

## Celebrating completion of our new build social homes programme for the New Lodge

There were celebrations in September 2019, as the Association officially opened two new social housing developments. The **£13.9m** projects were delivered by us in partnership with Apex Housing Association, with **£7.37m** funding through Housing Association Grant and the remaining **£6.53m** through private finance sourced by Newington.

At North Queen Street, a former police station has made way for **26** homes, built at a cost of **£3.8m** through a combination of **£1.27m** Housing Association Grant and **£2.53m** of private finance. The New Lodge Redevelopment saw delivery of **88** new homes at a cost of **£10.1m** through a combination of **£6.1m** Housing Association Grant and **£4m** of private finance.

Louise Warde-Hunter, Deputy Secretary of Housing, Urban Regeneration and Local Government at the Department for Communities officiated at the openings said: *"It gives me great pleasure to see for myself the contribution the Department of Communities through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Social Housing Development Programme is making in local communities. We have provided over £7m in Housing Association grants to take forward these housing projects. It is terrific to see new homes created, greatly improving the quality of life for the residents bringing many benefits and new beginnings for local communities in these areas of housing need."*

Sean McKenna, Chairman, Newington Housing, said: *"Newington was really pleased to work in partnership with Apex Housing and others to deliver these much-needed homes. It was great to be able to meet some of the new residents and to see our developments already turning into a community."*

Anthony Kerr, Chief Executive, Newington Housing, said: *"I am delighted that individuals and families have already moved into these new homes, which are located within an area of significant housing need. Residents in both developments have access to excellent community*

*services and are in close proximity to the new University of Ulster campus and Belfast City Centre, so people can easily avail of training, education, employment and leisure opportunities, which will undoubtedly enhance their lives.*

*Moving forward, by working closely with our partners, Apex Housing, other statutory agencies and local communities, we are committed to delivering further new homes across North Belfast. Our model of working in partnership at a local level has proven to be a great way to deliver homes and build communities in areas of extremely high need".*







Over the coming months, Newington will be moving to temporary office accommodation at Groundwork, 63-75 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GB.

The purpose of this move is to allow us to construct new office accommodation on our current site on the Limestone Road. The construction of our new office is anticipated to last around 15 months and we hope to be back by Spring 2021.

Immediately prior to the move, the Association will be writing to all our tenants to confirm the exact timeframes regarding our relocation.

We can still be contacted by the usual methods, such as by telephone, email or by calling in with us at the Groundwork building.

## Support Your Local Food Bank

At this time of year many people find it difficult to cope financially and make ends meet. According to the Trussell Trust's, between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, their food bank network distributed 1.6 million three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis across the UK, a 19% increase on the previous year. More than half a million of these went to children.

**The Association will be using our office as a drop off point, right up until the Christmas holidays, for tenant wishing to leave donations.**

Once received, we will be passing all your donations directly onto the North Belfast Advice Partnership for distribution locally.

Alternatively, you can drop off your donations at any of the following collection points:

- Ligoniel Improvement Association, Wolfhill Centre, 148 Ligoniel Road
- Ardoyne Association, 11 Etna Drive, Ardoyne
- Ballysillan Community Forum, The Willowgrove Centre, 925 - 927 Crumlin Road
- The Ashton Centre, 5 Churchill Street, New Lodge



## Housing Management Update



### Partnership working secures a two-year Welfare Advice Post

Over the past few months, the Association, in conjunction with the North Belfast Advice Partnership (NBAP) have been exploring the potential of a acquiring an additional dedicated advice worker to support the delivery of a new and innovative project (i.e. North Belfast Connected Homes Project).

Initially, the Association's Board of Management approved funding of £34,000 to support the delivery of this pilot project for one year. Subsequently, an application was lodged via Nationwide Building Society's Grant Fund, which is managed by the Community Foundation for NI.

Recently NBAP were notified that they were successful in acquiring additional match funding of that which was already committed by the Association, meaning the project can be sustained and delivered for the next two years.

