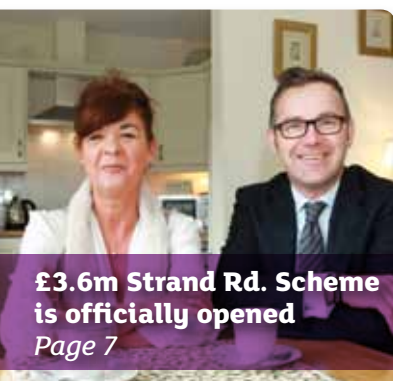


Choice News

Issue 10
Spring 2019
The Newsletter
for Choice Housing
Ireland Tenants



Choice invest £700,000 in Whitehouse Court



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choice 
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A message from our Group Chief Executive

Michael McDonnell

Welcome to the Spring 2019 edition of Choice News.

There are significant changes coming to Supporting People and through Welfare Reform. I am using my Welcome message in this edition of Choice News to raise awareness of how they may impact you.

Many of you will know that there are 20 housing associations registered in Northern Ireland, all of whom are not-for-profit charities. The sector provides around 40,000 homes for people and families on the social housing waiting list across the country. Housing associations have combined revenues of over £200m per annum and employ more than 3,000 people. It is estimated that the sector has 400+ voluntary board and committee members giving their time freely to build thriving communities. The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) acts as the umbrella body for our sector. We work very closely with the Northern Ireland Housing

Executive who as a publicly funded body is both the regional housing authority and a major social landlord, and with the Department for Communities. There are two important issues for tenants which are at the very heart of NIFHA's campaigning activity at the moment – the future of the Supporting People programme and Welfare Reform. The Supporting People programme provides 900 housing related support services across Northern Ireland. This funding enables 30,000 vulnerable people to continue to live independently and thereby reduce or remove pressures on the broader health and social care system.

However, programme monies have been frozen for over 8 years and then cut by 5% last year, at a time when demand for support is actually increasing. So can I please encourage you to take the opportunity to raise the importance of future funding for Supporting People with your community and political representatives.

Of equal concern for tenants should be the ongoing programme of Welfare Reform.

Existing Housing Benefit claimants will be directly affected by the full roll-out of Universal Credit which is scheduled to commence on a pilot basis in the UK in 2019. The cessation of welfare mitigation payments across Northern Ireland is also expected in early 2020. Both of these significant changes are getting very close. Choice has a large number of tenants who are in receipt of supplementary payments which compensate for the impact of either the benefit cap or the social sector size criteria (commonly referred to as the 'bedroom tax'). My housing colleagues have spent many months engaging with those affected to discuss the implications of the removal of these 'top ups'.

I encourage each and every tenant to either speak to your housing officer or to visit the Choice website to find out more about Welfare Reform. If it doesn't affect you directly, it may impact on a family member or friend.

I'd like to finish by saying thanks for being a tenant of Choice.



Choice showcase £700k upgrade of Newtownabbey Development

Choice has kicked off the New Year celebrating an impressive renovation of an Edwardian housing development in Newtownabbey. Whitehouse Court contained three buildings that collectively provided six shared flats, one self-contained flat and a laundry facility.

The two original Edwardian buildings were constructed in the early 1900's and were extensively refurbished during the 1980's.

The investment in the general needs scheme has led to a complete reconfiguration of the buildings, providing twelve new apartments with self-contained accommodation. The Choice

team joined residents to mark the new and improved scheme and heard first-hand what difference these new facilities will make to residents lives.

Phase one of the development completed in 2015 and comprised 24 apartments, with phase 2 now complete. Choice has provided a housing offering of 36 apartments for those in need. Phase 2 focused on the remodelling of existing shared accommodation into self-contained housing, providing residents with secure independent living.

Spearheaded by Magherafelt contractor, Andrew Bradley Construction, and under the

watchful eye of Choice building surveyor, Chris Graham, work began on the scheme in November 2017.

The original building was built with distinctive red brick, which we were keen to preserve, maintaining the character of the building, while modernising the interior.

A range of mechanical and electrical engineering works were completed including all electrics and plumbing within the buildings and the fitting of new internal and external lighting, heating and fire alarm systems.

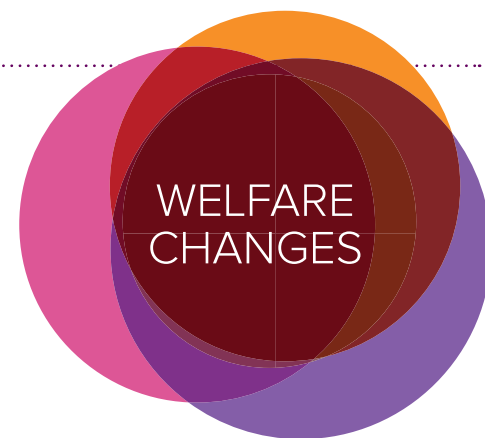


Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive of Choice said:

"We are pleased to see the unveiling of this impressive refurbishment project which has involved a considerable amount of hard work and dedication, not just from the team at Choice but from all our external partners and our residents.

"It was very important to ensure that as we modernised the development, the charm of the old building remained. Our partners, Andrew Bradley Construction and Moore McDonald & Partners clearly shared this vision, providing some creative and innovative modifications that maintained the building's history."

Welfare Changes - summary of changes to the benefits system



Choice tenants will be aware **Universal Credit** began its introduction to Northern Ireland on 27th September 2017. 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**
- **Housing Benefit**

if you are claiming with a partner, at the start of a claim you 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
- National Insurance Number
- Tenant Reference number
- 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 1 calendar month to ensure your claim is processed. If it is not provided within 1 calendar month your claim may be cancelled. Once your claim is submitted log into your Universal Credit portal regularly, check your to do list and your journal for notes from your job coach.

If you struggle with maintaining your account online, ask a family member to help or inform the Jobs and Benefits office immediately. This will help with making sure your claim goes into payment.

The introduction of Universal Credit is being carried out in two phases:

- **Natural Migration phase** – new benefit claims commencing from September 2017 - December 2018
- **Managed migration** – existing benefit claims were due to transfer to Universal Credit from July 2019 - March 2022 however, the government have announced this will be delayed in Northern Ireland until 2020.

When will Universal Credit affect you?

All areas in Northern Ireland are live which means if you have a change in your circumstances this may trigger a move to Universal Credit. Examples of a change could be getting a new home and having to apply for housing benefit for the first time, or having your first child and having to make a fresh claim for Child Tax Credits. As these benefits no longer exist for new claimants this could trigger a move to Universal Credit.

If you have a change in circumstances seek specialist advice as early as possible to avoid loss in benefit entitlement.

