

TENANTS' Newsletter

Summer Edition 2020

Newington
Housing Association

Newington's Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

As the Coronavirus pandemic swept into Northern Ireland, the Association quickly adapted our processes to ensure we were able to continue to provide a service to our tenants and local communities in general.

We immediately reached out to our community partners to identify what was happening on the ground, what help groups and local organisations required and how we as an organisation could help in supporting those most vulnerable within our communities.



Newington's Board of Management immediately approved financial support to Holy Family's Society for St Vincent De Paul and North Belfast Advice Partnership's Food Bank, both of which were already operating with limited resources and providing support to local

families. This funding allowed these groups to provide additional support such as emergency gas, electric, food and essential items.

From the outbreak of the pandemic, several of our staff volunteered daily to help with the North Belfast Advice Partnership's Food Bank, which was based at Holy Cross Boys School in Ardoyne. NHA staff helped put together and deliver essential food hampers and also with the collection of essential supplies from wholesalers, for distribution throughout North Belfast and beyond.

The Association also quickly identified over 190 of our households aged 60+ and began a 'Good Morning Newington' contact service offering advice, support, signposting or just a friendly voice and listening ear. These calls were designed to offer those most vulnerable reassurance that Association staff were there and available whenever required. Many of those contacted were extremely welcoming and appreciative of the calls.

Commenting on the initiatives delivered by the Association during the pandemic, Newington's current CEO, Anthony Kerr said "All of our actions over the past few months have undoubtedly shown that we are an organisation that is



fully committed to ensuring we put our tenants and the local community at the heart of everything we do. I am proud to be part of this organisation and everyone associated with it, whether that be our Board, who have shown strong and effective leadership throughout this crisis or every single one of my colleagues, who all played pivotal roles in ensuring we continued to deliver, when it mattered most.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to the numerous volunteers, local groups and community organisations, for their dedication, hard work and invaluable support, which they have provided to many households throughout North Belfast."

Big Enough to Deliver & Small Enough to Care

Coronavirus Advice for tenants

Everyone continues to live in uncertain times as we await some clarity of the effects the Coronavirus/ COVID-19 pandemic has had on us all. Whilst we wait for the worst to pass, if you're a tenant concerned about your ability to pay rent on time or are struggling to retain the upkeep of your home, so that it remains a decent, warm and safe place to live, please contact us as help, advice and support is available.

Contact us directly for help, advice & support

It has never been more important to have direct communication with us in order to maintain a good relationship. The implications of COVID-19 are no one's fault, so at times like these we will be understanding and will help whenever possible.

When contacting the Association, please be open and honest with us regarding your current circumstances. If required, we can also make referrals for any personal or financial difficulties you may be experiencing.

Our Response Maintenance Service to Tenants

Due to the ongoing pandemic, NHA will only be undertaking **Emergency Repairs** in our response Maintenance Contract. This decision was taken in the interest of the health and safety of our staff and the community, and of course to support the NHS.

All non-essential works are still suspended, including routine repairs, planned works, grounds maintenance, heating installations, minor & major adaptation work and change of tenancy. This is to minimize the spread of the virus in keeping with Governments advice.

NHA Contractors will only be carrying out repairs that fall under an Emergency repair and undertake statutory servicing and inspection for health and safety purposes.

Please continue to report **all other repairs** in the normal manner, by calling us on **028 9074 4055** or alternative email **admin@newingtonha.co.uk** and we will endeavour to complete these when Government advice allows.

Our Property Services staff will ask tenants if they or anyone in the household is shielding / self-isolating so that our contractor knows they require a Risk Assessment to be carried out before entering your home.

Help prevent the spread of infection

Like seasonal flu, the same public health advice applies for COVID-19 (Coronavirus): if you cough or sneeze, use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose, throw it away carefully after use, and wash your hands.

