



# NB Housing

Homes that build community

## Tenants Newsletter

ISSUE 31

MAR 2023

### Fundraising at Holyrood House



The residents & staff at Holyrood House had a fundraiser for Ardoyne Youth Club on 27th January 2023. They cooked a lunch, sold some ballots & donations were received from some local businesses.

This year the residents chose the youth club because they have had their funding cut and as a result they may not be able to run the intergenerational activities with the residents.

This is unfortunate because the youth leaders & young people came to Holyrood House approximately 3 times per year and put on 'fun days'. Some of the residents are house bound and this was a great social outlet for them, if it has to stop, it will be greatly missed.

Altogether, £700 was raised on the day and on Friday 3rd February some of the youth leaders and young people came to Holyrood House and the cheque was presented to them.

# Community Development & Tenant Participation

## Introducing our New Community Development Officer

Rebecca Wilson has just recently joined us as our Community Development Officer. Rebecca's role includes helping you to get your voices heard and encouraging you to become involved with your community. We are always keen to recruit new members for our Tenant's Forum where you will have an opportunity to express your views as to how we can improve upon our services. You can also take part in our activities which provide a wonderful opportunity to get together and meet new people.

Rebecca can also offer tenants support and referrals with housing issues and benefits. If you are interested in participating in any of our groups or projects please contact Rebecca at [Rebecca.wilson@nb-housing.org](mailto:Rebecca.wilson@nb-housing.org) or via telephone: 02890592110. Rebecca looks forward to meeting you!

## 'Get Crafty' Programme

Rebecca is currently working with some tenants on a 'Get Crafty' programme, which consists of 3 different workshops including flower arranging, pamper craft workshops which include soap and bath bomb making, wax melts and candle making, with the final part of the programme being an Easter wreath workshop.

The flower arranging class was held recently at the Houben Centre and all participants enjoyed the class and left with lovely spring centre pieces! Everyone was given information about the greenery and flowers used in their arrangements, and they all found the class very relaxing and easy to follow.

Rebecca then held a soap and bath bomb class where tenants were able to make their own soaps and bath bombs. At the end of the class, they were taught how to make an origami box to take their work home in. Some tenants were unable to make this class and these boxes were delivered to them which they enjoyed.



If you would like to be part of the action  
please get in touch with us!

We hope to soon deliver

- Seasonal craft classes
- Cooking programmes
- Gardening projects
- Money management classes

## Our New Website!

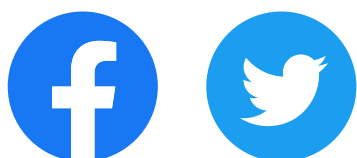
Have you seen our new website? We recently refreshed our website [www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org) and the website contains a wealth of information about the association, its people and its properties. You will also find many useful links that will provide information on upcoming events, available properties, newsletters, new developments and much more.

We hope you find the website easy to navigate and that it provides what you are looking for. As always, we want to hear what you think. Simply complete a comment form, or make a suggestion online. We are always seeking new ideas and ways to improve our services for you, our tenants.



## Facebook & Twitter

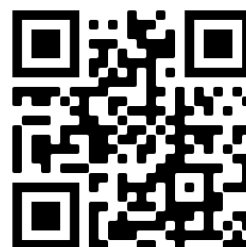
Did you know that we have Facebook & Twitter? We post regularly so that our tenants can keep up to date with what is happening at NB Housing. We would love as many tenants as possible to like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. To like us on Facebook simply type NB Housing into the search box at the top of the page. To follow us on twitter, search @nbhousing and click follow.



## My Tenancy

My Tenancy is an online portal where you can view information related to your tenancy at NB Housing 24/7. This information will include your current rent balance, repairs on your home, important documents, contact information etc. You will also be able to pay your rent and request any repair work for your home.

The portal can be accessed through our website [www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org). You can scan the below QR code with your phone and it will take you straight to our website. Once there, you can select 'My Tenancy' from the drop down menu. If you are accessing the website from a desktop you can click on the 'My Tenancy' tab in the top right hand corner.



Before creating an account, you'll need to ensure that you have:

- Access to a valid email account
- Provided NB-Housing with your date of birth and your valid email address
- Your tenant reference key/account code. If you do not know your account code, just give us a call on 02890592110 and we can let you know what this is.

Why not set up your account now and enjoy access to your account whenever you need it.

# Have Your Say!

## Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022/23

Enclosed you will find your Tenants Satisfaction Survey.

This is your opportunity to voice your opinion and views on the services NB Housing offers. It will assist us to make improvement where necessary and therefore it is important we get your feedback.

Should you require any assistance in completing the form please let us know and we will try our best to facilitate this.

As a thank you for returning the survey with your comments by 14th April you will be entered into a free prize draw!

The lucky winners will receive £100 (1st prize), £50 (2nd prize), £25 (3rd prize).



