

## Ongoing New Lodge New Build Redevelopment continues to deliver essential new homes to **North Belfast**



Following on from our successful delivery of 56 new homes in 2017/2018, the Association is pleased to report we are on track to acquire an additional 88 new homes within 2018/19.

In June 2018, we were delighted to take possession of 31 new homes, which were acquired through completion of Phase 1 of the New Lodge Redevelopment Scheme.

A further 8 new homes were acquired under Phase 2 in early September 2018.

An additional 18 new homes will be acquired under Phase 3 in mid-December 2018, whilst the remaining 31 new homes, under Phases 4 & 5, will be completed in early 2019.

As part of the handover process, tenant welcome boxes were distributed by us and Abunance Grace, a local Christian organisation based in McCrory Hall on Duncairn Gardens.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Management within Newington Housing, we wish to express a warm welcome to our new tenants and sincerely thank all those who played a pivotal role in ensuring the delivery and handover of such essential new homes for the local area.

Moving forward, we as an organisation intend to continue to build upon our recent growth and success, whilst ensuring our service delivery standards to our existing tenant remains at the core of what we do best.



## Notice of Upcoming T.D.K Resident's Group Christmas Event

TDK Resident Group are delighted to inform you that "Santa" will be delivering selection boxes to all the children in Thorndale, Duncairn, Kinnaid Street, Terrace and Avenue on.

**FRIDAY, 14TH DECEMBER 2018 AT 7:00PM.**

Whilst travelling through the area, they will be distributing selection boxes to local children.

TDK also intend to hold a collection on the evening to raise essential funding for the Children's Cancer Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital and it is hoped local residents will come out and participate and contribute to such a worthwhile cause.



### Newington Housing Associations' Annual

## Brian Mullan Community Fund

Following on from the success of last year's inaugural Community Investment Awards, in which £10,000 was distributed between 16 local organisations throughout North Belfast, the Association was delighted to again recently reopen our annual Brian Mullan Community Fund scheme on Monday, 22nd October 2018.

The renaming of these awards by our Tenant Forum, is to commemorate a much loved and well-respected member of our Board of Management, Brian Mullan, who for decades, mostly on a voluntary basis, worked tirelessly to enhance and transform people's lives in various areas throughout North Belfast.

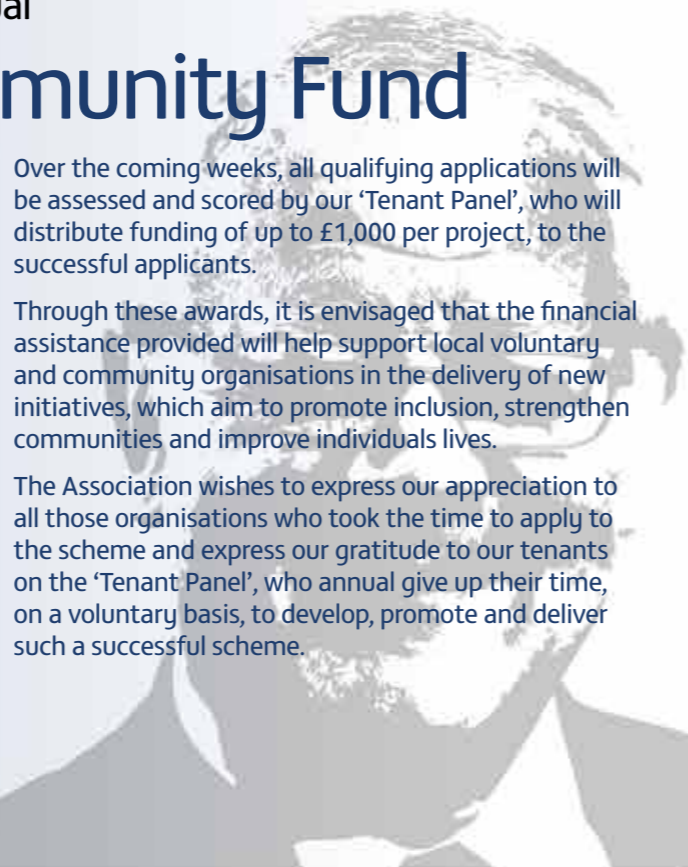
A funding pot of £10,000 was again set aside this year by Newington Housing's Board of Management to ensure the successful delivery of the scheme. The scheme closed on Friday, 16th November 2018 and a total of 20 applications were received.

