

Choice News

Issue 8
Spring 2018
The Newsletter
for Choice Housing
Ireland Tenants

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A message from our Group Chief Executive

Michael McDonnell



Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of Choice News.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish every tenant of Choice a happy 2018.

Many of you will use the New Year to set some resolutions for the 12 months ahead. And the last quarter of the current financial year (to March 2018) also provides an impetus for Choice to think about our priorities for the future. Uncertainty is probably the best way to describe how 2018 has started. Uncertainty in relation to our government and key public policies. Uncertainty around the impact of Universal Credit. Uncertainty around Supporting People funding and the Social Housing Development Programme.

With lots of change in both the Board membership and senior team of Choice over the last couple of years, now also seems like a good time to revisit our corporate plan. The previous version was launched in 2015 to coincide with the formation of Choice. So a renewed focus on why we are here and what should be important to our organisation seems timely. From deliberations over recent weeks, three high level priorities in our strategy to 2020 appear to be emerging. In summary, Choice will concentrate on providing great homes, on delivering great

services, and in offering demonstrable value for money.

In the current year ending 31st March 2018, we expect to complete over 400 new social homes. This reflects a huge amount of hard work by a whole range of people both within and outside our organisation. A development programme of this scale is perhaps one of the largest on these islands, and requires genuine partnership working across the Department for Communities, NI Housing Executive, local councils and Choice. But housing demand continues to rise and many people across Northern Ireland are in significant housing stress. So Choice and our partners must do more. Primarily through the provision of social housing, but with the capacity and capability to offer private rented and affordable for sale accommodation to create integrated and mixed tenure communities.

The 'rolling' external customer service feedback provided to Choice suggests that over 86% of tenants are currently satisfied with the repairs service provided. The figure for Choice Services, our new in-house response maintenance subsidiary was 90%. This is a tremendous result for Choice Services after only 6 months in operation and reflects the key reason why it was created. We have also spent over a year consulting with tenants and staff over the redesign of our customer-facing teams, and the new regional structures were launched in November 2017.

Again there is so much more to do. We need to continue to improve our service delivery across all areas including contact centre, housing management and property services.

In this edition, you can also find out more about Active Choice and the rewards available to you as tenants. Active Choice is about putting the customers at the heart of what we do and putting financial and other rewards in reach for those who pay rent on time; look after properties and communities; contribute to tenant activities and keep their appointments for repairs.

In a time of austerity and competing demands on constrained public resources, there is an increasing onus on Choice to demonstrate value for money. This means both efficiently managing our costs and delivering real and sustainable benefits to tenants, your families and to broader society. There has been a lot of discussion across Choice about how we measure and manage value for money. This debate will continue over the coming weeks and months, but I want to encourage each and every tenant to get involved. In the Autumn edition of Choice News, I devoted a lot of time to the crucial issue of tenant engagement. Please take the opportunity to express your views on the future priorities of Choice to the Chair or Vice Chair of our Central Tenants Forum at bill.jeffrey@choice-housing.org or rita.murray@choice-housing.org

choice

126 Strand Road



To arrange an appointment call:

0300 111 2211

enquiries@choice-housing.org

choice-housing.org



£3 million redevelopment

to deliver 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments

Active Choice: a new rewards scheme

Active Choice is an incentive scheme which rewards and encourages good conduct of tenancy by offering a range of benefits to those who meet the eligibility criteria. This exciting new scheme, which will be launched in the coming months, has been developed in response to feedback from our customers who believe that good tenants should be recognised and rewarded.

Active Choice is about putting people at the heart of what we do, offering financial rewards and a range of other benefits to those who pay their rent on time, adhere to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement and contribute positively to their community.

For more information on the range of incentives and competitions included within the Active Choice scheme, visit our website at www.choice-housing.org



**WIN
LOTS
OF PRIZES**



Special thank you to Tenants' Forum representatives; Maura Doherty, David and Roberta Jane Taylor for taking part in our Active Choice photoshoot. Choice would like to offer our sincere condolences to Roberta Jane Taylor on the recent passing of her husband David.

Good Neighbour Award

ANNUAL



**WIN
£100
shopping
voucher**

Everyone needs good neighbours! Tenants can make nominations and the winning tenant will receive a £100 shopping voucher. (Nominated neighbour must be a Choice tenant.)

Gardening Competition

ANNUAL



**£100
shopping
voucher**

Green-fingered tenants are urged to 'grow for it' as part of the annual Choice Gardening Competition and win a £100 shopping voucher.

Tenant Repair Feedback

QUARTERLY



**£200
PRIZE
DRAW**

The tenant repair feedback survey is designed to capture tenants' views on repairs recently completed in their home. To thank our tenants for completing this short survey, tenants are entered into a prize draw for £200.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

QUARTERLY



Choice carries out regular customer satisfaction surveys to help us identify things that we are doing well, as well as, areas that need some improvement. To thank our customers who take the time to complete the surveys, we will conduct a prize draw for an iPad.



Active Choice



Christmas Card Competition - ANNUAL



**1st Prize
£100
shopping
voucher**

Accomplished or budding artists amongst our tenants are encouraged to enter the annual Christmas card competition to have their artwork selected as the Choice Christmas card and win a £100 shopping voucher.

Children's Colouring Competition QUARTERLY



**WIN
A prize to
the value
of £40**

Children have a chance to show off their colouring skills as part of the quarterly children's colouring competition in Choice News and win a prize up to the value of £40. (The parent must be a tenant of Choice).

Clear Rent Account MONTHLY



**2 x
£250
shopping
vouchers**

Tenants who successfully pay their rent on time each month and have no outstanding arrears are entered into a prize draw to win £250 worth of shopping vouchers.

Direct Debit Payment ONE OFF PAYMENT



**£50
to switch
to Direct
Debit**

Tenants who switch to paying their rent by direct debit can receive £10 at the time of switching and £40 after six months of paying their rent via direct debit.

Tenant Bursaries ANNUAL



Bursaries are available upon completion of an application form. Application forms are available from Choice Services Centre call 0300 111 2211 or email enquiries@choice-housing.org

Choice Services Centre Prize Caller

**WOW
£100
shopping
voucher**



Choice Services Centre continues to grow from strength to strength resolving tenant repairs and housing enquiries quickly and effectively. We mark significant milestones with a £100 shopping voucher for the lucky caller.

Golden Goodbye ONE OFF PAYMENT



Tenants who decide to leave their property at Choice can receive a one off payment of £100, if they provide Choice with the required four week notice and leave the property to an agreed acceptable standard. (An inspection is required to assess the tidiness and cleanliness of the property).



Universal Credit



Choice tenants will be aware by now that Universal Credit began its introduction into N. Ireland on 27th September 2017. Further details of the new benefit are highlighted below for your information:

Universal Credit is a single means-tested benefit for working-age people aged 18 to 64 years and is paid to each household. It will replace the following means-tested benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits and
- Housing Benefit.



