

# Choice News SPECIAL EDITION

**choice**  
Together we enrich lives

*Supporting our  
communities during the  
cost of living squeeze*



**WE'RE  
HERE  
FOR YOU**

Issue 15,  
Spring Summer 2022

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [choice-housing.org](http://choice-housing.org)

## A message from Michael, our Group Chief Executive



### Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of Choice News.

Whilst the weather has undoubtedly improved since our last newsletter and the pandemic appears to be transitioning into a new and less severe phase, cost of living pressures continue to mount. So this edition of Choice News once again highlights the crucially important work of our Financial Inclusion Team who are ready and willing to help with advice on welfare support and household budgeting. My colleagues would also be pleased to signpost you to our broader tenant support services including guidance on energy use.

It was a real pleasure to meet with representatives from the Choice Tenants' Forum in Belfast recently to discuss shared challenges and opportunities. It feels like a very long time since we were able to meet safely in a room together, but thankfully with appropriate health and safety protocols the event went ahead as planned. It was great to see a number of new faces participating and I would encourage more tenants to come forward and get involved.

I was delighted to visit the Faulkner family in March and to see the fantastic work to convert their home in Bangor. Six-year-old John Luke is one of a very small number of children born each year with Angelman Syndrome and the family home in Bangor required extensive work to create a safe and comfortable environment. Whilst we still need to finish off some of the garden elements as we move into better weather, the Faulkner's home reflects the vision we had at Choice for investment in the former VHE properties.

And on the theme of community investment, this edition of Choice News profiles the refurbishment of 242 Antrim Road, Belfast and the development of our mixed tenure new build scheme at Lewis Mews. The former is a supported housing scheme for younger people in partnership with the Simon Community. Lewis Mews in East Belfast will combine social rented general needs and older person accommodation with private rented apartments. In addition, the last block of homes on the site adjacent to CS Lewis Square will comprise apartments for sale. This development highlights our commitment to more mixed tenure and indeed shared housing schemes across the country in the coming years.

Finally, please take the opportunity to find out about our ongoing commitment to university scholarships and the Choice apprenticeship programme. Both initiatives have been running for a number of years and highlight that our work as a housing charity is about far more than the bricks and mortar. The installation of community defibrillators outside our sheltered housing schemes is an excellent example of how support from Choice shouldn't stop at the front door, the gate or the end of the road.

Thanks for being a tenant of Choice and I hope everyone has an enjoyable summer in 2022.

*Michael McDonnell*

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Choice Housing Ireland Limited 

Choice Housing 

Follow us on social media - from Facebook, Twitter to YouTube and LinkedIn - we've got something new for you every day! It's a great way to stay connected, engaged, informed and entertained! Feel free to like, follow, share, and ask questions on any of our social media platforms.

We're looking forward to connecting with you!



## Join us on Social Media!



# Help with energy costs



## Ways to Save on Energy Bills

**1** Maximising Income

**2** Switching Energy Suppliers

**3** Energy Saving Tips

**4** Improving Energy Efficiency

### 1 Maximising Income

If you are worried about being able to manage payment of your bills, call Choice's Financial Inclusion Team on **0300 111 2211** or email [financialinclusion@choice-housing.org](mailto:financialinclusion@choice-housing.org)

If you purchase your energy via direct debit or key pad, your supplier may be able to provide additional financial assistance. Contact your supplier for more information:

#### Domestic electricity suppliers in Northern Ireland

PowerNI	03457 455 455	home@powerni.co.uk
Budget Energy	0800 012 1177	talktous@budgetenergy.co.uk
Electric Ireland	0345 600 5335	customerservice@electricireland.com
SSE Airtricity	0345 601 9093	customerservice@sseairtricity.com
Click Energy	0800 107 0732	chat@clickenergyni.com
Bright Energy	*	**

\*\*\*All Bright customers have been transferred to Power NI. Contact PowerNI for further information.

#### Domestic natural gas suppliers in Northern Ireland

SSE Airtricity (gas)	0345 0262 658	info@airtricitygasni.com
Firmus Energy	0330 0249 000	furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk

Correct at time of publication.

### 2 Switching Energy Suppliers

It may be possible for you to switch energy supplier to get a better deal. If you are on a variable tariff or your energy contract has come to an end, use the Consumer Council price comparison tool on their website [www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/comparison\\_tool/begin](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/comparison_tool/begin) to

check if you can get a better deal. Or you can contact them by phoning **028 902 51600** or emailing [info@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@consumercouncil.org.uk).

### 3 Energy Saving Tips

-  Change all lights to energy saving LED bulbs.
-  Turn your thermostat down by 1°C to save 10%. Time your heating for when you need it and don't block radiators.
-  Ensure you have a full load when using the washing machine or dish washer.
-  If you have a hot water tank, set the cylinder to 60°C.
-  Turn all lights off when not in use.
-  Wash your clothes at 30°C where practical.

### THE COST OF LIVING SQUEEZE

-  Only boil what you need when using a kettle.
-  Turn taps off properly. In a single week, a dripping hot tap can waste enough hot water to fill half a bath.
-  Don't leave your mobile phone charging all night – most only need a couple of hours.
-  Keep curtains open in the day to let sun energy into your home and close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping.
-  Dry clothes outside when possible.