We are delighted to report that applications have been received from various organisations throughout North Belfast.

Over the coming weeks, all qualifying applications will be assessed and scored by our 'Tenant Panel', who will distribute funding of up to £1,000 per project, to the successful applicants.

Through these awards, it is envisaged that the financial assistance provided will help support local voluntary and community organisations in the delivery of new initiatives, which aim to promote inclusion, strengthen communities and improve individuals lives.

The Association wishes to express our appreciation to all those organisations who took the time to apply to the scheme and express our gratitude to our tenants on the 'Tenant Panel', who annual give up their time, on a voluntary basis, to develop, promote and deliver such a successful scheme.



## What do i do... if there is a change in my circumstances?

### HAVE THERE BEEN ANY RECENT CHANGES IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD CIRCUMSTANCES?

#### WHAT DO I DO IF I RETURN TO WORK?

If there is any change in your current circumstances or if you require any advice regarding any recent or upcoming changes within your household, please contact the Association immediately.

Staff can offer advice on how you may be affected and will assist you to ensure all relevant paperwork is forwarded to the relevant agencies such as Housing Benefit. This will ensure the transition process is as easy as possible for you.



### Newington Credit Union & Newington Housing Association

## Annual Student Bursary Awards 2018

**The winners of Newington Credit Union and Newington Housing Association's Student Bursary Scheme attended an awards evening in Newington Credit Union on Thursday, 18th October 2018.**

The Student Bursary Scheme, which is launched annually to coincide with the commencement of the academic year, has been successfully delivered in partnership by both organisations for several years. It aims to provide financial assistance to young adults and mature students who have recently committed to undertake a third level/higher level course or vocation.

In total, thirteen new recipients received individual bursaries this year. Ten of the awards were sponsored by Newington Credit Union, whilst the remaining three were sponsored by Newington Housing. These bursaries are then automatically awarded to the successful candidate on an annual basis, whilst they remain in education.

Representatives from both Newington Credit Union and Newington Housing Association were present to distribute the awards to the successful candidates.

Newington Credit Union Board Member Michael Devlin said 'On behalf of both organisations I wish to express our delight in receiving such a strong initial interest in the Bursary Scheme and for us to be in a position to award this targeted financial support to the successful candidates. Combined, both organisations received nearly 70 applications; an increase on previous years.

He went on to say, 'Looking ahead, both Newington Credit Union and Newington Housing are fully committed to the continuation of the Annual Student Bursary Scheme and are also actively exploring new initiatives, which will hopefully further assist in increasing local educational attainment levels or which will help enhance communities and local individual lives in general.'

Martin Hamilton, Community Engagement Officer at Newington Housing went on to say 'We sincerely hope our financial contribution provides all the recipients with some meaningful support during this current academic year and looking ahead we wish them every success in achieving their own personal educational aspirations. On behalf Newington Housing, I wish to extend my gratitude to our partner organisation, Newington Credit Union, for their continued support and for their tireless work in delivering essential services to our tenants and others residing locally. On behalf of both organisations, I want to express our congratulations to all the successful candidates and wish them every success on their educational journey. I also want to thank all those who were unsuccessful on this occasion for taking the time to apply for an award and to emphasis to them that if they are still in, or intending to commence third level/higher level education next year, that these awards are run annually and although they were unsuccessful on this occasion, they should consider re-applying again.



# Universal Credits



Universal Credit is a payment for people over 18 but under State Pension age who are on a low income or out of work. It includes support for the cost of housing, children and childcare, and financial support for people with disabilities, carers and people too ill to work.

## WHEN DID UNIVERSAL CREDIT COMMENCE IN NORTH BELFAST

New Claims – Universal Credit was introduced in North Belfast on 14th November 2018 for new claimants.

## ABOUT UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Credit was designed to make sure you are better off in work than on benefits and to give you the support you need to prepare for work, start work or earn more money. There's no limit to the number of hours you can work in a week if you get Universal Credit.

Your benefit will not suddenly be removed if you start work. Your payment will reduce gradually as you earn more. This allows you to take temporary or seasonal jobs without making a new claim or having gaps between paydays as you move in and out of work.

When receiving Universal Credit, it is your responsibility to do everything you can to find work or increase your earnings.

