

Housing
Executive

2021 EDITION

streets ahead

nihe.gov.uk   

The magazine for
Housing Executive
tenants



News > Features > Advice > Community

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CIPR PRIDE AWARDS WINNER Best Publication

Housing Executive

Welcome



Grainia Long
Chief Executive

Make sure you turn to page 26 to read our interview with tenants Linda Roy and Anne and Patrick Morgan. They've been with us since 1971!



Dear tenant, Welcome to the 2021 edition of Streets Ahead.

I feel incredibly lucky to have joined the Housing Executive as its Chief Executive, particularly in its 50th year. While the past 12 months have continued to be extremely challenging for everyone, tenants and colleagues alike, our anniversary has offered us the opportunity to reflect on our successes and to think about the future.

This organisation has a proud history of delivering high quality housing services to tenants, supporting residents to find solutions to the problems they face, and working with voluntary and

community sector partners to make our neighbourhoods great places to live.

My motivation to work in housing stems from my very first job, straight out of university, when I worked in Housing Rights Service in Belfast, and heard first-hand the life experiences of people in housing need. I am passionate about ensuring that our homes help people thrive. This principle is as important today, as it was in the first Housing Executive Annual Report, written in 1971. It said, 'The Executive must be more than the agency for the physical task of building houses. We must build with an awareness of all the problems that go with housing and the social implications of our task'.

The Housing Executive is at its best, when it focuses on people. We are thrilled to have achieved our best

performance to date for Customer Service Excellence in 2020/21, surpassing our previous commitment to customer excellence year on year.

We have packed this edition full of features that show how our investment has made an impact on communities across Northern Ireland. I am delighted that we have been able to play a part in supporting local people to do incredible things.

I am very conscious that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our lives. Despite these challenges, my colleagues continue to serve, and are there for you online, over the phone, or in your estate. Please use this edition to find out how to access our services in a way that works for you.

Home is about much more than the property we live in, it gives us our sense of identity and place.

This is why it is so important that we make yours somewhere that you feel safe, comfortable and well. Your experiences and opinions help to shape our services, and there is information in this edition on how you can get involved.

On behalf of everyone in the Housing Executive, I would like to wish you a safe and healthy Christmas and a happy New Year.

Grainia Long
Chief Executive

How we're doing

Figures taken from Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey 2020 & Housing Executive Annual Report 2020/21



84,692

homes managed by the Housing Executive

171,536

tenants – 41,053 younger than 16 years old and 84,043 older than 60 years old



Almost **400,000** phone calls to our offices

89% of you were satisfied with your neighbourhood

325,000+ maintenance jobs carried out at a cost of **£61.8m**

293 confirmed Housing Community Network community groups

£730 average spent on each dwelling

121 MAJOR ADAPTATIONS and **2,273 MINOR ADAPTATIONS** carried out so people could continue to live independently in their home

83% were satisfied with how we had managed your repair(s)

85% of you were satisfied with the quality of your home

89% of you said that your rent provides value for money

Retained Compliance Plus standard for Customer Service Excellence



83% of you said that you were satisfied with the overall service provided by us

Tower block update

Following the approval of our Tower Blocks Action Plan in 2019 by our Board and the Department for Communities, we wanted to update you on our progress so far.

Due to the complexity and scale of the plan, the demolition of our 33 tower blocks is happening in 3 phases.

PHASE 1

(Monkscoole, Latharna, Coolmoynes, Rathmoynes, Kilbroney, Clarawood, Abbotscoole, Moylena, Breda, Oisin, Ross, Woodland, Beechwood and Magowan)

These blocks are due to be demolished over a 1 to 5 year time period with demolition works to Monkscoole House due to be completed by Summer 2022.

A number of other Phase 1 blocks have now received approval for demolition and are being actively cleared of residents to allow the demolition works to begin. These are Latharna, Coolmoynes, Rathmoynes, Kilbroney, Clarawood.

Our Board has also approved the demolition of Breda and Belvoir Houses. The next stage is approval from the Department for

Communities. Business cases for remaining Phase 1 blocks, will be progressed in the next year. We are, however, currently reviewing the timescale for Oisin House due to the proposed Redevelopment Area of Upper Long Streets which is situated close by.

PHASE 2

(Finn, Fianna, Mount Vernon, Belvoir, Riverdale, Parkdale, Ferndale)

These are due to come down over a 6 to 10 year period, with remedial works carried out in the interim.

Once the plans for demolition of Phase 1 blocks have progressed sufficiently, the business cases for Phase 2 blocks will be undertaken. In the meantime, we will continue to undertake necessary repair and health and safety works to the blocks.

PHASE 3

(Divis, Cuchulainn, Grainne, Maeve, Eithne, Carnet, Whincroft,



Glencoole, Carncoole, Moveen, Willowbrook, Woodstock)

It is proposed that Phase 3 blocks will be retained for a period of more than 10 years with improvement works carried out as needed.

A feasibility study is required to understand the nature, cost and delivery method of these improvement works. We are engaging with market operators and hope to have a consultant appointed in the next 4-6 months.

Once plans for improvement works are established, business cases for the Phase 3 blocks will be undertaken.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Residents within each block will be consulted with during the preparation of our plans. We will continue to communicate with all residents and stakeholders affected by the Tower Blocks Action Plan, to ensure they are kept up to date with our progress. ■

Service update

As restrictions ease, we are working hard to resume our normal housing and maintenance services. You can access most of our services on our website, through the

My Housing Executive tenant portal, or by phone.

We ask that you call our General Enquiries Line on 03448 920 900 to speak to your Patch Manager about your query in the first instance.

You can find out how your Patch Manager can support you by turning to page 36.

For services that we cannot effectively deliver online or over the phone, we can offer appointments in

your local office.

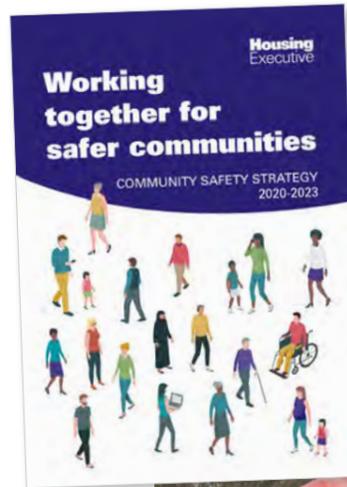
We expect some interruptions to our normal repair service at this time. We thank you for your patience while we continue to work through the backlog of repairs.

To keep up to date with the latest information on the status of all our services, visit the Customer Service section on our website, or check out our social media channels. ■

Milestones from our year



As we celebrated our 50th anniversary this year, we reflected on our past, and looked forward to the future.



In **January**, we launched our new Community Safety Strategy. This sets out our plan to work in partnership with organisations to make our communities safe places to live. If you're worried about anti-social behaviour in your neighbourhood, turn to page 35 to find out how we can support you.



In **March**, we ran a month long #MakingYourMoneyWork social media campaign, showcasing how our staff can help you make your money go further. Turn to page 43 to learn more.



National Storytelling Week, which encourages people of all ages to take up writing, was in **February**. Flick over to page 14 to find out how we're empowering women through the medium of storytelling as part of The Phenomenal Women project.



Our new Chief Executive, Grainia Long, joined us in **April**. Flick back to page 2 to find out her vision for the Housing Executive's future.



May was National Walking Month, so we challenged our staff to walk a combined billion steps with other public sector organisations in 31 days. We contributed **60,199,587** steps towards the challenge and raised almost **£3,000** for mental health charities.

In **June** we celebrated Volunteers Week. Turn to page 48 to read our interview with Sheila McWilliams, one of the fantastic volunteers that sit on our Housing Community Network.



In **July** we kick-started our Good Neighbour campaign, which celebrated people like Saoirse who make a difference in their community. Turn over to meet the good neighbours who make our neighbourhoods great.



We launched our Housing Investment Plans for each council area in **August**. These set out our commitment to meeting the housing needs of our customers for the year ahead. Flick back to page 4 to find out how we're doing.



Did you know that World Alzheimer's Day is on 21 **September**? If you'd like support to continue to live independently in your home, turn to page 42 to find out how we can help.



In **October**, we took part in Fire Safety Week. Turn to page 18 to learn about the simple steps you can take to stay safe in your home.



As part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, our Chair, Professor Peter Roberts, visited 50 organisations we work in partnership with across Northern Ireland. We sat down with him in **November**, to hear his views on the role our tenants and staff have played in building strong communities. Turn to page 28 to find out more.



Thinking of moving home in the **New Year**? Then turn to page 41 to find out how to sign up for our HomeSwapper service.



Good Neighbours make Great Neighbourhoods

As part of our 50th anniversary, we wanted to celebrate the unsung heroes living in our homes. Those who look out for their neighbours, and make where they live better for everyone.

