



Arbour
HOUSING

ISSUE 19 | AUTUMN/WINTER 2023



**ARBOUR
VOICE**

THE NEWSLETTER OF ARBOUR HOUSING

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ARBOUR HOUSING

18-22 Carleton Street
Portadown
Co. Armagh, BT62 3EN

T 028 3833 9795
E hello@arbourhousing.org
W arbourhousing.org



Hello

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2023 edition of **Arbour Voice** – the newsletter produced with you, the tenant, in mind.





Kieran Matthews,
Chief Executive
Arbour Housing


In this issue we have a detailed section on Universal Credit. We hope you find it informative. As ever, if you have any comments – or suggestions for future editions – please do get in touch.

CONTACT US

Please see below different methods to get in contact with us:

 028 3833 9795

 07375 341 414

 hello@arbourhousing.org

 arbourhousing.org

  @ArbourHousing



DIGITAL ZONE

Do you have problems accessing a computer or the internet? The Digital Zone in the Arbour office can help. It's here for you to use, for example to manage an online claim for Universal Credit or for any another internet or computer needs you have.

There are staff on hand if you need extra support, and if access to the office is an issue, you can ask for staff to arrange to visit you at home instead.



COMMUNITY FUNDING

Arbour Housing provides funding for community initiatives – everything from fun days and improving the environment to encouraging healthy lifestyles and scheme enhancement projects. Is there an event you feel would benefit your community? Just contact your local Housing Officer and let us know.

HAVE YOUR DETAILS CHANGED?

Let us know if your contact details have changed or there have been changes to your household, as it's vital our information is always up to date.

028 3833 9795



2023 TENANT CONFERENCE

This year's Tenant Conference event will take place on **11th October** at **The Civic Centre, Craigavon** from **10.00 am to 1.00 pm**. Lunch and transport will be provided.

It promises to be a great opportunity for you to engage with members of the Tenants' Forum and hear speakers on a range of relevant issues.

We will be issuing invites soon to all tenants, so make sure and save the date.



UC *Universal Credit*

The process to move people from their current benefits (known as legacy benefits) to Universal Credit was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, but in Spring people started to receive Migration Notice letters asking them to claim Universal Credit.

If you receive a Migration Notice, meaning you need to go through the move to Universal Credit and end up being worse off, you could be entitled to a 'transitional element' top-up payment. Note, this top-up is only for people who have been 'managed migrated' and who would be entitled to less under Universal Credit than currently.

DO YOU HAVE TO MOVE TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT?

If you receive a Migration Notice letter, yes. Follow the instructions in it or your benefit payments may stop. If you haven't received a letter, you don't have to move to Universal Credit yet.

There are two other ways to move to Universal Credit:

- **Natural migration**
If your circumstances change, you will have to claim Universal Credit. In general, natural migration could be triggered if entitlement to your current benefit ends or you become entitled to a different or extra benefit. It shouldn't happen when you make changes to benefits you're already claiming.
- **Voluntary migration**
You can voluntarily make the move to Universal Credit at any time. However, do seek advice before moving because once a claim for Universal Credit has been made there's no going back.

IF YOU RECEIVE A MIGRATION NOTICE LETTER

The letter will specify a date by which you must make your claim to Universal Credit, otherwise your current benefits may stop. If you need help to make your claim, call the **Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline** on **0800 169 0328** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or visit your local Jobcentre.

WHAT IF YOU DON'T START YOUR CLAIM IN TIME?

- You can ask for a short extension, but this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- If you miss the application deadline and make a late claim, you might lose the transitional top-up payment.
- If you can't make your claim by the deadline, contact the helpline above as soon as possible.

THE FOUR KINDS OF CLAIM FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT

1. **New claims**, e.g. when someone not currently on benefits loses their job and makes a new claim for Universal Credit
2. **Natural migration**, when you are on benefits but have a change of circumstance which triggers a new claim for Universal Credit, e.g. when a partner moves in/out
3. **Voluntary migration**, when you choose to move
4. **Managed migration**, when your circumstances haven't changed so DWP initiates your transfer onto Universal Credit.