## BENEFITS BEING REPLACED BY UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Credit will replace:

- » Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- » Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- » Income Support
- » Working Tax Credit
- » Child Tax Credit
- » Housing Benefit

## PEOPLE ALREADY RECEIVING A BENEFIT BEING REPLACED BY UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Anyone changing address or moving into one of our homes from the above date will face a change in their circumstances and therefore must apply for Universal

Credits if they are already in receipt of one or more of the above benefits.

As it is now introduced in the North Belfast area, you will no longer be able to make a new claim for the benefits being replaced and you will need to claim Universal Credit instead.

If your circumstances have changed since 14th November 2018 and you are a Newington Housing tenant, **please contact a member of our Housing Management Team immediately on 028 9074 4055.**

A member of our team will provide you with general advice and can signpost/make a referral for you to relevant agencies or community organisations, who will provide you with more professional advice, guidance and support and assist you through the transition process.

If your circumstances do not change, you will move to Universal Credit between July 2019 and March 2023. The Department for Communities will contact you when it is time to move to Universal Credit.

## HOUSING BENEFIT

You must report any change in your circumstances that could affect your claim as soon as possible by contacting **us** and the **Private Sector Housing Benefit Unit within the Housing Executive.**

If you already receive Housing Benefit and you do not have a change in your circumstances, the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities will contact you when it's time to move onto Universal Credit.

You do not need to do anything further now unless your circumstances change.

## HELP WITH RATES

Your Universal Credit payment will not include money towards your rates.

A new Rate Rebate Scheme will replace Housing Benefit for rates for tenants who claim Universal Credit. If you are a Newington Housing tenant and think you may be eligible to claim a Rate Rebate, please contact us immediately on 028 9074 4055 and a member of staff will assist you with the application process.

## GETTING READY FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT

You can start to prepare for Universal Credit by:

- » setting up a bank or building society account if you don't already have one
- » setting up an email address
- » familiarising yourself with using the Internet
- » checking how much rent you pay (including any service charges)
- » making sure you have the documents you need to verify your identity – this may include your passport, driving license or a household bill

## ELIGIBILITY

To get Universal Credit in Northern Ireland you must:

- » live in an area where Universal Credit has been introduced for new claims
- » be aged 18 or over (16 or 17 in certain circumstances – see below)
- » be under State Pension age
- » not be in full time education or training (unless exemptions apply – see below)
- » not have savings over £16,000

You'll get less Universal Credit if you have savings over £6,000 or earn enough money to cover your basic living costs.

If you're aged 16 or 17

You can get Universal Credit if you:

- » have limited capability for work or you have medical evidence and are waiting for a Work Capability Assessment
- » are caring for a severely disabled person
- » are responsible for a child
- » are in a couple with responsibility for at least one child and your partner is eligible for Universal Credit
- » are pregnant and it's 11 weeks or less before your expected week of childbirth

- » had a child in the last 15 weeks
- » don't have parental support, for example, you don't have parents and you're not under local authority care

Exemptions if you're in training or studying full time

You can get Universal Credit if any of the following apply. You're:

- » in a couple and your partner is eligible for Universal Credit
- » responsible for a child, either as a single person or as a couple, if both of you are students
- » disabled and entitled to Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment and have limited capability for work
- » in 'non-advanced education' (for example, studying for A levels or a BTEC National Diploma), are 21 or under and don't have parental support

## OTHER HELP

If you would like independent help and advice on Universal Credit or any of the other welfare changes, you can visit any independent advice office or contact:

### Welfare Changes Helpline

### Housing Rights

### North Belfast Advice Partnership (NBAP)

### Debt Advice (Citizens Advice)

A Universal Credit guide is also available.

- » Universal Credit & You (Website Link): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/744321/universal-credit-and-you-2809.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/744321/universal-credit-and-you-2809.pdf)

## HELP TO SAVE SCHEME

If you are working and claiming Universal Credit, you may be eligible for the Help to Save scheme. The scheme allows you to build savings for up to four years and receive tax-free bonuses.



# Home Adaptations

Do you have a current impairment which restricts you from easily accessing your property or which prevents you from managing sufficiently within your home?

Association staff are available to carry out a quick assessment with you to identify if minor adaptations can be incorporated into your property, to make life easier for you.

We can also assist in referring you for an Occupational Therapist assessment, if major works to your home are required.