Universal Credit is claimed online at www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/claim-universal-credit-online

You will see references to local authority and councils. In Northern Ireland this means the Housing Executive, housing associations or Health and Social Care Trusts.

The housing element of your Universal Credit will be paid directly to your Landlord, the Housing Executive, or your housing association. If the housing element you are awarded does not cover the full amount of your rent, you will need to pay the difference yourself.

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.

When claiming Universal Credit, a new Rebates Rebate system has replaced the rates 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 can be applied for on the same day you make your claim for Universal Credit. This is also an online application.

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.

Housing Benefit and Supplementary Payments

Social Sector Size Criteria continues to change how Housing Benefit is calculated for some tenants, based on sets of conditions. Social Sector Size Criteria is sometimes called the 'Bedroom Tax'. You will not be affected by Social Sector Size Criteria if:

- you live in supported accommodation
- you live in a houseboat, caravan or mobile home
- you live in a shared co-ownership scheme
- you live in temporary accommodation

You don't need to claim the Welfare Supplementary Payment for Social Sector Size Criteria, if you qualify for the payment, the Department for Communities (DfC) will pay it directly to your landlord.

For those affected by the Benefit Cap, it is administered through a reduction in Housing Benefit and paid directly to your landlord until any transferal to Universal Credit.

Welfare Supplementary Payments for Benefit Cap and Social Sector Size Criteria will only be paid until 31 March 2020.

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

- Speaking with your income recovery or housing officer. They can refer you to Choice's in-house benefits advice team for help and support.
- Visiting the Welfare Changes website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/UniversalCredit.
- Contacting the Universal Credit telephone service: **0300 123 3017** (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)
- Calling charges £0.10/minute from a landline and £0.03 to £0.55/minute from a mobile.
- Contacting Choice Services Centre: **0300 111 2211** or email: Choice Services Centre: enquiries@choice-housing.org
- Visiting Choice's website: www.choice-housing.org
- 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 or choice-housing.org

If you have a disability and need an overnight carer you may be entitled to an additional room to help with your disabilities. This may also be the case if a child with disabilities cannot share with another household member as they need their own room.

You can download
our information
leaflets
from our website now
choice-housing.org



£3.6m Strand Road Scheme is officially opened

Choice officially launched our £3.6m upgrade of 126 Strand Road in Derry~Londonderry.

The ambitious redevelopment of the scheme, formerly known as Rock Mills, included the remodelling of existing 86 apartments to an increase of 94 new, modern, self-contained units - the three largest of which will each accommodate families of 4.

Working in collaboration with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Housing Executive, Choice transformed the building which started in November 2016. This marks a new chapter for the scheme and for its residents, bringing the very best standards and latest energy saving technologies into the historic building. It is one of the largest housing renovation and refurbishment projects undertaken in the city and will radically enhance the area.

Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive of Choice said: "We believe in providing good quality housing to those who need it and actively involving tenants in our plans. The renovation work at 126 Strand Road is a fine example of what we are trying to achieve. It was through consultation with our tenants that the decision was made to rename the scheme, helping to express the new character of the development.

The completion of this scheme is great news for its tenants and for the city as a whole, particularly given the need for quality accessible social housing in the Derry~Londonderry area.

The renovation project included an overhaul of all electrics and plumbing within the building and the fitting of new kitchens and bathrooms throughout, as well as a number of other upgrades. In April 2017, the first wave of new tenants moved in, with remaining tenants taking up residency in their homes in August 2018 ahead of its official opening.

AMSON Consortium, a joint venture between local construction firm AMS Ltd and Omagh-based O'Neill Electrics Ltd., undertook the refurbishment.

Located adjacent to the junction of Strand Road and Rock Road, 126 Strand Road overlooks the River Foyle and comprises the listed former Gilliland Flour Mills, constructed in 1846.

Paul Price from the Department for Communities said:

"The refurbishment of this development was essential to ensuring its long term future as a social housing provision for the Derry~Londonderry area. The scheme has made a significant contribution to Northern Ireland's Social Housing Development programme, with £570k of the project's capital funding comprising DfC Housing Association Grant".



Seven schemes mark milestone anniversaries!

20th anniversary at Donal Casey Court, Derry~Londonderry

Autumn/Winter has been an incredibly busy period for our sheltered living schemes, with seven schemes marking 20th, 25th and 35th anniversaries. As you can imagine there have been plenty of parties which provided an opportunity to reconnect with friends and former colleagues.

35th anniversary at Elm Court, Belfast

35th anniversary at Lisnamon Court & 25th anniversary at Nora Frazer Court, Derry~Londonderry

35th anniversary at Lisnavar Court, Derry~Londonderry

30th anniversary at Cabin Hill Court, Belfast

choice

An opportunity to reconnect with friends and former colleagues

Our sheltered living schemes make a vital contribution to their communities while at the same time striking the balance between secure living and an independence that comes with the availability of amenities that these schemes offer.

Scheme

Anniversaries

25th anniversary at Lowtherstown Court, Irvinestown

Choice joins partners in officially opening £3.5m Greenisland House

A new £3.5m supported housing scheme – Greenisland House, close to Newtownabbey was officially opened by the Department for Communities.

The project, which is a partnership, between the Department for Communities, Choice Housing Ireland, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Triangle Housing Association and the Housing Executive provides 32 supported living apartments, with a mix of 1 and 2 bedrooms.

The Housing Executive nominated Choice to work in partnership with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and the Supporting People Programme to develop the scheme for older people in November 2012.

The scheme is located along the shoreline close to Carrickfergus, Greenisland and Newtownabbey, providing local residents easy access to a range of local amenities, including shops and medical facilities all linked by main public transport.

Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive of Choice said:

“This scheme is testament to the collaborative working that we are committed to, ensuring we address the growing need for social housing across the region.

This partnership between housing and healthcare professionals demonstrates how closely the two areas are connected.

“Greenisland House provides the right balance between safe, secure living and independence.

For our residents, this is invaluable, particularly those who are dealing with mild levels of dementia. Knowing someone is there when he or she needs them can be the comfort they need.”

Greenisland House will accommodate older people, including those with mild to moderate dementia and mental health problems, offering a balance between independent living and a safe support network when required. Housing Support staff will be available daily by Triangle Housing Association, with care provided via a Domiciliary Care package.

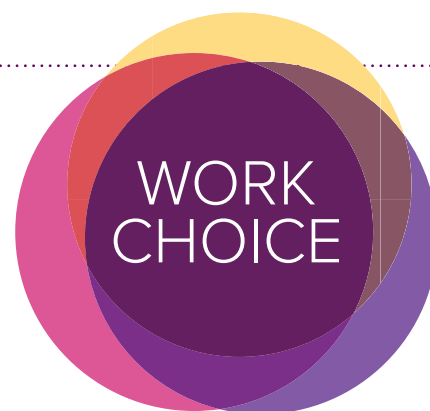
Work on the scheme began in March 2015, and was carried out by MJ McBride Contractors, and RPP Architects. The former Greenisland House, which was demolished, previously occupied the site. The construction period took 18 months.

