



NB Housing

Homes that build community

Tenants Newsletter

ISSUE 33
OCT 2023

Delivering New Homes



In July, we took possession of 6 new homes in Langley Street, Belfast. These were a mix of both houses and apartments, all designed to the highest standards. The families moving into these new homes were delighted. We're looking forward to handing over more homes like these in the future and more information on our new developments can be found on pages 4 and 5.

For regular updates on our developments keep an eye on our Facebook & Twitter pages!

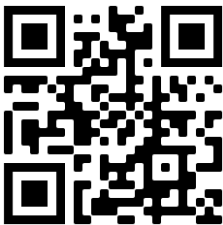
Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

Thanks to all NB Housing tenants and residents who returned their completed Tenant Satisfaction Surveys. NB Housing values feedback from our tenants on the services we provide.

A total of 98 tenants responded to the surveys which represents a 9% return. We seek to continually engage with our tenants to ensure that they are kept informed of our services and that their views are taken into account.

Whilst the satisfaction levels are 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 or by email (info@nb-housing.org).

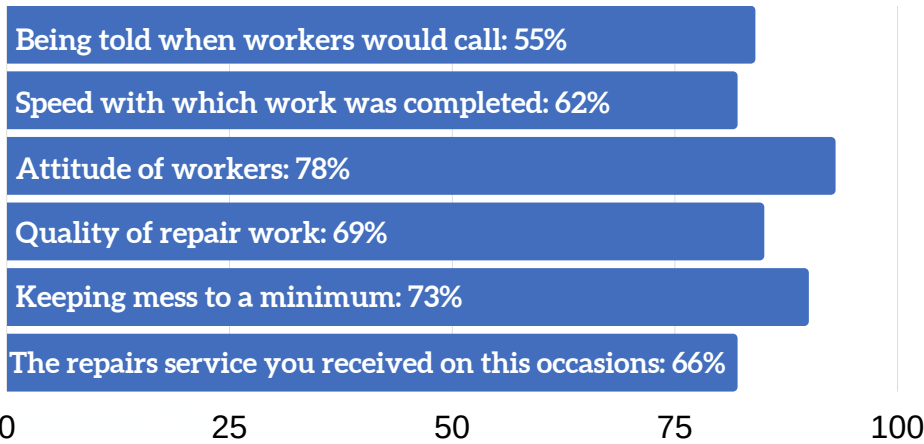
Alternatively, you can submit feedback on our website in the 'contact' tab. Our website can be accessed by scanning the QR code.



70% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the overall service provided by NB Housing

76% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with their accommodation

Contractor Performance



77% of tenants surveyed said when they last had contact with NB Housing, it was easy to get hold of the right person

85% of tenants surveyed said that staff were able to deal with their query

73% of tenants surveyed were satisfied that NB Housing is keeping them informed

87% of tenants surveyed said that they found staff helpful

Community Development & Tenant Participation

Flax Foyer Celebrates Good Relations Week

The Foyer embraces all cultures with a common goal in overcoming homelessness. Each young person's journey through homelessness is different, each and every one is unique and special. Our young people help each other and share their limited resources and experiences. This Good Relations Week we celebrated the theme 'Together' by enjoying food, games and good company. The Supper Club was put on for residents to come down to the common room, make toasties and play games together. The young people also played a twist on the popular TV show Come Dine with Me, called "Let's Dine Together". Each young person had a dish to make and was inspired from cuisines around the world. The food was enjoyed and scored by others in the Foyer.

The cooking was supervised by Eamonn (our own in-house chef!) making sure all went to plan. There was a lot of laughter and of course voting of which young person was going to win. It was great fun and wonderful to see the young people let go of their problems in life for a short while and enjoy themselves. Our lovely winner got some vouchers for her great cooking skills and our runner ups got sweets. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it's one we certainly would like to give them the opportunity of doing again. Maybe a Christmas special is on the cards.....stay tuned!