For further advice and information, please contact a member of staff on **02890 744055**.

# Why not join Newington's Match Savings Scheme



Newington Housing has been working in partnership with Newington Credit Union over the past few years to deliver a Match Savings Scheme to our tenants. When joining the scheme you must initially save a minimum of £10 per month on a regular basis for the first 6 months. At the end of the 6 months, we will check with Newington Credit Union to ensure you have adhered to the terms of the Scheme.

If you have met the terms of the Scheme, the Association will deposit the amount of £60.00 (i.e. match the minimum savings amount you will have saved over the first 6 months into your account as a reward).

**You can qualify for Newington's Match Savings Scheme if you do not currently have a credit union account or if your credit union account been inactive for more than 2 years.**

**If any tenant is interested in joining the Match Savings Scheme, please call us on 028 9074 4005 and we will be happy to assist you through the application process.**



**YOUR CREDIT UNION**

Planning for tomorrow

# Night Time Safety

## BE SAFE ON THE STREET

Whether you walk, run, cycle or drive the following precautions will help keep you safe.

- » Avoid short cuts and isolated areas
- » Stay away from confrontational situations
- » Carry a personal attack alarm
- » Always use a known taxi firm
- » Avoid lonely bus tops or quiet areas
- » Be Safe when Socialising
- » Avoid going to the pub, club or party alone
- » Do not leave bags, coats or mobile phones unattended
- » **NEVER** leave your drink unattended and **NEVER** accept a drink from someone you do not know or trust
- » Do not drink from large open containers such as punchbowls
- » If you begin to feel drunk, dizzy or disorientated, seek help from a trusted friend or member of pub/club staff.
- » Do not drink and drive and do not accept a lift from anyone who has been drinking
- » Carry enough money for a taxi
- » Do not get separated from friends and do not head home alone

Please remember when you are in a residential area **Be Considerate, Be Respectful, Be Quiet and Be Tidy.**

Alcohol is the number one Rape Drug, many rapes happen when people are drunk. Follow these steps to protect yourself:-

- » Don't get so drunk you don't know what you are doing
- » Don't go alone to a strangers house when you are drunk. Arrange to meet them when you are sober.
- » Don't accept drink from someone you've just met and don't share drinks.
- » Plan how you are getting home. Don't walk home alone, stay with friends.

## BE SMART

- S**ay NO to any sex you don't want.
- M**ake sure you are clearly understood
- A**lcohol affects your judgement so watch what you drink
- R**ape stays with you for life
- T**ake care of each other

# Domestic Violence

Incidents of Domestic Violence tend to increase over the Christmas period, if you are a victim or know someone who is a victim **DON'T tolerate it, DO report it.**

**Contact police on 999 in an emergency or 101 for non-emergency or Women's Aid on 02890 66 60 49**

# A Christmas Present to You

If you have a bike or are buying a new bike this Christmas, you can contact the Crime Prevention Officer in Tennent Street on telephone number 101 for a free Bike Register Bike Marking Kit.



## Contents Insurance Are YOU Covered?

The Association would advise all tenants that it is their responsibility to take out Contents Insurance.

The Association is not liable for any loss or damage caused to Tenant's belongings Contents Insurance can be obtained from most Insurance Brokers.



## Useful Numbers

NIHE: 03448 920 900

Phoenix Gas: 08454 55 55 55

POWER NI: 03457 643 643

### BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Pest Control: 02890 270431

B.C.C Noise Control: 02890 373 006

B.C.C Waste Management: 02890 270 657



Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

*Belfast Family Support Hub brings together organisations that deliver services to children/young people (0-18yrs) and their parents/carers. This includes community, statutory and family support service.*

For further information, please contact **Edith McManus**, Co-Ordinator of the Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub by phone on **02890 749986** or email her at: [edith.mcmanus@ashtoncentre.com](mailto:edith.mcmanus@ashtoncentre.com)

OR

**Karen McClean**, Co-Ordinator of the Upper North Belfast Family Support Hub by phone on **02890 351020** or email her at: [uppernorthfamilysup-port@vinecentre.org](mailto:uppernorthfamilysup-port@vinecentre.org) or alternatively contact the Association on **02890 744055** for advice, assistance and guidance.



