



NB Housing Tenants Newsletter

Issue 8
Autumn Edition
2016

NB Housing Celebrates Success

NB Housing received their Investors In People Accreditation at a celebratory event held in September 2016 at Belfast Castle. NB Housing are the first NI Housing Association to be accredited with the new Generation 6, Investors in People Award. The IIP 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. This is a great achievement for NB Housing and the accreditation is valid for 3 years.



The Department for Communities inspect Housing Associations in order to determine whether or not they are viable organisations, perform well and strive for continuous improvement in the services provided to their tenants. In winter 2015, NB Housings Inspection covered 5 key areas which included Finance, Property Development, Property Management, Corporate Governance and Housing Management.

Rated **"Satisfactory Assurance"**, the second highest of the four scoring mechanisms, we are delighted with the Inspection outcome. A full Inspection Report will soon be available on our website; www.nb-housing.org

Forthriver Development

NB Housing is pleased to announce the redevelopment of lands located at 119 Forthriver Road Belfast.

Phase 1 of the project is to construct 18 two bed semi-detached homes with Phase 2 providing 6 three bed semi-detached homes. This much needed social housing project will be of the highest standard and will include secure by design and lifetime homes standards. The artist's impression provides an insight of the proposal and location within the site. NB Housing has submitted a planning application to Belfast City Council Planning Service.

This proposal is our first new build housing project, since the creation of NB Housing in 2014. The project will represent an investment of £2.1 million, part funded by Housing Association Grant provided by the NI Executive and £1.2 million contribution from NB Housing. Not only will the building contract provide much needed jobs in the building sector, our contract will provide opportunities for work placements for the long term unemployed.

We envisage being on site in the spring of 2017 and expect the construction phase to take around 18 months to complete.

If you have any queries or require further information regarding this proposal or the work of the organisation, please do not hesitate to contact our development team, John Brooks or Leanne Kelly:

Tel: 028 9035 1131

Email: development@nb-housing.org

Write to: NB Housing, 282-290 Crumlin Road, Belfast.BT147ED



We're on Facebook & Twitter!

In August 2016 NB Housing set up our Facebook and Twitter profiles. We're excited about this new form of communication and we hope that you, our tenants will be too!

We'll be posting daily updates, statuses and photographs so that our tenants can keep up to date with what's 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.



Change in Circumstances

Have you received a letter from NIHE about Housing Benefit or has your income or household size changed?

Be sure to let us know, ring us or use the text service to tell us and we will phone you back. Did you know we can send and scan documents for you such as payslips and letters via e-mail directly to NIHE. This is much safer and quicker and ensures delivery of important documents rather than sending by post. It helps us too, because it means we can sort out problems with your rent more quickly and hopefully avoid arrears building up on you rent account.

It's even more important because from Monday 5th September NIHE will only backdate HB claims for a maximum of one month which means if your Housing Benefit is suspended or stopped you have only got one month to sort it out. So if it takes you for example 6 weeks to get the information that NIHE asks you for you will miss out on two weeks benefit and have 2 weeks arrears added to your rent account.

If you receive any letters from NIHE about your Housing Benefit please let us know immediately

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.