Conrad Murphy, from the Department for Communities, officially unveiled the scheme. Conrad commented:

“This scheme illustrates that it is possible to provide a safe, homely environment for older people who require some additional support yet enables them to continue to retain their independence and dignity. It will enable residents to lead meaningful and active lives in the community and to feel safe and secure. It offers independent living in a self-contained supported accommodation setting.”



Work Choice Tenant Employment Programme



Bryson
FutureSkills

Choice and Bryson FutureSkills have renewed their commitment to boosting employment opportunities in Northern Ireland, announcing the second year of their skills and employment programme – WorkChoice 2018.

First launched in 2016, the programme aimed at upskilling people dealing with unemployment in a range of disciplines, with the ultimate aim of gaining long-term employment.

The first phase of the WorkChoice 2018 programme saw seven participants, including Choice tenants, receive 'hands-on' experience within Choice, in areas such as; Property Services, Finance, ICT and the Services Centre. As part of the programme, participants get the chance to study towards a recognised OCN Award in Employability level 2 through Bryson FutureSkills. They also receive

a full-time salary during their involvement with the programme.

Lawrence Jackson, Choice Group Director of Organisational Development said:

“WorkChoice is designed to propel participants towards sustainable employment, further education or training by providing practical work-based and accredited learning that are aligned with individual aspirations.

“Experience is important for anyone seeking to secure employment and the programme not only provides this but allows participants to work in an area that they would like to develop into a career. We are pleased to be collaborating with Bryson FutureSkills on this project and I look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on those taking part”.

The six-month programme is just the starting point, providing participants with the foundation to continue to develop their own employment and learning prospects.

Cathy Wilson, Bryson FutureSkills Employment and Development Manager added; **“WorkChoice has been a success in helping people gain training and new skills which are essential to help them find their way back into the workplace; we are delighted that this initiative is continuing and more people are benefitting from it.”**

“The participants will leave the programme with an OCN Award in Employability Level 2 from Bryson FutureSkills, as well as transferable work skills and invaluable experience gained from working as an integral part of a team”.

The Big Market



Young Enterprise is a local charity which develops the skills of young people and ensures they leave education prepared for work and life. On 5th December Young Enterprise student companies from schools across Northern Ireland took over St George's market and literally set out their stalls at the Big Market, showcasing their talents, wares and ideas.

Choice is proud to have sponsored this important initiative, which engages over 600 young people, aged between 14 and 19. Lawrence Jackson, Group Director of Organisational Development at Choice enjoyed participating on the judging panel to find the best trading company at the Big Market.

Congratulations to all the young entrepreneurs, below is a list of all the winners and runners up:

Quick Start runner up – Assumption Grammar School

Quick Start winner - Assumption Grammar School

Business Beginnings winner - St Brigid's Primary School Brocagh

Team Programme runner up – Jordanstown Special School

Team Programme winner – Killard House School

Start Up Programme runner up – Ulster University Coleraine

Start Up winner – Ulster University Magee

Company Programme runners up – Wallace High School & Friends School Lisburn

Company Programme winner – Glenlola Collegiate School

Lawrence Jackson, Group Director of Organisational Development from Choice added:

“It has been exciting to be part of Young Enterprise and help young people engage in business and entrepreneurship. We want to encourage young people to consider their career path and nurture their ambitions. Building strong and resilient communities is just as important to Choice as providing high quality homes. That's why, across Northern Ireland, we're supporting individuals and groups to enhance their skills and prospects for long-term prosperity.”

Giving a Choice to Those with no Home:

Choice and Simon Community work together to build futures

Choice and Simon Community NI have partnered to better tackle homelessness through a new Tenancy Sustainment Service.

Homelessness has risen by a staggering 32% over the last five years and this new service, partially funded by Choice, aims to help the most vulnerable in society, providing them with the expertise and

financial backing to enter the private rented sector and live independently and happily.

As part of the service, support workers and team leaders from Simon Community regularly work with clients and identify those individuals and families who are 'tenancy ready' but do not have the means to afford a private sector deposit or the first month's rent.

Through Choice's investment of £10,000, the service provides housing clinics across six Simon Community NI projects with a dedicated Tenancy Liaison Officer operating across Northern Ireland. To date, the scheme has allowed three individuals to move into private rented properties with a further four clients currently waiting to find a suitable property to match their individual needs.

Louise Davies has been involved in the scheme with Choice and the Simon Community. Overcoming addiction issues and poor mental health after the death of her mother, Louise has praised the Tenancy Sustainment Service. Working with a team of dedicated support workers, she was able to get her life back on track.

Speaking about her journey, Louise said:

"Working with Simon Community saved my life. I wouldn't be alive today and have this beautiful house, if it wasn't for them. I have never known kindness like it. I went through a really difficult stage in my life and found myself at rock bottom. This service has been instrumental in helping turn my life around. I've went from complete darkness to actually living my life.

The world needs selfless people like those in the Simon Community to continue to help and they need support from companies such as Choice to provide the required funding to allow them to continue the lifesaving work they do.

Thanks to Simon Community, I've overcome my demons. Without Choice's investment into the scheme, I would not have been able to afford the security deposit for my new home."

"We know that the best way to break the cycle of homelessness is to help people find and move into a home for the long term. At a time when social housing waiting lists are growing and demand for temporary accommodation rising, the private rented sector is an increasingly important source of housing for people moving out of hostels."

Jim Dennison, Simon Community NI's Chief Executive



Aughrim Court

Amazing Spaces



choice



Since June 2018 tenants at Aughrim Court, Kilkeel, have been working with community partners to improve the garden at the scheme and make it an amazing space for everyone.

Staff from Choice and the tenants at Aughrim Court have worked with a number of partners and not for profit groups to make the most of their space and resources, including Newry Street Unite, Mourne Stimulus, Mourne Grange, Jim's Youth Group and others.

With funding from Choice and a small grant from Live Here Love Here the space has been transformed and now includes a wildflower garden which has been designed to attract butterflies and bees with vibrant colours and scents.

Another area has been named the Garden of Tranquillity - a quiet space to sit and reflect with a range of scented herbs and a water feature.

