

Providing quality
community housing
across Northern Ireland



IN THIS ISSUE:

- >> Access
- >> Bedroom Tax
- >> The Big Lunch
- >> Rent Arrears
- >> Pathways Programme
- >> Portuguese Day

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Welcome



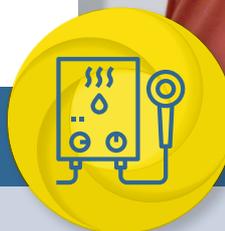
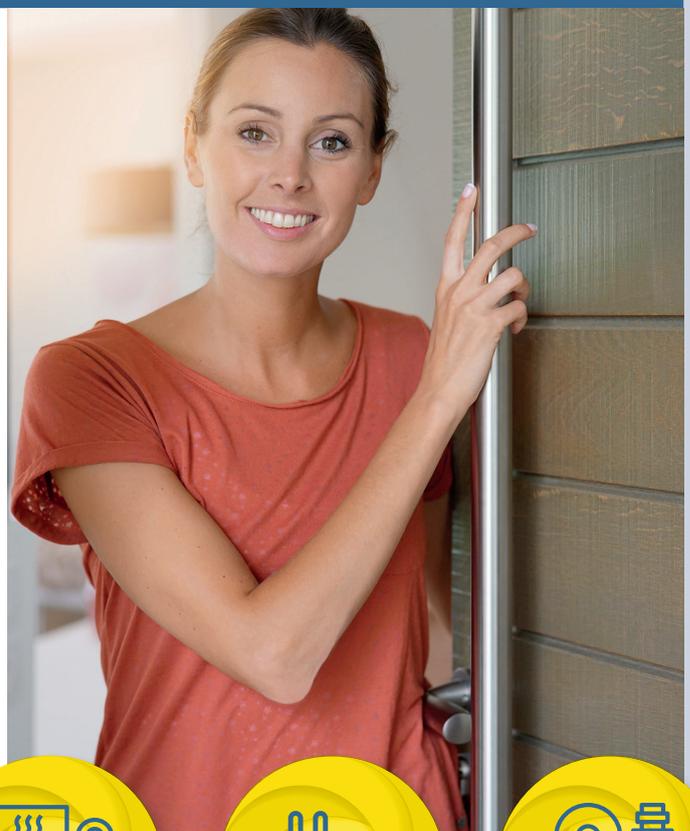
Kieran Matthews
Chief Executive
South Ulster
Housing
Association

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2019 edition of the SUHA Advisor, 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.

ACCESS REQUIRED

We would like to remind tenants of the importance of allowing our Contractors access to complete servicing and repair works. The Association carries out a range of repairs including boiler servicing and electrical testing for the **Health and Safety of our tenants.**

If the arranged time or date of appointments does not suit please make contact with the office so that alternative arrangements can be made. Remember, if access is not provided South Ulster Housing can enter your home to ensure we comply with statutory obligations, and we will always provide a minimum of 24 hours' notice before doing so.



the big lunch

This year the residents of Granemore Park, Keady participated in The Big Lunch and young and old thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations.

The Big Lunch is the UK's biggest annual get together for neighbours. It's a simple idea from the Eden Project: that as many people as possible across the UK have lunch with their neighbours annually on a weekend in June in a simple act of community, friendship and fun. We hope to continue this event in Keady as well as other schemes. If you are interested in hosting an event like this, please speak with a member of staff.



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BEDROOM TAX



Please find a list of most common circumstances where a request to impose Bedroom Tax could be made.

If you are currently in receipt of the bedroom tax you may be able to increase your HB. Although the Social Sector Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax) is mitigated against at the moment, this is a temporary measure due to end in March 2020.

First of all, it is important to point out that the current mitigation **ONLY** affects people of the **working age group**



If you or your partner are in receipt of the following:

- A daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Mid or high rate care component of Disability Living Allowance, or Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance, or
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (which does not need to be in payment in respect of night time needs) And
- That one or more non-household carer stay in my house on a regular basis to care for me (i.e. often and steadily enough to require a bedroom be kept for them. And
- They are provided with the use of a room for sleeping in not used by any other member of my household for sleeping.

You may also be entitled to separate bedroom if you meet the above criteria please note that you may be asked to evidence the above so for more information and advice please contact housing staff for further assistance.



If you have children:

Children of the same gender are expected to share a bedroom until the **age of 15** and if they are of the different gender until the **age of 9**. In all other cases they are expected to have a bedroom each.

If one or more of your children have a disability and are in receipt of the **middle or high rate care elements** they will also have an entitlement for a bedroom each and will not be expected to share with their siblings, for example irrespective of their age.