Universal Credit will be paid monthly by default but claimants can choose to receive payments fortnightly. The housing element of Universal Credit will be paid by default to your landlord on a monthly basis.

At the start of a claim for Universal Credit the joint claimants must choose whether payment is made to one single account or whether to split payments across two accounts (there is no default option).

Claims for Universal Credit must be made online, and all subsequent contact regarding weekly rental charges will also be conducted online at www.nidirect.gov.uk/UniversalCredit

It is important that you have the following information at hand before you start your claim:

- Your postcode
- An email account
- Details of the bank or building society you want Universal Credit paid into
- Details of your housing costs (rent)
- Your landlord's details
- Details of your savings or other capital
- Details of any income that's not from work, for example, from an insurance plan
- Details of any other benefits you're getting.



When you submit your claim you may be asked to provide more information. This information should be provided within one calendar month to ensure your claim is processed. **If it is not provided within 1 calendar month your claim may be cancelled!**

The introduction of Universal Credit will be carried out in two phases:

- **Transition phase** – new benefit claims commencing from September 2017
- **Managed migration** – existing benefits claims will transfer to Universal Credit between July 2019 and March 2022

The Department for Communities (DfC) has published a timetable for the transition phase of Universal Credit:

- 16/05/2018 Newry and Downpatrick
- 30/05/2018 Lurgan, Newcastle and Kilkeel
- 13/06/2018 Falls and Shankill
- 27/06/2018 Andersonstown and Banbridge
- 05/09/2018 Hollywood Road and Ballynahinch
- 19/09/2018 Newtownabbey and Newtownards
- 03/10/2018 Shaftesbury Square and Carrickfergus
- 17/10/2018 Knockbreda and Bangor
- 31/10/2018 Lisburn and Larne
- 14/11/2018 North Belfast and Cookstown
- 05/12/2018 Ballymena and Antrim



• *Help with rates*

Rates support is currently paid with Housing Benefit. When Universal Credit is introduced, a new Rate Rebate system will replace the rates payment under Housing Benefit for new tenants.

Your Universal Credit payment will not include a payment towards the rates element of your weekly charge. Rates support for working age tenants receiving Universal Credit will be moving to a new Department of Finance 'Rate Rebate' scheme administered by Land and Property Services (LPS).

Applications for a rate rebate will have to be made separately from Universal Credit. Payments of Rate Rebate will also be made separately from Universal Credit. The application for Rate Rebate will need to be made within three months of entitlement to Universal Credit being established. These applications must also be made online.

When making the application, claimants will be asked six or seven questions online. **If a Universal Credit claim is cancelled, suspended or resumed, the Rate Rebate payments will be affected.**

If you are concerned about transferring to or making an application for Universal Credit you can find more information by:

1. Contacting the Independent Welfare Changes Helpline on 0808 802 0020
2. Visiting the Welfare Changes website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/UniversalCredit.
3. Contacting the Universal Credit telephone service: 0300 123 3017(8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Call charges £0.10/minute from a landline and £0.03 to £0.55/minute from a mobile.)
4. Contacting Choice Services Centre: 0300 111 2211 or email: Choice Services Centre: enquiries@choice-housing.org
5. Visit Choice's website: www.choice-housing.org
6. If you need help getting online your Jobs and Benefits Office or local library can provide support. Find out where to get support at: www.gov.uk

Protecting your home from flooding

Protecting and preparing your home from flooding is becoming more important with the increase in flash flooding throughout Ireland as a result of torrential rain over a short period of time. This information will help you prepare and assist you if you experience flooding or are known to be in a flood risk area. By being prepared you can reduce the risk of injury, damage to your home and contents and reduce stress and inconvenience.

It is important to recognize that when there is extreme weather, subsequent high call volume may result in delays in answering your calls. Please be patient. Due to call volume, access difficulties or where other agencies are responsible, repairs may not be completed within the designated time frames. Once you have reported your repair, try to avoid repeat calls to our Services Centre. Our contractors will deal with repairs issued in order of priority. We appreciate that this may be a difficult time for tenants and your co-operation is very much appreciated.

Please contact Choice Services Centre to report flooding on 0300 111 2211.

We are currently reviewing our flood risks. If your home or general area has been subject to flooding previously, please contact us at the above.

Further advice is available from:

Floodline 0300 2000 100

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

028 9266 4221

Preparing for flooding

There are a number of simple steps that you can do to prepare for flooding if floods are forecast:

- Make sure you have home contents insurance. Choice will carry out repairs to the structure of our properties. It is, however, the tenant's responsibility to have insurance cover for personal belongings, furnishings and the decoration of your home. If you do not have insurance for your personal belongings, you run the risk of having to repair or replace items that have been damaged.
- Move pets, vehicles, valuables and other sentimental items and important documents to safety.
- Weigh down plugs in sinks/baths or low-level shower trays to prevent backflow.
- Alert vulnerable neighbours.
- Listen out for severe weather warnings for flash floods on local radio, TV and social media.
- Fit sand-bags and air-brick covers where possible. Pillowcases or plastic bags filled with soil or sand can be used in an emergency.
- Gather essential items you may need if evacuated eg mobile phone and charger, first-aid kit and medication, children's essentials, warm/waterproof clothes, rubber gloves and hand-gels, cash, bottled water, spare keys, a torch, essential documents and contact details.
- Switch off gas, electricity and water at the mains if safe to do so in extreme circumstances.

Please contact Choice Services Centre to report flooding on **0300 111 2211**.

Staying safe during flooding

- If flood water has penetrated your home, gas and electricity supplies should remain switched off until a qualified professional has checked the systems thoroughly. Wiring, appliances and pipe-work should be inspected for safety.
- Keep extension cables out of water.
- Emergency Services will tell you if you need to evacuate your property, please follow their instructions carefully. Do not return home unless you are told by authorities that it is safe to do so. Please remember prescription medicines if evacuated.
- Shut all windows and lock doors.
- Check if neighbours need help if it is safe to do so.

Fast moving flood waters are dangerous. Manhole and gully covers may have dislodged resulting in further hazards.

Returning to properties after flooding

The three step clean-up for returning to damaged properties:

1. REMOVE WATER AND MUD

- The NI Fire & Rescue Service can pump out standing water but may charge for non-emergencies.
- Choice maintenance staff and contractors will try and help as many tenants as possible to remove water and mud. We may need to prioritise the assistance we can offer.
- Be vigilant. Rogue traders and criminals may try to trick or steal from you at this very difficult time.

2. CLEAN AND DISINFECT

- Floodwater may be contaminated so disinfect all areas affected after cleaning. Make sure you wash your hands with disinfectant after cleaning up. Disinfecting also avoids harmful mildew and moulds.
- Wear protective clothes, boots and rubber gloves when cleaning.
- Do not eat contaminated food and disinfect contaminated cooking utensils, crockery etc.

3. DRY

- Good ventilation is essential, keep windows and doors open on dry days and remove air brick covers.
- Have the central heating on at 22c or above.
- Drying out can take weeks or even months. If it is done too quickly, it can cause structural damage and long-term problems.
- We recommend that you take photos of any damage.