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

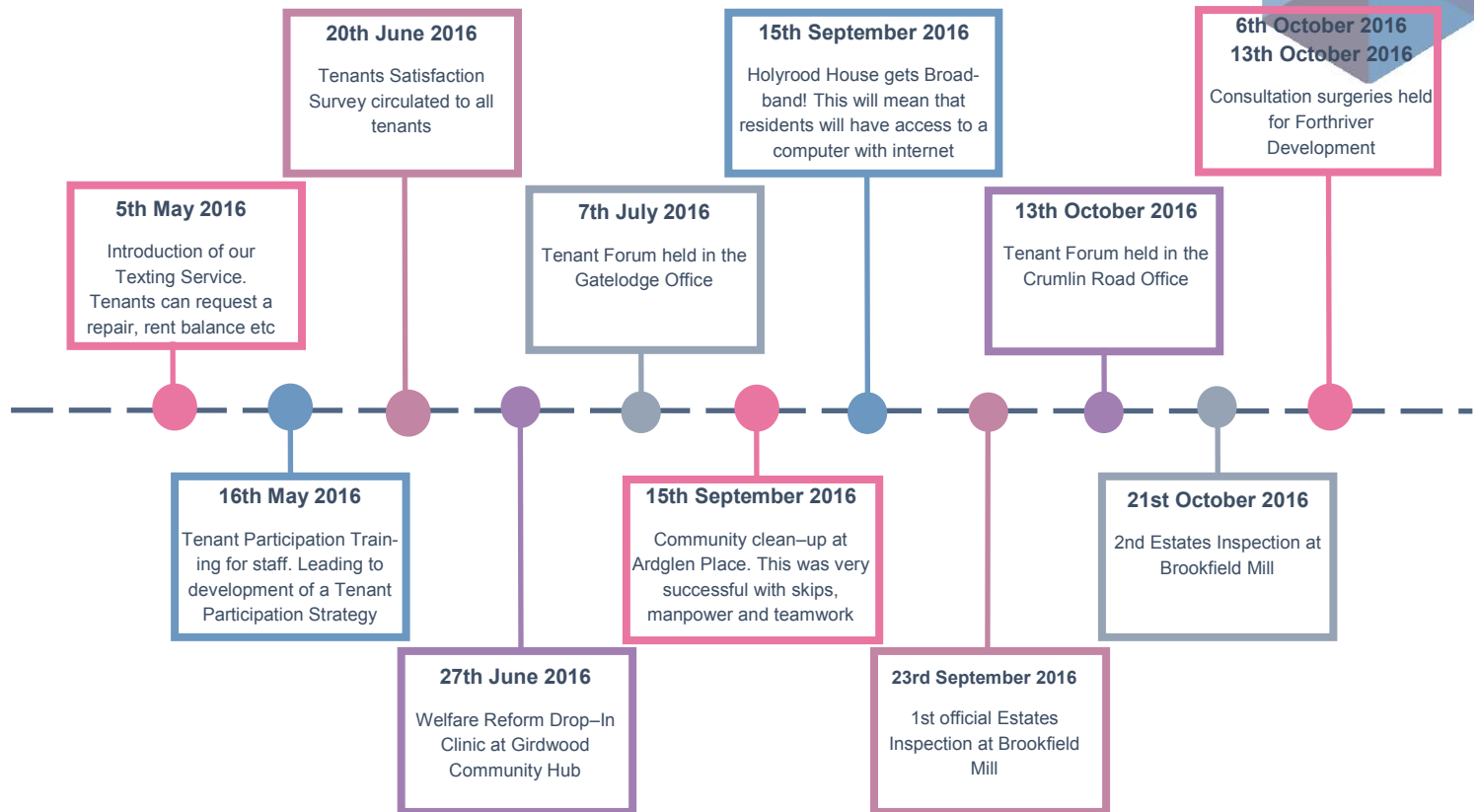
Send text message to 074 9820 2221

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!

Tenant Participation: Lets 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.

Our Story So Far...



Tenant Forum 07/07/16



*Estate Inspectors
23/09/16*



*Welfare Reform Event
27/06/16*

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

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

NB Housing proud to sponsor the Homeless World Cup 2016



The Homeless World Cup is an annual football tournament for people who have experienced homelessness. The 2016 Homeless World Cup took place in Glasgow from 10th to 16th July. Northern Ireland's team was comprised of people from disadvantaged groups such as homeless people, people suffering from substance abuse, refugees, asylum seekers, and those who are long-term unemployed. The Northern Ireland Team finished 13th overall which is a great achievement!

NB Housing was proud to be one of the sponsors for the Northern Ireland team and congratulate them on their success!

Flax Foyer & The Duke of Edinburgh Award

Flax Foyer are running the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) in partnership with PBNI.

Both residents and staff are looking forward to getting involved in the four different sections of the DofE Award. The four sections of the DofE include:

Volunteering: undertaking service to individuals or the community for at least 1 hour per week.