Tenant Participation



During this quarter some tenants took part in ceramic painting classes, where they were each given a trinket dish and plant pot to paint and take home. This was a fun activity and feedback received from everyone who took part was that it was very enjoyable!

If you would like to get involved in any activities please contact us on 028 90592110 to register your interest. Tenant participation activity is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and we are always keen to encourage new members to come aboard. Our Tenant Forum also provides tenants with the opportunity to express their views on our service and get involved in reviewing some of our policies and processes.

Our New Homes

NB Housing continues to play an important role in providing high quality family homes for people in need of housing. Here are some examples of recent handovers, schemes in construction and planned developments.

197-203 Crumlin Road, Belfast

Progress at 197-203 Crumlin Road has been good and homes are currently expected to be completed during December 2023. This scheme will consist of 9 x 2 bed houses, 3 x 3 bed houses and 2 x 1 bed apartments.



Gobrana Road, Glenavy

The first handover of 20 x 3 bedroom homes in Glenavy is expected during October 2023.



283-285 Kingsway, Dunmurry

Works have commenced to provide 14 apartments in Dunmurry. Below is an artists impression of what the development will look like. Watch this space for more progress pictures!



Rehabilitated Properties

Works are ongoing to 16 houses across the Greater Belfast area. Below are examples of completed properties.



An Update from our Maintenance Team

Repair Reporting

You can report a repair either in person, by telephone, by fax, email, by using My Tenancy or in writing. When contacting NB Housing, please ask to be put through to the Maintenance Department. Our Maintenance team will ask for information on the repair request, make a decision if it is the landlords responsibility and if so we will require a contact telephone number for contractor access arrangements.



We prioritise the repairs into one of three categories. Completion dates are detailed in the text issued to each tenant. We will prioritise the repair 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.

NB Housing employs Radius Connect 24 to deal with out of hours emergency repairs. You can contact them on 028 9042 1010 to report your repair at any time when the office is not open including weekends and Bank Holidays.



Safety Inspections

We carry out an annual inspection of your heating boiler and 5 yearly inspection of the electrical installations. These are legal and regulatory requirements and tenants should facilitate access when notified by our appointed contractors. Failure to provide access is a breach of tenancy and will result in a Notice Seeking Possession being served, the capping of the fuel supply (where possible) and legal action to obtain access or to recover the tenancy. All costs associated with legal action will be recoverable from tenants. These inspections also ensure that the systems are operating correctly and are not using too much energy, so please work with us and grant access.



Bulky Waste

Most councils provide a bulky waste collection service for free or a small charge. Bulky waste should not be dumped in bin stores or communal areas. Tenants should arrange the collection date with their local council and keep the item within their property and present for collection on the agreed date.

If tenants are found to be dumping bulky items, the Association will recover all costs for the disposal from the tenant, so please utilise your local council bulky waste collection service



Communal Bin Stores

The bin stores at several schemes are constantly being found in a poor state and placing increased pressure on the caretaking team.

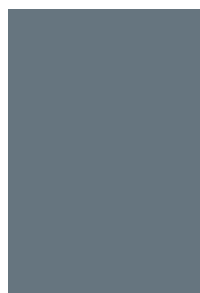


Some tenants are dumping rubbish and not making use of the bins provided. Recycled items must be placed in the recycling bins provided. All rubbish must be bagged up and put in the bins provided. If bins are full, please take the bags back to your apartment until the bins have been emptied. Do not leave them on the ground as this can cause a rodent problem.



End of Tenancies

The Association has seen a worrying trend of properties being left in very poor condition at the end of tenancies. When we receive properties in poor condition, this adds to the delay in re-letting the property to the next family and the additional costs in bringing the property to a lettable standard comes out of our maintenance budget.



A condition of your tenancy is to maintain a lettable standard. You can view the lettable standards leaflet by scanning the below QR code.