As a local housing provider, we believe that this project will not only directly benefit Newington's tenants; but the whole of North Belfast; as it is envisaged the successful applicant will be utilised in all of NBAP's local offices.

## Why not become an Active Tenant

The Association has various ways to encourage and support active participation. Why not take a look at our current Tenant Participation Strategy

<http://newingtonha.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ten-partstat-2017-2021.pdf>

If you are interested in participating at any level, please contact our **Community Engagement Officer, Martin Hamilton**, on **028 9074 4055**, for further information.





# Children & Safeguarding

## Have you ever considered contacting Social Services, NSPCC or the Police Service of Northern Ireland

Do you have concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or young person? Have you previously witnessed incidents where you feel children may have been put at risk. Don't wait until you're certain. If you have any concerns or suspicions, please report them by one of the following ways:

### Option 1 – Contact Gateway Services/Child protection

Gateway is the first point of contact for all new referrals to children's social work service and is responsible for:

- » Making sure that all new referrals are responded to promptly
- » Linking with children and families to assess their needs and identify appropriate support services
- » Ensuring an immediate response to safeguard children in need of protection
- » Making sure children and young people receive ongoing social work support whenever they need it
- » Ensuring that everyone involved with a child can contribute to the assessment of the child and their family
- » Working closely with other agencies when additional support is needed.

If you are concerned that a child may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, there is help available. Find out more about Child Sexual Exploitation by visiting: <http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/ChildSexualExploitation.htm>

### Option 2 – Contact the Police Service of N. Ireland

Don't delay – call the police on 999, straight away.

### Option 3 – Contact NSPCC

If you are hesitant about contacting Social Services or the PSNI, you can contact NSPCC 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by completing an online report visit <https://forms.nspcc.org.uk/content/nspcc-report-abuse-form/>

If you think a child is in immediate danger, you can also call their Helpline which is available Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends on **0808 800 5000**.

They will listen to your concerns, offer advice and support and can take action on your behalf, if a child is in danger. You don't have to tell them who you are, if you don't want to, or you can ask them not to share your name or contact with the police or social services.

### How to access the Gateway Service

Anyone can contact this service directly in one of the following ways:

#### By phone:

During office hours (9.00am – 5:00pm) - you should contact Gateway on **028 9050 7000**  
At all other times (all through the night, at weekends and over Bank Holidays) - you should contact the out-of-hours Emergency Service: **028 9504 9999**.

#### In person:

Speak to a Duty Social Worker at Gateway Services  
110 Saintfield Road  
BELFAST  
BT8 6HD

### Find out more about how you can remain anonymous below.

You can contact their Helpline anonymously if you do not want to tell them who you are. However, it's really helpful to have your name and contact details, as they may need to contact you for more information in order to protect the child or children that you are concerned about.

It may also help to protect a child if you give permission for them to share those details with the Police or a social worker, or sometimes another agency where necessary, so that they can seek further information from you if they need to.

If you are willing to provide your details, but do not want them to share them with other agencies, please select the 'no' option on the form when submitting a report online. If you are unsure or concerned about completing the form, please call the helpline on **0808 800 5000**. All communications will be recorded, and NSPCC keep records for 15 years.

## Reporting Anti-social Behaviour & Neighbour Nuisance

The Association actively encourages tenants to report incidents of anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance. If you experience behaviour which is causing you alarm, annoyance or distress, it is important that you contact the relevant all relevant statutory agency and the Association immediately. We can then liaise with you and other agencies to jointly tackle and address issues which may arise.

There are ways that you can also help to support any reports or complaints you make to the Association. By doing the following, it can help us take appropriate action and help reduce the likelihood of further issues re-occurring.

## Contact Belfast City Council's Noise Nuisance Team

### By phone:

If you are experiencing Noise Nuisance, please contact Belfast City Council's Noise Team on **028 90 373006**.

#### (Day-time Noise Nuisance)

This number is available Monday – Thursday from 8:30am – 5:00pm and on Friday's from 8:30am – 4:30pm.

#### (Night-time Noise Nuisance)

This number is available Monday – Sunday from 8:00pm – 4:00am.