Examples include:

- Volunteering in a charity shop.
- Becoming a residents rep or joining the NB Housing Tenants Forum.
- Being an active member of a youth council or forum (Even in the DofE group itself).

Physical: improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities. Examples include:

- Completing a Park Run/ Walk once a week.
- Joining a boxing club or a dance class and attending weekly.

Skills: developing practical and social skills and personal interests. Examples include:

- Life skills can be counted while living in the Foyer. (Cooking, cleaning, employability, meal planning, housing)
- Achieving a new qualification or completing a training programme such as Bytes or Ashton Centre.
- Essential skills (Maths, English and/ or ICT)
- Digital and computing skills (Fab Lab) or Learning how to drive.

Expedition: planning, training, fundraising, for and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK. This will usually involve a few days walking/ hiking and a minimum of 1 night camping out.



Residents and staff getting ready to take part in a Saturday morning Parkrun

Christmas Shopping Top Tips

Advice from the Consumer Council

For many people, Christmas is a special time of year, but, with the cost of presents and food shopping, it can also be a financially stressful time. Setting and keeping to a fixed budget can ease your worries and will reduce financial strains in the New Year. The Consumer Council has produced a Christmas budget planner, which will help you plan your budget as you write your present and food shopping list.



What if I've already started shopping for Christmas?

If you have already started your Christmas shopping then it's important you know your consumer rights:

- ✓ The law says that anything you buy must live-up to the description given in the advertising, packaging or told to you by the website or salesperson.
- ✓ What you buy should also be of good quality, so it shouldn't be scratched or break too easily, if used correctly.
- ✓ What you buy should be fit for the purpose it was designed for, so a games console should be compatible with certain video games, if it is sold for this purpose. If goods don't fit their description, aren't of satisfactory quality or aren't fit for purpose you may be entitled to a repair, replacement or refund. Let the trader know as soon as possible if there is a problem, and get into the habit of keeping your receipt as this makes it easier to return items.

What if I want to do all of my shopping online?

If you are planning doing your Christmas shopping from the comfort of your own home, be aware that some web retailers have delivery restrictions to NI, which could mean you paying more for delivery, orders taking longer to arrive or even non delivery. Delivery restrictions should always be clear and upfront on the website. Our advice is to check before placing an order, to avoid empty stockings this Christmas.

Is it too good to be true?

You should also be careful about cheap deals that are too good to be true this Christmas.

- ✓ Check where the web retailer is based and find out what previous customers thought by researching the company first.
- ✓ Check the website address begins https – as the 's' stands for secure and means your personal and financial details will be kept safe. There should also be a little padlock in the browser bar.

For more information on any of these tips, or to get your free copy of the following resources, please visit our website www.consumerCouncil.org.uk or telephone 0800 121 6022.

Guide to Shopping Online Safely

Receipt Wallet

Christmas Budget Planner

Sending Letters and Parcels


Making a Postal Complaint



Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2016

Thanks to all NB Housing Tenants and Residents who returned their completed Tenant Satisfaction Surveys 2016.

NB Housing values feedback from our tenants on the services we provide. Our 2015/16 survey has demonstrated high satisfaction levels across all our services. Of the 889 surveys sent out, 132 (15%) were returned. We seek to continually engage with our tenants to ensure they are kept informed of our services and that their views are taken into account.

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- ✓ **81% of respondents satisfied with overall service**
 - ✓ **79% of respondents said that rent represent value for money**
 - ✓ **94% of respondents said that they were satisfied with their accommodation**
 - ✓ **77% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the condition of their property**
 - ✓ **81% of respondents were satisfied with the area/ location of their property**
 - ✓ **84% of respondents are likely to recommend NB Housing to their friends or family**

Repairs	Very/ Fairly good
<i>Ease of reporting</i>	89%
<i>Staff knowledge</i>	82%
<i>Attitude of workers</i>	92%
<i>Quality of repair work</i>	83%
<i>Helpfulness of staff in dealing with the repair</i>	89%

Communication	% of tenants satisfied
<i>Your views taken into account</i>	80%
<i>Keeping you informed</i>	87%
<i>Opportunities for participation in decision making</i>	72%
<i>Helpfulness of staff</i>	87%



Whilst the above satisfaction levels are very positive, your responses will also give us an opportunity to make improvements in certain areas that were not as positive. We welcome any ideas you may have to help us improve our services and encourage tenants to make suggestions by contacting us by phone, letter, email (info@nb-housing.org) or texting us on 074 9820 2221. Alternatively you can use the comments leaflet which can be downloaded from our website www.nb-housing.org.