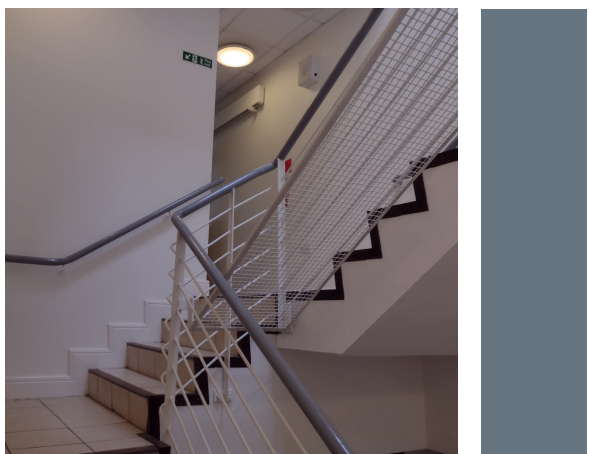
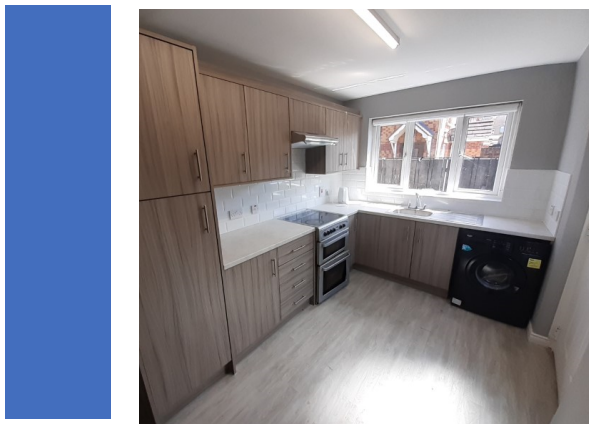
If you fail to leave the property in a lettable condition, the Association will seek to recover the costs.

Planned Maintenance

The Association has recently completed some improvement schemes which included:

- Kitchen replacements
- Redecoration of Rosemount House
- Replacement windows to Flax Foyer

The Association is currently working with our consultants on future improvement schemes and we will be commencing consultation with tenants in the near future.



Home Insurance/ Broken Glass

The Association insures the building you live in against damage, however we do not cover tenant belongings. Likewise, the Association is not responsible for replacement of glazing/glass to windows or doors regardless of the cause. We encourage all tenants to take out home insurance to cover any unforeseen circumstances that may arise during your tenancy.



Common Areas

Common areas should be kept free of tenant's belongings. If items are found in the common area they will be disposed of and any costs will be recovered from the tenant.

Contact Details

Are your contact details up to date with us? Please ensure that we hold the current telephone number and email for you. These details are needed to ensure we provide important information of any repairs raised and allows tenants to complete a satisfaction survey for any repair carried out. If you would like to provide any new details please contact our office on 028 9035 1131.



Fire Safety In Your Home

It is vital that you have a fire escape plan in place so that everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire. As the best course of action will change according to your location, the type of building and the extent and whereabouts of fire, it is important that everyone knows what to do in different situations. It is therefore recommended to plan and practice multiple escape routes, and follow a defined course of action should you find a fire in your home.

What steps can I take to prevent fires occurring in my home?

Smoking

- Never leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended- it may fall onto an armchair or carpet which will soon catch fire and give off dense smoke and fumes.
- Never smoke in a chair if you think you may doze off.
- Never smoke in bed.

Candles

- Never leave a candle unattended.
- Use a suitable holder that will not allow heat to pass through.
- Do not place candles on plastic surfaces or leave near soft furnishings.

Electrics

- Do not overload electric sockets or use multiple extension leads.
- If a socket is heat damaged, there is a fault; get an electrician to check it.
- Use the correct fuse.
- Only professional tradesmen should repair faulty electrical appliances or wiring.

Matches

- Keep matches and lighters away from children so that they cannot play with them.

Alcohol

- Take extra care if smoking. Do not smoke in bed or in a comfortable chair. It is too easy to fall asleep.
- Should you decide to cook do not leave appliances unattended.

