recoverable charge is the cost to repair any damage in a property caused by the tenant.

Tenants who move on from a property are responsible for ensuring the property is handed back to the Association in an acceptable condition.

As per the tenancy agreement, it is also essential the dwelling is left in a clean condition and all tenant belongings are removed. Charges will be applied for any repairs, redecoration or removal of belongings that are deemed the tenant's responsibility



It is also important to note that if a property is left vacant by a tenant which is then subject to break in or vandalism, the property will remain the responsibility of the tenant until such time the termination of tenancy date takes effect. Any damages to property in this instance will also be recovered from the tenant. Where considered necessary, the Association may carry out the repair and then recharge the tenant.

The Association will actively follow up recoverable charges through the courts where necessary.



Communicating by TEXT!



NB Housing will soon be introducing a new texting service which will provide a quick and easy communication tool for all our tenants.

Tenants will be able to text the association to request a repair, rent balance, complete a tenant satisfaction survey, make an appointment etc.

To assist the process we are asking all of our tenants to inform us of any changes to their mobile contact number by completing the enclosed slip and returning in the freepost envelope. This will ensure text messages are directed to the correct person. We will keep you informed of developments with the texting service and provide you with a launch date once this is confirmed. We appreciate you forwarding the information as we work towards improving our communication with NB Housing tenants.



Rent Statement



The Association 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 and Amanda Smith at the Gatelodge Office on 028 90 592110.



Stay Safe From Gas

As your landlord, NB Housing is bound by law to carry out an annual safety check on our gas fittings in your home. But as a tenant, you too have responsibilities...

Landlord Duty

We are committed to your safety and we take our responsibilities on gas safety very seriously

We will ensure:

Gas fittings (appliances and pipework) and flues are maintained in a safe condition

A Gas Safe Registered installer carries out all installation, maintenance, safety checks and annual gas servicing

A gas safety check and service is carried out on each relevant gas fitting/ flue in your home every year

When you take up a new tenancy all gas appliances/ flues will be checked before commencement of tenancy

We keep a record of each annual safety check and service

Tenant Duty

As a tenant you have responsibilities:

Allow us prompt access to your home to carry out maintenance or safety checks on our gas fittings/ flues, please ensure we hold the most up to date access information for you

Ensure any gas fittings which you own, including gas cookers, are installed correctly and checked annually for safety using a Gas Safe registered engineer. For more information see <http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

Never try DIY with gas such as removing radiators for decorating or painting your gas fire

Never block up air ventilation grilles and ensure that flue terminals are kept clear at all times

Never use a gas appliance if you think it's not working properly

Never cover gas appliances

Please note failure to give reasonable access to your home to allow us to complete the annual safety check is dangerous for you, your family and your neighbours. It's also a breach of your tenancy conditions, which could result in action to enforce access or end your tenancy

Spot the danger signs– Contact us immediately on 02890351131 if you notice:

- Sooting or staining on or around the appliance
- A yellow or orange lazy flame-not crisp and blue
- More condensation than usual in the room where the appliance is installed
- Anyone in your household suffering from drowsiness, headaches, nausea or chest pains when using a gas appliance



Gas leaks– if you think you can smell gas or fumes:

- Turn off the gas at the meter
- Open windows
- Put out naked flames
- Don't use electrical switches
- Call the National Gas Emergency **Freephone 0800 002 001**



All calls outside normal working hours and holiday period should be directed to Fold Telecare on **Freephone 0800 731 3081**



Tenant Participation



As part of the Tenant Participation Strategy we at NB Housing are keen to listen to you, our tenant. The Strategy is about you becoming involved and telling us how you want us to communicate with you and you telling us how you want to participate and communicate with us.

Although the government has introduced rules to ensure that tenants have a voice and are supported to get involved, as NB Housing is a local based housing association we are in a good position to deliver and participate in local solutions.

Together we can make sure we are making a difference. There are many ways for you to get involved including simply being an armchair participant and receiving texts, phone calls and e-mails from us or being a member of the tenant's forum which already exists.

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.

You will find enclosed a letter that explains all the ways you can become involved and you'll also find a reply slip to show us how you'd like to become involved. You don't need a stamp to send it back to us, use the Freepost envelope supplied or you can leave it in to one of our offices on the Crumlin Road or in Flax Street.



Thanks and we look forward to working with you.



Tenant Forum



In our last Newsletter we informed tenants of our aim to continue the good practise of Tenant Participation and Involvement via the Tenant Forum. We plan on having our next meeting at the
Gatelodge Office on **Thursday 7th April at 4pm**

We would be grateful if you would indicate your interest in becoming involved in the upcoming Forum meetings which will be held quarterly. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

FORUM



FORUM



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

NIHE

03448 920 900

Phoenix Gas

08454 55 55 55

Power NI

08457 455 455

Belfast City Council – Pest Control

02890 270431

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.

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 8am – 7pm 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

Gatelodge, 8 Flax Street

Belfast

BT14 7EQ

Tel: 02890592110

Email: info@nb-housing.org

www.nb-housing.org

Crumlin Road Office

282-290 Crumlin Road

Belfast

BT14 7ED

Tel: 02890351131

Email: info@nb-housing.org

www.nb-housing.org