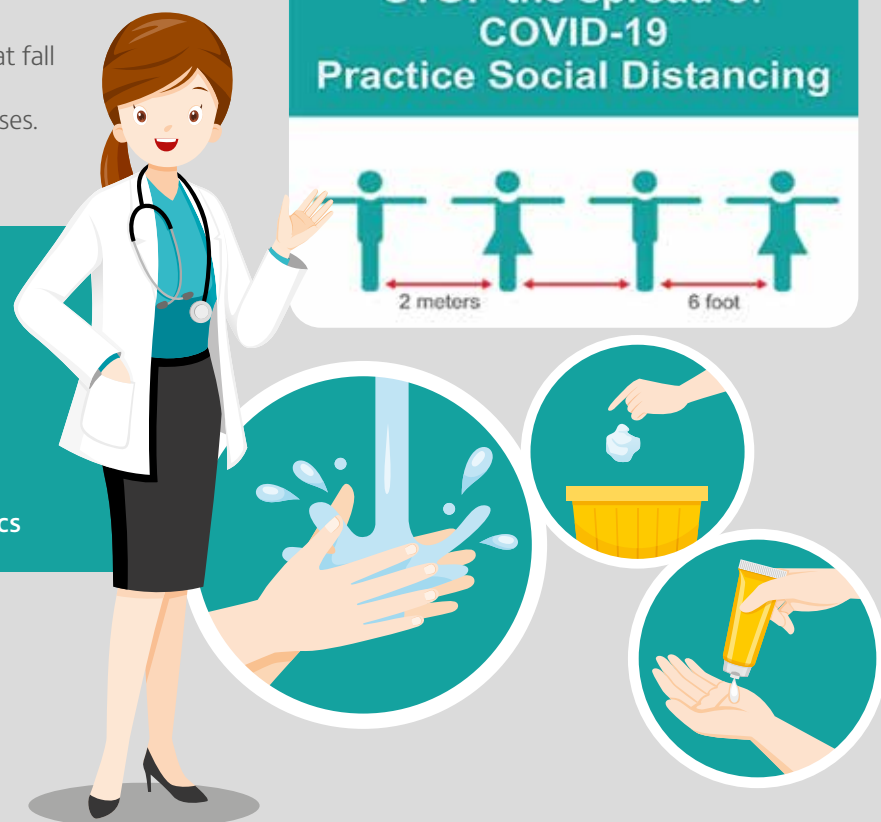
The best way to prevent the spread of infections, including coronavirus, is good personal hygiene. This means washing your hands regularly using soap and water and drying them with paper towels.

STOP the spread of COVID-19 Practice Social Distancing



We have identified the following as what we would deem to be an emergency:

- Heating systems that have failed, or, if a household cannot heat water
- Unsafe gas supplies/installation
- Burst water pipes
- Lack of electrical supply or unsafe electrics



OUR NEW TENANT PARTICIPATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2020 – 2023

Our new Tenant Participation & Community Involvement Strategy 2020 – 2023 and Action Plan has been recently developed by us. Consultation with our Tenants Forum occurred on 04/03/2020 and follow up consultation took place with several key stakeholders throughout April 2020. Below are the main strategic objectives we hope to achieve during the lifetime of our new Strategy:

Our Strategic Objectives over the next few years



Our Homes

We will support tenants and community partners to develop initiatives and partnerships which enhance and strengthen new and existing communities.



Our Tenants & Communities

We will deliver all aspects of the Tenant Participation & Community Investment Strategy 2020 – 2023, which will support us to engage with and invest in our communities.



Our People

We will develop staff to make a difference, whilst also ensuring good organisational governance.



Our Finances

We are committed to funding our community engagement activities either directly or by working in partnership, whilst ensuring value for money and financial scrutiny.



Our Services

We will provide opportunities for tenants to review and scrutinise existing services and to further develop the services that are provided by us.

Why not become an Active Tenant

The Association has various ways to encourage and support active participation. Why not take a look at our new Tenant Participation & Community Involvement Strategy:

<http://newingtonha.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/tenant-participation-and-community-involvement-strategy-20-23.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.

How do I contact the Association or keep up to date with the information they share?