If the number is busy, leave a message and we'll call you back.

**Please note**, if the noise problem occurs between 8pm and 4am, please report it by phone to **028 9037 3006**.

### By email:

[envhealth@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:envhealth@belfastcity.gov.uk)

### By post:

Noise control  
Cecil Ward Building  
4-10 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BP

## What can Belfast City Council Do?

They can visit or write to those responsible. If we can't resolve the complaint, we'll carry out a more formal investigation and take legal action if necessary.

## Contact the PSNI directly

You can also report serious incidents of ASB or Criminal behaviour to the PSNI by phoning **999** (for emergency assistance only) or by phoning **101** (for general non-emergency assistance).



## Update on SSSC & Benefit Cap Mitigated Payment Protection



There are many challenges facing the Association and our tenants over the coming months ahead. None more so than the continued planned role out of Universal Credit and the potential changes to how current mitigation payments will be assessed, administered, delivered and funded from April 2020.

Currently around 150 of our tenants are still in receipt of mitigated payments, which is a top up payment which contributes towards tenants current housing costs in respect of the Social Sector Size Criteria (more commonly known as the Bedroom Tax) and The Benefit Cap.

Current legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2016 is due to cease at the end of March 2020. The Association acknowledges that if these payments cease, our tenants are likely to face hardship as they will have to meet these costs directly themselves and make payment of any shortfall to us, the landlord.

We are still awaiting clarity and guidance from Department for Communities, on how tenants who are currently in receipt of mitigated payments will be supported from April 2020, prior to us commencing a planned phase of home visits/phone calls with tenants, who are currently in receipt of these payments.

**It is extremely important that our tenants provide us with up to date information regarding the size and make up of their households. If there have recently been additions to your household make-up, can you please contact us immediately on 028 9074 4055.**

Finally, the Association is currently still lobbying with others within the community, voluntary and social housing sector for the renewal of protection measures after March 2020.

### Find your local independent advice centre

Advice centres provide a free, confidential and impartial service and help by advising on how to maximise and maintain your income debt management and budgeting and can refer you on to a food bank if needed. Below is a list of local advice centres located throughout North Belfast.

#### Ardoyne Association

111 Etna Drive  
Ardoyne  
Belfast  
BT14 7NN

Tel: 028 9071 5165

#### Ballysillan Community Forum

The Willowgrove Centre  
925 – 927 Crumlin Road  
Belfast  
BT14 8AB

Tel: 028 9039 1272

#### Advice Space

40 – 44 Duncairn Gardens  
Belfast  
BT15 2GG

Tel: 03001 233 233

#### Ligoniel Improvement Association

Wolfhill Centre  
148 Ligoniel Road  
Belfast  
BT14 8TD

Tel: 028 9039 1225

#### Tar Isteach Advice Service

244 Antrim Road  
Belfast  
BT15 2AR

Tel: 028 9074 6665

#### The Vine Centre

193 Crumlin Road  
Belfast  
BT14 7DX

Tel: 028 9035 1020



### 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.

## Our commitment to working in partnership at a local level



The Association currently attends 14 community-led initiatives throughout North Belfast. At many of these community safety meetings there are representatives from various statutory agencies, community and voluntary sector organisations and local residents. These partnership working groups offer a joined-up approach to tackling local issues facing various areas throughout North Belfast. These are as follows:

Ardoyne Housing & Environmental Group

Girdwood Site Management Group

Girdwood Community Hub Forum Working Group

Thorndale Duncairn Kinnaird Community Group

Duncairn Community Partnership Programme Reference Group

Alexander Park Steering Group

New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership Working Group

New Lodge Safer Streets Initiative

Upper North Belfast Multi-Agency Partnership Group

Upper North Belfast Family Support Hub Working Group

Lower North Belfast Multi-Agency Partnership Group

Lower North Belfast Family Support Working Hub

Lower North Belfast Smile Sure-Start's Management Committee

Advice Plus North Belfast Working Group

Below is a list of local Resident's Groups or local Community Organisations that are actively involved in promoting and assisting to develop safer communities.