Earlier this year, we asked our staff and Housing Community Network members to nominate those who have made a difference in their local community. After receiving dozens of nominations, we selected 16 Good Neighbours to recognise and thank.

These phenomenal people, have went out of their way to help their neighbours and enhance where they live. They're the problem solvers in their community - organising clean-ups, bringing people together to transform unloved pieces of land, and setting up committees to ensure local people have a voice.

As life in lockdown continued, they were the people residents turned to during their time of need. From delivering shopping, to picking up prescriptions, dropping off dinners to elderly residents, and keeping everyone's spirits up by hosting virtual events.

To put it simply, they are the reason why living in our communities is so special. We look forward to supporting them over the next 50 years and beyond. ▶



John Wilson
As a member of the award winning Ahoghill in Bloom, John works alongside other volunteers to create beautiful flower displays in the village. He also helps vulnerable neighbours by maintaining their gardens and bringing in their bins.



Claire Rollins
Claire has lived in her estate in Cookstown for 14 years. She volunteers with the local community group and enjoys arranging day trips for the children living on her estate.



Ian McCrorie
As a member of Donegall Pass Community Forum, Ian has worked tirelessly to help people in his community. He can usually be found in the community garden, helping members of the Men's Shed to grow a range of fresh vegetables for his neighbours.



Beverly Simpson
Beverly has lived in the Cregagh area of Derry-Londonderry for 3 years. As a member of the North West Migrant's Forum, she is passionate about bringing people of different backgrounds together and giving back to her community.

Inspired by our Good Neighbours?

Get in touch with your **Good Relations Officer** to find out how we can help you get your community project off the ground. You can call them on our General Enquiries Line on **03448 920 900**.



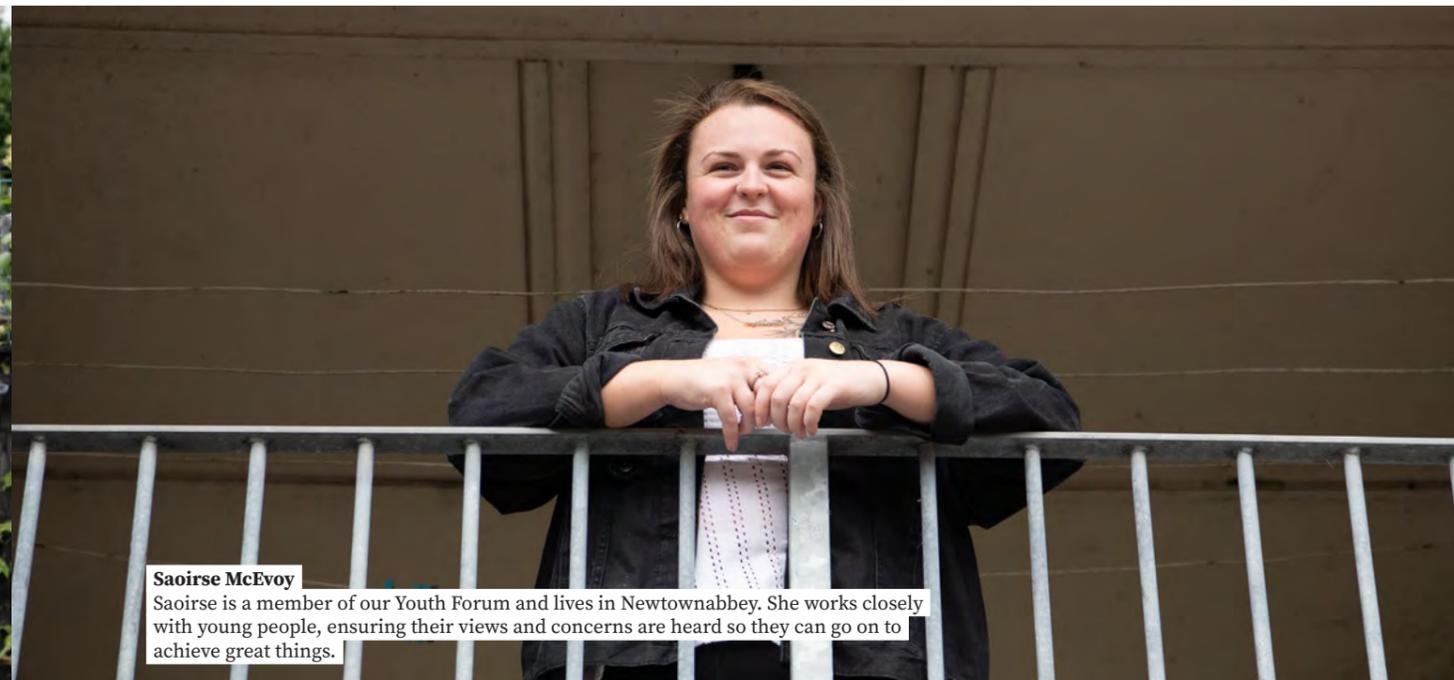
Elisha Thompson
Elisha is Chair of Tullyally Community Partnership and co-ordinated the community response during the start of the pandemic. Alongside other volunteers, she delivered food parcels and organised Halloween and Christmas street events to raise the spirits of her neighbours.



Sasha Rainnie
Sasha lives in Ballymena and is the go-to person on her estate. Over the years, she has been an advocate for residents and brought them together to create a wonderful community garden.



George Rogan
George has lived in his home in Poleglass for 34 years and enjoys working with young people. Throughout the years, he has been involved in a range of schemes that have enhanced the local area and brought people from different generations together.



Saoirse McEvoy
Saoirse is a member of our Youth Forum and lives in Newtownabbey. She works closely with young people, ensuring their views and concerns are heard so they can go on to achieve great things.



Phyllis Fegan
Phyllis works quietly in the background in her neighbourhood in Enniskillen to better her community. She can often be found in the Community House, writing funding applications for projects and sharing the views of residents with service providers.



David Belshaw
David set up the Men's Shed in Knock Square in Lisburn. He has helped bring local men together to socialise, have fun and create a range of garden furniture that can be used by local residents.



John McCabe
John has lived in Newry for almost 20 years, with his fiancé and 3 dogs. Over the last year he has championed a range of projects to improve his estate such as tree planting and creating new flower beds.

Thank you

During the coronavirus pandemic, communities across Northern Ireland found themselves in greater need of heroes more than ever before.

We want to thank all the Good Neighbours who gave up their time to help vulnerable people living in their community during this unprecedented time.



Craig McMahon
Craig has lived in his flat in Ballyduff for 5 years and plays a vital role in his community. He can usually be found in the local community centre, organising events that residents of all ages can enjoy.



Samantha Watt
As a member of Building Ballysally Together, Samantha has organised a range of schemes to support people living in her estate including safeguarding training, an electricity voucher scheme, and providing Easter Packs for children.



Blair Anderson
Blair has lived in Broughshane for 2 years and works for the Northern Ireland Youth Forum. She is passionate about empowering young people to make a positive contribution to their community and ensures they have opportunities to shape our services.



Lisa Brown
As Secretary of Leckagh Neighbourhood Partnership, Lisa has worked extensively to deliver a range of projects that promote community spirit. During the pandemic, she worked with local volunteers to create floral displays for elderly neighbours through her 'Window Boxes of Hope' initiative.



Michaela Hannaway
Michaela lives in Downpatrick with her young family and enjoys helping her neighbours. She is currently working on transforming a piece of unloved land in her neighbourhood into an asset the entire community can enjoy.

A League of Their Own

In September, we visited Gortacladdy, a rural hamlet nestled in Kildress, County Tyrone, to see how a new £1.45million GAA community hub is enabling local people to develop and access essential services.

“The GAA acts as an anchor in communities, providing structure and support.”

Inspired?

Visit the rural section of our website www.nihe.gov.uk to find out how we can help your rural community.

We were greeted with a huge sense of pride from residents as soon as we stepped into the building, and it's not hard to see why. The large two-story building, which opened in April after 11 years of planning and hard work, is modern, welcoming, and firmly rooted in the heart of the rural area.

It houses a range of facilities that the entire community can avail of. These include changing rooms, a gym and fitness area, meeting spaces, and a multi-use community hall.

It also has a 'Learning Room', made possible by our Rural Development Programme match funding initiative, providing people with a place to come together to learn new skills and study for qualifications.

Families are able to enjoy 2 state of the art GAA pitches and a brand new playground, which will enable them to improve their health and wellbeing. Club members are also making plans to create a walkway, filled with native plants and flowers, which will support local wildlife.

As well as offering villagers access to top of the range sports facilities, the hub will also act as a 'drop in' centre so they can receive support from public agencies. This is hugely important, as residents struggle to access basic services due to the remote location of the village.