“Never too old to learn new skills!”

“It really furthered my knowledge in IT and I managed to get a full time job out of it which started after Christmas! Thanks a million for all the help!”

“I was a confident and frequent user of the internet and my smartphone before the course, but I picked up some technical information. Also, I enjoyed the social aspect of the course.”

“Just learning a new skill was worthwhile and a little understanding of how the world works was eye opening.”

Tenants’ Forum Members Make the Digital Connection

At Choice, we have been embracing all things digital by installing Wi-Fi in common areas of our sheltered living schemes. In addition, we are currently developing an online tenant portal to enable users to access their account information online and communicate directly with us.

Between October and December, Choice Tenants’ Forum Members made the digital connection and with the guidance of Supporting Communities completed an eight-week Digital Inclusion course.

Some of the popular topics on the course included: -

- Help with job searches by attaching a CV to an email
- Finding friends and family on social media
- Giving feedback on the Choice website using the ‘Contact Us’ section of the site
- Using Twitter to highlight events.

Past experience of the group was varied, although most of the group said they currently used the Internet, 4 people had used it in the past, but were currently online and **4 people had never gone online before**. Through the training confidence levels have improved, **80% of the group felt very or fairly confident using the Internet at the end of the course**.

96% said they considered the Internet to be ‘essential’ or ‘important’ to their everyday lives.

As part of the training people were able to interact with one another and make new friends!



80% of the group felt very or fairly confident using the Internet at the end of the course.



Energy Week 2017



Choice Customer Winner – Mrs McAfee of Rothesay Court

Energy Week 2017 saw Choice attend roadshows along with partners to promote energy efficiency and switching of energy suppliers. Nine roadshows were held at shopping centres across the country. Partner organisations included the NI Housing Executive, the Make the Call Team, Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA), National Energy Action (NEA), Energy Saving Trust (EST), Bryson, The Consumer Council and representatives from the energy sector. We were delighted to reach 118 households who had the opportunity to obtain expert advice from all of these organisations. All attendees were provided with the opportunity to enter a draw for a £50 restaurant voucher at each event.

Alongside the roadshows our Energy Team also delivered one hour drop-in sessions at 14 schemes spread across the country, to provide our customers with the opportunity to call in for some energy advice and receive advice from Housing Rights.

75 Choice customers took the opportunity to come and chat to the team about how they use their energy. All of the attendees at the drop-in sessions were also included in a prize draw for a £50 shopping voucher.

Throughout the week information was posted on the Choice website. This information is still available within the news section November 2017.

Environmental Audit Success!

Choice has passed the Environmental audit which took place on Monday 15th January. The audit took place to re-assess our work against the BS8555 Environmental Management Standard. Positive comments from the auditor included –

“Choice Housing have continued to demonstrate a high level of commitment to sustainability and environmental management in relation to their office accommodation and support services”

“Staff have continued to demonstrate engagement in relation to the environmental management system which should be commended”

The standard recognises the measures taken by Choice to manage our impact on the environment. To meet the BS8555 Environmental Standard, we needed to identify how we have an impact on the environment and to set targets for improvement.

Examples of some current environmental targets are:

- Reduce the amount of energy we use
- Reduce the amount of paper we use
- Increase recycling and reduce waste.

These targets help Choice to reduce the amount of raw resources used by the organisation, prevent pollution and reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced by our operations, therefore reducing our overall contribution to Climate Change.



Choice working with Budget Energy to deliver savings on communal electricity for the second year

Budget Energy has been appointed to supply all of our landlord and communal electricity for one year. This contract is expected to deliver a saving in the region of almost 13% against average market or regulated prices, it is anticipated that savings in the region of £102,000 may be delivered for our tenants.



Choice have also now entered the second year of our two year contract with Budget Energy as a preferred electricity supplier for our new homes.

During the first year of this arrangement almost 200 homes were included and we estimate that our tenants in these homes could have a combined saving of £12,000 over the course of a year. We would also continue to advise all our customers to review their electricity supply and consider switching suppliers if there are savings available.

Choice Success at CIBSE Awards

Choice Housing along with architects PDP, have won “Project of the Year- Residential” award for Killynure Green in Carryduff at the recent CIBSE Building Performance Awards 2018.

The CIBSE Building Performance Awards, now in their eleventh year, recognise the people, products and projects that demonstrate engineering excellence in the built environment. They are the only industry awards that focus on actual, measured performance outcomes, and not just design intent or performance specifications.

A ground-breaking zero carbon development, Killynure Green is designed to meet Level 5 of The Code for Sustainable Homes, the first scheme in Northern Ireland to achieve this standard and in doing so has met strict targets around areas such as energy & CO2 emissions, water, ecology, and waste.

Choice and architects, PDP, are delighted to win this award as recognition of their successful partnership and the excellent service they provide to its residents.



Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive said on the achievement of this award:

“Killynure Green is a shining example of the positive impact thoughtful design can have on the environment and a community. We are incredibly proud of this project as it reflects our ambition as a housing provider”.

Topping Off at £3.1m Supported Housing Scheme in Whiteabbey

A new Supported Living Scheme that will boost the housing options for those diagnosed with early stage dementia in the Antrim and Newtownabbey area moved a step closer to completion with an official topping off ceremony.

Developed by Choice and in partnership with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the NI Housing Executive, this new residential development - The Croft comprises 24 units with 1-staff bedroom and associated staff facilities. The living units consist of 24 self-contained apartments with communal facilities all built to wheelchair housing standards.

The new apartments, which will be available from May 2018, will enable local people with a care need to continue to live independently with the added security of care and support when they need it.

Community representatives joined Choice, Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the NI Housing Executive to view progress to date on this exciting scheme.



THE CROFT

The scheme, designed by TODD Architects with Tal Ltd. appointed as project contractor, funded through a mix of private financing secured by Choice and grants from the Department for Communities.

Hazel Bell, Chair of Choice said:

“We have a wide range of housing options in the Antrim & Newtownabbey area aimed to meet the diverse needs of local people, specifically Sheltered, Family and Supported Housing. This scheme is another example of quality-supported housing for those who want to live independent lives and play their part in the local community”.

“The Croft is the latest completion in a busy new build programme that is actively planning and constructing much needed new homes across the region. Today is an important milestone for us and for the people who will ultimately benefit from the new homes in this area. We couldn’t do this without the positive partnerships we have developed, namely the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Department for Communities and NI Housing Executive.”

Bob McCann, Chair of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, said:
“The Northern Trust has been working for some time on future services for people with dementia. Our ambition is to support people to remain at home for as long as possible with appropriate support and, when this is no longer possible, to offer supported living services. This is an exciting new initiative for the Trust as it is the first three way partnership which allows the Trust to offer greater choice regarding the care model and type of accommodation and we look forward to bringing it to completion.”