Struggling to Pay Your Rent?

If you're struggling to pay your rent or feel you might fall behind, contact your Housing Officer straight away on **028 38339795**.

We are here to help, and we can agree a repayment plan that is achievable for you. Remember, the sooner you get in touch, the sooner we can help.

Budget planning is a great way to manage your spending, improve your finances and avoid debt. For more information, contact your Housing Officer.

OTHER RESOURCES



Advice NI can help you gain control of your finances. Call **0800 915 4604** or advice@adviceni.net

make the call

The Make the Call Service ensures you're getting all the benefits, services and support you're entitled to. Call Freephone **0800 232 1271** or email makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk



The Consumer Council has interactive tools online to help you save money on energy costs and household bills. Visit www.consumercouncil.org.uk



Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC)

We were delighted to have participated in a range of programmes, initiatives and events organised through T:BUC this year.



CHILDREN'S SPORTS & MENTAL HEALTH CAMP

Held at Newry Olympic Hockey Club, this event involved children across a range of age groups and combined sport and games along with mental health and wellbeing exercises.



HEALTH KICKS

This event took place at Newry Olympic Hockey Club and involved a range of outdoor activity sessions and indoor workshops and presentations.



DEMENTIA REALITY WORKSHOP

Funded by T:BUC Newry, a month-long dementia awareness programme was offered to Arbour's new tenants in the Belfast Road housing scheme.

26TH JUNE 2023 - 2 JULY 2023

YOUTH PRIDE
Newry

YOUTH PRIDE, NEWRY

This programme of events at the end of June included comedy nights, musical shows, family support and networking events to support people from the LGBTQI+ community and challenge misconceptions.



Launch of new scheme at Belfast Road, Newry

In April 2023 we were proud to have the grand launch of the new shared housing scheme in Belfast Road in the Newry.

The 21-unit development is supported by the NIHE's Housing for All programme, which is part of the T:BUC initiative and focuses on building good community relations through shared housing.



Women's History Project

Supported by T:BUC, Newry, women aged 50+ took part in a cross-community project with Altnaveigh Ladies' Group and Hizone Women's Group, as well as the wider community. Events included workshops and excursions and the project was open to all Arbour and Radius Shared Housing tenants.



PLANTING EVENT

At Belfast Road in Newry tenants took part in a community planting event, creating a colourful array of planters, pots and hanging baskets.





Energy Efficiency Tips



Using electricity more efficiently saves you money but also reduces carbon emissions and helps protect the environment. Here are some things you can start to do today.



IN THE KITCHEN

- Only use the amount of water you need when boiling the kettle (cover the element of an electric kettle).
- Put lids on pots and turn down the heat when the water starts to boil. You'll retain heat and cut condensation in the kitchen.
- Steamer pots cut hob use.
- Where possible, use your oven for more than just one item. Remember, you can cook at a higher temperature at the top of the oven and at a lower temperature at the bottom at the same time.
- Every time you open the oven door to check cooking, you lose 20% of the accumulated heat!
- Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly and avoid putting hot food in the freezer. Let it cool first.
- Never leave the fridge door open.
- Using a microwave rather than a conventional oven to heat up a small amount of food may save you energy.



LAUNDRY

- Washing clothes at just 30°C can be just as effective for a normally soiled load.
- Run your washing machine or dishwasher with full loads.
- Avoid tumble drying. Dry clothes outdoors or on indoor racks when possible to save money and energy.



HEATING AND HOT WATER

- Turning your central heating down by just 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10%!
- Turn down your immersion heater temperature by 1°C. You'll save energy – and you won't notice the difference!
- Close your curtains at night to keep the heat in.
- Don't block radiators with furniture.
- Never leave the hot water tap running.
- Use the shower, if you have one, rather than the bath.



LIGHTING

- Use energy-efficient bulbs.
- Switch the lights off every time you leave a room.
- When you need only a small amount of light, use 'task' lighting – like a lamp.