Thorndale Duncairn Kinnaird Community Group

New Lodge Safer Streets Initiative

Upper Long Streets Resident's Association

If you would like to become actively involved or would like to acquire further information on any of the above, please contact the Association on **028 9074 4055**.

## Recent concerns regarding Rats & Mice

Over recent weeks, concerns have been raised by some residents within the New Lodge area in relation to vermin, in particular rats.

Issues with rats should in the first instance be reported to Belfast City Council Pest Control – Tel: 028 90 270 431. Once you have contacted the Council, please contact the Association by way of a follow up, so that we are also aware of the issue and can act on your behalf, if this is required.

After you have contacted Pest Control, please contact your Property Services Officer or Housing

Officer, as either of them will be able to provide advice or assistance. If they are unavailable, other members of our team will be able to record your issue and provide you with some quick and relevant advice.

Over the page are some useful tips as a means of prevention for all households. It provides details on how to book a Belfast City Council Pest Control Inspection, general advice for tenant, evidence to look for if you think you have rats and some handy tips on how to prevent rats.







**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).**

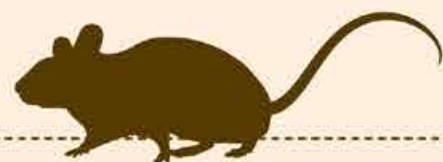
### ADVICE TO TENANTS WHEN DEALING WITH RODENTS AND PESTS.

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.



#### 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.

The Council offer a large bulk item removal service and can be contacted on **028 90 27 0230**. Full details of this service can also be found on their website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins-recycling/bins/bulkywaste.aspx](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins-recycling/bins/bulkywaste.aspx).

Finally, it is essential that tenants ensure that their garden and the locality of your home is kept tidy, cleaned and maintained on a regular basis and if you notice any overgrown grassland, dirty alleyways, any build-up of rubbish and any sign of vermin, that you report it accordingly.



## Development & Property Services Update

### Our New Build Programme

The Association is currently working on a proposal to deliver 28 new homes within Ligoniel, North Belfast. As part of the proposal, we intend to construct a much-needed community facility, which will accommodate the expansion of a local service provider already established within the area.

We are continuing to work in partnership with Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum (CCRF) to identify unoccupied or derelict properties in the Cliftonville area of North Belfast. We aim to invest in these properties and bring them back into use, which will result in the delivery of essential new homes and the revitalisation of the local community in general.

Finally, through our Group Structure Agreement with Apex Housing, we also intend to identify further development opportunities and acquire properties from the open market moving forward.



### Our Planned Maintenance Programme 2019/2020

The Association is in the process of rolling out our Planned Maintenance Programme for 2019/2020. Via our Stock Investment Programme, we are committed to investing a further **£375,000** in our stock during 2019/2020 on the following projects.

- » Replacement of existing gas boilers to 59 properties
- » External cyclical painting to 91 properties
- » Upgrade of Lisieux House flat roofs and eaves
- » Replacement of Door Entry Systems at Camberwell Court and Richmond Lodge Sheltered Schemes
- » Major Thermal Works to 2 properties
- » Improvement of Sound Insulation & Thermal Works at 232 Limestone Road
- » Incorporate additional heating source to 17 homes within the Cliftonville area.

This significant investment by us will result in further improvement of our current stock.





## Investing in the future generation of local professionals

In mid-October, our Head of Development & Property Services Damian Murphy assisted in completing mock interviews with St Malachy's Year 14 pupils. This provided the students with an opportunity to practice their interview skills, help them prepare for the future and support good decision making, which was a key objective of the program.

Geraldine McAlinden from St Malachy College said "On behalf of the College and our Year 14 pupils, I wish to express our sincere thanks to all those who assisted in providing guidance and support at our recent Mock Interview Event.

All of the boys found the experience a very positive one and noted this and their appreciation of all our interviewers in their evaluations.

Judging by both verbal and written comments, each pupil has learned a lot and has taken to heart the advice provided regarding personal statements, course and career choices as well as interview technique.