Steve Camillare tenant at Aughrim Court said:

"The garden project helps everyone here. My doctor said it's a great idea and very therapeutic. It is not just the flowers that grow in the garden it is the friendships and feeling of belonging. There is a sense of pride and self worth for everyone who is involved. It is great to see everyone doing their bit and every day someone will bring visitors to the garden to have a look. We are all grateful for the chance to have a garden that helps make this our home."

Joan Maginn tenant at Aughrim Court said:

"Being part of the garden group has helped my mental health and given me a sense of purpose taking a lead role in the front garden and planning and designing our new gardens."

Energy Week 2018

(5th - 9th November 2018)

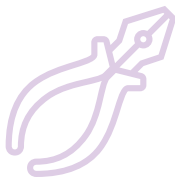
In the run up to Energy Week 2018, we provided information around Oil Buying Clubs throughout Northern Ireland to tenants who may be able to benefit from this initiative in their area. Letters were posted to over 370 homes advising of the benefits of being part of an Oil Buying Club and directing tenants to the appropriate bodies who can provide further information.

Information was provided on our website, at our sheltered living schemes and via our social media channels throughout the week, to advise our tenants on 3 different ways to tackle fuel poverty – energy saving tips around the home, switching energy suppliers and having benefits checks carried out.

We have also made presentations at each of our Regional Tenants’ Forums to highlight the work of our Energy Management Team and provide advice on tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland.

During Energy Week our colleagues provided information on various initiatives, including energy contracts, energy saving tips around the home and benefits entitlement.

As part of our engagement with staff we held a “Fastest Lap Challenge”, with staff cycling to power cars on a scalextric track. This enabled us to promote our cycle-to-work scheme, highlight the concept of generating electricity and also encourage staff engagement.



How to Report a Repair



Choice provides a 24-hour service operating 365 days a year to report repairs. To report a repair, call Choice Services Centre on **0300 111 2211** or email Choice at **repairs@choice-housing.org**

All repairs can be reported to Choice Service Centre. If you live in a staffed scheme such as sheltered housing, you can report repairs to scheme staff.

During normal working hours, 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday, all calls will be answered by Choice staff who will assist with any queries. Outside these hours, calls will divert to a third party monitoring centre (including Bank Holidays) who will only deal with emergency repairs.

Information and guidance is available in the Repairs Handbook and on our website.

Before reporting a repair, please consider the following:

- Have as much detail as possible of the repair required as we will ask various questions about the repair.
- Advise us of any access restrictions or difficulties.
- Let us know your name, address and current contact number.
- Let us know of any special circumstances that need to be taken into account.
- Let us know if the repair relates to something that was recently repaired or replaced.
- Let us know if any other repairs are required and if any repairs, previously reported, are overdue or not completed to a satisfactory standard.

Please be aware of the following:

- Our contractors carry identity cards which you should check when they arrive.
- A responsible adult must be at home when the repair is being completed.
- Let us know as soon as possible if you cannot keep an appointment.
- Our contractors are required to adhere to a code of behaviour with high standards of courtesy and professionalism. In turn, we expect tenants to be courteous to our contractors.
- Our contractors need access to the problem. You are expected to remove delicate items and valuables from the immediate area.
- We will make a charge if the repair relates to an issue for which you are responsible or if you exaggerate the urgency of the problem.

If you are not satisfied with your service, please let us know.

Category	Time frame	Repair Need
IMMEDIATE- within normal working hours	To be commenced immediately and attend no later than 2 hours and completed or made safe within 4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where there is a clear, immediate risk to the occupant, public or property.• Examples include total loss of heating in winter or there is a significant vulnerability, total loss of power or exposed live electric parts, major leaks, to secure a property or major structural risk or damage to the property.
EMERGENCY	To be made safe and/or completed within 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The circumstances will be similar to ‘Immediate’ above but where the risks are less severe such as blocked WC where there is only one WC available, partial loss of heating in winter or full loss of heating where there are no significant vulnerabilities.
URGENT	To be completed within 4 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work to prevent damage to the property, to overcome serious inconvenience to the occupant or where there is a possible health, safety or security risk.
ROUTINE	To be completed within 28 calendar days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For work where the fault or failure does not cause immediate inconvenience or danger to the occupants or the public.

The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2018



Mr Tony Black, from The Silvergrove in Belfast, has been awarded the 2018 Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award.

Mr Black was nominated by many of his neighbours who feel that he truly encourages a sense of community within the scheme and is a great example of a good neighbour.

Mr Black always helps out around the scheme setting up bingo and getting the papers for other tenants. One nomination read, "Tony is a wonderful neighbour to have, always ready with a joke or some banter which provides a lovely, happy atmosphere here".

When the news broke at the scheme that Mr Black was to receive the award there were immediate celebrations and shouts of joy!



Congratulations Mr Black on a well-deserved award.

Best Kept Garden Competition 2018

Congratulations to Pound Green Court!



Pound Green Court in Larne, have won the 2018 Best Kept Garden Award. Mr Thomas Crawford nominated the scheme, and provided many beautiful images of the flowers, plants and shrubs that make up such an inviting garden which all the tenants and visitors to the scheme enjoy.

The judging panel were overwhelmed with the quality and number of entries this year but the display at Pound Green court won them over on the day. Well done to everyone at Pound Green Court!



Well done everyone!

Our Ambitious Development Plans

Choice brought together stakeholders, developers and partners from across Northern Ireland to set out our ambitious development plans to 2021.

As a leading housing provider at the forefront in the provision of social housing, Choice is committed to delivering quality housing, which enhances the community.

The need for decent, affordable housing and support services continues to grow, establishing and creating effective relationships with developers and partner organisations will enable Choice to leverage skills and resources to maximise the benefits for those in need.

Niall Sheridan, Group Director of Development & Assets, laid out the ambitious strategy to 2021 and Choice's vision 'to be recognised as the leading housing association group in Ireland'. Investing our experience and working with others will help Choice to shape new standards to develop more high quality dwellings.

The growth of the Choice Group Companies is the result of ambition and the relentless pursuit of development opportunities in areas where it is needed most. Maple and May, Choice's profit-for-purpose company, is delivering new affordable homes for rent or purchase across Northern Ireland.

Through widening the scope, Maple and May offers greater freedom and the flexibility to tenants to move if their needs change. The strategic partnership between Choice and Oaklee Housing is playing an active role in tackling an increasingly urgent lack of homes in Ireland and is contributing to the step change required in the delivering of more social and affordable accommodation.



Choice is actively seeking development opportunities. If you would be interested in discussing a suitable site for both the affordable and private markets, or learn more about our ambitious development programme, please contact a member of our Development Team on 0300 111 2211.