APPLIANCES

- Never leave mobile phones charging overnight.
- Make sure computer equipment is switched off and unplugged when not in use.
- An electrical appliance on standby still costs you money. So switch it off or unplug it if possible.
- And remember: energy-saving products use less energy and therefore cost less to run.



HOME ENERGY MONITORS

A home energy monitor is an easy way to see how much electricity you're using as you use it – and what it costs. A clip from the monitor is attached to the cable from your electricity meter. The current is then measured and transmitted wirelessly to a display that you can keep anywhere in your house.

It's not a substitute for your electricity bill, but if you update the monitor with any changes to your tariff, it can show how much your electricity is costing.



SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR E-BIKES AND SCOOTERS

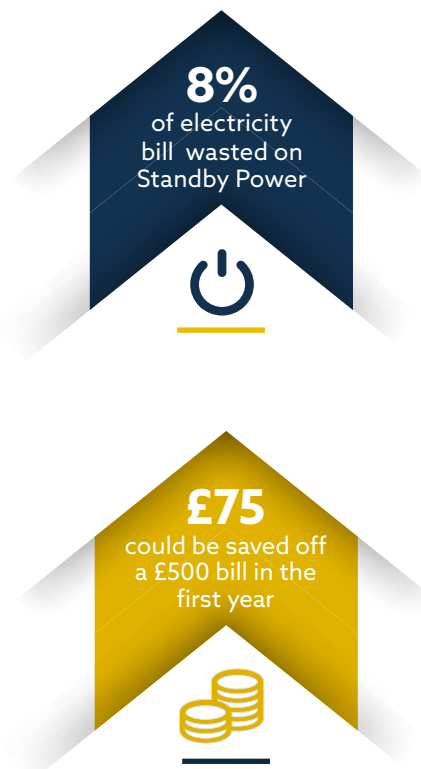
- Avoid charging the battery overnight.
- Do not leave vehicles charging for any longer than they need to fully charge.
- Plug the cable into a main socket rather than an extension lead.
- Don't cover the battery while it's charging.
- Make sure you always use the battery and battery charger recommended by the manufacturer for the product
- If you spot any wear and tear or damage, buy an official replacement charger for your product from a reputable seller.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms on every floor of your home - including the room where you charge the bike/scooter.



HOW MUCH CAN YOU SAVE?

- The Energy Saving Trust estimates that households in the UK waste around **8%** of their electricity bill just on standby power. That's about **£30 a year** for an average household.
- In trials of home energy monitors, customers have typically saved between **5%** and **15 %** in the first year of owning a monitor - which could be up to £75 off a £500 bill.

For more info contact NI Energy Advice on Freephone **0800 1114455** or at www.nidirect.gov.uk



Granemore Spring Event

On 13th April this year we held an Easter Fun Day at the Tommy Makem Arts & Community Hall for the residents of Granemore Park, Keady.

There was a petting zoo, face-painting, craft activities - and of course lots of treats for everyone!





Winter Nature Watch!



BIRDS

As the weather gets colder, many of our local bird species become dependent on us to keep their energy levels up. By keeping a bird feeder or table well stocked at the end of the year, we can ensure our garden birds will have enough fuel to make it to Spring, when plant life will start to come into bloom again.



HEDGEHOGS

Over winter hedgehogs go into hibernation in sheltered area such as log piles, under timber buildings or abandoned rabbit warrens. When preparing their nest, they collect fallen leaves and twigs, so as the leaves begin to fall, try brushing these into a corner of your garden. This way any hedgehogs will have access to this valuable material for their nest, and may even hibernate in the leaf pile itself. During autumn, placing out a small bowl of water near the leaf pile may provide an opportunity to watch the hedgehogs drinking - provided you stay up late enough!



INSECTS

To ensure a good return of insects to help manage your garden year on year, collect old sticks, twigs and logs that are starting to decay. When piled together in a secluded part of your garden they provide the perfect shelter for these small garden maintainers.



That's it for this issue. As ever, we love to hear from you, so feel free to get in touch within concerns, questions or comments.

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