Many admit they are now more inspired to achieve their best and they look to the future with more confidence, determination and realism.

A significant number of staff also have commented on the very positive feedback they have received from the boys in class.

All those that participated in the event added tremendous value to the 'Careers' experience of our pupils and I hope to be in contact regarding further collaborations in the future".

Damian Murphy went on to say "On behalf of the Association I wish to convey my congratulations to all the students for the way they conducted themselves during the interview process, and I extend my best wishes to them with the remainder of their academic year and also wish them every success in achieving their own personal aspirations, moving forward".



## 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**.



## Tenant Participation & Community Engagement

### Update from your Tenant Forum

With support from Newington, we have recently acquired the services of Empowering Communities to help us to progress the Forum and have developed an action plan to help us achieve the delivery of our current priorities and objectives by the end of March 2020.

Over recent months, we have achieved the following:

- NHA's Senior Management Team have provided us with an overview of the workings of NHA departments.
- We have helped redesign an online Tenant Satisfaction Survey and are currently completing home visits within different areas where the Association provides homes.
- We are currently reviewing the Tenant Forum & NHA's staff training needs.

Over the coming months, we intend to complete the following:

- Carry out a policy review and scrutiny/service improvement exercise.
- Set up a working group to organise a tenant conference for tenants and staff to attend.
- In conjunction with the Association, we intend to develop our new Tenant Participation Strategy for 2020 – 2023



## Local Community Clean Up Events

Over the summer months, the Association held six community clean up events in various parts of North Belfast where we own and manage our homes.

Brushes, shovels, litter picks, gloves and black bags were supplied by Belfast City Council for the events. The Association arranged for skips to be delivered on the day of each event.

The Association wishes to thank all our residents and local volunteers who came out to help make each event such a huge success.



# New Lodge Fun Day

As part of the New Lodge Festival programme, the Association held a community fun day and photo exhibition 'Looking Back – Looking Forward' at New Lodge Youth Centre on the 9th August 2019.

This event was to celebrate our recent completion of the current phases of the New Lodge Redevelopment. Although the weather didn't stay good and it turned extremely wet, it did not dampen the spirit of those in attendance and a fantastic day was had by all.

The Association wishes to convey our appreciation to New Lodge Youth Centre and Kate Clarke and Isy Bannon from North Belfast Interface Network for their help and support in assisting us with organising and delivering the event on the day.



# Camberwell Trips & Intergenerational Project



There is no doubt the residents at Camberwell Court have had a busy few months. There has been an array of events held both internally and external, ranging from armchair aerobics, boccia ball, movie afternoons, lunch club, coffee mornings and bingo, their grow gardening project, bus trips, etc.

Over recent weeks, Newington H.A. staff and Youth Workers from New Lodge Youth Centre have worked in partnership, along with residents from within Camberwell Court and young people from the Youth Centre, to develop a programme of events to promote inter-generational relationships.

The eight-week programme ended with the young people from New Lodge Youth Centre holding a thankyou party for the residents, for all their help, guidance and support during the programme.

All participants involved have indicated that the project was extremely beneficial and rewarding to all those involved.



# NHA Student Bursaries Scheme 2019

The winners of Newington Credit Union and Newington Housing Association's Student Bursary Scheme attended an awards evening in Newington Credit Union on Thursday, 17th October 2019.

The Student Bursary Scheme, which coincides with the commencement of the academic year, has been successfully delivered in partnership by both organisations for several years.

This year the Association awarded the £400 bursaries to a further 3 new full-time students, on top of the 3 awards from previous awards, as these bursaries are 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.

On behalf of both organisations, the Association wishes to convey our congratulations to all the successful candidates and wish them every success on their educational journey.



## Our Brian Mullan Community Fund

In September 2019, the Association was delighted to again welcome applications from community or voluntary sector organisations seeking to avail of essential funding to deliver projects and services within North Belfast.