Once our tour was over, Mark Conway, a Club committee member, explained why the new Kildress Wolfe Tones GAA Club is so special to residents.

“Everything here was led and delivered by the community; in fact we raised 83% of the £1.45million needed to build this hub ourselves with over £500,000 coming from a club draw. It really exemplifies the level of generosity and determination in rural areas.”

“And in all of this, we can't and won't forget the Housing Executive's support. When we needed it, they stood up with and for us.” ■



Club committee members enjoy a coffee while having a meeting in one of the hub's function rooms.



The new GAA community hub cost £1.45 million to build with over £500,000 raised through a club draw.



The 'Learning Room', funded through our Rural Development Programme, provides villagers with a place to come together to learn new skills and study for qualifications.



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 “One of my favourite quotes is ‘there’s no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you’ by the late Maya Angelou. I believe through this project, we have been able to unearth some incredible stories that needed to be told.”

Nandi Jola is a poet, storyteller, playwright and creative writing facilitator. Born in South Africa, Nandi is well known in Northern Ireland and beyond for her work in the arts sector.

Write like a girl

We travelled to Ballymoney to meet Nandi Jola, a creative writing facilitator working for the Building Communities Resource Centre, to find out how she’s empowering women through the medium of storytelling.

The Phenomenal Women project, funded through our Community Cohesion Programme, is the brainchild of Nandi and Building Communities Resource Centre Manager, Marie-Louise McClarey. Last year, they decided to create a safe space for women of all ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities, to share their stories, and connect with each other. During the pandemic, they moved their workshops online, which led to them publishing ‘A Collection of Poetry and Short Stories’ in April 2020.

“All the women had amazing stories to tell. This project provided them with the skills they needed to unearth them,” Nandi told us, while showing us some of the texts the group have been studying, “It has been a great privilege to be able to empower these women to tell their stories of loss, identity, and hope.”

Throughout the project, Nandi acted as a mentor to the women, providing one-to-one sessions, and giving feedback and tips to help them to express themselves in different ways, through poetry, short stories, and biographies. They also enjoyed learning about different cultures, and exploring what they, as women living in Northern Ireland, have in common.

Nandi explained that the creative writing project has enabled them to develop a supportive, diverse network that amplifies the voice of women. All of this has had a massive impact on participants, she said,

“Through this project I have witnessed transformation; women beautifully recalling memories through writing prose, a poem, or a story. They are all truly phenomenal.” ■



Nandi and Building Communities Resource Centre staff read ‘A Collection of Poetry and Short Stories’, published by the Phenomenal Women participants in April 2020.

About Building Communities Resource Centre

Building Communities Resource Centre is instrumental in designing and delivering projects which collaborate with people of all ethnicities living in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.

It spearheads initiatives like ‘Beyond Newcomer Narratives’, ‘Connection Cafe’, ‘Speaking Truth To Power’ which enhance cultural competency, and increase awareness of the contribution diverse people have made to the life and history of this corner of the world.

To learn more about their work visit the [@BuildingResourcesCommunityCentre](#) Facebook page.

Start a new chapter

Would you like to hold an event or create a project that brings people together? Get in touch with our Community Cohesion Unit to find out how we can help.

You can do this is by calling our General Enquiries Line on **03448 920 900**

Caring in the community

We met with Orlaith Bradley, Manager of Kids Together Belfast Youth and the Transitional Learning Centre (TLC) Programme, to find out how her team are helping young adults with learning disabilities learn life skills, and foster new friendships.

Set up by local parents living in the West Belfast area 16 years ago, the programme provides support to people with learning disabilities and their families. In 2020, they launched their second social enterprise project called TLC, which provides post-school opportunities for young people to reach their full potential.

Orlaith, whose post is funded by our Social Enterprise Plus Programme, invited us over to their Hannahstown Hill premises in Andersonstown, to see how the project helps participants become more independent.

“Young adults with moderate to severe learning needs often struggle when they leave school as not many service providers are able to meet their needs. Our TLC project helps them overcome these barriers so they can gain essential living skills.”

“We’re passionate about encouraging our young people to make meaningful social connections

with their peers. This helps reduce feelings of isolation and gives them the confidence to go out and socialise.”

Orlaith and her team provide participants with a safe and fun environment to build relationships. They pack each day with activities that everyone can get involved in such as yoga, fitness classes, board game tournaments, and trips out to places like the cinema.

“I’ve been a part of Kids Together Belfast for 9 years and I couldn’t imagine doing anything else. I love seeing our young people using the support we give them to empower themselves to make decisions and changes in their lives. Having this provision in the local community is so important. We really get to know them and shape our services round their individual needs.”

To learn more about the TLC programme visit Kids Together Belfast on Facebook or give the team a call on 028 9061 1034. ■



Orlaith Bradley, Manager of Kids Together Belfast Youth and the Transitional Learning Centre (TLC) Programme



The Kids Together Belfast team provide participants with a safe and fun environment to develop key life skills.



Young people learn how to improve their physical fitness as part of the TLC programme.



The TLC programme is shaped around the needs of each participant so they can reach their full potential.



The Kids Together Belfast team pack every day with a range of activities that help participants foster new friendships.

.....
 “I love seeing our young people using the support we give them to empower themselves to make decisions and changes in their lives.”



Safety in your home

We want to make sure that your home is safe and secure. This is why we carry out annual services and safety checks in all our properties. You can also take steps to keep you and your family safe.

WATER HYGIENE

Legionnaires' disease, a severe form of pneumonia, can be caused by inhaling small droplets of water containing the Legionella bacteria.

To make sure your water is safe in your home, you should keep:

Hot water hot – Hot water should be stored at 60°C. Our contractors set this for you during your annual heating service. It is important that you don't change the temperature.

Cold water cold – This is because the bacteria doesn't grow in water below 20°C.

Water circulating – Turn on rarely used taps and showers once a week, and run the water for a short period to prevent the build-up of bacteria.

Outlets clean – The bacteria feeds on limescale on taps and shower heads. Cleaning these regularly will prevent limescale build up.

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of naturally occurring minerals made of soft and flexible fibres that are resistant to heat, electricity, moisture, and corrosion. These properties led to it being used previously in a wide range of building materials and products for waterproofing, fireproofing, and electrical and thermal insulation.

WHY IS IT NO LONGER USED?

Asbestos fibres, when inhaled, can cause serious lung disease. It's important to know that you are not at risk if the materials are in good condition and not disturbed.

WHERE CAN IT BE FOUND?

Asbestos can be found inside and outside your home, in places like roofs, gutters, and in your insulation, or ceiling tiles.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND IT?

If you think that there is asbestos in your home, and are concerned about its condition, get in touch with us.

FIRE SAFETY

You should have a smoke detector fitted on every level of your home. We check these every year, as part of the annual safety check of our heating systems, to make sure that they are working properly.

You should also test your smoke detector every week. If you are having issues with any of them, you should contact us straight away.

This is really important as smoke detectors identify smoke at the earliest stages of a fire, giving you extra crucial time to get out of your home. ■



**Your safety
is our top priority**

If you are concerned about Legionella, fire safety, or asbestos in your home, call our 24 hour Repair Line on **03448 920 901**

Learn more about staying safe in your home by checking out our website www.nihe.gov.uk

Kit out your kitchen for less with Refresh Appliances

It pays to go green

When you buy a preloved product from Refresh Appliances they'll also:

- **Install and deliver it for free**
- **Provide you with a 6 or 12 month warranty**
- **Remove and recycle your old machine**
- **Give you expert advice to help you get started**



Refresh Appliances staff refurbish and restore white goods, in need of some TLC, to the highest industry standards.

For many of us the kitchen is the heart of our home. It's where we cook and eat together, and the place we catch up with our family and friends. Kitting it out doesn't have to be expensive though, as we found out when we visited Refresh Appliances Ltd in Newtownards.

Since 2014, they have been refurbishing white goods in need of some TLC, restoring them to the highest industry standards. This means you can pick up machines that are practically brand new, for a fraction of the price you would pay on the high street.

If you buy from Refresh Appliances, who have received support through our Social Enterprise Programme, you're also reducing your carbon footprint, and giving back to the local community. Over the last 7 years, they have helped dozens of young people gain qualifications and access employment opportunities from their workshop in Strangford Park.

Whether you have just moved in, or would like to upgrade your kitchen, you can pick up a bargain with Refresh Appliances. ■



Refresh Appliances, based in Newtownards, have employed and provided training for dozens of local people over the last 7 years.

Enjoy a stainless steal

Buy **refurbished washing machines, cookers, dishwashers, and tumble dryers** for a third of the price of a new one.