## Managed Migration to Universal Credit

The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) has been piloting the managed migration to UC in some areas of Great Britain for some months now. It is however its intention to begin to roll this out to the remaining areas of the UK in April 2023, with a view to completing the process within 18-24 months. DWP will write to you to tell you when you will be moved over to UC. We would advise you to seek benefit advice as soon as possible in preparation for this move. Please contact your local advice centre or if you are unsure who to speak to, contact your Housing Officer who will be able to signpost you to the relevant agency.

Please be aware that when you receive Universal Credit your rates will not be paid automatically. You must make a separate application for Rate Rebate at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/create-or-log-rate-rebate-account](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/create-or-log-rate-rebate-account)

## Spring Bank Holiday Office Closure

Our offices will be closed on the following dates for the bank holidays closures in April and May 2023;

- Easter Monday: Monday 10th April 2023
- Easter Tuesday: Tuesday 11th April 2023
- Early May Bank Holiday: Monday 1st May 2023
- Bank Holiday for the coronation of King Charles: Monday 8th May 2023
- Spring Bank Holiday: Monday 29th May 2023

In the event of an out of hours emergency repair, please call Radius Connect24 on 02890423811



# How is My Rent Calculated?

You will have recently received correspondence regarding your rent increase and may be wondering how this is calculated.

NB Housing has adopted a calculation that set rents at the lowest possible level. This year an increase of 6.75% has been set and while we appreciate this is high, this is against inflation running at over 10% and maintenance costs escalating by 30%. The rent will be compared against other housing providers in the area with similar properties and the rent will vary depending on the type of building, the number of rooms, and any additional characteristics.

The costs that NB Housing seeks to meet from rental income are as follows:

- All management related cost including overheads, staff salaries, stationery, office costs, office running costs, etc.
- Day to day maintenance of your property.
- Income lost through void properties and bad debts.
- Costs of future planned and major repair work, such as kitchen or heating replacement.
- Insurance costs excluding home contents insurance.
- The costs associated with servicing of loan repayments and interest charges\*. \* (the association received government grant assistance for a proportion of the costs for new stock and remaining sum is financed through private finance)



The basis of calculating the rents are as follows:

- Each new development project will be subject to an economic appraisal, and long term cash flow. The cash flow will predict scheme costs, private finance requirements, management & maintenance allowances and voids. Income from rent shall be set to cover all outgoings relating to the scheme.

Your rent is charged weekly on a Monday.

## How is my service charge calculated?

If your property is in a mutli-dwelling (i.e. more than one property in the same building) or your property has a communal area you will be charged a service charge each week.

The costs that NB Housing seeks to meet from service income are as follows:

- Heat, light, repairs and cleaning of communal areas
- Maintenance of grounds and lifts
- New equipment in apartment if supplied by the association.

The basis of calculating the service charge are as follows:

- Each year the association will review the projected costs for the year and set a charge will cover all expenditure.

If you have any further questions about how your rent or service charge is calculated please contact our Housing Team on 028 9059 2110

# Our New Homes

An update from the Development Team

## 197-203 Crumlin Road



Works commenced on this new build development in March 2022. Once complete the scheme will provide 3 x 3 bed houses, 9 x 2 bed houses and 2 x 1 bed apartments. This programme is due to complete in the Summer of 2023.

## Langley Street

Works commenced on this new build development in September 2022. Once complete the scheme will provide 3 x 2 bed houses, 2 x 2 bed apartments and 1 x 1 bed apartment. The project is due to complete in the Autumn of 2023.



## Drummond Brae, Ballynahinch

The 2 units in Drummond Brea have been procured using the Off-The-shelf methodology. The scheme will deliver our first properties within the Newry, Mourne and Down District council area. The units are currently programmed to complete in Spring 2023 and will deliver 2 x 3 bed houses.



## Rehab Units

NB Housing have in recent years undertaken refurbishment of houses bought from the private housing market. Works undertaken included a new kitchen, new front and rear doors and windows, internal doors, rewiring, new heating system, insulation upgrade, landscaping works, new roof and felt and external fencing. Below are a few photos of one of the recent completed rehabs in Millisle.



We hope to commence work to a further 23 units throughout 2023 bringing much needed social housing for those in need.

## Future Developments: 22-30 Hopefield Avenue

Our scheme at Hopefield Avenue, Belfast will provide 15 x 2 bed apartments and 3 x 2 bed wheelchair apartments. We hope to be on site during the summer of 2023.



# An Update from our Maintenance Team

## Boiler Services and Access for Contractors

It is vital that all tenants provide access to NB Housing contractors to enable works to be completed. It is particularly important that you grant access for your annual Gas Boiler Service. This is a health and safety requirement and is essential to ensure the safe operation of your boiler. It also ensures that your boiler is working efficiently and given the high cost of fuel, it is in your interest to have this completed on time.

Failure to provide access will result in abortive call outs. If access continues to be an issue, the Association may instruct the capping of the gas supply at your home until the boiler service is complete.

Please note all additional costs associated with these actions will be deemed recoverable from tenants.