HSC Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Department for **Communities**
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Housing Executive

Winter Clean Ups in West Belfast



The cold December weather didn't stop brave volunteers from Choice and Live Here Love Here getting out there and cleaning up Good Shepherd Court, Upper Suffolk Glen and their surrounding areas in West Belfast.

These clean ups were part of the wider Live Here Love Here initiatives across Northern Ireland which are open to anyone wishing to rid their streets, beaches or parks of litter and discarded rubbish.

Litter can blight our towns, villages, beaches, roadsides and countryside which make us feel a little less than proud of our beautiful surroundings.

By helping to clean up our housing developments, we are doing something positive and building a sense of community pride. Look out for more clean ups over the coming months. Together staff and volunteers can tackle litter and make a positive difference in our local areas!



Greenisland House



One and two bedroom apartments available to rent. Designed and managed to allow frail elderly residents to live independently.

If you are interested in applying for housing at Greenisland House or for further information please contact Choice on: **0300 111 2211** or email: **enquiries@choice-housing.org**

choice-housing.org



Working together for positive change

Greenisland House
91 Shore Road
Greenisland BT38 8TZ

TRIANGLE

HSC Northern Health
and Social Care Trust

Caring for your pets at home

Choice understands that keeping pets offers significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can also cause nuisance to others living nearby and so it's necessary to have some rules to ensure that neighbours are not adversely affected.

The Choice Pets Policy does not apply to small animals which are housed in cages or bowls/ tanks and do not need to be allowed out of the property, ie. small birds and small fish. However, the pet policy does apply to larger animals, for example cats, dogs, rabbits and larger birds and to animals that could be classed as 'exotic' or rodents.

Tenancy agreements state that consent or permission is required in order to keep a pet. Tenants who keep pets without consent may have enforcement action taken against them, up to and including eviction.

Permission will only be considered where a pet application form has been completed. Tenants wishing to keep a pet should contact their Housing Officer and request an application form.

A new pet application form must be completed for each pet. This applies to both new pets and replacement pets.

To comply with current legislation dogs must be licenced and wear a collar and name tag. Cats should be neutered and all pets must be permanently identified by microchip or tattoo, as appropriate.

Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and in the Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) Order (NI) 1991 and any animals listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 may not be kept. This is to protect the health and safety of any tenants and employees of Choice who may come into contact with them.

Stray Pets

Stray animals should be reported to the Local Council or the USPCA.

Abandoned Animals

Where animals are abandoned in a property, the USPCA or Regional Animal Welfare Officer should be contacted.

Pet Sitting

Tenants who are asked to 'pet sit' for a period will only be allowed to do so with prior permission from Choice. Permission will be given for a limited period of up to 28 days unless there are exceptional grounds for refusal. Grounds for refusal will include the pet being too large for the property occupied by the tenant.



Granting permission to keep a pet

Choice will deal with requests to keep pets as fairly as possible bearing in mind any problems or restrictions, which may exist on any scheme or in any block.

Consent will depend on the type of pet the tenant wishes to have. In general all pets must not cause noise nuisance or any other nuisance to neighbours. They must be properly looked after and not mistreated.

Where permission is granted tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. Under the Welfare of Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2011, there is a duty to ensure the welfare of an animal. This requires proper day-to-day management and care of the pet. If tenants have any questions about the care of their pets they should contact their vet or a suitable accredited animal welfare organisation. Routine health care must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccinations and neutering where appropriate.

The control of pets, including any pet visiting a Choice property, is the responsibility of the tenant. If cats are allowed free access outside then steps must be taken to ensure they do not cause nuisance to neighbours. Dogs must always be kept on a lead when in public areas. They must never be let out on their own - this includes communal balconies and stairwells. Animal faeces must always be removed immediately.

If outside accommodation for a pet is required, other than a hutch or pen for small mammals,

written permission must be obtained before it is built. An application must include plans of the proposed construction and detail the species to be kept.

Withdrawing permission

Tenants should also note that permission to keep a pet may be withdrawn if the pet causes danger or nuisance or if the policy is otherwise breached.

Breaches, dangerous or nuisance activities include, but are not limited to:

- Dogs roaming without a lead
- Owners failing to clean up after their pets when they foul in the communal areas, including communal balconies and stairways, grassed areas, footpaths, verges and adjoining roads within the housing scheme
- A tenant keeping a dog which is registered under the Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and the Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (NI) Order 1991, or an animal listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals (NI) Order 2004
- Keeping animals over the maximum number permitted
- The keeping of other animals such as snakes, rats, mice, rabbits or insects with inadequate facilities
- Reports that animals are aggressive, intimidating or barking excessively
- Breeding/offering animals for sale.

Notes for tenants about dogs

Dog Bites

If a dog bites you, causing you injury, you should report the incident to the police and should seek expert medical advice immediately.

If you are not bitten, but fear a dog could cause injury to yourself or others, you should report the incident to the local Council Dog Warden or the police. Also, all unattended (stray) dogs should be reported to the local Council Dog Warden to prevent potential incidents.

Safety Advice

DON'T

- Approach a dog without the owner's permission
- Leave small children alone with dogs or give any child sole responsibility for the supervision of a dog
- Tease dogs in any way
- Run, scream or shout around dogs
- Ignore reasonable written or verbal instruction from a dog owner



DO

- Get to know a dog only when the owner is present
- Stay calm and quiet around dogs
- Move slowly around dogs
- Put an object or solid barrier between yourself and any dog attacking you (Dogs will usually bite the first thing they reach)
- Get inside a building or car as soon as possible (lock the dog out or lock the dog inside!) if you are under attack.

What can you do about a dog fouling offence?

If you witness dog fouling in communal areas, or public places, or are experiencing problems with a dog fouling you can report it to your local Council Dog Warden or your Housing Officer.



How we're performing

Choice are at the forefront in the provision of social housing and are committed to delivering quality housing and excellent customer services that enhance the lives of customers and communities.

It is important that your voice, in relation to our services, is heard as the feedback we receive is vital for us to identify and correct any problems within our service delivery and to ensure that we meet the needs of all our customers.

Gas Safety



Target
100%

99.98%
Units with valid
gas certificate

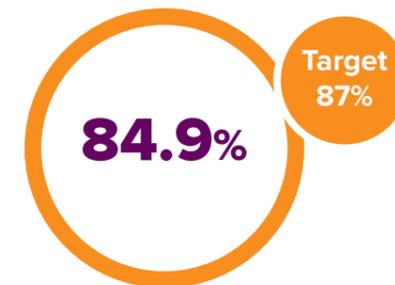
Repairs



Target
90%

88.4%
Average repairs
completion

Customer Enquiries



CSC satisfaction
overall service

Complaints



Complaints
(days, combined stages)

Human Resources



Target
8

5.30
Absenteeism (days)

It is important
that your voice,
in relation to our
services, is heard.

The performance figures are for the period April 2017 - December 2017

Delivering New Homes

Our Development Team are working on new housing schemes to deliver much-needed homes across Northern Ireland.