To find out what they have in stock give them a call on **028 9182 1112**.
[f @Refresh2021](#)

Be Gas Safe



ANNUAL GAS SAFETY CHECKS

By law, we must carry out an annual service and safety check of all gas appliances that we have installed in your home. This is to ensure that your heating system is running efficiently and safely.

It is important that you allow our Gas Safe registered contractor to access your home to carry out this important work. If you don't allow access, your gas supply will be disconnected, as we can't ensure that your gas is safe to use.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Whenever our Gas Safe registered contractors install a new or replacement heating system in your home, we will provide you with a carbon monoxide detector or alarm. This will be placed in the room where your boiler is located.

Carbon monoxide is a silent killer that you can't see, taste, or smell. However, there are signs that you need to look out for including:

- Staining, soot, or discolouration around a gas fire or around the top of a water heater or central heating boiler.
- A yellow or orange flame in a gas appliance.
- Onset of symptoms such as tiredness, headache, nausea, giddiness, pains in the chest and stomach (these can often be mistaken for symptoms of a cold or flu).

If you suspect an appliance is unsafe, turn it off, leave it alone, and call our 24 hour Repair Line on 03448 920 901. We will have it checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer as soon as possible. ■

Don't freeze up this winter

If a pipe freezes in your home, follow these 4 simple steps to prevent a leak or flood:



1

Cut off your water supply at the stopcock or stop valve, by turning it clockwise.

If your home has a stopcock, you should be able to find it under the kitchen sink. It can also be in an airing cupboard or under the floorboards by your front door.

If your home has a stop valve, it should be on a wall in your kitchen.



2

Find the frozen pipe if you can, and move your belongings away from it so they don't become damaged if it bursts.



3

If you find it, try to thaw the pipe out by holding a hot water bottle to it. This will melt the ice and help get things flowing again.



4

Call our 24 hour Repair Line on 03448 920 901 and let us know that you have a frozen pipe in your home. ■

How to save energy this winter

Many of us have seen our household bills rise recently. Here are 3 ways that will help you spend less running your home.

SWITCH OFF AND UNPLUG

Appliances like hairdryers, microwaves, and irons continue to use electricity even when they're turned off. If you don't use these all the time, unplug them so you're not wasting energy.

TURN IT DOWN

Turning down your thermostat by just 1 degree could cut your heating bill significantly. You can also save money by setting your heating and hot water to only come on/off when you need it.

CHECK YOU'RE GETTING THE BEST DEAL

Compare energy suppliers to see if you're getting the best value for money. Chat to your energy supplier – you may be able to get a discount if you change the way you pay your bill. ■

Get in touch with our Energy Advisors

- You can get free independent and impartial advice by:
- Calling our NI Energy Advice Line on **0800 111 4455**
 - Emailing nienergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk
 - Filling out the **Get in Touch form** on the 'Community' section of our website



Save money with our Oil Buying Clubs

As a member of one of our Oil Buying Clubs, you can order home heating oil at the same time as your neighbours, and fill your tank for less.

Ordering in bulk reduces the supplier's delivery costs, so by buying collectively, members can negotiate a better price. The more people that take part, the greater the savings for everyone.

As a member, you can buy as little as 200 litres and easily keep track of heating oil prices, which means that you can order at a time that suits you. You only ever pay for the oil you order and we don't add anything to the price.

HOW IT WORKS

GET A QUOTE

All members place their order by a specified date. Based on estimated monthly order requests, the club representative will negotiate the best price on each oil group's bulk order.

PLACE YOUR ORDER

Your club representative will be in touch with details of the discounted cost per litre and a proposed delivery date. At this point, you must confirm your order and commit to it.

RECEIVE YOUR OIL

All members will receive deliveries from their local supplier on their confirmed delivery date. You can pay on delivery, or in advance, by debit or credit card directly to your oil supplier.

This is dependent on any terms and conditions established by the club. ■



Find your local Oil Buying Club

You can learn more about joining a club near you by:
Calling **0800 111 4455**
Texting **079 3984 3716**
Emailing oilbuyingclubs@nihe.gov.uk
Visiting our website www.nihe.gov.uk

Start your own club

You can contact us to get advice on setting up your own Oil Buying Club. We can help you with administration and negotiating with suppliers to get the best price.



Martin is looking forward to enjoying his well-earned retirement and spending more quality time with his family.

On the home stretch

“Throughout my 50 year career in the Housing Executive, I’ve always loved watching tenants turn our properties into great family homes. I’m proud to have been able to play a small part in helping them to do this.”

In 1971, Martin McKee joined the Housing Executive, having transferred from the now redundant Northern Ireland Housing Trust. He retired 50 years later on the 19 September 2021. Before he clocked out for the last time, we visited him in his home in Bangor to chat about his career in housing.

Joining us as an Accounts Clerk in our first year, Martin was initially based in Andersonstown, Belfast. He was a member of our Accounts team for 32 years, moving to our Kilkeel office in 1973, and then on to Castlereagh in 1991, helping dozens of tenants with their queries. A large part of his role involved visiting people and families in their home. He told us,

“Over the years, I got to know many of the families living in our

houses. I sat down with them in their living room or at the kitchen table, to talk through things like applying for benefits and making their income go further. It was really rewarding being able to help people who were struggling to get back on their feet.”

From 1975 to 1996, we built 80,000 new homes across Northern Ireland. Martin was present when new estates were developed in Annalong, Kilkeel and Rostrevor, something that he is immensely proud to be a part of. This provided much needed housing to people on the waiting list, and gave these areas a new lease of life.

In 2005, Martin transferred to our Finance Department, as part of a project team that transformed our services to our leaseholders, and has remained there ever since. Throughout the last 50 years he has witnessed many changes, including

the mainstream use of computers in the workplace.

“The first computers we got were seen as an ‘aid’, you didn’t need them to do your job unlike now, so essentially they were high tech adding machines,” He explained, “We didn’t have the internet back then so you used the computer to check your own calculations or work something out quickly.”

As his half-century long career with us comes to a close, Martin is looking forward to enjoying his well-deserved retirement,

“My wife and I love holidaying in the South of France. We’re already making plans to travel there in our caravan next summer. We haven’t had many opportunities to use it because of COVID, so I want to make up for lost time now I’m retiring.” ■

Stepping back in time

Over the summer, we met up with some of our first tenants, who took up their tenancies way back in 1971, when the Housing Executive was established. We found out how their lives have changed over the last 50 years.

Putting down roots in Clarawood

Linda has lived in her childhood home in Clarawood, East Belfast since it was first built. She was keen to take on the tenancy herself as she loved growing up there,

“Everyone had very large families back then. My mummy had 8, Mrs Cox next door had 6 and Mrs Maxwell down the street had 11! It was great, there was so many kids about, and it was like an anthill.”

“We were outside all the time - skipping, playing Jacks, hide-and-seek, and rounders, and swinging on ropes around the trees. It was great fun and I made many lifelong friendships then.”

Linda went on to have her own family and she believes Clarawood is a great place to grow up. As one of the first residents on the estate, she has seen many changes over the last 50 years. This includes the creation of the Clarawood Millennium Park,

Connswater Community Greenway, and Knock dual carriageway. Although the area has grown and evolved, Linda says there is still the same strong sense of community spirit,

“Of course there’s not many of the original families left now, but the ethos of the estate lives on. People here look out for each other and take pride in the community. It’s still a very special place to live.”



Linda lives in her childhood home, taking on the tenancy herself in 1971.



Anne and Patrick Morgan moved into their home shortly after they got married and raised their 4 children there.

Finding their feet in Hillfoot Crescent

Anne and Patrick Morgan moved into their home in Hillfoot Crescent, Ballynahinch just after they got married. A new estate in the small town, it provided many other young couples with somewhere to start their life together and make memories. Anne told us,

“We were 28 when we moved here. We loved how close it was to shops and other amenities. We thought we had made it, as both of us were from very rural areas.”

Before they retired, Anne worked as a nurse while Patrick was a digger driver. Living in Hillfoot Crescent meant they could easily commute to Belfast from the market town, something that Patrick did until he was 71. He explained why this was important,



50 years later, their home is now the meeting place for their 14 grandchildren.

“Like many of our neighbours, we wanted to have children. Being able to get to Belfast easily meant both of us could balance work with our family life.”

Although their children are all grown up now, the couple are kept busy looking after their

14 grandchildren and their home is now the place where everyone meets up. Anne said,

“We have always had a very happy home and it’s still full of life today. This house is full of memories and we couldn’t imagine living anywhere else.” ■

From Peter's Pen

This year our Chair, Professor Peter Roberts, visited 50 organisations across Northern Ireland, who work in partnership with us to support those living in our homes and on our estates. Here, he shares his thoughts on partnership working to build strong and resilient communities.