If you or your partner are foster care parents/adoptive parents or fostered a child in the last 12 months:

you may also be entitled to an additional bedroom, for more information and advice please contact housing staff for further assistance.



If you have a shared care of children:

You may get help with additional bedroom only if you are responsible for the child (basically it is the child's main home and you receive Child benefit for that child).



For people that are temporarily absent such as **students** and **Armed Forces personnel** will also continue to receive their bedroom entitlement. For more information, please contact housing staff for further assistance.



RENT ARREARS

If your rent is not paid, the money owed is called 'rent arrears'. Rent arrears are 'priority debts', which means the consequences of not dealing with them are serious - there is a risk of eviction.

Dealing With Rent Arrears

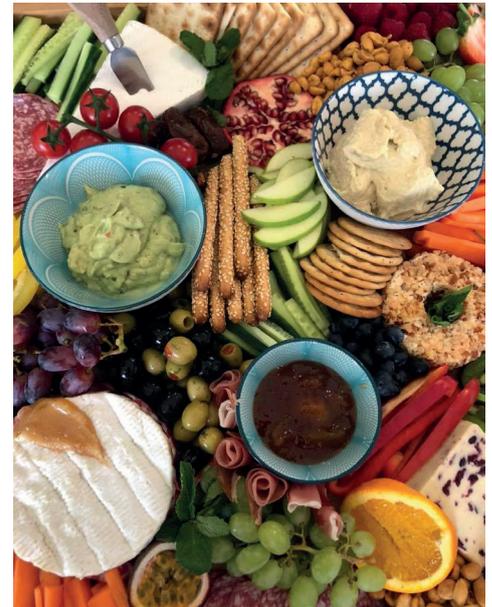
If you can't pay your rent, you have missed rent payments or you're worried your payments are not being made due to an error - housing cost element of Universal Credit has been paid directly to you, sort things out as soon as you can. Even if you have other debts, make sure you prioritise rent arrears.

Things to do to help you get back on track:

- Make a list of all your debts and put them in order of priority
- Write down all your income and expenses - then see how much you've got to pay your debts
- Work out how much you can afford to pay to each creditor (a person or organisation you owe money to)

- Consider seeking advice from a debt advice agency
- Ensure that housing cost of Universal Credit is paid directly to the Association. Should you receive this payment it is your responsibility to pay the Association directly
- Most importantly, talk to us - try to reach an agreement about paying off the arrears, but don't agree to pay more than you can afford - one way to do this is through an agreed debt management plan
- We can refer you to onto a professional debt advice service at your request

Remember that once your rent is being paid in full again, the arrears that have built up will still have to be paid off.



PORTUGUESE DAY

To celebrate the diversity of our tenants we hosted our first ever celebration of Portugal day.

Portugal Day is also known as Dia de Camões after Portugal's national poet, Luís de Camões. Residents from Portadown and Lurgan were invited to come together with others throughout the world to celebrate Portuguese culture. All those who attended had the opportunity to savour a variety of Portuguese foods as well as enjoy traditional Portuguese music. A great event to remember Portugal's rich heritage, get together and party!



PATHWAYS PROGRAMME

When people are close to reaching crisis point, or when their lives are chaotic and affected by multiple disadvantages, they require support to assist them.

Distress often occurs alongside a range of other disadvantaging factors including substance misuse, trauma, abuse or homelessness. It can be difficult for individuals experiencing these things to seek help and appropriate support.

Our Pathways programme provides signposting to a wide range of support services and/or key organisations that can assess individual's needs to assist in dealing with their issues. We work strategically with the emergency services and other key organisations to develop ways in which they can work together more effectively and help tenants sustain their tenancy.

Our Pathways programme key areas of focus for tenants are:

Housing and tenancy - A safe and suitable home and adherence to the terms of tenancy

Money and rent - Paying rent, benefits, budgeting, debt management, arrears and savings

Maintaining your home - Keeping your home in both good condition and appropriate state of repair

Health and well-being - Physical, mental and emotional health, healthy lifestyle and managing addictions

Positive use of time - Work, training, volunteering and education

Community - Feeling connected with a sense of belonging

TENANT INVOLVEMENT

We strive to be more than just a Landlord, to put our tenants' voice at the heart of what we do and to deliver great homes and services, supporting communities and improving lives. To help us achieve this we need you, the tenant at the heart of this process.

We need more tenants to come forward as Tenant Representatives for the area in which you live and to sit on the Tenants Forum to become the voice of our tenants and to help us improve the delivery of services to all of our tenants. If you are interested in becoming a voice of the Association's tenants please contact Joanne on 028 3833 9795