We encourage tenants to complete surveys to keep us informed of your views and once again thank all those who participated in this years survey.

Maintenance and Repairs



Stock Condition Survey

The Association has appointed Rand Associates to carry out stock condition surveys. The properties to be surveyed will be randomly selected and if your home is selected you will be contacted directly to arrange a suitable date and time for the survey.

The survey is essential to allow the Association to budget plan and prioritise future planned maintenance and we would be grateful for your cooperation in the event that your home is randomly selected for survey.

If you have any queries regarding this survey, then please contact our maintenance department on 028 90351131 or repairs@nb-housing.org



All you need to know

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 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.

The Association employs Fold Telecare to deal with out of hours **emergency repairs**. You may contact them on **0800 731 3081** to report your emergency repair when the office is not opened including weekends and Bank Holidays.

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
-  Cleaning 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.




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



NB Housing is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of open spaces within our schemes. It is your responsibility to **maintain your garden** which is within the curtilage of your property.



It is vital that all tenants **provide access to NB Housings contractors** to enable work orders to be completed. If you fail to do so the Association may recharge you. If this no access continues then possible capping of services or legal action could take place. In addition the Association may take possession of the property. If you are unable to facilitate a contractor attending contact the Association so alternative arrangements can be made.



NB Housing shall maintain 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 glass regardless of the cause.

Fire Safety In The Home

Advice from the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

Fire Safety in the Home

If a fire occurs in your home you may have to get out in dark and difficult conditions. Escaping from a fire will be a lot easier if you have already planned your escape route and know where to go



Involve everyone in the house
The normal way out is the preferred choice
Keep your escape route clear of obstructions
Protect your escape route by closing all doors into it, especially at night
Practice using the agreed plan
Select a safe meeting place outside
Make everyone aware of how to call the Fire & Rescue Service.



If you are unable to use the normal way out, consider alternative routes:
Rear doors
Patio doors
Windows



If you are cut off by fire, try to remain calm:
Close the door and use towels or sheets to block any gaps
Try to make your way to the window
If the room becomes smoky, crawl along the floor
Open the window and try to attract the attention of others



If possible:
Close the door of the room where the fire is
Get everyone out as quickly as possible
Telephone Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service on 999 from a neighbour's house or mobile phone
Never go back into a house until a Fire Officer has told you it is safe to do so



Make sure everyone is aware of these alternatives. If you discover a fire, or the smoke alarm sounds, you will only have a short time to get out.

Planning Your Escape

Watch out for the obvious dangers of smoking in the home

- Take extra care smoking if you are drowsy, taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking. It's too easy to fall asleep and not notice that a cigarette is still burning.
- Don't smoke in bed. It's too easy to fall asleep and set bedding on fire.
- Always use proper ashtrays.
- Make sure when you put out a cigarette, it is really out.
- Take responsibility and keep matches and lighters away from children.



For more information on Fire Safety visit www.nifrs.org

The Firework Safety Code

Firework Safety Code

When buying fireworks, make sure they comply with BS 7114 or its European equivalent and are clearly marked for their intended use "Indoor, Garden or Display".

- Keep fireworks in a sealed box or tin.
- Use them one at a time, replacing the lid immediately.
- **NEVER** put fireworks in your pocket.
- Read the instructions carefully, using a torch or hand lamp. **NEVER** use a naked flame.
- Light fireworks at arm's length using a taper or a firework lighter.
- Stand well back and **NEVER** return to a firework after it has been lit as it could explode in your face.
- Always supervise children around fireworks.
- **NEVER** throw fireworks.
- Keep all pets and animals indoors.
- Take care of sparklers; wear gloves to hold them and dispose of sparklers in a bucket of water as soon as they are finished.
- Don't set off noisy fireworks late at night and never after 11pm.