Maple May

oaklee housing



As of April 2019, Mr Bill Jeffrey is stepping down from his position as Choice Tenants' Forum Chairman. Bill is a man who can wear many hats, he is a keen star gazer, photographer and actor. He also enjoys social networking, current and political affairs, and is a regular freelance contributor for BBC and print media. Bill is the owner of The Wordsmith's Forge and has been a Committee member of the John Hewitt Society since 2005. He also holds a post graduate diploma in marketing.

With such a wide range of knowledge and skills, Bill has been an instrumental member of the Tenants' Forum for 12 years, and Chair of the Forum for 9 years. He was a Board Member from 2009-2013 and sat on the Tenant & Client Services Committee within Choice.

Bill is a passionate advocate on the importance of tenant participation,

"I believe implicitly that a strong, independent Tenants' Forum is the best way to protect and develop tenants' interests in conjunction with the closest

possible co-operation with Choice."

During Bill's time as Chair, Choice has been through many changes, his stewardship of the Forum has offered continuity through the amalgamations, considerable organisational growth and wider contexts such as welfare reform.

As Chair of the Tenants' Forum, Bill has served as the link between the Forum, the Group Chief Executive and Group Director of Tenant & Client Services. The Chair of the Forum is there to ensure the tenants' voice is loud and clear, being heard across the entire organisation. The Chair of the Forum must communicate openly and effectively including at Committee and Board level. Bill has also been a tremendous ambassador for Choice and the Tenants' Forum on outside bodies such as Cancer Focus, Live Here Love Here and at many official functions.

Carol Ervine, Group Director of Tenant & Client Services

"Bill has worked closely with our Tenant Involvement Team

over the years to ensure there is a strong independent Tenants' Forum for the future. Bill has shown leadership and made a strong commitment to Choice as Chair of the Forum, for which we are very grateful."

Claire Darby, Tenant Involvement Champion

"Bill's enthusiasm is something we have all grown to rely on. He always shows up ready to contribute, and is never shy about new ideas or giving constructive criticism. Bill has served as Chair of the Forum with dedication and always has his fellow tenants at the front of his mind."

Rita Murray, Tenants' Forum Member

"It has been very reassuring to have Bill as Chair of our Forum for the past 9 years. He has always treated the role with professionalism. As a fellow tenant, I have watched him speak up for tenants at meetings and he always did his best to ensure Choice understand our ideas and concerns. I am always impressed with his enthusiasm for this role, he certainly encouraged a lot of us to get involved. Bill will be a hard act to follow and I know many of us will miss him, so on behalf of all the Forum members and the tenants in general I would like to extend our thanks for a job well done."

All the staff at Choice thank Bill for his dedicated service to the Tenants' Forum.

Community Champions

Community Champions are neighbourhood volunteers, they are the tenants in our blocks of apartments or estates within our general needs housing whose commitment and dedication is to improving the neighbourhoods in which they live.

We are always on the look out for people to become Community Champions. If you know someone who is interested in volunteering for their community and would like to put themselves forward to be considered, or if YOU are interested please contact the Tenant Involvement Team on: **0300 111 2211**

- Community Champions will benefit from training and ongoing support from Choice staff.
- Improve their skillset and develop their confidence.
- Be more aware of Housing and the policies within Choice that govern what a Landlord can do.

- Work closely with staff and develop relationships.
- Support and help signpost tenants to obtain the correct agency needed for their required support.
- Help improve your neighbourhood and provide support within your community.

WE WANT YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Fire Safety at Home

At Choice we work closely with our tenants to ensure our homes are safe and well maintained. This maintenance is a shared responsibility between landlord and tenant. There are simple steps you can take to protect against fire.

Our Fire Safety leaflet contains everything you need to know to keep your home safe. You can download a copy of the fire safety leaflet from our website **choice-housing.org** or call **0300 111 2211** to request a copy.





Choice Housing Officers complete accredited training



**Supporting
Communities™**
Empowering Society

Choice are working with Supporting Communities (Independent Tenant Organisation) to provide training specifically aimed at our Housing Officers highlighting and reinforcing the benefits of involving tenants. The OCN Level 2 accredited Tenant Participation & Community Development course was delivered over 4 days to 30 Housing Officers who fully participated and engaged in lively discussions around the practicalities and benefits of working in partnership with tenants to constantly strive for improvements in service delivery. As it was an accredited course all staff had a number of exercises to complete including two assignments. The assignments were completed by the participants in their own time and feedback from the course tutors was very positive.

Sheenagh Mc Nally Head of Corporate Services, Supporting Communities, stated:

“As an organisation with 40 years’ experience working with tenants we are passionate about tenant engagement and how important it is that social landlords fully embrace it in a truly meaningful way. To that end, Tenant Participation must be embedded in the very DNA of the organisation at every level, and is not solely the responsibility of housing officers, everyone in the organisation has a role to play. Supporting Communities is delighted that Choice has invested in this training as it demonstrates a clear commitment to putting tenants at the heart of everything. Choice has a very ambitious Tenant Involvement Strategy and Action Plan that can only be delivered by working in partnership; staff, board members and tenants all working for the one goal.”

If you are interested in getting involved, please check out our Menu of Involvement on our website www.choice-housing.org or contact your Housing Officer on **0300 111 2211**

Get Involved with Choice, have your say!

Your **choice** 
Your Voice

Listening

Informing

Working
Together

Responding



If you're interested
please contact the
Tenant Involvement
Team on:

T: 0300 111 2211
choice-housing.org



The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2019

To assist you in your nominations here are a few guidelines of what the judges will be looking for:
The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award will be judged by a panel made up of Board Members, Staff and Tenants' Forum Representatives. You can nominate your neighbour by completing and returning the attached entry form. If you are unable to complete the form or require assistance, please contact the Services Centre on 0300 111 2211, who will be pleased to help.

- Have they helped you out at a time of crisis or are they a good neighbour all the time?
- Do they help you with your garden or do the shopping for you when you can't?
- Perhaps they have looked after your children so you can have a break or even go to work?
- Maybe they've just been there when you needed someone to talk to?
- The person nominated and the nominator must both be tenants of Choice.
- More than one person can be listed as nominator, however, anonymous nominations will not be accepted.
- Listing the special qualities that are the reasons for nomination of the person concerned will assist in the judging.

Ts & Cs apply.

WIN
£100
Shopping
Voucher



Best Kept Garden Competition 2019

Green-fingered tenants are being urged to 'grow for it' as part of the annual Choice gardening competition.

Calling all keen gardeners! To the green fingered among you or your friends and neighbours, it's time to remind you of the annual Choice Best Kept Garden Award. You can nominate your own or another tenant's garden, or a scheme garden providing it is tended by the tenant and not Choice contractors. If you wish to submit an entry please complete and return the information slip plus photo(s) of the nominated garden by

Friday 30th August 2019
to the Editor,
Choice News
FREEPOST BEL2371,
Belfast BT1 6BR.