**Newington**  
Housing Association



**02890 744055**

## Tenant Debt Advice Service & Support via Housing Rights Service

The Association operates a referral service for tenant's currently experiencing financial difficulties. The Tenant Debt Advice Services is delivered by Housing Rights Service and is completely confidential.

Any tenant seeking to avail of financial advice and support is urged to contact us for further information.

# Gas safety in your home

## Gas safety inspections

As your landlord, we are legally required to carry out a gas safety inspection each year. The inspection is to check your gas appliances are safe.

**>> Our Gas Safe contractors will carry out the inspections and you do not have to pay anything for the service.**

The Association or our contractor will contact you to arrange access to your home. If your circumstances make it difficult for you to have a gas inspection, please contact us. We will work with you to ensure your service is completed.

As this is a legal requirement, if you do not provide us with access to your home, we will take legal steps to gain entry or take steps to ensure the gas supply to your property is disconnected until your boiler service is completed.



## Gas leaks

If you smell gas or think there's a leak phone **0800 002 001**. Also, make sure you:

- >> Turn off your gas supply immediately
- >> Open windows and doors to let in fresh air
- >> Don't turn electric switches on or off
- >> Don't smoke
- >> Don't use naked flames.

## Carbon monoxide poisoning

Unsafe gas appliances may produce a poisonous gas called carbon monoxide (CO). This gas is odourless and invisible. When breathed in it can cause serious health problems or death.

We have installed CO detectors in all our homes to protect you and your family. If your CO detector is triggered turn off your gas appliances, open windows and contact the Association immediately on **02890 744055** during office hours or our out of hours telecare service on **0800 731 3081**.

## Fire safety advice

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, it is important that we all take steps to ensure all residents have the information they need to raise any fire safety concerns and are well informed about what to do if an incident should occur in their building. High-rise buildings are designed to resist fire and stop the spread of smoke. Most fires are contained and do not spread beyond the flat they originated in.

Safety advice for residents

- >> Newington has installed smoke alarms in all our accommodation and it is important that they are tested at least once a week.
- >> As a tenant, formulate an escape plan in case you ever need to evacuate the building.
- >> Communicate the escape plan to other occupants in your household and with neighbouring tenants.
- >> If you are high up, do not use the lift. If you can, go down the stairs.
- >> In the event of a fire, there will be a designated assembly point located outside your building. If you are unsure where this assembly point is, please contact the Association for clarity.
- >> If you cannot get out of your home, go into one room, then phone 999 and say which room you are in. The fire and rescue service will tell you what to do and they will get there as fast as they can.
- >> Keep exits clear both in your home and in communal areas
- >> Never leave flammable materials/unwanted household furniture in the communal areas or bins stores.
- >> All front doors to flats and doors on corridors and staircases are 'self-closing' fire doors, never wedge them open

Finally, if you spot anything that concerns you, please contact the Association on **028 9074 4055** further additional advice and assistance.



# Home Safety/Protecting your Home

Homes with no security measures in place are **five times** more likely to be burgled than those with simple security measures. Good window locks and strong deadlocks can make a big difference.

By taking just a few steps can make a big difference in keeping your home safe from burglary. Here are a few tips:

## Helpful Tips

- >> Lock your doors and windows every time you leave the house, even when you're just out in the garden.
- >> Remembering to double-lock UPVC doors (lift handle and turn key).
- >> Hide all keys, including car keys, out of sight and away from the letterbox (remember a device could be used to hook keys through the letterbox).
- >> Install a visual burglar alarm and ensure your outside lighting is in working order.
- >> Get a trusted neighbour to keep an eye on your property.
- >> Leave radios or lights in your house on a timer to make the property appear occupied.
- >> Make sure the fences around your garden are in good condition.
- >> Secure bikes at home by locking them to an immovable object inside a locked shed or garage.
- >> Keep ladders and tools stored away; don't leave them outside where they could be used to break into your home.
- >> Ensure side gates are locked to prevent access to the rear of the property.
- >> Ensure rear fencing is in good repair.
- >> Improve natural surveillance at the front of your property i.e. trim high hedges.
- >> Remove valuables from view of ground floor windows.
- >> Store any high value items (i.e. jewellery, passports) in a properly secured safe.

## Beware of Bogus Callers

Reports of bogus callers tricking their way into people's homes are a regular occurrence. Often the problem arises because people are very trusting and are willing to accept strangers into their homes.