If you are unable to facilitate a contractor attending, please contact NB Housing on 02890351131, so alternative arrangements can be made.



## Planned Maintenance Update

At NB Housing we continue to update and maintain your properties. Below is selection of schemes planned to start in March 2023;

- Oil to gas heating conversion scheme in Shankill area of Belfast.
- Kitchen replacement scheme 52 properties throughout North Belfast
- Replacement Windows at Flax Foyer
- Internal Decoration Brookfield Mill
- Internal Decoration Rosemount House

The above scheme represents an investment of £700,000

## End of Tenancy Repairs

When terminating your tenancy, NB Housing expects properties to be left in a good standard. This includes the property being cleared from belongings and any gas/electric top up cards provided for the next tenant.

A member of our Maintenance Team will carry out an inspection and if any defects or non-standard items remain in the property, we will proceed to make the property suitable for re-letting and will then calculate recharges costs.

## Stock Condition Surveys

WH Stephens has been appointed to carry out a stock condition survey of our properties. This exercise is vital to inform future maintenance requirements and we would appreciate in the event that your home is selected for survey that access is granted.

## Alterations to Properties

You should not make any alteration to your property without requesting the Associations written permission and our Team will have to carry out an inspection to review your request. An alteration may involve works such as:

- Removing internal walls
- Erection of railings
- Conservatories
- External decoration
- Changes to electrical fittings
- Hard landscaping

Please note that the Association will not provide any permission for a conversion to the loft/attic space to occur.

If you carry out any works without permission from the association you will be responsible for returning the works back to their original condition.

If you have any queries then please do not hesitate to get in contact with the Maintenance Team on 02890351131.

## Contact Details

Are your contact details up to date? Please ensure that we hold your current telephone number and email.



## Home Insurance

NB Housing insures the building you live in against damage, however we do not cover tenant belongings. We encourage all tenants to take out home insurance so that your own belongings and furniture is adequately covered.

Home contents insurance can be purchased for as little as £63 per year and we encourage you to shop around for the best deal.



## Sort Your Rubbish

Any furniture that requires disposal should be arranged with your local council who will provide a bulky waste collection. Any item for disposal should be kept in your home until the day of collection as agreed with the council.

## Bin Stores

Bins stores in apartment schemes are for the sole use of residents. It is essential that all rubbish is placed into the appropriate bins. The number and size of bins provided in each scheme is determined by the local council and NB Housing has no control over those decisions. Each scheme has recycling facilities and we urge all tenants to use these to reduce the amount of waste.



# 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.



# Condensation in your Home

## What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a cold surface, such as when windows steam up. This is a very common issue as we all generate moisture as we breathe and carry out normal daily tasks such as cooking and washing. In some severe cases condensation can lead to mould on walls and ceilings and can also lead to damp patches.

As your landlord we are committed to working with our tenants to address any cases of condensation. We are particularly mindful that the high cost of heating your home may add to the issue as temperature reduce allowing more cold spots to develop. We ask any tenant who is experiencing condensation to please contact our Maintenance Team and an inspection will be carried out.

## Some useful tips to reduce moisture from your home

These simple steps will help you produce less moisture in your home:

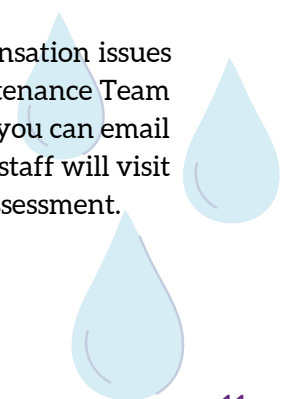
- If you can dry washing outdoors.
- If drying wet washing indoors, put it in the bathroom with the door closed and windows left open.
- If you can, try to keep your house warm for as long as possible. It is advised that a reduced thermostat setting at your boiler or radiators and run for longer is best rather than high heat for a short period.
- If you can, please do not dry wet clothes on 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. It is recommended to open windows and air your home for at least 20 minutes daily.

- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom when in use by opening the windows and using extractor fans. When cooking place lids on pans as this will reduce the amount of moisture escaping into the room.
- 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.
- We recommend extractors are used to remove moisture to outside the property. If you feel your extractor is not effective then please report this to our maintenance team.
- The bathroom is one of the rooms in your home that condensation will occur. Bathing creates a lot of moisture and steam and if it does not go outside then it will form water droplets on cold surfaces such as windows and walls. We recommend the extractor fan is on and left on until moisture is removed, open windows and air the bathroom after use.
- Where excess condensation is on windows and surfaces we recommend that this is wiped with a towel.

## How to remove mould

- Wipe mould off immediately with water using a sponge or cloth.
- We recommend you 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.

If you have any damp or condensation issues please report these to our Maintenance Team on 02890351131. Alternatively, you can email us at [info@nb-housing.org](mailto:info@nb-housing.org). Our staff will visit the property and complete an assessment.



### 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) : 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](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