WIN
£100
Shopping
Voucher



Please be advised that this competition is open to Choice tenants only.

Ts & Cs apply.

The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2019

Your details

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Nominee Detail

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Reasons for nomination:

All nominations should be forwarded to:
Marketing Officer,
Choice
FREEPOST BEL2371,
Belfast BT1 6BR
by 12 noon on
Friday 30th August 2019

Best Kept Garden Competition 2019

Your details

Name:

Address:

.....

Telephone No:

Email:

Nominee Detail (if different)

Name:

Address:

.....

Telephone No:

Email:

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TOGETHER

Anti-social Behaviour Support for our customers

Choice 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.

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 that we receive is vital for Choice to identify and correct any problems within our service delivery and to ensure that we meet the needs of all our customers.

Gas Safety

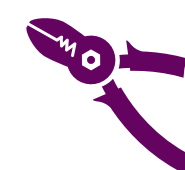


Target
100%

100%

Units with valid
gas certificate

Repairs

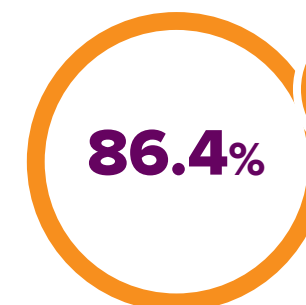


Target
90%

92.10%

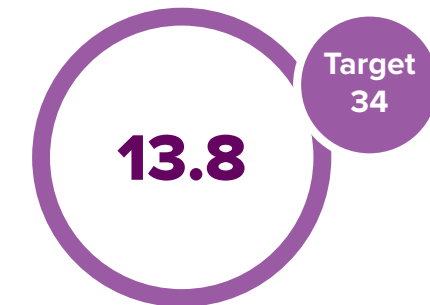
Average repairs
completion

Customer Enquiries



Target
87%

CSC satisfaction
overall service



Target
34

Complaints
(days, combined stages)

Human Resources



Target
8%

3.35%

Absenteeism (days)

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

The performance figures are for the period April 2018 - February 2019

New prize programme with Queen's University Belfast

Choice has launched an exciting new prize in partnership with Queen's University Belfast to help transform the lives of people across Northern Ireland.

The prizes, one in each faculty, will provide financial support to students who have participated in either the Pathway Opportunity Programme or Senior Academy Programme, key Queen's initiatives delivered by the University's Widening Participation Unit.

Established in 2013, the Widening Participation Unit at Queen's comprises the Junior Academy, the Senior Academy and, more recently, the Pathway Opportunity Programme. Widening Participation students at Queen's include young people who are in secondary education and colleges, students who have disabilities, care leavers or adult learners. Programmes such as the Senior Academy and the Pathway Opportunity Programme target young people who have the ability to attend university but who are least likely to progress to higher education, and provides support to enable them to fulfil their potential.

The Choice prizes have been established to support and motivate students from Widening Participation backgrounds to achieve academic excellence and to complete their studies. The prizes will be awarded to the Pathway Opportunity Programme or Senior Academy students, one from each of the University's faculties, who achieve the highest overall mark in Level 1, and who will be continuing to Level 2.



The Pathway Opportunity Programme aims to increase the number of students from under-represented groups who will go on to study at Queen's. The Programme is for talented young people from Northern Ireland who have the academic ability to study at Queen's but who may require additional support and encouragement to reach their full potential.

The Senior Academy Programme raises awareness of higher education in primary and post-primary pupils by developing their academic skills and supporting attainment. Specifically targeting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, these programmes are open to all and provide insights into university life.

Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive of Choice said:

"We are very pleased to announce this partnership with Queen's who are leading the way in providing opportunities to study for those who may find prospects not as readily available."

"Encouragement and confidence play a big part in academic achievement and everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, should have the same foundation on which to grow and develop."

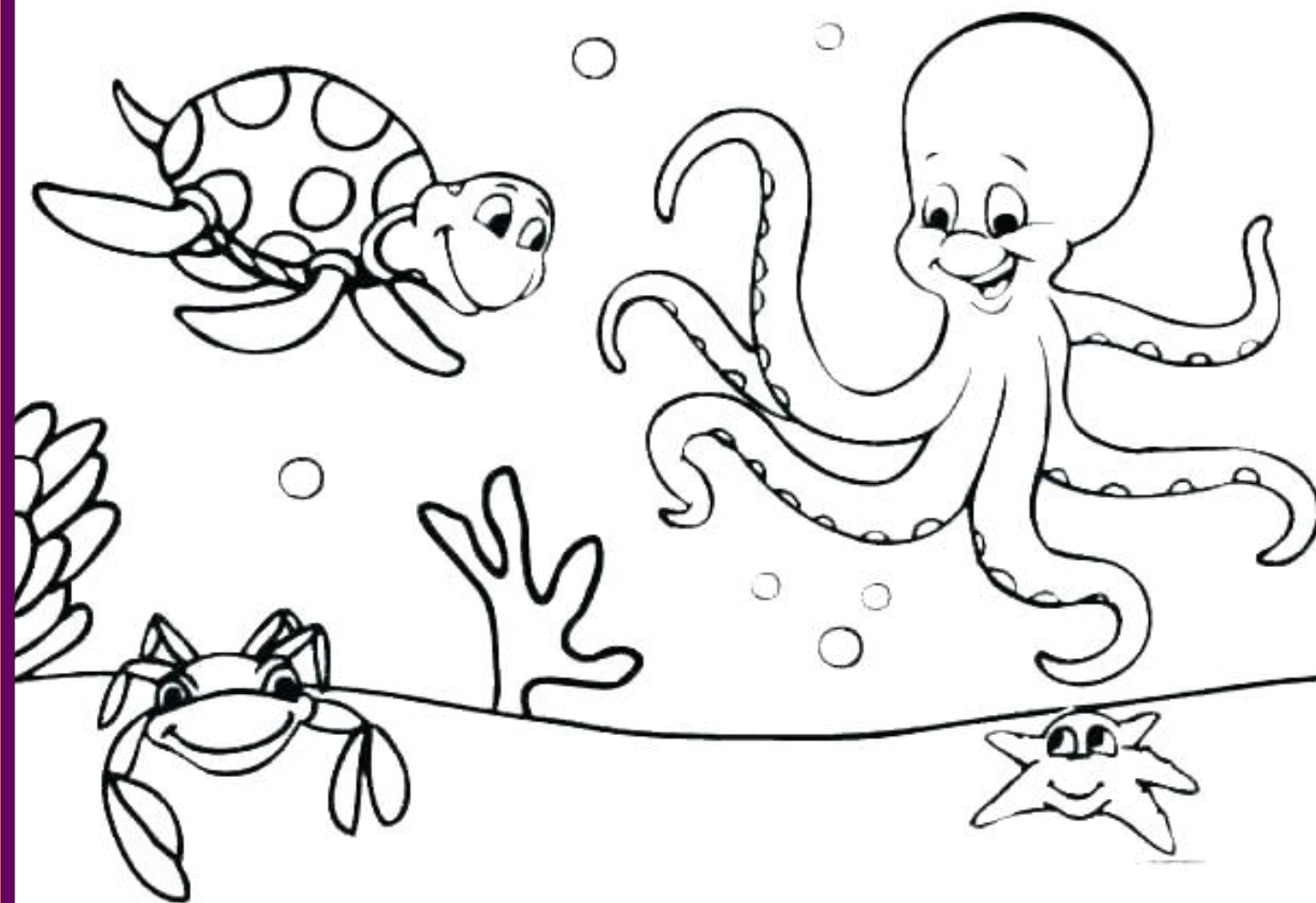
"The Widening Participation Unit at Queen's has worked with a wide range of young people, teachers, schools, colleges and parents to raise the profile of opportunities open to those who want to achieve academic success. We hope that through these prizes, we can help recipients to succeed in the future and create stronger inclusive communities."