It is very important to be wary. Always ask for identification. If you are unsure, don't let them in.

## Our Contact Details/ Reporting Repairs

Contact us directly on: **02890 744055**  
Visit our website: [www.newingtonha.co.uk](http://www.newingtonha.co.uk)  
& (click on report a repair icon on the main screen) or email us directly: [admin@newingtonha.co.uk](mailto:admin@newingtonha.co.uk)

When our offices are closed, Emergency Repairs can be reported through our Out of Hours service via Fold Tele-care on **0800 7313081**

## Meter Box Damages and Rechargeable Repair

The Association is receiving requests from tenants to repair/replace their gas meter boxes, due to malicious damage.

The Association wishes to advise all tenants that the repair/replacement of meter boxes are not the responsibility of the Association and if any tenants request these works, they may be held liable for the associated costs.

# What do I do about mould?

**The environment in the home can become damp. Too much moisture in your home can lead to damp and mould conditions and is often due to condensation.**

## CONDENSATION

Are your wall surfaces, windows, furniture or clothing damp? Can you see black mould growing on them?

If so, it is likely that you have a condensation problem.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. It forms when warm moist air and steam are produced and the warm air comes into contact with, and condenses on, a cold surface before it can leave the building. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

## HOW TO AVOID CONDENSATION

There is no immediate or easy solution but as the occupier you are responsible for balancing the three main factors, which are Heating, Ventilation and Moisture.

Some ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture quickly:-

### Moisture

There are steps which will help you reduce the condensation in your home by producing less moisture:

- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- Do not dry washing on radiators
- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on.
- Tumble dryers must be vented to the outside.

### Ventilation

You can ventilate your home without making draughts to reduce moisture:

- Keep a small window ajar when someone is in the room.
- If your windows have trickle ventilators use them.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider, or better still, use a humidity-controlled electric fan if one is fitted.
- Do not block air-brick vents.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes.
- Avoid putting too many things in cupboards and wardrobes as this stops the air circulating.
- Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- Do not block permanent ventilators.
- Do not draught-proof rooms where there is condensation or mould.

- Do not draught-proof windows in the bathroom and kitchen.
- Do not tamper with any ventilation or extract unit installed within your property.

### Heating and insulation

You can make sure that you have adequate heating and insulation in your home to reduce moisture:

- When at home, the ideal temperature usually ranges between 19-22 degrees Celsius in the living rooms, including the kitchen and bathroom, and 16-20 degrees Celsius in the bedrooms.
- When away from home, the temperature in the rooms should not drop under 15 degrees Celsius to avoid condensation and increased humidity levels.
- Do not heat up cold bedrooms in the evening by opening the door to heated rooms. The warm and humid air will condensate on the cold walls of the bedroom.
- Good insulation of the building creates warmer walls and ceilings, and therefore inhibits mould growth by preventing condensation from forming on them. Note: tight windows and buildings require more active ventilation.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen and bathroom has an extractor fan. This will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.

### FIRST STEPS AGAINST MOULD:

First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear. The long-term solution to avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness. If the above points are followed, condensation should not be a persistent problem in your home.

However, you must remember that a balance is needed between these factors and you may need to experiment and persevere until the problem is resolved.

### To kill and remove mould

- Wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to prevent mould recurring

Note: this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.



# Winter Advice

## HELP YOUR NEIGHBOUR

The cold weather can be a difficult time for people who are vulnerable.

If you know someone who is elderly, has a disability, or is housebound, check on them and make sure they are okay.

During extreme weather conditions many older people will not be able to get out and it is at this time that a visit from a neighbour is most appreciated.

## DON'T FREEZE UP THIS WINTER

During spells of severely cold weather it is possible for water pipes in your home to freeze which may lead to a burst pipe when the thaw sets in. This can cause inconvenience and damage to your home and belongings. These are some simple precautions you can take to reduce the risk of frozen pipes or deal with situations when pipes burst.

## HELP PREVENT YOUR PIPES FROM FREEZING

- » Keep your home as warm as possible, even when you are out, by setting the central heating to come on for short periods throughout the day;
- » If you feel you are able to, lift the trap door to the roof space slightly to allow warmer air to circulate around pipes and water tanks. Remember to close it afterwards;
- » 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 doors to all rooms and minimising drafts from outside;
- » If you are away from home, ensure that the central heating comes on for regular short intervals and ask someone to check regularly for frozen pipes.

