



Providing quality
community housing
across Northern Ireland

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Welcome



Kieran Matthews
Chief Executive
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Housing
Association

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2017 edition of the SUHA Newsletter, which is produced with you, the tenant in mind. We hope you find it enjoyable and informative. If you have any comments regarding content or suggestions for future editions, please contact us. We welcome and value your feedback.



TEXT MESSAGING

In April 2017, we will launch our new text messaging service. If you have registered your mobile number with us, we will send you a "welcome message" to confirm that the number is correct. To update the number we hold on file for you, please contact the Housing Department on **028 3833 9795**.

The idea to introduce a text messaging service came from responses received from the Tenant Satisfaction Surveys. The introduction of this service demonstrates our continued commitment to excellent customer service. Further details will be issued prior to text messaging service going live.



MAKING IT EASIER TO PAY YOUR RENT

We at South Ulster Housing endeavour to listen to our Tenants in an attempt to make life easier for us all, so, you will all be happy to hear that you can now pay your rent via Debit Card, by calling into the office or from the comfort of your armchair.

WELFARE REFORM

The Social Sector Size Criteria has been introduced on 20th February 2017. Housing Benefit will be calculated (for working age claimants) based on the number of people in a tenant's household and the number of bedrooms in the property.

Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14% if tenants have one additional bedroom and 25%, if they have two or more additional bedrooms. The NIHE have put in place arrangements to provide financial support for those impacted by this change to the welfare system. A Welfare Supplementary Payment will be available until 31st March 2020, which will be paid directly to the Association from the Department for Communities. The NIHE have contacted all those to be impacted to advise of change to Housing Benefit and of financial arrangements in place to deal with this change. The NIHE have requested all to update the household details form attached if necessary to ensure that the correct amount of Housing Benefit is paid.

It is important to note that when a tenant transfers properties which results in the household reducing their level of under-occupation the Welfare Supplementary Payment will continue at the appropriate rate; however, if the transfer results in the household increasing or maintaining their level of under-occupation the Welfare Supplementary Payment will cease.

If there are any changes to your household details, it is important that you update this information with the Association. These can include changes to your household composition and contact telephone numbers. Please contact your Housing Officer to advise of any relevant changes.

TENANT REPRESENTATION

One of the Association's Business Objectives is Tenant Empowerment and Engagement which facilitates tenants to engage with us to improve our business. We believe that in order for us to do so effectively, to deliver services that are appropriate and meaningful we need to fully involve you, the tenant, in this process.

To assist us in achieving this objective we are requesting that more tenants come forward as Tenant Representatives for your area and sit on the Tenants' Forum. The purpose of the Tenants Forum is to improve the delivery of Housing Services, Property Services and organisational wide services to all Tenants which is critical in delivering

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responsive, efficient and effective services to tenants as well as sustaining communities. The Tenants Forum is the platform used to elect a Tenant Representative onto our Board of Management. Faye Aiken is the current Tenant Representative on the Association's Board of Management.

Please contact your Housing Officer of you are interested in representing the area in which you live.

Performance Indicator Results

To achieve 101% of rent collection Qtr. 3	112%
Past Tenant arrears to be kept below 0.4% of rent receivable	0.35%
Rent Loss from Voids to be kept below 0.25%	0.17%
Turnaround of void properties within 10 days	98%
Complete 85% of Emergency Repairs within set timescales	94.53%
Complete 85% of Urgent Repairs within set timescales	92.68%
Complete 85% of Routine Repairs within set timescales	95.15%
To achieve 90% Tenant Satisfaction levels in Tenant Surveys	93.13%

TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Housing Staff undertook the annual Tenant Satisfaction survey in November 2016. These surveys were carried out with a proportion of randomly selected tenants to find out if the services that the Association provides are to a standard that you find acceptable.

Results of the survey were benchmarked against previous results and the results show that the Association met or improved upon the performance of 2014 in every area appraised.

The survey gave tenants an opportunity to advise the Association of areas that they consider a priority and these are listed as follows:

Services that Tenants consider a priority

- Repair & Maintenance
- Quality of Home
- Neighbourhood as a place to live

Preferred methods of contact with Association

- Telephone
- Writing
- Text

Reasons to contact Association

- Repairs
- Rent / Housing Benefit
- Other

Preferred method of contact to report repairs

- Telephone
- Visit Office
- Internet



PLANNED MAINTENANCE

Our 2016/17 Planned Maintenance Programme is due for completion in the coming weeks with the Association investing over £500,000 in stock improvements.

Upon completion, we will have carried out kitchen, bathroom, roof and heating replacements and External Cyclical Maintenance works to over 100 properties throughout Portadown, Lurgan and Bessbrook.

Our appointed Consultants are nearing completion of surveys in advance of the 2017/18 Planned Maintenance Programme. All tenants, whose home is included in the programme, will have received a letter providing details of the proposed works. Tenants receiving new kitchens will be consulted with in the coming months regarding choice of cupboard doors, worktops, handles and floor covering.



*All participants of the satisfaction survey were entered into a free draw - the winner **Maria Lennon** was drawn at random and received a £50.00 shopping voucher.*

STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

South Ulster Housing are in the process of appointing a Consultant to carry out surveys of approximately 200 of our homes.

The purpose of the surveys will be to inform the Association's short and long term stock investment decisions regarding repairs to your home. If your home has been selected for an inspection, a member of the Property Services Team will contact you in advance. We would ask that you allow the Surveyor to gain access to all necessary rooms within the property to ensure the most accurate survey possible.



EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE 2017-2019

Our appointed Consultants have now completed surveys to over 400 homes for the 2017-19 External Cyclical Maintenance Programme.

We will be in contact with you shortly to outline the works to be completed over the two-year programme.