CHILDREN'S COLOURING COMPETITION

Open to children 16 years and under

Under the Sea



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 14th June 2019**. (Please note that the parent must be a tenant of Choice Housing Ireland). Ts & Cs apply.

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

Win a family pass to Movie House!

Name Age

Address

Daytime Telephone Evening Telephone

Out & About

Choice is made up of over 10,000 tenants, more than 300 staff and numerous partners and stakeholders; so it's no surprise that there is always plenty of activity going on in all the communities we support.

Read our Out & About section and don't forget to let us know about your events!

Contact us at:

editor@choice-housing.org



MEDWAY COURT FRIENDSHIP GROUP

The death of someone we love can bring strangers into our lives who then become our friends because we find someone who understands how we are feeling and how the grief is affecting us.

This is evident at the Friendship Group which is held at our sheltered living scheme, Medway Court, Belfast. It was formed under the Beyond Words Project at Cruse Bereavement Care NI. Beyond Words was a partnership between Cruse and Stroke Association NI.

The Medway Court Friendship Group was set up in May 2017.

The group provides a safe environment for members to come along, share experiences and make new friends. More importantly,

the group also helps members find a "new normal". The group has had days out and recently members travelled to Ayr for two days. At the November meeting, members from the Lisburn Friendship Group came to Medway Court to enjoy lunch provided by the groups' joint committee.

The group meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 11 am to 1 pm.

If you would like further information, please contact Eleanor on 028 9079 2419 or email: eleanor.ellerslie@cruse.org.uk

Make new friends



MEN IN SHEDS

Choice, through the T:buc Strategy, have partnered with Rowallane Hub Men's Shed. This partnership gives tenants at Manse Court, Saintfield a Choice T:buc scheme, the opportunity to participate in the project and the activities the Rowallane Hub Men's Shed offer.

The shed is a place where they can come together to have fun, share skills and knowledge and gain a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. We are excited to see this group come together and even more excited to hear what projects they will take on.

CHOICE HIGHLY COMMENDED AS AN EMPLOYER FOR CHILDCARE

Choice were nominated at the recent Employer for Childcare Awards Ceremony in Galgorm Resort & Spa, Ballymena.

A few members of the HR team attended the ceremony and were delighted to be awarded Highly Commended



BREAKFAST MORNING AT THE OAKS

The Oaks Portadown had a great turnout at their breakfast morning, our sheltered living scheme served up hot tea, coffee and traditional Ulster fry delights.

Ulster Fry delight



ELIZABETH TURNS 101!

Happy birthday to our tenant Mrs Elizabeth Mansbridge from Ellis Court in Belfast who turned 101 years young!

Elizabeth enjoyed a wonderful party at the sheltered living scheme with her friends, family and Choice staff.

in the Charity Category against 12 other Charities.

The judges rated Choice's tangible examples of what they are doing currently and their future plans for progression. They also demonstrated evidence of responsiveness and genuine flexibility in accommodating staff requests for family friendly working.



Family Fun Day



CHOICE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION 2018

In December 2018, Christmas Card Competition winner, Moyra Blayney was presented with a £100 shopping voucher. With so many incredible designs it was not easy to choose an overall winner, but the dramatic snowy mountain artwork really stood out and caught the eye of the judges, who agreed that it was a worthy winner of the Choice Christmas Card competition of 2018.

Staff joined Moyra to celebrate the presentation.

We would like to say a big well done to all our wonderful entries and congratulations once again to Moyra!



CAIRNMARTIN COMMUNITY FAMILY FUN DAY IN ASSOCIATION WITH H.A.I.P

Choice brought together the residents of Cairnmartin Road, Belfast, for a Community Family Fun Day, aimed at promoting good relations across housing associations in NI as part of the H.A.I.P Project. As an intergenerational event, the tenants and families enjoyed lots of fun, with a lively Disco Bus, Bouncy Castle, Face Painting, Refreshments, and a Barbecue, with assistance from the ladies of the Twaddell Women's Group.



STREET SOCCER NI RETURN FROM A SUCCESSFUL HOMELESS WORLD CUP IN MEXICO

In November Street Soccer attended the Homeless World Cup in Mexico City which was their 6th World Cup adventure. They brought a homeless men's team and women's team away for the 10-day trip.

The men finished 29th overall in the tournament with the women finishing 14th in their competition. To top off a great 10 days in the sun they picked up two awards, one for Best Female Coaches and one for Best Female Player which Kiera Moss picked up after scoring an incredible 35 goals.

Proud to sponsor



THE FIRST RULE ABOUT KNITTING CIRCLE....

Elm Court, Belfast, host a very well attended Knitting Circle each week. On Thursday evenings tenants come together to create new pieces and share stories.



The group are working hard to prepare for an upcoming market at which they are sharing a stall with the Donegall Pass Community Garden Project.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

Choice supported International Day of Older Persons by celebrating older people and the positive impact they have on our communities. Some of our sheltered living schemes took part in the celebrations including; Castlerocklands, Carrickfergus, Westbridge House, Enniskillen, Ashley Lodge, Belfast, Lowtherstown Court, Irvinestown and Donal Casey Court, Derry~Londonderry. You can find out more on what fun and laughter the tenants had on our social media channels.



COLOURING COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to Jamie Henderson from Ainsworth Avenue, Belfast, winner of the colouring competition. 6 year old Jamie impressed the judges with his artistic flare, adding glitter, gems, and fluffy cotton wool to his masterpiece.