I am frequently amazed when I think about the number of lives the Housing Executive touches every day. Housing is about much more than the properties that we live in. It is where we raise our families, escape from the pressures of the everyday world, and make most of our memories. This is something that the Housing Executive has understood since its creation in 1971. As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary this year, I wanted to meet some of the extraordinary people and organisations that we work with."

"Through our Supporting People Programme, we provide funding to a wide range of community and voluntary organisations who help people to live at home independently. These services are a lifeline for many, as they are able to put individual support plans in place that allow people to enjoy their independence and continue to live at home."

"The Housing Executive has a proud history of working with community groups to make our neighbourhoods better places in which to live. One visit that sticks in

my memory was to the Monkstown Jubilee Centre. Here I met the Good Morning Newtownabbey Team, a group of volunteers who provide a lifeline for many people in the local area with the help of funding from our Community Safety Team. This service became even more important during the pandemic, when many people were isolated from their family and friends."

"Over the past 50 years, we have continued to evolve our approach to meeting the needs of individuals and communities across Northern Ireland. I am delighted that our funding and support has helped local people create projects such as Men's Sheds, social enterprises, and community hubs. It has been a privilege to meet our amazing community champions, and to better understand how they are able to deliver essential services that make such a difference to the lives of many people."

"We take a hands-on approach to working with local organisations to build strong communities. Our staff are passionate about working with our tenants and other residents

to find solutions to complex and challenging problems. I was thrilled to hear that the groups I met valued our input, and can count on us to help them overcome barriers."

"As we look to the future, and enter our next half-century of service to communities, I am confident that we are building on strong foundations. We want to continue to provide good homes, while at the same time helping to combat climate change and deliver sustainable communities. This can only be achieved by working in partnership with the people living in our homes and neighbourhoods, and using our services - you, our customers."

"Here's to the next 50 years."

Professor Peter Roberts
Chair



Clockwise from above:-

Peter and Mid & East Antrim Area Manager, Breige Mullaghan, visit the Monkstown Jubilee Centre in September to learn more about the Good Morning Newtownabbey project.

Peter discusses our Tower Block Action Plan, which outlines how we are meeting the needs of people living in our 33 tower blocks, with Coolmoyn House residents.

One of the highlights of Peter's '50 visits' was a trip to Destined, based at the Foyle Valley Railway Museum site in Derry-Londonderry. This organisation provides services to people with learning disabilities at all stages of their lives.

Peter got a warm welcome from Milburn Community Association members when he visited their social enterprise, The Calf Lane Kitchen.

Peter travelled to Derry-Londonderry to learn more about the work of the Cathedral Youth Club.



Join the Reuse Revolution

The 4Rs • Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Reskill



Recycling Manager, Nuala Griffiths, in their furniture storeroom, where customers can pick up a wide range of quality, recycled items.



You can learn how to repair electrical appliances at one of their 6-week DIY courses.

We visited Derry-Londonderry to find out how the 4Rs, a social enterprise based at the city's recycling plant, are inspiring people to learn new DIY skills, and reduce the amount of household items that end up in landfill.

As soon as we arrived at the 4Rs centre, we received a warm welcome from the Recycling Manager, Nuala Griffiths. Nuala gave us a tour of this extraordinary facility, and showed us how participants in their DIY skills programmes are helping the city become greener.

"Over the last 8 years we've trained hundreds of local people; from school leavers to adults with disabilities, to upcycle previously loved furniture. These items, which were previously destined to go to landfill, are beautifully restored. They can then be sold in our retail unit, and go on to take pride of place in someone's home," she explained,

while showing us around the many workshops in the centre.

"It also has a knock-on effect, as by learning these practical skills, they're able to secure work in the construction industry."

This year the 4Rs launched their 'She Shed' project, funded through our Social Enterprise Plus Programme, which has become hugely popular.

"During the pandemic, many women decided to make changes to their homes, but didn't have the skills or confidence to do it themselves. This project provides them with opportunities, in a safe and fun environment, to take that step and make something that gives them a great sense of pride."

After the tour, Nuala introduced us to other members of the 4Rs team who are all passionate about giving back to their community. This ethos is at the core of their work, and we can't wait to see what else they have got planned for the future. ■

Thinking of trying something new?

Make upskilling your New Year's resolution by signing up to one of their 6-week DIY courses.

Their qualified tutors can teach you everything from basic joinery techniques, how to upcycle furniture, to repairing electrical appliances.

To find out more, visit their website www.4rs-new2you.co.uk or email info@newtoyou.org

Everything but the kitchen sink

Do you live in the **Derry City and Strabane District Council area** and are thinking about giving your home a makeover?

The **New2You** shop sell a wide range of quality, recycled furniture including sofas, bedroom furniture, tables, and white goods, at affordable prices.

They also offer home delivery for a small fee.

Don't miss out! Check out their inventory on social media:

 [@4rsnew2you](https://twitter.com/4rsnew2you)

 [@4rs_new2you today](https://www.instagram.com/4rs_new2you_today)



Their friendly staff show you how to furnish your home for less.



Staff member Anne Marie teaches women how to upcycle furniture as part of the She Shed project.



Making a MARC in Newtownards



Alan Coleman, Floating Support Manager, outside the Link Family and Community Centre in Newtownards.

In October, we sat down with Alan Coleman, Floating Support Manager of the Link Family and Community Centre in Newtownards, to find out how his team have been supporting people with substance abuse issues through the Making a Real Change (MARC) project.

Since 1997, the Link Family and Community Centre has been an active Christian presence in the community, serving residents living in the Ards and North Down area. For 24 years, they have helped people from different backgrounds change their relationship with alcohol and drugs, by providing floating support through the MARC project. Their approach focuses on a personalised support plan for the individual's needs. Alan explained,

“Our staff will talk to you about your issues and help you set goals. They'll then offer you practical support, walking alongside you, so you can reach them. Your support plan will look at everything from your mental health, to checking that you are getting all the benefits that you are entitled to. We can also signpost you to specialist service providers, and attend medical appointments with you if you're worried about going to them alone.”

Another key aspect of the project is linking people to services in their local community, so they can foster strong support networks. The team provides support at a pace that is comfortable for each individual.

This allows them to develop coping strategies that help them reduce or cut their alcohol and drug intake.

Alan's Floating Support team understand that many people find it difficult making that first call to ask for help. Although it can be difficult finding the courage to have that initial conversation, people shouldn't let that stop them from calling, he told us,

“Our staff want to help you to get to the root of the problem. They won't judge you, or ask you to do something that you're not ready to do. By having that initial chat, they can create a support plan that will empower you to make meaningful changes in your life.”

Alan went on to tell us that previous participants in the MARC Project, which is funded through our Supporting People Programme, have improved their health and relationships. It all starts by linking in with their staff. ■

“We understand that it can be incredibly difficult managing alcohol or drug issues on your own. Remember change is always possible and we're there to support you on your journey.”

Our online service directory can be used to find all support services funded through the Supporting People Programme in Northern Ireland by visiting www.nihe.gov.uk/find-support



The Floating Support Team provides service users with advice and guidance so they can make positive changes in their lives.

Would you like to make a change?

If you're worried about your alcohol or drug use, and want to talk to someone, get in touch with the staff at **The Link Family and Community Centre** by calling **028 9182 1124**.

They can arrange for you to receive support from your home through the MARC Project.

You can also be referred by your Patch Manager.

It's easy with My Housing Executive

We all lead busy lives. That's why we want to make it easy for you to get in touch with us at a time that suits you.

Our tenant portal – My Housing Executive – allows you to access information about your tenancy, and contact us securely 24 hours a day.

Whether you're on the go, or in the comfort of your home, with My Housing Executive, it's easy to:

- Check your rent balance and account statements
- Make a payment
- Order a new payment card
- Request services like a transfer, an adaptation to your property, or a self-help repair
- Update your contact and personal details
- Request and track a repair
- Contact our staff through direct web messages

You can do all of this on any of your devices that connect to the internet. We're always adding new services so keep checking back to see what else you can do. ■

TOP TIP!

Before you start, have a copy of your rent statement handy. It will have your Tenancy Number on it and will help with the registration process. Your Tenancy Number begins with the number 8.

Register now

Visit our website www.nihe.gov.uk and click on the 'Register' icon on the top right hand corner of the homepage to get started.

This will take you to the My Housing Executive homepage. You should select 'Register' on the menu on the left. You will then be asked to enter your tenancy number, an email address, and a few personal details.

The email address you provide must be private and only used by you. This is because we will send secure notifications and alerts to this email address.