Animals do not like fireworks. The flames and noise upsets them. They should always be kept safely indoors around times of the year when fireworks are used. Make sure that they cannot get out through open windows and doors. It is best to keep the curtains closed.

Sparklers

These are often viewed as being harmless but they do burn at fierce temperatures. To a young child, the heat from a sparkler is equivalent to the heat from a welding torch.

- Never give sparklers to young children under five.
- Always wear gloves with sparklers, preferably leather ones.
- Hold it at arm's length while an adult lights it for you.
- Never wave sparklers near someone else as you could burn them.
- Never hold a baby in your arms when you are holding a sparkler.
- When the sparkler has finished, put it into a bucket of cold water straight away and leave it there.



What to know when buying fireworks

- Category 1 (indoor) fireworks must not be sold to children under 16 years of age; Category 2 (garden) and Category 3 (display) fireworks must not be sold to persons under 18 years of age.
- Fireworks cannot be bought in Northern Ireland without a licence. The only exceptions will be Category 1 i.e. sparklers and indoor fireworks.
- To fire any outdoor firework you must apply to the DOJ for a licence
- Fireworks such as aerial wheels, bangers, double bangers, flash bangers, batteries and combinations containing banger, double banger or flash bangers, jumping crackers, jumping ground spinners, spinners, mini rockets and shot tubes whose principal effect is a report or whose internal diameter is greater than 30mm are illegal.
- The cost of a fireworks licence is £30 where the attendance at the firework display will not exceed 100 people. When applying for one you must specify who is using the fireworks.
- Fireworks should not be fired between the hours of 11:00pm and 7:00am.

Need advice on how to deal with debt?

Get in touch for free, confidential and impartial advice

- ☎ 0800 028 1881 (free from mobiles)
- ✉ debt.advice@citizensadvice.co.uk
- 🏠 Visit your local Citizens Advice
- 💻 www.citizensadvice.org/northernireland

Our specialist debt advisers can:

- Talk through the options available to you based on your situation
- Deal with all kinds of debts including urgent issues and bankruptcy
- Help you to prioritise your debts to make sure that the most urgent issues are dealt with quickly
- Help you to budget accurately to work out how much you can afford to pay
- Negotiate with creditors on your behalf

citizens advice Northern Ireland



citizens advice Northern Ireland

The Digital Age IT Toolkit is a free downloadable learning resource to help everybody get online and connected.

It can be used by individuals learners or to provide tutor guidance for those wishing to support others to get online. It is also an ideal tool for connecting generations through IT skill sharing - download, share and help others get connected!



FREE

I.T.

TOOLKIT



Download for free at
www.digital-age.org.uk

The Digital Age Project is an initiative that focuses on the promotion of digital inclusion, particularly with older people in sheltered accommodation. The project is supported by the Big Lottery Fund and delivered by a partnership comprising LGNI (Linking Generations Northern Ireland – part of the Beth Johnson Foundation) as lead partner with Ignite IT, Zenith IT Solutions, Learning & Work Institute, NIFHA (NI Federation of Housing Associations) and in partnership with Go ON NI.



Dates for your diary:

What? Belfast City Monster Mash
Where? The Slipways, Titanic Belfast

When? 30th Oct, 4pm-7pm

What? Twilight Market
Where? St Georges Market
When? 8th Nov, 5pm-11pm
9th Nov, 12noon- 11pm

What? Christmas light switch on
Where? Belfast City Hall
When? 19th Nov, 6.30pm-7.15pm
(This is a free ticketed event. Tickets will be available from the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre on 3rd November at 9.30am)

What? Belfast Christmas Market
Where? Belfast City Hall grounds
When? 19 Nov- 22 Dec
Mon to Wed: 10am- 8pm
Thurs to Sat: 10am- 10pm
Sun: 1pm-6pm

Entry to all of the above events is Free!

For More Info visit
www.belfastcity.gov.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
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
BT14 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