Jamie received a family pass to W5 from Housing Officer, Courtney Watton. We hope the family enjoy their day out!

W5 FAMILY PASS WINNER!



WOODWORK AT WESTBRIDGE HOUSE

Carl Moore, Maintenance Assistant, used his woodwork skills to make a wonderful wooden planter out of an old bed frame destined for the skip!

The statement planter is raised to enable tenants at Westbridge House Enniskillen, to roll their sleeves up and put their green fingers to work. Well done Carl, what a lovely showcase piece for the garden.

Wonderful
woodwork
skills

SHORT TRIP TO SHORT CROSS

Tenants from Elmgrove Manor, Belfast recently visited the famous ShortCross gin distillery in Crossgar.

Tenants were delighted to visit Rademon Estate Distillery, home to the most awarded gin on the island of Ireland, ShortCross Gin.

After hearing a brief history lesson, learning more about one of Ireland's oldest estates, everyone was then taken through the bottling and packing hall and into the small batch distillery, where they learned more about Rademon Estate's beautiful copper pot stills.

Guests had an opportunity to meet the distiller and founders all whilst being taken on a botanical journey and full tasting experience, after which the tenants relaxed with a gin and tonic.



CEDAR COURT TENANT COMMITTEE

Cedar Court in Downpatrick is a purpose-built facility managed in partnership by the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust and Choice to support the housing and health needs of people with dementia and a range of other conditions.

Last year, the tenants decided to set up a formal committee to ensure they had a voice in the way their housing and their community was run. Empowering Communities was asked get involved as an independent organisation to support them establishing a Tenants' Committee.

The newly established committee was formally celebrated on 26th September at Cedar Court with plenty of cake and friends. The tenants have worked hard to establish the group and now feel that everyone has a voice and an identity in their own community.

We wish the group every success in their future endeavours and partnership with Empowering Communities.



GET CONNECTED GRADUATION

Choice was delighted to support BT Connect and Supporting Communities to deliver a ten week Digital Inclusion course at Leonard Cheshire Taylor House in Belfast.

After completing the course, participants said that their digital skills are better than before, that they have better access to the internet and are more confident going online.

The course helped residents to know where to look for information on the services they need and to communicate more with friends and family.

The group agreed that being online also makes them feel more independent and able to do things for themselves.



GAMES NIGHT

People of all ages enjoyed a fun filled games night at Lowtherstown Court in Irvinestown.

Games night provides a wonderful opportunity for tenants to come together to enjoy games which can be adapted to suit a wide range of physical limitations.

A FUN
FILLED
NIGHT!



FESTIVE FUN

As part of our contribution to the T:buc Strategy, Choice held Cross Community parenting Programmes in both Saintfield and Ballynahinch over the last number of weeks, which were open to Choice tenants and the surrounding community.

The programmes were well attended and culminated in a festive visit from Santa for all the little ones, from newborns up to the age of four.



CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR JACK ALLEN COURT

Tenants from Jack Allen Court kicked off the holiday season with a Christmas lunch at the City Hotel, Derry~Londonderry. Everyone enjoyed a great day out spreading some festive cheer!



FIRST AID TRAINING

The tenants at Castlerocklands, Carrickfergus, recently took part in a short course on Everyday First Aid and defibrillator training provided by the Red Cross. The tenants now feel confident and equipped with new skills to know what to do in a first aid crisis.



HEALTHY NEW YEAR FOR PEMBROKE LODGE & HILL COURT

Pembroke Lodge, Belfast and Hill Court, Lurgan, welcomed Cancer Focus to help improve the health and well-being of tenants. The charity carried out health checks and informed the tenants in the sheltered schemes about cancer awareness.

The well rounded session touched on everything from diet to exercise. Tenants had the opportunity to have their blood pressure taken, blood sugars measured as well as their height, weight and carbon monoxide intake tested.

Health & well-being checks



MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNINGS

Our sheltered living schemes at Rothesay Court, Coleraine, and Stevenson Park, Lurgan, held fundraising coffee mornings in support of Macmillan Cancer support. With plenty of cakes, sweet treats and prize draws the tenants and staff had a great time fundraising for a worthy cause!



ROAD SAFETY

Tenants of Lisnamon Court, Derry~Londonderry including Nora Frazer, worked along with Local Councillor, Mary Hamilton who contacted the Department for Infrastructure to put in place an "elderly people crossing" road safety sign. The safety of our tenants is vital and this new road sign will reduce speed along the road in front of the scheme. We are proud of the positive action our tenants took for their community.

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 Store, Windows Phone Store or Google Play .



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, shop, 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.



Universal Credit direct payment – if you claim Universal Credit, the housing cost element can be paid directly to your rent account. However, if this does not cover the full amount of your rent you need to pay the difference.



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

YOUR GUIDE TO ASBESTOS

Choice manages asbestos through regular surveys and inspections of properties where asbestos has been detected. We have robust asbestos management procedures, which exceed the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive.

There are various types of asbestos and some are of higher risk than others. We can reassure our tenants that we have only identified low risk types of asbestos within our properties.

All identified areas of asbestos, if undisturbed present no risk to tenants. Choice will inspect these areas of asbestos on a yearly basis to ensure that the asbestos material remains in good condition. You can download our new information leaflet below.

If you have any queries regarding asbestos please contact: asbestos@choice-housing.org



Property Corner

Properties to Let

choice 
choice-housing.org

Immediately available properties

We have accommodation immediately available in the following areas:

- Millbrook Gardens, Castlederg
- Carn Court, Roslea
- Pond Park, Lisburn
- Aughrim Court, Kilkeel
- Larne Town Centre (Various)

You can keep up to date on our immediately available accommodation by visiting our website choice-housing.org

Contact us today for further information
0300 111 2211 or email: enquiries@choice-housing.org



Budget Energy has been appointed to supply all of our landlord and communal electricity on a one year contract, for the third year running.

This contract is expected to deliver savings in the region of almost 9% against average market or regulated prices, with anticipated savings of almost £80,000 for our tenants. Our Energy Management Team were aware of rising market energy prices this year and so carried out market engagement with electricity suppliers in the Summer to ensure our planned tender exercise is appropriate to deliver significant savings for our customers.

Budget Energy were also successful in our tender for a 'Preferred Electricity Supplier', for our new homes over a two year period. In the first year of our previous preferred supplier arrangement, nearly 200 homes were included and we estimate that our tenants in these homes may have saved in the region of £12,000 over the course of a year. The second year of the previous contract is currently under review. We would also continue to advise all our customers to review their electricity supply and consider switching suppliers if there are savings available, particularly with recent increases in electricity unit prices.

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*

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