## DEALING WITH FROZEN PIPES

- » Turn the water supply off at the stopcock;
- » Protect everything around the pipe that appears to be frozen to avoid damage if it bursts;
- » Open the tap nearest to the part of the pipe you think is frozen so the water can flow through when it has thawed;
- » Thaw the ice in the pipe with a hot water bottle or hairdryer (taking care to keep it well away from any water), beginning from the tap end and working back towards the cold water tank;
- » Never use a heat gun or blow torch;

## FIND YOUR STOPCOCK

The stopcock is used 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 shut off.

Stopcocks are usually found in your kitchen, below the sink unit.

However in some houses the stopcock is found in a front or back hall or in a larder unit. **It is important that you know where the stopcock is and that it is working.**



*(always know where your stopcock is located, prior to an emergency occurring)*

## While you're out shopping... so are they!

Opportunistic thieves are constantly on the lookout for easy chances to steal, especially on the run up to Christmas

There are some simple steps that when taken will greatly reduce opportunities for a thief to take advantage of and thereby the likelihood of anyone's Christmas holiday period being ruined through theft, burglary or car crime.

- » Don't tempt thieves by leaving presents on display in your home or car
- » Be cautious about storing expensive gifts in your home
- » Don't keep large sums of cash in your home
- » Make sure your home is secure and keep doors and windows locked
- » Property mark items using a UV pen with your postcode, house number and initials

## Vehicle Hijack



There has been a small increase in hijackings within Belfast; however, you are unlikely to be a victim. You can reduce the risks even further by following the advice below:-

- » Keep doors locked
- » Keep your windows up at all times
- » Keep valuables out of sight
- » Park in well lit, busy areas or attended car parks
- » When approaching your parked vehicle be alert, avoid listening to MP3 as this will distract you from potential threats
- » If you feel afraid remember to use your horn to attract attention.

## Defrosting of Vehicles

Crime Prevention Officers from the Police Service wish to offer motorists advice about securing their vehicles on dealing with cold winter weather, when motorists warm and defrost vehicles before travelling.

**Kathy Latcham**, a Crime Prevention officer based at Tennent Street Police Station, says "Cold weather presents a number of challenges to motorists, not least that vehicles may be iced over. Many motorists might choose to start and run their car's engine for a short period before driving. This represents a classic example for seasonal, opportunistic crime."

Ms Latcham advises all motorists "To remove keys from the ignition of their vehicle when they are not in the driver's seat. In addition to this, never leave the vehicle with doors or windows opened or unlocked, even for the briefest of moments. Always take time to be aware of the immediate surroundings and persons moving around close by. Stay with your vehicle whilst defrosting it."

All motorists should be aware that leaving the vehicle unattended with keys present may negate insurance cover against theft!



# Belfast City Council Pest Control Service

## HOW TO BOOK A BELFAST CITY COUNCIL PEST CONTROL INSPECTION

Belfast City Council (BCC) have a free pest control service which can help you get rid of rats, mice, fleas, flies, etc. from your home.

The service is available to all our tenants. When contacting them, you will need to provide your name, address, contact details and our contact details, as your landlord.

They currently do not support the removal of problem pests such as wasps or ants or deal with larger animals, such as bats, birds, foxes or squirrels.

They will try to deal with your pest problem as quickly as possible, although you may experience some delays.

Also, if demand is very high, they may not be able to fulfil your request and may recommend the services of commercial pest control companies or that you contact Newington directly.

**To book an inspection or for more information call 028 9027 0431 or email [pestcontrol@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:pestcontrol@belfastcity.gov.uk).**

## ADVICE TO TENANTS WHEN DEALING WITH RODENTS AND PESTS.

Belfast City Councils pest control teams can play a pivotal role in helping you to eradicate rats and mice from your home. By following some simple steps, you can minimise the risk of rats and mice entering your home or garden.

## RATS

### EVIDENCE TO LOOK FOR IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE RATS:

- » Fresh droppings that are soft and moist and coloured brown or black. They are capsule shaped and about 20mm long. You may find them under your kitchen sink, in the hot press, in your loft, or your garage.
- » Fresh gnawing of wood, carpets, papers, cables or furniture.
- » Damage to food or household items.
- » Holes that would usually be 50 - 80mm in diameter and shallow, with dirt usually piled up outside it. Rats like to burrow under sheds and paving stones.
- » Smear marks around well-used entry points as rat hair is oily and leaves a dark stain.
- » A trail of matted grass or trodden soil as a result of constant use of the same tracks.
- » A bad smell.