Over the past two years, via this Fund, the Association has distributed in excess of £20,000 to 27 local organisations throughout North Belfast. Our Brian Mullan Community Fund initiative has been designed to support organisations and projects that promote inclusion, strengthen communities and improve individual's lives.

A funding pot of £10,000 was again set aside this year by the Association's Board of Management to ensure the successful delivery of the scheme.

The scheme closed on Friday, 18th October 2019 and a total of 20 applications were received from various organisations throughout North Belfast.

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.

The Association wishes to express our appreciation to all those organisations who took the time to apply to the scheme and extend 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 initiative.

## 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.



Belfast Family Support Hubs bring 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 or alternatively contact the Association on **028 9074 4055**, for further information.



## Useful Numbers



### BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

NIHE: **03448 920 900**

Phoenix Gas: **0800 002 001**

POWER NI: **03457 643 643**

Pest Control: **02890 270431**

B.C.C Noise Control: **02890 373 006**

B.C.C Waste Management: **02890 270 657**



# 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 supply 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)*

# 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 stops 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**

## Help your neighbour

The cold weather can be a difficult time for people who are more 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 may be appreciated.



# Defrosting of Vehicles

**The PSNI provide the following advice to motorists about securing their vehicles during winter weather, especially when motorists warm and defrost their vehicles before travelling.**

“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. We urge 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 any insurance cover against theft”.

## 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
- » Mark your property with 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.

# Theft from Vehicles.



It is often the case that a thief seizes upon an opportunity to steal valuable items from an unattended, parked vehicle.

If thieves can see it - they can steal it. Leaving valuables, such as your handbag, wallet, CD player, laptop or phone on view in your vehicle is like an open invitation to opportunist thieves. If they see something valuable on view, they will simply break the window to get it. You only have to leave your vehicle for a short time for a thief to act.

By taking simple precautions such as locking valuable items in the boot of your car, or removing the faceplate from your in-car stereo system you can help ensure that your valuables will be kept safe. An empty bag may still attract attention even where nothing of value is present. Taking just a few moments can significantly improve your chances of not becoming a victim of this type of crime. Improved car security features such as alarms, immobilisers and tracking devices can also help protect your vehicle and your valuables.

The Police Service acting on good and timely reports from the community is better placed to deter and prevent crime, or if needs be, to detect and arrest criminals. The Police Service of Northern Ireland asks everyone in the community to report instances of anti-social behaviour and crime to Police. Early interventions can reduce crime opportunity.

## Beware of Bogus Callers

and if in doubt, always use the Quick Check scheme

**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.**

Distraction Burglary or 'Bogus Caller' Burglary remains a crime of great concern for all families and householders, particularly for a person who considers themselves or a relative to be a vulnerable person. During these crimes, the perpetrator will present him or herself at the door, try to create the impression of being an official of a public service, or from a public utility company.

Police, Electricity Service, Water Service, and Social Services are just some of the bogus identities used. Enquiries about fences, electric posts etc. are common. The burglar tries to get an invite to enter the home, and then distracts the householder while a fellow burglar enters the home to steal valuables.

Always use the 'Lock, Chain, Check' routine when answering the door to strangers. **Lock** the Door. Use a door **Chain** or bar. **Check** the identity of callers before opening the door. Before answering or opening the front door, check and be certain that the back door is closed and locked. If unsure about the caller, do not open the door and do not let them enter your home. A single point of contact telephone number can be used to check the identity of callers.

The **QUICK CHECK** scheme invites calls by phoning **101** and selecting **Option 2**. A call centre operator will answer your call and can quickly check with any service provider to ensure the person at the door is a genuine caller from that company.

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BE WARY. ALWAYS ASK FOR IDENTIFICATION. IF YOU ARE UNSURE, DON'T LET THEM IN.**



# 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.

# 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.



# COLOURING in COMPETITION FOR ages 3-10

Please encourage your child to colour in the enclosed sheet for a chance to win a **£20 gift voucher**

To be entered into this competition, all completed entries must be returned to Newington Housing by **12:00pm (noon) on Friday, 20th December 2019**. Additional copies are available on request, if you have more than one child who wishes to take part.