If you require assistance registering with My Housing Executive, please call our dedicated helpline on **03448 920 910** to chat to a member of our staff.



Got your smartphone handy?

Scan this QR code to go straight to the My Housing Executive registration page.



Making our estates safer

We are committed to ensuring all forms of anti-social behaviour are tackled appropriately.

While the majority of our areas are safe and popular places to live, we recognise that nuisance and anti-social behaviour are real issues which can have a significant impact on you and your family.

It is important that you know what to do if you're worried about anti-social behaviour.

REPORTING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The easiest way to report anti-social behaviour is to ring our General Enquiries Line on 03448 920 900 and ask to speak to your Patch Manager.

You can also send them a message on our My Housing Executive tenant portal.

If you prefer, a relative, friend, or representative can make a complaint on your behalf. You can also report anti-social behaviour anonymously on our website www.nihe.gov.uk. However this may limit the action that we can take to resolve the issue.

It is important when reporting anti-social behaviour that you provide as much detail as possible, such as the date and time of the incident, who was involved, where it happened, and who was affected by the anti-social behaviour.

It may also be necessary for you to report anti-social behaviour to the PSNI or your local council.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

If you make a complaint, we will respond in a sensitive way, and take appropriate action to tackle the problem, taking your wishes into account.

We also organise support for victims and witnesses, by making referrals to specialist organisations such as Victim Support Northern Ireland. It is important that you know what to do if you're worried about anti-social behaviour. ■



Get to know your Patch Manager

We understand that turning a house into a home requires much more than bricks and mortar. It is important to contact your Patch Manager so they can resolve any housing issues you may have, and allow you to focus on what matters.

Your Patch Manager is your first point of contact if you have any concerns, requests, or questions about your tenancy with us. They can give you advice on anything from benefit entitlement to maintaining your home, and refer you to other service providers that offer specialist support.

They're also out and about on our estates, meeting with community groups to discuss local issues and help them deliver projects that benefit everyone living in the neighbourhood. This means that they can easily meet you in your home, if you prefer, to discuss your housing needs face-to-face.

If you haven't had a chance to meet your Patch Manager, get in touch with them to find out how they can help you. ■



Since 2017, Ross Kennedy has worked as one of our Patch Managers. He enjoys getting to know tenants on a one-to-one basis and helping them with their housing issues.



Tanya Graham has been a Patch Manager for the last 3 years. She is passionate about providing her tenants with opportunities to give feedback on our services.

Here to help

Your Patch Manager can support you by:

- **Providing** advice to help you maintain your tenancy
- **Liaising** with our contractors when you're getting planned maintenance work done to your home
- **Resolving** issues you may have with your neighbours
- **Processing** home improvement requests
- **Referring** you to people that can help you make your money go further like our Financial Inclusion Managers

It's easy to get in touch

You can contact your Patch Manager by sending them a message on our tenant portal, My Housing Executive, or calling our General Enquiries Line on **03448 920 900**

If you prefer, they can meet you in your home or arrange for you to come into your local office.

Breaking the silence around domestic abuse

Your home should be a safe space for you and your family. We are here to offer you advice and support, if you are experiencing, or feel at risk of domestic abuse.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

You do not have to be physically harmed to be abused.

Domestic abuse occurs when a current or former partner, or a family member, is violent or abusive to you. It can involve physical contact, verbal or emotional abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, and threats to harm or kill.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

WE BELIEVE YOU

Do not suffer in silence. You can call us in confidence on 03448 920 900 and ask to speak to your Patch Manager.

We will support you to make decisions about your living arrangements. We can help keep you safe by:

- Installing security enhancements in your home
- Organising support from organisations that specialise in helping victims of domestic abuse

- Arranging temporary emergency accommodation and transport to get there
- Discussing your permanent housing options with you

You only have to tell us about your experience once. We will ensure confidentially in accordance with your wishes. ■

You are not alone

We give funding to a range of specialist organisations that provide advice and support to victims of domestic abuse.

You can contact them by calling the following numbers:

24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline: 0808 802 1414

Women's Aid: 028 9024 9041

Men's Advisory Project: 028 9024 1929 or 028 7116 0001

Men's Action Network: 028 7137 7777

Members of the LGBT+ community can contact **The Rainbow Project** on **028 9031 9030 or 028 7128 3030**

If you are worried about a child please call the **NSPCC** on **0808 800 5000**



No one should live under lock and key



Marie Brown, CEO of Foyle Women's Aid

We spoke to Marie Brown, CEO of Foyle Women's Aid, to find out how her team have been helping women experiencing domestic abuse, understand their rights and housing options throughout the pandemic.

The formation of Foyle's Women's Aid

On the 16th October 1976 the 'Women's Aid Action Group' occupied 24 Pump Street in Derry-Londonderry.

This was in response to the lack of shelter facilities for women and to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse in the city.

Thanks to the action of these brave women, Foyle Women's Aid was born.

Marie and her staff gave us a very warm welcome when we arrived at their Ardmore House premises, and brought us in to have a cuppa in the beautifully restored Victorian building. While waiting on the kettle to boil, she told us that her staff had been working tirelessly since the first lockdown, to ensure that women could continue to access support. When we asked her what she wanted women experiencing domestic abuse to know most, she said,

"Women often feel that they are locked into an abusive relationship but this isn't true. They need to know that their lives don't always have to be this way, and they can make changes at any point in their lives."

After coffee, Marie took us on a tour showing us the range of ways that her team supports women living in the North West. Support includes, providing secure, short-term housing



Friendly staff are there to help women turn each of their properties into a home, so they can concentrate on improving their wellbeing.



The Foyle Women's Aid team provide women with secure, short term housing in fully furnished properties.



Their 'Dressed for Success' Stylist helps women pick out professional attire, kindly donated by Marks and Spencer, for job interviews.



Women with children can access a range of childcare facilities at their Ardmore House premises.

in fully furnished properties of various sizes. Women with children also have access to childcare facilities onsite through the Sweet Peas Crèche and Teenlink programme, which supports young people affected by domestic abuse.

We visited the fabulous Dressed for Success boutique, where women in need of professional attire, can pick up beautiful outfits, donated by Marks and Spencer, for job interviews. Here they can get advice and support that will help them

.....
 "We have continually adapted the way we deliver our services so we can help women start a new chapter in their lives."

access employment and training opportunities.

We were blown away by the incredible work of Foyle Women's Aid, who are incredibly passionate about improving the wellbeing of local women, placing their needs at the centre of everything they do. Marie told us what happens when someone gets in touch with her team,

"The first thing we do when a woman makes contact with us is listen. This is so our staff can work out what her options are, and help

her make decisions that will keep her safe."

Marie and her team also have big plans for the future, including opening a brand new Family Justice Centre on Bishop Street, Derry-Londonderry next year - an initiative made possible by our Supporting People Provider Innovation Fund. Over the last 45 years they have helped hundreds of women, living in the North West area, improve their lives and we look forward to visiting their new centre in 2022. ■

You don't have to stay put

Foyle Women's Aid offers secure, supported, short term accommodation at confidential locations for individual women and women with children who have to leave their home due to domestic abuse.

Find out how they can help you by ringing their specialist female advisers on **028 7141 6800**

If you prefer, you can discuss your situation with your Patch Manager and they can make a referral on your behalf.

Search, See, Swap...

Find a home that meets your needs with HomeSwapper.



HomeSwapper is an online mutual exchange service that allows social housing tenants to swap homes. By registering, you can exchange properties with another Housing Executive tenant in Northern Ireland, or a housing association tenant that lives in any part of the UK. Once you create a HomeSwapper account, a member of our housing team will confirm if you are entitled

to a swap. If you are, then you'll be able to post an advert to let potential swappers know what your current property is like, search for a new home, and send messages to other tenants to see if they are interested in swapping.

You can find out more about HomeSwapper by calling our General Enquiries Line on 03448 920 900 and speaking to your Patch Manager. ■

Get a move on

To register for HomeSwapper download the app from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

You can also create an account by visiting www.homeswapper.co.uk

There for you every step of the way

If you are living with dementia, we can provide you with practical items that will help you continue to live independently.

Your Patch Manager can give you a 'Dementia Friendly Pack' which includes:

- A specially designed landline telephone with large number keys and picture buttons
- Colour contrasting key fobs with labels
- A 2-in-1 calendar clock that displays the month, day, date and time prominently
- Alzheimer's Society documents and guides
- A dry-wipe reminder board and pen
- An easy to read bookmark with all of our contact details

We have trained over 40 members of staff, based in our local offices across Northern Ireland, as Dementia Champions. They can provide you and your family with bespoke support. Chat to your Patch Manager to learn more. ■



A budget is a great way to work out where your money is going, so you can manage your spending, and even put money aside for a rainy day.