Main Office:

Out of Hours:
(Repairs/other emergencies)

Email:

Website:

Facebook:

Twitter:

Tel: 028 9074 4055

Tel: 0800 731 3081

admin@newingtonha.co.uk

www.newingtonha.co.uk

Newington Housing Association

@NewingtonHA

Universal Credit



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.

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 has now replaced:

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

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

As Universal Credit has now been rolled out throughout Northern Ireland, you will no longer be able to make a new claim for any of the benefits which were replaced, therefore, you may need to claim Universal Credit instead.

If your circumstances have recently changed 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 may be moved to Universal Credit anytime between now and March 2023. **You do not have to do anything at this stage.** The Department for Communities will contact you when it is time for you 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.**

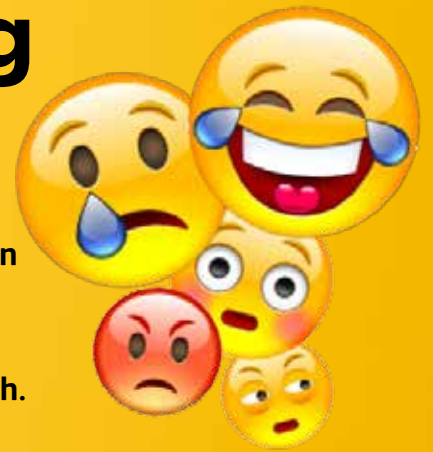
If you already receive Housing Benefit and you do not have a change in your circumstances, the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities will contact you when it's time to move onto Universal Credit.

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

HELP WITH RATES

Your Universal Credit payment will not include assistance towards the payment your rates. A Rate Rebate Scheme has been introduced 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.

How to help sustain or improve your mental wellbeing



Coronavirus (COVID-19) is impacting all our lives at present.

For many, some of the usual advice, treatment and support options are more difficult to access or are being delivered in different ways.

An important part of keeping fit and healthy is to take care of your own mental health. There are plenty of things you can do to help make sure you keep yourself mentally healthy.

Below are TEN useful tips to help improve or sustain good mental health.

GET PLENTY OF SLEEP

Sleep is extremely important for our physical and mental health. Sleep helps to regulate the chemicals in our brain that transmit information. These chemicals are important in managing our moods and emotions. If you don't get enough sleep, you can start to feel depressed or anxious.

EAT WELL

Eating well isn't just important for our bodies, but it's also important for our minds. Certain mineral deficiencies, such as iron and vitamin B12 deficiencies can attribute low mood. Try to eat a balanced diet. If you find you're particularly stressed or an anxious person, you should try limiting or cutting out caffeine as this can make you feel jittery and anxious.

AVOID ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUGS

Drinking and smoking aren't things which we always associate with withdrawal symptoms, but they can cause some which impact on your mental health. When you've had a few drinks, you can feel more depressed and anxious the next day, and it can be harder to concentrate. Excessive drinking for prolonged periods can leave you with a thiamine deficiency. Thiamine is important for our brain function and a deficiency can lead to severe memory problems, motor (coordination) problems, confusion and eye problems. If you smoke, between cigarettes your body and brain go into withdrawal which makes you irritable and anxious.

Other drugs will often leave you in withdrawal and can often cause very low moods and anxiety. More severe effects of drugs include paranoia and delusions.

GET PLENTY OF SUNLIGHT

Sunlight is a great source of vitamin D. Vitamin D is a really important vitamin for our bodies and our brains. It helps our brains to release chemicals which improve our mood, like endorphins and serotonin. Try to go out in the sun when you can, but make sure you take adequate precautions to protect you against exposure to direct sunlight and that you do so in a safe manner.

MANAGE STRESS

Stress is often unavoidable but knowing what triggers your stress and knowing how to cope is key in maintaining good mental health. Try to manage your responsibilities and worries by making a list or a schedule of when you can resolve each issue. Often if you break down your worries and stresses and write them down, you realise that they are manageable. Try to avoid burying your head in the sand, and tackle problems face on. If you find you are having trouble sleeping, or are waking up thinking about all of the things that are stressing you out, write them down and reassure yourself that you can deal with them in the morning.

ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE

Activity and exercise are essential in maintaining good mental health. Being active not only gives you a sense of achievement, but it boosts the chemicals in your brain that help put you in a good mood. Exercising can help eliminate low mood, anxiety, stress and feeling tired and lazy. It is also linked to living a longer life.

You don't need to run a marathon or play 90 minutes of football; a short walk or some other gentle activity might do the trick.

DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY

Try to make time for doing the fun things you enjoy. If you like going for a walk, painting or a specific TV show, try to set aside time to enjoy yourself. If you don't spend any time doing things you enjoy, you can become irritable and unhappy.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS AND BE SOCIABLE

Try to maintain good relationships and talk to people whenever you get the chance. Having friends is important not just for your self-esteem, but also for providing support when you're not feeling too great.

DO THINGS FOR OTHERS

Helping others isn't just good for the people you're helping; it's good for you too. Helping someone can help with your self-esteem and make you feel good about your place in the world. Feeling as though you're part of a community is a really important part of your mental health. You could try volunteering for a local charity, or just being neighbourly.

ALWAYS ASK FOR HELP

One of the most important ways to keep yourself mentally healthy is to recognise when you're not feeling good, and to know when to ask for help. There is no shame in asking someone for support if you're feeling low or stressed. Everyone goes through patches where they don't feel as good as they should. You can try speaking to your friends or family, or if you think your mental health is getting on top of you then you can speak to your GP or local support services.

Newington Housing's Annual Student Bursary Scheme

Along with this Newsletter you will have received information relating to our opening of applications for our Annual Student Bursary Scheme.

YOU MAY APPLY FOR A BURSARY IF:

- ✓ You are entering either third level or higher-level education for the first time,
- ✓ You are a mature student (25+), or
- ✓ You are already on a third level/higher level education course and have missed out on your first 1st bursary application and you are applying again

All information on how to apply is outlined within the enclosed documents, however, should you require any clarity on whether you meet the criteria or any further information, please contact our Community Engagement Officer on **028 9074 4055**.

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

SSSC & Benefit Cap Mitigated Payment Protection measures extended beyond March 2020

In February 2020, there was some welcoming news from new Department for Communities Minister, Deirdre Hargey, who announced that she would implement legislation to continue mitigation payments protection after the March 2020 deadline.

Approximately 150 of our tenants are currently 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.

These mitigations will undoubtedly continue to soften the impact of UK-wide welfare reforms in Northern Ireland and help those most affected by them.

Previous legislation passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2016 was due to cease at the end of March 2020. The Association was extremely concerned that if these protection payments ceased, our tenants would have likely faced financial hardship as they would have had to meet these costs directly themselves.

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



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

Ballsillan 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.

Gas safety in your home

Gas safety inspections

Even with the ongoing situation relating to the outbreak of COVID-19, as your landlord, we are still legally required to carry out a gas safety boiler inspection each year. The inspection is to check your gas appliances are safe.

>> Our Gas Safe contractors will take all appropriate measures to carry out the inspections safely and you do not have to pay anything for the service.

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

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.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



CAN'T BE SEEN



CAN'T BE SMELLED



CAN'T BE HEARD



CAN BE STOPPED

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**.

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**

Fire safety advice

During our extended time at home due to the COVID-19 outbreak we all must work together to take the pressure off our emergency services by keeping our homes safe from fire and other risks.

These simple checks and safety tips can help reduce the potential risk to you and other surrounding households. Please feel free to share them with your family, friends and neighbours:

- >> Check your smoke detector alarms weekly – make sure you can do this safely. If they're not working, please contact us immediately.
- >> Working from home? Stay safe by not overloading electrical sockets. Use laptops on hard services so they don't overheat. Unplug devices after they've been charged. Don't forget your phone chargers - it's always safer to unplug these at night.
- >> Don't leave any items in communal areas or in areas where they can become a hazard to you or others.
- >> Don't leave pans, grills or toasters unattended in the kitchen.
- >> Be extra careful with your BBQ. Don't leave BBQs unattended or use them on balconies or inside your home. Keep children and pets at a safe distance.
- >> Don't have bonfires in your gardens at the moment – don't be tempted to burn uncollected garden or household waste. Bonfires can easily get out of control and cause unnecessary pressure on our emergency services.
- >> Please allow us access to your home to carry out electrical and gas safety checks. As a landlord, we have a legal obligation to carry out these checks, and it's important that this still happens, even during the COVID-19 restrictions. We understand you may be worried about letting us into your home; but these checks are to keep you and your family safe. Rest assured, our staff or contractors will follow the Government's social distancing guidelines during any visit and wear the necessary personnel protection equipment.

Information relating to sheltered accommodation, high-rise apartment living and flats/maisonettes.

It is important that we all continue to ensure you our residents have essential information needed to raise any fire safety concerns you identify and that you are well informed about what to do if an incident should occur within their home.

Our sheltered schemes, larger buildings and apartment accommodation are designed to resist and help stop the spread of fire. Most fires are likely to be contained and not spread beyond the apartment they originated in; however, tenants should ensure:

- >> Again, Check your smoke detector alarms weekly – make sure you can do this safely. If they're not working, please contact us immediately.
 - >> As a tenant, formulate an escape plan in case you ever need to evacuate your home.
 - >> Communicate the escape plan to other occupants in your household and with neighbouring tenants.
 - >> If you reside 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 assemble point is, please contact the Association for clarity.
 - >> If you cannot get out of your home safely, go into a room, 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 all exits clear both in your home and in shared communal areas.
 - >> Never leave flammable materials/unwanted household furniture in 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 see anything that concerns you, please contact the Association on 028 9074 4055 further additional advice and assistance.**

Domestic Violence

Incidents of Domestic Violence can occur at any time. If you are a victim or know someone who is a **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

Home Safety/Protecting your Home

Reporting a scam or an attempted scam

Recent reports suggest that the level of attempted scams have increased during the outbreak of COVID-19. If you've been scammed or suspect that someone is attempting to scam you or someone you know, you should always report it. Don't feel embarrassed or ashamed.

How to report a scam

If you or someone else is in immediate danger or risk of harm, phone 999 immediately.

You should report fraud, scams and related cybercrime directly to Action Fraud unless you are requesting a call for service from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

If you report a scam, it gives important information to the authorities that can be used to warn other people.

Request a call for service from the PSNI

You should ask for a call for service when any of these apply:

- a fraud is being committed or recently occurred (within 24 hours)
- you know the suspect and they live in Northern Ireland
- the victim is perceived to be vulnerable, through age, mental or physical impairment, or in need of care and support
- you believe it's important to report the incident to police so they can secure and preserve evidence or prevent loss (such as CCTV and recovering large amounts of money transferred from bank accounts before the criminal can remove it)

You can request a call for service report to the PSNI by phoning 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Action Fraud

Action Fraud is the UK's national fraud and internet crime reporting unit.

They offer a central point of contact for information about fraud and financially motivated internet crime.

If you've been scammed, ripped off or conned, there is something you can do about it.

Report fraud to Action Fraud and receive a police crime reference number.

Action Fraud is not an emergency service - dial 999 if you are in immediate danger.

- To report online with Action Fraud please visit: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime>
- Telephone – Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

If you receive a scam email message or a computer virus, but you haven't lost any money you can report it for information purposes, to Action Fraud.

Consumerline

After reporting the matter to the PSNI or Action Fraud, you can also report the scam to Consumerline.

- Consumerline, please visit: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/consumerline>
- Phone: 0300 123 6262 (9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Thursday, and 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Friday)

Scams which are reported to Consumerline may be passed on to the Northern Ireland Trading Standards Service who will gather the details to send on to the National Scams Team.



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.

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.

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.



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.

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**.