### HOW TO PREVENT RATS:

- » Ensure all gaps both internal and external are filled in, for example drainpipes, windows or door frames. Rats only need a gap of 25mm (the size of ten pence) to gain entry.
- » Any manholes should be regularly inspected to ensure they are free from rats.
- » All food items and supplies of water should be covered.
- » Gardens should be cut regularly and all weeds removed as these provide food and shelter for rats.
- » Garden sheds should be kept at least 25cm off the ground.
- » All rubbish in both the house and garden should be put in the bin.
- » All garden tools and toys should be stacked neatly when not in use.
- » Bins should be kept closed at all times.
- » Bird feeders should be used rather than scattering food on the ground.

## MICE

### EVIDENCE TO LOOK FOR IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE MICE:

- » Fresh droppings that are soft and moist and coloured brown or black. They are rod shaped and about 2 - 6mm long. You may find them under your kitchen sink, in the hot press, in your loft, or your garage.
- » Damage to food or household items.
- » Smear marks around well-used entry points as mice hair is oily and leaves a dark stain.
- » A bad smell.

### HOW TO PREVENT MICE:

- » Ensure all gaps both internal and external are filled in, for example drainpipes, windows and door frames. Mice only need a gap of 20mm (the size of a pence) to gain entry.
- » Replace the mesh externally on ventilation bricks and slots as it may have worn away.
- » Self-closing door mechanisms should be fitted to back doors to ensure these remain closed as mice often enter premises through an open door.
- » All food items and supplies of water should be covered.
- » Gardens should be cut regularly and all weeds removed. Long grass and weeds provide food and shelter for mice.
- » Garden sheds should be kept at least 25cm off the ground.



## FLEAS

- » Vacuum your house regularly.
- » Get pets regularly treated by a vet for signs of fleas.
- » Groom your pet outdoors to prevent fleas getting into your home.
- » Wash animal bedding regularly using a mild detergent.
- » Spray floor surfaces, particularly cracks and crevices, with an anti-flea spray.

## FLIES

- » Always store leftover food in sealed containers.
- » Don't feed or leave food out for wild pigeons - it can make them ill and could attract other pests.
- » Clean your bin and drains regularly and never leave rubbish lying around.
- » Use a fly spray.

## WILD PIGEONS

- » Don't feed or leave food out for wild pigeons - it can make them ill and could attract other pests.







## Need a Repair?

### Contact details

If you require a repair, when contacting the Association, please provide us with your correct contact details. Also when our contractors are due to call with you, please ensure you have made adequate arrangement for them to gain access. If you request a repair and you then fail to provide access, you will be requested to repay the Association the associated callout charge.

### Boiler Service

The Association is still conducting our annual programme of cyclical gas servicing to all our properties. We appreciate all your assistance in facilitating access to our contractors. If anyone has not yet had their gas boiler serviced and is aware that an engineer has already called with them, can they please contact the Association immediately?



## How to make a Complaint?

### Are you dissatisfied with the service we provide?

If so, please contact us immediately. Information on how to make a complaint is provided within your Tenants Handbook. Complaint Forms can be provided to you, by contacting or calling into our office.

We welcome your feedback and views, and strive to put things right when they go wrong. Staff are available to assist you with this simple process and to ensure a satisfactory resolution is found. **Just call us on 028 90 744055.**

If we cannot resolve your complaint immediately, we will forward you a complaints form or take your complaint over the phone.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and investigated. Our team aim is to treat all complaints as opportunities to improve our services to tenants, so please contact us when you need to.



## Tenancy Fraud and Subletting of NHA properties

Newington H.A. is committed to tackling tenancy fraud to ensure our properties are used to their full potential by those designated to reside within them.

Addressing tenancy fraud can only be achieved with the support of our tenants and the information we receive. If you suspect that someone is committing tenancy fraud or subletting their home to someone else, please contact us immediately.

Tenancy Fraud has a major impact on all those currently awaiting a new home. **To report any suspected Tenancy Fraud, please contact our Housing Team on 028 90 744055.**