Boost your Budget

Follow our 5 tips to create a budget that works for you.

SET GOALS

First decide who the budget is for. It could be just for you, or it may be for your partner and family as well.

If you have a joint or combined income, sit down with everyone and make the budget together.

WORK OUT YOUR INCOME

If your wages or the amount you receive in benefits fluctuates, you need to work out what your average income is.

This is really important as it allows you to see if you're spending more than you're bringing in.

CREATE A LIST OF EXPENSES

Write down everything you need to pay every month. This includes household bills, any debt you have, and money you might set aside to pay for things like eating out.

INCLUDE 'ONE-OFF' SPENDS

We all have one-off spends like a holiday, Christmas presents, or buying a new car. These however have an impact on your budget so if

you can, plan ahead and work out what the monthly cost of these will be during the year.

BE REALISTIC

Take simple steps to reduce your spending and try to cut your bills by switching provider for example, without cutting back on things you enjoy. ■

Money Matters

If you'd like help making a budget, speak to your Patch Manager by dropping them a message on our tenant portal or calling **03448 920 900**.

You can also use the **Budgeting & Benefits Calculator** on our website to work out your income and see if you're getting all the benefits you're entitled to.

Supporting independent living

Your Patch Manager can refer you to specialist providers that can help you with home maintenance, improve your wellbeing, and learn new life skills.

This is called floating support as the service is 'floated' out to your home. If you're eligible, the provider will create a support plan for you.

Your support plan is based on your needs, goals, and what you're comfortable with.

Floating support providers can help you:

- Stay healthy and well
- Carry out everyday tasks
- Access educational and training opportunities

- Deal with debt or manage your money
- Socialise with people in your community

If you feel that floating support would help you, chat to your Patch Manager. They'll advise you what local support services they can refer you to. ■



Are you scam aware?



As more of us are now shopping online, it is important to watch out for parcel delivery scams.

The most common scam is a text or email claiming that a parcel has failed to be delivered to you.

These messages contain a link to a fraudulent website, where you are asked to provide your personal information, or to make a payment, to ensure the parcel is delivered.

These scams are very sophisticated. They often pretend to be a trustworthy delivery company, and many people have lost money by falling victim to them.

To avoid being scammed follow these 3 tips:

DON'T CLICK

Avoid clicking on any links in the email or text they've sent you. This often brings you to a website where they will steal your information.

NEVER SHARE

Don't give out personal or banking information such as your bank sort code, credit card number, or any passwords.

CHECK IT OUT

If you're expecting a delivery, contact the seller or sender directly to check what parcel company they're using, and when the order is being delivered. They will let you know if the text or email you received is genuine. ■

Protect what matters

Your home contains your most valuable possessions. It is important to protect them by getting contents insurance. This means that you can replace them, should something unexpected happen like a fire or flood.

Home contents insurance covers you against loss, theft, or damage to your personal possessions. Before you take out a policy, you need to work out how much cover you need. This is based on the cost of replacing all your possessions and 'high risk items' such as jewellery, smartphones, and musical instruments.

The average yearly cost of contents insurance is £59.22 so it isn't expensive, and can save you a lot of money in the long run. The easiest way to find a policy that is affordable for you and your family, is to do a quick search on a price comparison site. ■



Why do I need contents insurance?

As your landlord, we are responsible for protecting the structure of your home as well as any permanent fixtures and fittings in it.

Contents insurance covers your belongings. This means that if there is a burglary, flood, or fire in your home, you can claim on it and replace what matters to you.

Getting your money's worth

Money is a tool that can help you achieve your goals. It can provide stability for your family and make it easier to plan for the future. Although managing money can seem complicated, it doesn't have to be. Our Financial Inclusion Managers can provide you with information to help you make better financial decisions.

They can chat to you about your circumstances and guide you through the steps you can take to make your money work for you. Our Financial Inclusion Managers, Sinead, Michael, and Niamh, can help you with:

- Resolving benefits issues
- Managing your debt
- Creating a budget
- Reducing your household bills
- Maximising your income

They'll handle anything you tell them confidentially, and can refer you on to specialist advice agencies if you like.

So what are you waiting for? Start getting your money's worth today. ■

It all adds up
Check out the Budgeting & Benefits Calculator on our website to get an estimate of what benefits you are entitled to.

Pics from top:-

Sinead covers the greater Belfast region, including Lisburn and Castlereagh.

Niamh looks after our South region, encompassing counties Armagh, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone.

Michael takes care of our North region, covering counties Antrim and Derry-Londonderry and the Strabane area.

Our Financial Inclusion Managers are here to check you're getting all the benefits you're entitled to, help you reduce your household bills, and provide you with impartial financial advice.



Do a Money Makeover

Contact your Patch Manager by dropping them a message on **My Housing Executive** or calling our General Enquiries Line on **03448 920 900**.

They can refer you to one of our Financial Inclusion Managers.

Fancy a rewarding career with us?



Interested in making a real difference to people's lives? We offer excellent flexibility, a competitive salary, generous annual leave, enhanced pension scheme, family friendly working policies and the opportunity to develop through training.

With a range of varied development opportunities in: building maintenance; project management; IT; business improvement;

customer services; legal; finance; HR; communications; procurement; and excellent career pathways, the opportunity to achieve your potential is unlimited.

We have many opportunities for talented people who want to change people's lives for the better. For our latest job vacancies, visit www.nihe.gov.uk/careers



“All of us have mental health, which goes up and down when things happen in our lives. This service is about giving people the tools to live a happy life. I love being able to help them create their own destinies.”

As a Project Officer, Mark provides people with one-to-one support and really enjoys getting to know them.

Changing minds in Omagh



We caught up with Mark Dodds, a Project Officer for Inspire Wellbeing, who helps people to reach their full potential through the Western Area Floating Support service. We sat down with him to find out why having good mental health is so important.

For 13 years, Mark has worked in Inspire Wellbeing’s premises in Market Street, Omagh. He assists local people, on a one-to-one basis, who are living with mental ill health. The level of support provided is tailored to the individual, and what steps they feel comfortable taking, to improve their quality of life. Mark told us it all starts with a phone call,

“Whenever someone gets referred, the first thing we do is call them up to have a chat. This is so we can find out what they’re struggling with. If you are experiencing poor mental health, it can have an impact on how you think, feel, and act. It’s really important that we know what someone is going through, so we can work out what we can do to put things in place to improve their emotional wellbeing.”

After the initial conversation takes place, Mark puts together a support plan that meets the needs of the person. Over the years, he has helped people to develop daily living skills, access support networks, and maintain their tenancies. This can be done both in-person, or over the phone.

The aim of the service is to increase people’s self-confidence and assist them to live independently. Mark is very passionate about this,

“Good mental health is important at every stage of your life. It helps you deal with setbacks and allows you to enjoy the good times. We’re there if you’re struggling and need a helping hand. We won’t judge, and anything you tell us will be kept in confidence.” ■



The friendly Inspire Wellbeing Omagh team are passionate about helping people improve their mental health and wellbeing.

It’s okay not to be okay

Staff at Inspire Wellbeing’s Western Area Floating Support service can work with you to:

- Maintain your home • Connect you with your community
- Manage your finances • Improve your wellbeing
- Link in with specialist service providers

If you’d like to be referred to **Inspire Wellbeing**, talk to your Patch Manager.

Lights, Camera, Action

For the last 22 years, Sheila McWilliams has been advocating for her neighbours as a member of our Housing Community Network. We met her in Roe Valley Park, Limavady, to find out how our tenant involvement approach has changed and adapted in recent times.

Established in 1982, our Housing Community Network brings members together to discuss issues in their neighbourhoods with Housing Executive staff at face-to-face meetings. This changed in March 2020, when we were all told to stay in our homes because of the pandemic. Since then, members have attended virtual meetings, and Sheila told us that this has helped tenants, especially those with underlying health issues, to continue to provide valued feedback on our services.

She explained, "Although virtual meetings took a while getting used to, especially for those of us who don't have the best internet connection, they've allowed us to raise important issues that are having an impact on our estates. It's also convenient for people who are working as they don't have to travel to attend meetings."

Over the years, Sheila has used Housing Community Network meetings to deal with concerns around anti-social behaviour, repair work, and benefit entitlement. She is also a member of our Rural Residents' Forum and has found it really helpful.

"Being a part of the Rural Resident's Forum has been brilliant as it isn't just focused on typical housing issues. The Housing Executive has helped me make connections with partner organisations, who deliver services like public transport in rural communities, and supported me to work with them to find solutions to local issues."

Sheila encourages other tenants to get involved with our Housing Community Network so they can find out more information on our funding streams and enhance where they live. ■

Get involved

We want to hear from tenants of all backgrounds, abilities, and ages, to help shape the way we deliver our services.

