

# Newsletter

ISSUE 12 | SPRING/SUMMER 2020



Providing quality  
community housing  
across Northern Ireland

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# Welcome



Kieran Matthews  
Chief Executive  
South Ulster  
Housing  
Association

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2020 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.

## Extension of Welfare Mitigations

Communities minister Deirdre Hargey announced that fellow ministers in the Executive have backed her recommendation to extend the welfare mitigation payments from April 2020.

Legislation to extend the payments will be tabled "in the coming weeks".

However, it will only cover the Social Sector Size Criteria – commonly known as the bedroom tax – with Ms Hargey saying that mitigations for other welfare cuts such as the benefit cap need to be looked at.

The Department for Communities (DfC) estimates another 1,500 households across the region are eligible to have their benefits capped.

A document setting out a plan for Northern Ireland's new government committed to



extending welfare mitigation payments.

Ms Hargey said: "We have a responsibility to protect the poorest and most vulnerable in society. I am pleased to announce that today the Executive agreed to my recommendation, in line with New Decade, New Approach, for the urgent extension of the bedroom tax mitigation beyond March 2020." There are also other mitigations which need to be looked at as they review the mitigation measures committed to in 'New Decade, New Approach'. I will continue to work with stakeholders in moving forward with that important piece of work."

## VULNERABLE TENANTS

South Ulster Housing Association recognises that there are some vulnerable tenants who require additional support in order to sustain their tenancy with the Association.

### Definition of a vulnerable person

A vulnerable person is generally defined as some-one who is more likely than the average person to suffer detriment or harm and will be in need of additional support. The types of people who may be considered vulnerable can include:

- Persons with mental health problems
- Persons with a physical disability
- Persons with a learning difficulty
- Older Persons
- Victims of domestic violence and abuse

- Persons with alcohol and/or substance misuse
- Asylum seekers or Refugees
- Ex-offenders.

The Association can offer support or referral to those tenants who are vulnerable, at risk or in crisis.

Please contact a member of staff if you feel you or a member of your household needs support in any of these areas or for any other reason and we will try to assist you.



## REGENERATE BBQ

### QUEEN ST, PORTADOWN

We were delighted to support Regenerate's "Taste of the Annagh" BBQ which was held in Queen Street, Portadown, in October.

The event was a great success with residents from around the globe coming together to enjoy an evening of music and children's entertainment whilst sharing their local cuisines. We look forward to future art and gardening projects with Regenerate that will utilise the area and improve the overall appearance of Queen Street's alleyways. Be sure to keep an eye out when passing on the train!



## The Tenants' Forum started the new decade strongly with the addition of four new faces to the Group.



This sees us covering the Lurgan, Portadown, Warrenpoint and Keady areas that allows us to deliver a strong "Tenants Voice" on issues concerning tenants living within these areas.

However not all areas are represented so we extend a warm welcome to anyone interested in taking the local issues affecting your area via the Tenant Forum directly to the People who have the power to make the changes. The Association is currently devising a plan

which will provide the Tenants Forum with an opportunity to interact directly with Contractors prior to new projects work schemes being implemented. This "Tenants Voice" opens up a wonderful opportunity for us to inform the quality and delivery of work.

In preparation for this exciting new phase the Tenants Forum have been upskilling themselves for the next level of their involvement.



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## MENTAL HEALTH

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.

**There are five simple steps to help maintain and improve your wellbeing. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your 'five a day' for wellbeing**

**Connect** - Connect with the people around you: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

**Be active** - Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

**Take notice** - Be observant, look for something beautiful or remark on something unusual. Savour the moment,

whether you are on a bus or in a taxi, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

**Keep learning** - Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.

**Give** - Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.



## COMMUNITY SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

South Ulster Housing Association has a Community Small Grants Programme

South Ulster Housing Association has a Community Small Grants Programme to provide small grants to our Tenants/Tenants Groups or local Community Associations to assist with Community Initiatives. Grants could be awarded for things like assistance with fun days, improving the environment, encouraging healthy lifestyles to scheme enhancement projects. Any initiative you feel that would benefit and include all members of the community will be considered by the Association. So why not come together as a group and speak with your local Housing Officer and see what you could achieve with a Community Grant from South Ulster Housing Association.



## STARTER PACKS

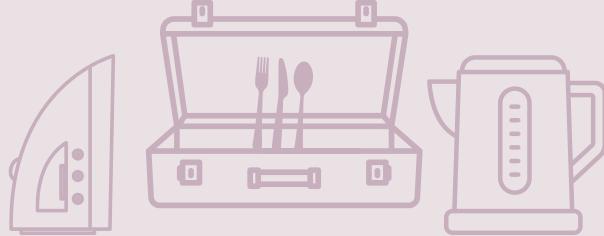
We are delighted to announce that a number of our eligible new tenants have availed from a Starter Pack.

The Starter Pack Scheme is managed by the Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI), funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Public Health Agency NI.

The scheme facilitates the transition from temporary accommodation to permanent housing by providing

essential items for eligible Full Duty Applicants. This helps ensure that tenants are starting off with the basic items that help to make a house a home and to guarantee the best possible start to their tenancy.

Each starter pack includes bedding, towels, microwave, slow cooker, kettle, toaster, iron and ironing board, cutlery, crockery and cleaning equipment.



## WOODHOUSE BENCH

The Association recently funded a bench for the residents of Woodhouse, Bessbrook to provide residents with a place to meet their neighbours or enjoy a quiet moment the beautiful surroundings.