Successful completion of our Planned Maintenance Programme for 2019/2020

Through our Stock Investment Programme, the Association spent approximately £463,078 on our Planned Maintenance works in 2019/2020. The Association commenced or successfully completed the following:

- 40 properties received kitchen replacements
- 23 properties received gas boilers replacements
- Replacement of Door Entry Systems at Camberwell Court
- Completed Major Thermal Works to three properties
- Commenced Major Thermal Works to a further four properties, which are due for completion over the coming months.
- Completed of Major Improvement works to two properties at 232 Limestone Road
- Completed the incorporation of additional heating source to 17 homes within the Cliftonville area.

Planned Maintenance Programme for 2020/2021

As a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, the Association was unable to complete the following planned works that were programmed for Quarter 4 - 2019/2020. We aim to complete these once it is feasible to do so.

- Upgrade of Lisieux House flat roofs and eaves
- Replacement of Richmond House Door Entry System
- External painting of 86 properties

Furthermore, over the coming months we also aim to commence the following planned maintenance works for 2020/2021:

- 52 properties to received kitchen replacements
- Upgrade of CCTV systems at Camberwell Court, Lisieux House, Richmond Lodge & the Delaware Building
- Replacement of fire alarm panels at Camberwell Court, Lisieux House and Richmond Lodge
- External Painting to Delaware & Camberwell Court (railings and fencing)
- External Painting to 64 properties
- Replacement of windows and rear door to one property
- 55 NICEIC's Electric Inspections
- Gas Boiler inspection of 723 properties



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.

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



WHAT 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

WHAT 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.



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

Even though we are still in uncertain and challenging times, if you are unfortunate enough to experience behaviour which causes alarm, annoyance or distress to you or other members of your household, we ask that you report this behaviour to us immediately.

WAYS OF REPORTING NEIGHBOUR NUISANCE TO US

Report by phone: 028 9074 4055

(Monday – Thursday from 9:00am – 5:00pm and 9:00am – 4:00pm on Friday)

Report by email: admin@newingtonha.co.uk

To report a problem online: newingtonha.co.uk/pages/contact-us/

It is important that you also contact other statutory agencies, such as Belfast City Council and the PSNI. By you doing so, you can help to support any formal or informal complaints you make to the Association.

We can then liaise with you and the other agencies to jointly address any issues which have arisen and via this partnership approach it will help us determine the appropriate action deemed necessary to help reduce the likelihood of further issues re-occurring.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL'S NOISE TEAM CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Due the ongoing situation relating to Covid-19, Belfast City Council's offices are closed and their officers are working remotely to deal with queries on a priority basis.

If you have an urgent query or request, please contact them by emailing envhealth@belfastcity.gov.uk. Please note that they can only offer a limited service and are currently unable to carry out visits to commercial or domestic premises.

To report a noise problem to BCC online: <https://dof.belfastcity.gov.uk/ReportNoise/>

Report by phone: 028 9037 3006.

Daytime: (Monday – Thursday from 8.30am - 5.00pm and Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm)

Night-time: Monday to Sunday 8pm - 4am

If the number is busy, leave a message and they will call you back.

Please note, BCC provides a night-time noise service which operates seven nights a week. If the noise problem occurs between 8pm and 4am, please report it by phoning 028 9037 3006, while the noise is happening. All information you give them is confidential.

Report by email:

As mentioned above, you can email them directly at envhealth@belfastcity.gov.uk

Report by post:

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

WHAT CAN BCC DO?

At present, due to the changes in the way they are currently delivering their services, BCC may only be able to write to those responsible. If they cannot resolve the complaint, they may carry out a more formal investigation and take legal action if deemed necessary.

FURTHER INFORMATION & ADVICE

For further information and advice on how to deal with neighbours and loud music or other types of noise, please visit: <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/buildingcontrol-environment/noisecontrol/noise-main.aspx>

CONTACT THE PSNI DIRECTLY

You can report serious incidents of ASB or Criminal behaviour to the PSNI by phoning 999 (In an emergency where you need immediate assistance or feel threatened) or 101 (In a non-emergency where you need assistance or advice).

You can also report any issues or concerns online by visiting: <https://selfservice.nidirect.gov.uk/firearms/PSNI/PSNIForms/OnlineIncident#/IntroAdult>



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.**