Greenisland House

Work has finished at Greenisland House in Newtownabbey. This supported housing scheme in partnership with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust will provide 32 one and two bedroom apartments, which are designed, and managed to allow frail elderly residents to live independently. The build by MJ Mc Bride Building Contractors took 24 months to complete at a cost of £3.3 million. If you are interested in applying for housing at Greenisland House or for further information please contact Choice on 0300 111 2211 or email enquiries@choice-housing.org



32
one and two
bedroom
apartments

New Accessible Homes for Belfast

Choice were delighted to hand over two new wheelchair bungalows to families in Blackmountain Way in Belfast. These bungalows have been developed to meet the needs of families with complex needs. The new homes took 13 months to build by Totalis Solutions at a total cost of £435,000. We wish the families many happy years in their new homes!



£435,000
investment

Homes in time for Christmas at Old Belfast Road

Great progress has been made on site at Old Belfast Road in Bangor with the handover of 44 new homes to families just in time for Christmas! These new two and three bedroom homes were part of second and third phase of development at the site, with now 60 homes completed. A further 46 homes will be completed by contractors, EHA Construction in spring.



60
homes
now complete

West Belfast – the next stop on the Choice Savings Scheme



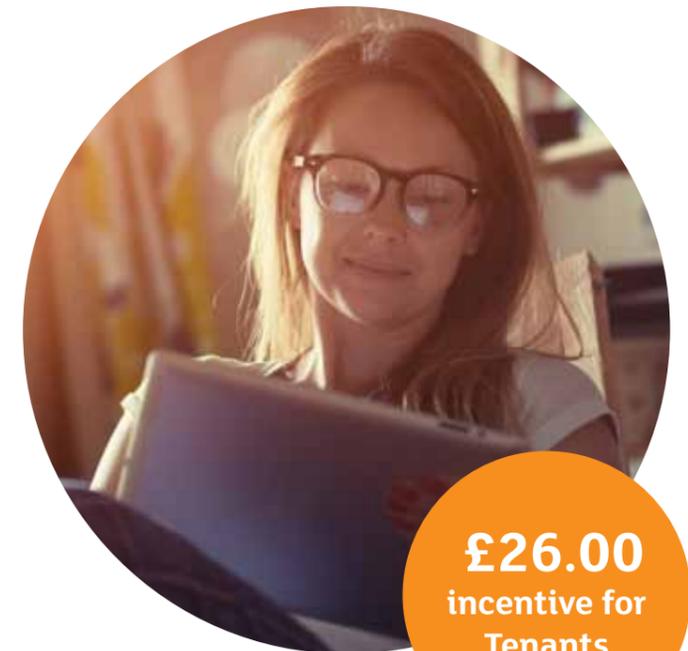
A Credit Union is a local financial co-operative, owned by its members, which offers affordable financial services.

Everyone benefits from regular savings and Choice wants to promote Credit Union membership so that regular savings of small amounts will enable our tenants to access a loan for unexpected emergencies. For example when a new washing machine is needed, or for holidays and at Christmas.

Following an initial pilot in Lisburn, Choice has decided to extend the Choice Savings Scheme, a partnership with local Credit Unions, to the Belfast region.

Choice is presently liaising with local Credit Unions in the West Belfast area and we will be contacting our tenants in this area with details of local awareness sessions to explain the scheme in more detail. Local Credit Union representatives will also be present to answer any questions and explain the benefits of Credit Union membership.

Please be advised that the Scheme only applies to one area at a particular time. However Choice plans to eventually roll the scheme out across all areas of Northern Ireland. East and North Belfast will be the next areas where we will introduce the scheme.



£26.00
incentive for
Tenants

Please contact the Tenant Involvement Team, or your local Housing Officer, on 0300 111 2211 if you would like more information on the Choice Savings Scheme.

STAR satisfaction surveys commence in February

We work with Voluntas, an independent market research company, to carry out satisfaction surveys with tenants on our behalf. These surveys are completed via telephone on a range of service areas including our Services Centre, Repairs and Maintenance. In addition, we are introducing STAR satisfaction surveys which will be carried out with a random selection of our tenants on a monthly basis. We aim to complete 110 surveys per month to ensure we obtain a full range of tenant views.

The STAR survey, is Housemark's framework which allows us to measure customer satisfaction, benchmark our performance with others and assess trends over time.

To enable us to gather feedback on a range of key service areas across the organisation, we have included the 7 core STAR questions.

1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home?
2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your rent provides value for money?
4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your service charges provide value for money?
5. Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Choice deals with repairs and maintenance?
6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Choice listens to your views and acts upon them?
7. Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Choice?

We will receive timely feedback and therefore can follow up on any concerns you may raise through the survey in real-time.

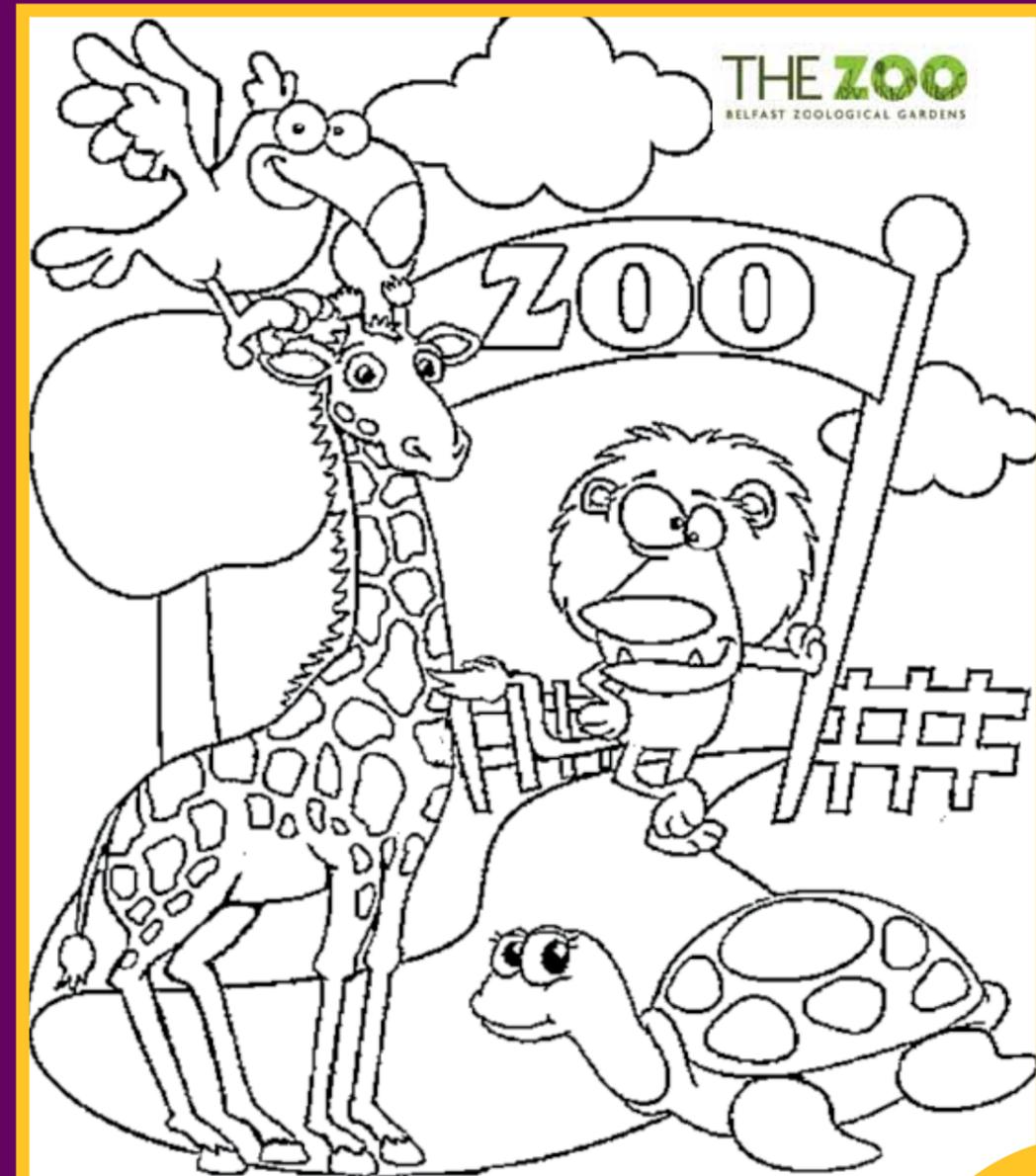
We welcome your honest feedback as it helps us to understand what we are doing well and where we need to make improvements.