Recommended steps to take in the event of a fire at home:

- Stay Calm
- Alert everyone inside the house
- Using a pre-planned escape route, get everyone out as quickly as possible. Do not delay by gathering possessions. You need to act quickly.
- Try to keep windows and doors closed when evacuating (only open them to escape) - if possible close the door to the room where the fire is located and close all doors behind you - this will delay the spread of fire
- Never use a lift
- If there is a lot of smoke stay close to the floor - smoke rises so the lower air is cleaner and easier to breathe
- If you are unsure as to the whereabouts of the fire, make sure you check doorknobs with the back of your hand before opening it (the fire could potentially be on the other side).

What do I do once I am outside?

- Once you are outside and safe, call 999
- Give your full address, details of where you are
- Details of the building on fire
- Details of anyone still inside and their whereabouts (if known)
- Don't go back into the building. Wait for the Fire Service to arrive. By going back into the building you may hinder the Fire Service efforts to put out the fire, and put your life at risk.

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.

Your stopcock is normally located beneath your kitchen sink, however if you can't locate, please contact the maintenance team for advice.

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 24 on 080 0731 3081 if our office is closed.

Weather Conditions & Limitations of Works

During the winter period it may cause contractors to 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 Christmas holiday period. NB Housing staff members will be able to discuss any concerns you may have by contacting the Crumlin Road office on 028 9035 1131.

Cold Weather Payments

You may be entitled to financial help during cold spells. Find out more about cold weather payments on the NI Direct website

Be Prepared For Winter

Staying Warm

It's important to stay protected during winter with the drop-in temperature.

Cold weather can affect your body's ability to fight off viruses and infections. By keeping warm, you can help yourself this winter.

You're at greater risk of illness in cold weather if you:

- Are aged over 65
- Are on a low income, and find heating difficult to afford
- Have a long-term health condition such as heart, lung or kidney disease
- Have a disability

Tips on how to stay warm at home during the day:

- Heat your main living room to around 18-21°C (64-70°F) and the rest of the house to at least 16°C (61°F)
- Heat all the rooms you use during the day
- If you can't heat all your rooms, make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed
- Set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed
- In very cold weather, set the heating to come on earlier rather than turning the thermostat up, so you won't be cold while you wait for your home to heat up
- Keep the temperature above 18°C (65°F) in your bedroom
- To prevent the risk of electrocution, avoid using an electric blanket with a hot water bottle
- To prevent the risk of scalds or burns, make sure you fill your hot water bottles with warm water - never use boiling water.

If you have an electric blanket:

- Check what type it is – some are designed to only warm the bed before you get in and should not be used throughout the night. Wear warm clothes.

You can help keep warm by:

- Wearing plenty of thin layers rather than one thick one
- Putting on a coat, hat, scarf, gloves and warm shoes or boots when you go outside
- Wearing clothes made of wool or fleecy synthetic fibres (cotton is only effective if the garment stays dry)
- Wearing bed socks and thermal underwear at night. If possible, stay indoors during a cold period if you have heart or respiratory problems.

Eat Well

A balanced diet will help keep you warm and healthy during the winter. Make sure you and your family eat at least one hot meal, such as soup which is nutritious, which will keep you warm and is inexpensive to make or buy.

Stay Active & Stay In Touch

Staying active is good for your health. Walking, for example, can be good for you. If the weather prevents you getting outside, stay active indoors by catching up on all the household tasks you've been putting off. Stay in contact with friends and family, especially if you've been stuck in the house for a few days. If you have elderly relatives or neighbours who might need help, check up on them. It's important to make sure your heating is safe, and your house is properly ventilated, to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. NB Housing will service boilers annually, so it is imperative that you allow engineers access to your home when arranged.

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 Office Visit Service

Should you require an out of hours visit, please make a request directly by calling our office.

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. 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) : 02890423811

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

INSEC Security: 028 9020 0080

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), can contact us via email: info@nb-housing.org , repairs@nb-housing.org or can text us on 074 9820 2221