We have 3 main forums:

- Central Housing Forum
- Rural Residents' Forum
- Disability Forum

We work closely with the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and The Rainbow Project, so young people and members of the LGBTQ+ community have opportunities to share their views.

To find out more info on our forums drop our **Community Involvement Officer** an email: Naomh.McArdleMcFall@nihe.gov.uk

"By sitting on community panels and residents' forums, I can voice my concerns and views directly to the Housing Executive."



Sheila McWilliams, member of our Housing Community Network

Leading the way in the New Lodge



New Lodge Housing Forum members Liam Wiggins, Gerry O'Reilly and Kate Clarke are passionate advocates for residents.

An umbrella body representing 9 residents' groups, The New Lodge Housing Forum has been supporting people living in North Belfast for over 20 years. In November, we met the Chair, Liam Wiggins, to find out how Supporting Communities has helped the group to develop and grow.

For over 40 years, Supporting Communities has empowered people across Northern Ireland to solve problems and run projects that have a positive social impact. Liam told us that they have been instrumental in enabling The New Lodge Housing Forum to thrive since they started back in 1998. He said, "They gave us great advice so we were able to become constituted and obtain charitable status. This meant that we were able to apply for funding to provide a range of essential services to residents."

These services include benefit advice, sharing residents' views with public agencies, and responding to housing issues. In 2017, Supporting Communities helped the Forum to apply for funding so they could hire a Housing Worker. This has allowed the group to enhance the level of support they provide to vulnerable people living in the Greater New Lodge Area.

Liam really values the knowledge and expertise of the Supporting Communities team, in particular his local Community Development Officer, Lisa Clarke. He told us, "Lisa is fantastic. Not only has she helped us with funding applications so that we can deliver projects that improve the wellbeing of residents, she has given us amazing administrative support to ensure everything runs smoothly." ■

Thinking of creating a community group in your area?

Supporting Communities provides a grassroots self-help approach to community development. They offer support, advice, information, and training to new and existing community and residents' groups in Northern Ireland.

They can help new groups to form, constitute themselves, and become sustainable and productive. They support groups to develop action plans that reflect the needs of their community, focusing on housing, social, environmental, and economic issues.

To find out how they can help you or your group, contact them using the self-referral form on their website www.supportingcommunities.org

You can also get in touch with them by emailing info@supportingcommunities.org or calling **028 2564 5676**

Embracing all our neighbours

If English is not your first language and you need help with interpreting & translation the Housing Executive can provide free services on request, please ask for further details at your local office.

ARABIC

كفت غل يه فيزييل جنال الة غللا نكت مل اذا
يف قدع اسمل الى ع لوصحل اجات حتو م ال
عيطتستغف ، فيطخل او فيفتشل اتم حرتل
مده ريفوت فيذي فننتل انكس ال اتم دخ
كفم ي جري ، بلطلا دن ع فيناجل ا تامدخ
نم لي صفتل اب رمال اده لوح راسفتس ال
يل حمل الكبتكم

CANTONESE

如果英語不是你的母語，並且你需要幫助來進行口譯和文字翻譯，那麼 Housing Executive 可以根據請求而提供免費的服務，請在你當地的辦公室詢問進一步的詳情。

LITHUANIAN

Jeį anglų kalba nėra jūsu gimtoji kalba ir jums reikia pagalbos dėl vertimo žodžiu ir raštu, jums pageidaujant Housing Executive gali suteikti nemokamas vertimo paslaugas; dėl išsamesnės informacijos prašome kreiptis į vietinį skyrių.

MANDARIN

如果英语不是你的母语，并且你需要帮助来进行口译和文字翻译，那么 Housing Executive 可以根据请求而提供免费的服務，請在你当地的办公室询问进一步的詳情。

POLISH

Jeśli język angielski nie jest Państwa językiem ojczystym i potrzebują Państwo pomocy w zakresie tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych, Housing Executive oferuje bezpłatne usługi tłumaczeniowe na życzenie. O szczegóły prosimy pytać biuro lokalne.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não for a sua língua materna e precisar de ajuda com tradução e interpretação, o Executivo de Habitação pode providenciar serviços gratuitos mediante solicitação, pode obter mais informações no seu escritório local.

ROMANIAN

Dacă nu sunteți vorbitor nativ de limba engleză și aveți nevoie de sprijin în interpretare sau traducere, Autoritatea Irlandeză pentru Locuințe [Northern Ireland Housing Executive] vă poate oferi aceste servicii gratuite la cerere; vă rugăm solicitați detalii suplimentare la biroul local.

SLOVAK

Ak angličtina nie je váš materský jazyk a vyžadujete si pomoc s prekladom a tlmočením, kancelária úradu pre otázky bývania (Housing Executive) vám ochotne poskytne tieto služby bezplatne. Prosím, požiadajte svoju miestnu kanceláriu o viac informácií.

SOMALI

Haddii af Ingiriisigu uusan ahayn luqaddaada hooyo oo aad u baahan tahay in lagaa caawiyo turjumaadda oraahda ah iyo midda qoran Agaasinka Guryeynta (Housing Executive) ayaa adeegyo bilaash ah bixin kara marka laga codsado, fadlan faahfaahin dheeraad ah weydii xafiiska xaafaddaada.

For customers with sensory disabilities, information can be provided in alternative formats like large print, Braille or audio. Sign language interpreters can also be provided, but please give as much notice as possible to allow us to meet your request.



Interpretation services for our deaf or hard of hearing customers

You can get in touch with us online, by text, or face to face.

GO ONLINE

If you're a British (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) user you can use our online Video Relay Service (VRS) to access advice and support on everything to do with your tenancy with us. The service works by connecting you with a BSL or ISL interpreter who will relay the conversation between you and a member of our staff. To find out how to use VRS visit our website www.nihe.gov.uk

DROP US A TEXT

You can communicate with us via text, if you have a textphone, or the Relay UK app installed on your smartphone, using the below numbers:

GENERAL ENQUIRIES:

18001 03448 920 900

REPAIRS:

18001 03448 920 901

HOUSING BENEFIT:

18001 03448 920 902

VISIT OUR OFFICE

If you've been asked to come into one of our offices by a member of our staff to discuss your housing situation, we can arrange for a BSL or ISL interpreter to provide you with communication support during your visit.

Want to make your money go further?

Our Financial Inclusion Managers are here to look after your financial wellbeing, and help you become more confident in managing your money. Here are some of the ways that they can support you.



I'm currently on Housing Benefit but think I might be better off on Universal Credit. Can someone check this for me before I apply?

Yes, our Financial Inclusion Managers can do a free benefits check with you. They'll chat to you about your circumstances, and work out what benefits you'd be better off applying for.

The number of hours I work has changed. Will this have an impact on my benefits claim?

You can work this out by using the Benefits & Budgeting Calculator on our website. Our Financial Inclusion Managers or your Patch Manager can also help you with this if you'd prefer.



I lost my job a few weeks ago and I'm worried about paying my bills. Can someone help me work out what options are available for dealing with my debt?

Our Financial Inclusion Managers can talk to you about your financial situation, and help you make a plan to manage your debt. They can also refer you to specialist debt advice agencies if you'd like.



My family are moving home and my outgoings will change. Can I get help making a budget?

A budget is a great way to keep track of your spending, and put aside money for the things you need. Our Financial Inclusion Managers can help you create a budget to save for a rainy day.



Let's talk money

You can be referred to one of our Financial Inclusion Managers by speaking to your Patch Manager.

Get in touch

You can contact your Patch Manager and other members of our housing team in the following ways:



TENANT PORTAL

Send us a message on our tenant portal My Housing Executive at a time that suits you.

Register at www.nihe.gov.uk



PHONE

General enquiries

03448 920 900

(Lines are open 8.30am to 5pm Monday – Friday)

Report a repair

03448 920 901

(Lines are open 8.30am to 5pm for normal repairs and 24 hours for emergencies)

You can also report a repair by texting 66644 (starting your message with the word 'REPAIR' and remembering to include your address)



EMAIL

For general enquiries email information@nihe.gov.uk



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way to keep up to date with everything happening in your area and you can also report anything you need help with.

 [HousingExecutive](https://www.facebook.com/HousingExecutive)

 [@nihecommunity](https://twitter.com/nihecommunity)

 [nihecommunity](https://www.instagram.com/nihecommunity)



FACE-TO-FACE

We understand that you may prefer to speak to someone in person. However, in order to keep you and our staff safe, access to our offices is by appointment only. If your issue can't be solved over the phone or online, your Patch Manager will make an appointment for you to come in to your local office to speak to a member of our housing team.