In order to thank tenants for taking the time to complete the survey, we will enter you into a quarterly prize draw to win a Tablet.



**WIN
a Tablet!**

COLOURING COMPETITION



*Hey kids
this is your
chance to
show-off
your
colouring
skills*

*Win a
family
pass to
The Zoo!*

It's really easy to enter, just pull out this page and colour it in anyway you like! Then pop it in the post along with your name, age, address and telephone number in the reply slip below to The Editor, Choice News, FREEPOST BEL2371 Belfast BT1 6BR. One lucky winner will receive this great prize! Entries must be received by Friday 27th April. (Please note that the parent must be a tenant of Choice Housing Ireland).

POST TO:
The Editor,
Choice News,
FREEPOST BEL2371
Belfast BT1 6BR

Name Age

Address

Daytime Telephone Evening Telephone

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TOGETHER

Anti-social Behaviour Support for our customers

Choice has appointed Insec Security to provide assistance to tenants whenever problems are encountered in relation to Anti-social Behaviour (ASB). This may include problems with excessive noise or threatening behaviour.

Insec Security
028 9020 0080

Please note the following:

- This service is only available to Choice tenants outside office hours.
- Tenants should continue to report all cases of ASB to the Services Centre on 0300 111 2211, during normal office hours.
- Any tenant who has concerns for their own safety, or believes that a crime has been committed, should contact the PSNI.

- Tenants living in sheltered housing schemes should continue to report all cases of ASB directly to their Scheme Co-ordinator or to the Services Centre on 0300 111 2211, during normal office hours.
- Insec Security will only visit the person who is causing the ASB. Insec will not visit the tenant making the complaint. This process is to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Please contact the Association if you require further information regarding this service.

TENANTS' FORUM

Tenant Involvement Strategy

We are proud to present the Choice Tenant Involvement Strategy which was shaped with input from our Tenants' Forum and Choice staff, we are grateful for everyone's contribution.

The Strategy sets out our vision and details our tenant engagement action plan over the next three years. We plan to increase involvement in all our regions across Northern Ireland and create more meaningful opportunities to engage with residents about the services we provide. Above all we aim to continue to improve our services and reach even higher levels of customer satisfaction.

Our strategy firmly places our tenants at the heart of everything we do ensuring positive engagement across our organisation. Hearing the voices and opinions of our tenants is vital to our work as a housing provider.

We want to use tenant input to:

- influence our services
- make a difference
- have your say
- work together with staff



YOUR OPINION MATTERS

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HAVE YOUR SAY

WORK TOGETHER WITH STAFF

2018 Tenants' Forum Calendar

The 2018 Tenants' Forum Calendar is the result of the hard work of the Editorial Team, both in Choice and Oaklee Housing, and is just one of the many projects the group works on.

This year the theme of the calendar is 'The Difference We're Making' and outlines some of the community initiatives which tenants partake in. These include Spring Clean Ups, Choice Savings Scheme and Estate Walkabouts.

You can download a copy of the Tenants' Forum 2018 calendar at choice-housing.org

Choice would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who helped produce the 2018 calendar. We welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with our tenants and recognise the importance of good tenant engagement. Through

our collaborations we are more successful at putting tenants at the heart of service delivery and ultimately improve the service to you, our tenants.



Men's Health Conference "Let Food Be Thy Medicine"

Facing a barrage of facts, figures and statistics can be somewhat overwhelming, but I can truthfully say that the Men's Health Conference was a reflective balance of latest research results and findings from a varied selection of speakers.

As a man in his 60th year it comes as no surprise to me that in general men do not like talking about health issues. We are too embarrassed or have "a head in the sand" mentality. A 2016 YouGov poll found that 28% of men ignore their mental health issues and choose not to visit their doctor for treatment and assistance.

We men, proud and mighty, struggle to seek help for our psyche when the symptoms are as real as a broken leg or the common cold. As men we tend to worry a lot, stress about something and then when a diagnosis is negative going into complete shock and perhaps even worse... denial.

Prostate cancer is the most common male cancer, and in Northern Ireland alone, three men are diagnosed with the disease every day. Listening to one man who had been diagnosed and how he copes with it was enlightening and informative. You can't help but be moved with someone who "speaks from the heart" and how you would cope in such a situation. It wasn't all doom and gloom as the conference also highlighted other developments in prostate cancer treatment and research being made in Belfast which are adding to the increase in the number of men surviving the disease locally.



As the make-up of population structure in Northern Ireland changes it is apparent that it is like a "ticking time-bomb" if health and lifestyles issues are not addressed. Pressures on the health system will increase so some of the speakers spoke of the need for "healthy-eating" plans.

All very well you might say, but it is apparent that we are becoming a sedentary generation and perhaps younger generation even more so! While listening to the speakers some facts and figures did jump out at me and made me seriously think about lifestyle changes. One of the talks entitled "Let Food Be Thy Medicine" really hit the mark.

Instead of 5-a-day it should be 10-a-day! There needs to be radical changes in our way of thinking and realising that our lifestyle and eating habits really do have a direct correlation to our health.

If you want to know the secret to keeping your doctor's visits at a minimum, look to your kitchen. Unfortunately as we get older the chances of developing health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, high blood sugar, diabetes, and prostate cancer increase. None of those conditions are inevitable, of course, but lifestyle habits - particularly what you eat - can make a huge difference in how healthy you remain.