# Cold weather advice for the elderly: Winter risks and safety tips

As the days get shorter and cold weather approaches, you might want to consider the physical and mental wellbeing of your elderly loved ones. Wintertime brings a whole host of health risks and complications for older adults due to the cold weather and low temperatures. Fortunately, there are some precautions you can take to mitigate these risks and make sure your loved ones are looked after this winter.



## COLD WEATHER HEALTH RISKS

One of the biggest problems for many older adults, especially those living on their own, is not staying warm enough in their homes. When temperatures fall below 8°C, older adults can have an increased risk of heart attack, stroke, flu, pneumonia, and in serious cases of low temperatures – hypothermia.



## WHAT IS HYPOTHERMIA?

Older adults can quickly lose body heat and aren't always aware of their temperature, making it easy for them to become too cold, too quickly. Body temperature below 35°C (normal temperature is 37°C) can cause hypothermia. Hypothermia is particularly dangerous for older adults; especially those living alone as there's not someone around to notice the early signs.

### Early signs of hypothermia:

- » Cold hands and feet
- » Puffy or swollen face
- » Pale skin
- » Slow or slurred speech
- » Lethargic
- » Anger or confusion

### Later signs of hypothermia:

- » Slow or jerky movements including trouble walking and clumsiness
- » Slow heartbeat
- » Slow, shallow breathing
- » Loss of consciousness



## PREVENTING HYPOTHERMIA AND OTHER COLD WEATHER HEALTH RISKS

Most cold weather health risks, including hypothermia, can be avoided by staying warm. Winter can be a financially difficult time for pensioners, and they might be tempted to turn the heat down to save money. Even keeping home temperatures between 15°C and 18°C might not be warm enough to avoid health risks.

If you live nearby, it might be a good idea to pop round to make sure their heating is in working order and they know how to turn up the heat. If you don't live nearby, you ask a neighbour or family friend to call in, even if it is just to make a regular cup of tea, and so they can keep an eye on the temperature to make sure it doesn't get too cold.

**If you notice signs of hypothermia, call 999 and seek immediate medical attention.**



## CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS' MENTAL HEALTH

In addition to physical health risks, older people are also more likely to suffer from loneliness or depression during the winter months. When the weather is grim, it's easy for them to become isolated and avoid going out.

You can encourage them to stay active by going for short walks, going out for lunch or accompany them to the shops. Getting out and about will also help older people maintain their circulation and stay fit.



## WINTER SAFETY FOR SENIORS: CHECK THE CAR

If your relative still drives their car, make sure to have the car serviced before the snow falls. Driving in winter often means driving in poor conditions or, at best, poor lighting. Bringing the car for a check-up can ensure that it's in good working order and will be safe to drive this winter.

Talk to your loved one and make sure they're still confident driving in wintry conditions. It may help to provide alternatives forms of transport like helping them to secure a free travel pass, giving them money for a taxi or offering to drive them.



## WINTER WEATHER TIPS FOR SENIORS

Whether you live near or far, there are some cold weather precautions you can take to promote the positive well-being of your loved ones this winter.

### STAYING WARM AND HEALTHY

- » Keep temperatures above 21°C in living rooms and above 18°C in bedrooms
- » Ensure they eat warming, nutritious meals
- » Make sure they have enough blankets and warm clothing
- » Pop round or ask a neighbour or family friend to check on temperatures
- » Register for heating benefits

### COLD WEATHER SAFETY FOR SENIORS

- » Make sure they wear sturdy footwear to prevent slips and falls
- » Spread grit on pathways and driveways to stop slippery surfaces
- » Check the car to ensure it's in good working order
- » Install handrails for steps and other problematic outdoor areas

### GOOD WINTER MENTAL HEALTH

- » Spend time together either on the phone or in person
- » Encourage them to get out in the community and meet new people
- » Help them stay active with low-impact activities like walking or swimming





## 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 had their gas boiler serviced within the last 12 months or is aware that an engineer has recently called with them and failed to gain access (i.e. they have left a calling card with you), 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.**