The conference was an "eye-opener" and one which has certainly made me more aware of keeping healthy in both mind and body.

*Report from Andrew McCarroll
Choice Tenant -Dunmurry and
committee member on
Tenants' Forum and Editorial Group.*

The Well Aware Programme

Cancer Focus and Choice Tenants' Forum members and staff work in partnership to bring the Well Aware Programme to our sheltered living schemes. Together we have been proactive in addressing the needs of an ageing population. Through the joint approach we inform tenants in sheltered schemes about Cancer awareness and carry out health checks, i.e. Cholesterol and blood pressure checks. There is also advice on smoking, obesity, nutrition and physical activity. These checks are carried out by a trained nurse and all matters remain confidential.

All of our sheltered living schemes across Northern Ireland took part in the programme in 2015 benefitting over 1000 tenants. Now in 2018 the programme is back on the road again!

The Well Aware Programme will be brought directly to Choice sheltered schemes that have signed up to the programme and sessions will take place in the comfort of the sheltered living scheme in a familiar and relaxed atmosphere.

We want to promote and prioritise this Well Aware Programme and help improve the health and well-being of our tenants.

If your scheme is interested in taking part speak with your Scheme Co-ordinator or to a member of the Tenant Involvement Team and we will refer your interest to Cancer Focus.

Contact Choice on: **0300 111 2211** and ask for a member of the Tenant Involvement Team or email enquiries@choice-housing.org



choice-housing.org



Pensioners Parliament

The Age Sector Platform hosted the Pensioners' Parliament on Thursday 26th and Friday, 27th October in the Europa Hotel, Belfast. Sylvia Connachan, Chair of the South East Regional Tenants' Forum and Alan Davenport, Chair of the South West Regional Tenants' Forum participated in this two day event.

Presentations and discussions took place on a wide range of issues including fraud, scamming, health, transportation and Brexit. Motions were passed by the Pensioners Parliament on all these subject.

Sylvia and Alan are pictured above with the CEO of the Age Sector Platform, Eamonn Doaghy and Carol Ervine, Group Director of Tenant and Client Services.

GET INVOLVED

If you want to be involved with Choice, why not join our Register of Interested tenants?

If you join the register then you will be contacted as part of our Consultation group on surveys or we will invite you to give feedback on various aspects of our services that you have received.

You may be invited to an annual event or asked to participate in a one-off focus group. Participation is voluntary.

If you are interested please contact our Tenant Involvement Team on 0300 111 2211 enquiries@choice-housing.org

Out & About



BALLYMONEY BARGAINS FOR WILLIE

96 year Willie McLaughlin from Sheils Court in Ballymoney had the honour of officially opening the new Home Bargains store in the town just before Christmas!

COLOURING COMPETITION

Congratulations to Tianna Whiteley from Belfast for winning the autumn colouring competition! Tianna's creativity and imagination really shown through her entry which impressed the judges. We hope that Tianna and her family enjoy her prize of a family pass to We Are Vertigo, presented by the Area Housing Manager, Niamh Donnelly.

FIRST AIDERS AT BERNAGH GLEN

Tenants in Bernagh Glen in Belfast recently completed a First Aid Course with The British Red Cross. The Red Cross created a bespoke training course for the tenants to ensure that their specific needs were met. Tenants now feel equipped with new skills and are confident that they know what to do in a First Aid crisis.

TENANT REPAIR FEEDBACK WINNER

The tenant repair feedback survey is designed to capture tenant's views on recent repairs that have been completed in their home.

At Choice we are committed to delivering excellent customer service, and we use the information gathered from these surveys to improve our services and build on what we are doing well. Congratulations to the winner of the Autumn prize draw of £200. Emmeline Johnston, Service Centre Team Leader was delighted to present Joan Kerr from Bangor with her prize.



CHRISTMAS CHEER AT SPERRIN COURT

Sperrin Court were treated to a Christmas grotto courtesy of some very creative A Level students from Holy Trinity College. The students designed and installed the grotto at our sheltered living scheme in Cookstown as part of their art portfolio. The tenants, students and staff came together to officially open the grotto, kick starting the Christmas season at Sperrin Court. Everyone enjoyed a great day, celebrating a fantastic project that has brought young and old together and spread some festive cheer.



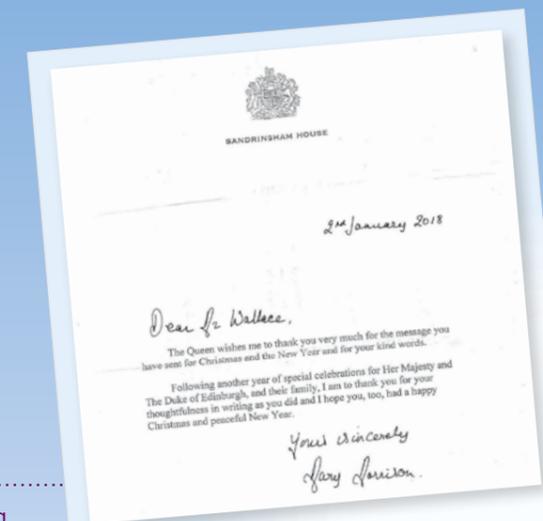
The British Red cross is available throughout Northern Ireland for anyone who may be interested in learning First Aid for everyday life. You can visit their website to find out further information:

www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk

Congratulations to everyone who took part.

ROYAL CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Paul Wallace from Antrim received this endearing letter from Sandringham House thanking Paul for his kind Christmas message to Her Majesty and The Duke of Edinburgh.





CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION WINNER 2017

The winner of the Choice Christmas card competition 2017 was Patsy McKeever from Donal Casey Court in Derry~Londonderry. With lots of great Christmas card entries, the judges had a tough decision to make but the festive winter bird scene painting from Patsy stood out from the rest to win!

Choice would like to thank all our customers for taking the time to design and send in their entries for the Christmas card competition.



CHRISTMAS DINNER DANCE

Tenants from Stevenson Park in Lurgan joined over 200 older people to celebrate Christmas with a dinner dance at Canal Court in Newry. A fabulous festive time was had by everyone!



COMING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT CAUSE

Tenants at Silvergrove, Belfast recently held a fundraising coffee morning. The event was held to support the daughter of a tenant who is traveling to Russia for stem treatment. The tenants enjoyed a range of goodies and homemade treats and were able to make a great contribution towards this worthwhile cause. Well done and a big thank you to everyone who got involved and supported the event!



CHRISTMAS HERO TERESA

Teresa Gallagher, Support Officer at Dillons Court in Strabane selflessly spent Christmas morning cooking up a festive brunch for the residents and local community to experience some Christmas joy.

Teresa said in the Strabane Chronicle, "I love cooking at Dillons Court because I know what it's like to be hungry on Christmas Day. We try to make everything as jolly as we can, with some residents dressing up as Santa and singing Christmas carols."

Well done to Teresa for a creating a wonderful time for all at Christmas.

DEMENTIA AWARENESS TRAINING

A number of Scheme Co-ordinators from sheltered living schemes recently attended Dementia training which was facilitated by Louise Hughes from the Alzheimer's Society. Louise provided a half day workshop on Dementia and it's causes. The content also included information on:

- Increase understanding of memory
- Support those worried about memory
- Increase awareness of Dementia.

Following the training one Scheme Coordinator commented:
"I found the training very informative and really useful for spotting signs of Dementia and learning about the different types of Dementia. Especially in our job working with older people it's great to have the knowledge of how to care and look after a person with dementia. Really great course with a fantastic trainer that explained everything clearly on such a complicated subject."



Photographed are some of the attendees from left to right: Maura Ross (Bleach Green Court), Louise Currell (Trinity Lodge), Patricia Kunaka (Belle Bashford Court), Marlene Smyth (Pound Green Court), Peggy Morrow (McNeill Court), Lorraine Kewley (Fitzroy Court)



GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARD 2017

Congratulations to Roberta McIlwane from Strand Court in Belfast winner of the 2017 Muriel Smyth Good neighbour Award. This award celebrates the wonderful individuals that make up our communities across Northern Ireland.

Each year we are inundated with entries and 2017 was no different! Our judging panel is made up of Tenants' Forum members, who thoroughly enjoyed reading the many entries that reflect such warm sentiments towards their neighbours.

The individuals nominated for the award provide support, companionship, a shoulder to cry on or even just a cup of sugar to their neighbours.

This year's winner, Roberta McIlwane, was nominated by an overwhelming majority of her neighbours who describe her as caring and friendly. According to her friends and neighbours, Roberta is "always smiling" and "nothing is too much trouble".

Carol Ervine, Group Director of Tenant and Client Services, presented Roberta with her prize of £100 shopping voucher. Congratulations again to Roberta from everyone at Choice.

SPRING MAKEOVER AT BLACKS COURT

Tenants from Blacks Court in Belfast are delighted that planned maintenance work has begun! The sheltered living scheme is getting an overhaul with new flooring for the communal areas and new kitchens for each apartment. Lorna Brown, Asset Project Liaison Officer met with tenants to discuss the upcoming work and assisted tenants in selecting their new kitchens. The work is due to be finished in six weeks' time for all tenants. We look forward to seeing the end result.



DRUMKEEN'S FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

Congratulations to Drumkeen Court, Ederney who have raised a fantastic £1,300 for Chest, Heart & Stroke. Tenants have raised money for the worthy cause through their weekly coffee mornings and through their walking group; 'Beware of the Chair' who carried out an impressive six mile sponsored walk. Congratulations to all the generous (and fit) tenants from the sheltered living scheme!



LOWTHERSTOWN COURT'S HANDMADE CHRISTMAS

The Knitting Club at Lowtherstown Court have been very busy working on a number of projects, and this fantastic decorative blanket is just one of the lovely hand made items they have produced. Everyone can agree that it is a beautiful piece of work and will be a welcome, cosy addition to the scheme made just in time for Christmas.

BIG CHANGES AHEAD AT MEDWAY COURT

Tenants at Medway Court in Belfast met with Lorna Brown, Asset Project Liaison Officer to discuss the new planned maintenance project that commenced at the sheltered living scheme in November. Work will include interior and exterior decoration, communal carpets and vinyls as well as, new fitted kitchens for tenants and will take 10 weeks to complete.



CHARITY LUNCH AT DONAL CASEY COURT

Residents at Donal Casey Court in Derry~Londonderry held a charity lunch recently and raised £150 for their local hospice at Foyle Hospital.

Well done to everyone involved in this wonderful event!



Different ways to pay your rent and other charges



In order to make paying your rent, rates and service charges both safe and easy, we offer a wide range of options that will mean you can choose how you pay.

Ways to pay your rent



Going Online – You can pay your rent online at www.choice-housing.org by clicking on 'Pay Rent' on the homepage.



The allpay App – You can pay your rent via the allpay App which is available to download from the Apple App or Windows Phone store and Google Play enabling you to pay your rent from your Apple, Windows or Android smartphone.



Direct Debit – You can set up a Direct Debit agreement. Please contact the Income Recovery Team on 0300 111 2211.



Phone us using your debit or credit card – You will need to give us your rent reference number (on your rent payment card), your debit or credit card details, and the amount you want to pay.



At any Post Office or shop or garage displaying the Paypoint sign – You can pay cash and show your rent payment card. Make sure you get a receipt and keep it safe.



Post – Send a cheque or postal order to our head office. Never send cash. You need to allow three days for your payment to reach us on time.



Housing Benefit direct payment – If you claim Housing Benefit, it can be paid directly into your rent account. However, if your Housing Benefit does not cover the full amount you still need to pay us the difference.



Choice Offices – You can pay with cash, cheque, or debit card. We accept MasterCard, Visa, Visa Electron, Solo and Switch.



CHARMING

As through life I blithely jog
I often marvel at the frog
at home on water and on the land
and rainy days are simply grand.

He's waterproof and on top of this
he's often wakened with a kiss
from little girls who try to find
if he's the handsome, loving kind.

But, to think a frog is your prince charming
Is silly, dear and quite alarming
To tadpoles who quake with fright
And cannot get to sleep at night.

Lest their slumber is disturbed
By clutching hands and loving words
So, set it down, and go this road
Try spoiling me, and spare the toad.

Written by Choice Tenants' Forum Representative,
James Watson from Galway Court, Dundonald.



Property Corner

Properties to Let

Our customers already enjoy the benefits of living in Choice accommodation and you may know someone, a friend or relative for example, in need of accommodation.

If so we'd be delighted to hear from them.

We currently have vacancies in sheltered schemes and general family housing in a number of locations across Northern Ireland.

Sheltered Housing

- Carn Court, Fermanagh
- The Milewater, Belfast
- Orchard Court, Newtownards
- James Court, Belfast
- Tamar Court, Belfast
- Rathkyle, Antrim

General Needs

- Corrigan Court, Armagh
- Millbrook Gardens, Castlederg



Further Information is available through the Services Centre on

0300 111 2211

Viewing the accommodation can also be arranged.

Working
together for
positive change

Choice
Leslie Morrell House
37 - 41 May Street
Belfast
BT1 4DN

T: 0300 111 2211
E: enquiries@choice-housing.org

choice-housing.org

We welcome your input

Here is your chance to become involved in future editions.

If you would like to submit a feature for consideration – such as a poem, a personal achievement, an interesting story, or indeed anything you feel would be of interest to other Choice tenants – then please send your article(s) to:

*The Editor, Choice News,
FREEPOST BEL2371, Belfast BT1 6BR*

Similarly, if you would like to join the Tenants' Forum Editorial Team to contribute and review articles for the Newsletter please complete a Menu of Involvement Form available to download on our website, choice-housing.org.

All contributions gratefully received! And of course, we always appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have for Choice News in general. After all, it is a newsletter for YOU!