### 4 Improving Energy Efficiency

Choice have a target to achieve an average Energy Performance Certificate (home energy rating) score of 78 across our properties by 2025. NI Social Housing average is currently **73** and our average is **76**.

In order to achieve this Choice schedule energy improvement works as part of the planned maintenance programme of our properties.

#### Routine energy improvement works include:

- Boiler and heating upgrades
- LED lighting
- Loft insulation
- Window and door upgrades

Further information and help is available by contacting the Northern Ireland Energy Advice Line on **0800 111 44 55**. You can also download Choice's Energy Saving Guide, visit: [www.choice-housing.org/energy](http://www.choice-housing.org/energy)



# Help with food costs



## Food Banks

Nobody should be left hungry or living in extreme poverty, sadly this is increasingly common in these difficult times. Trussell Trust have a network of food banks providing emergency supplies and dignified support to people locked in crisis.

### Where can I find my local Food Bank?

There are over 21 Trussell Trust food banks across Northern Ireland.

The services provided by food banks may vary from area to area, as they react to the needs of their community to provide help and compassionate support to local people.

To get help from the food bank you will need to be referred with a voucher. Each food bank works with different frontline professionals, like doctors, health visitors, social workers, and Citizens Advice. These professionals will be able to refer you to a food bank and give you a food bank voucher if they think you need emergency food.

The food bank and referral agency will use this voucher to gather some basic information about you. This will help them to understand why support is needed and offer practical guidance, and the right emergency food. Once you have been given a voucher, you can exchange this for a minimum of three days' emergency food at your nearest food bank centre.

### Visiting a Food Bank

Visiting a food bank might seem daunting, but you'll get a warm welcome in a safe environment, a listening ear from trained volunteers, and a food parcel. Your food will be packed in supermarket carrier bags – the food bank will supply these, but if you'd prefer to bring your own, these can be used instead.

### What's in a Food Parcel?

Trussell Trust have worked with nutritionists to make sure that the food parcels supplied by food banks contain at least three days' worth of nutritionally balanced meals for individuals and families. These emergency food parcels are not designed to meet long-

term need – that's why food banks also offer additional support like debt advice where possible.

A typical food parcel includes:

- Cereal
- Soup
- Pasta
- Rice
- Tinned tomatoes/ pasta sauce
- Lentils, beans and pulses
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tea/coffee
- Tinned fruit
- Biscuits
- UHT milk
- Fruit juice

Food banks will also provide essential non-food items like toiletries and hygiene products where they can.

### Dietary requirements

When visiting a food bank centre, one of the Trussell Trust volunteers will run through the food parcel packing list to check for any special dietary requirements.



April 2021 – March 2022  
**61,500**  
three-day emergency food supplies were provided to people in crisis by food banks in the Northern Irish Trussell Trust network



### Ways to Donate Food

Over 90% of the food distributed by food banks in the Trussell Trust network is donated by the public – that's why food donations are absolutely vital to give everyone referred to a Food Bank a balanced and nutritious three day supply of food. Without goodwill, food banks would really struggle to operate.

Ways you can donate food:

1. Directly to your local food bank
2. At collection points in supermarkets across the country.
3. By hosting a collection at your school, church or business for your local food bank.

If you're organising a collection for your local food bank, please check with them first to see which items they are currently in need of.

[www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)

## THE COST OF LIVING SQUEEZE



There are over 21 Trussell Trust food banks across Northern Ireland.



L-R Aidan McCrea Choice Financial Inclusion Manager, Carol Ervine Choice Group Director of Tenant & Client Services and Jonny Currie Trussell Trust Northern Ireland Network Lead.

# Help with scholarships



## Choice Scholarships



L-R Cameron Bell, Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, Ted Jenson, Queen's Outreach Officer, Aimee McElvogue, Medicine, Health & Life Sciences and Michael McDonnell, Choice Group Chief Executive

Students from Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University have recently received awards from Choice.

The 'Choice Scholarship', provides much needed support to those who face financial, social, and logistical barriers to furthering their education.

Since its launch in 2019, 12 students have received support by the scheme, which will support up to fifteen students over a five-year period. The partnership is aimed at encouraging those who are less likely to progress to higher education and will also contribute towards creating a fairer society and supporting economic growth.

Speaking about the Choice Prizes, Michael McDonnell, Choice Group Chief Executive said:

"We are delighted to be continuing this important partnership with our universities here in Northern Ireland.

"Everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, should have the same opportunities

to go on to third level education and, through this initiative, we aim to support and motivate students from Widening Participation backgrounds to achieve academic excellence and to complete their studies.

"We hope that through these prizes, Choice can help the individual recipients to succeed and contribute to creating stronger inclusive communities."

Commenting on the latest Prizes, Outreach Officer for the Queen's Widening Participation Unit, Grace Heatley said:

"We are extremely grateful to Choice for their continued support of this impactful award.

Prestigious prizes such as these enable us to recognise students for their academic achievements, celebrate their success and support them through their studies. Financial support is particularly impactful for students from Widening Participation backgrounds, and we are continually seeking to increase the support available to these students."

"I wish to congratulate the three recipients and thank Choice for their generous support."

One of the winners of this year's scholarships at Ulster University, Patrick Roe, BSc Hons Computer Science, said:

"This scholarship has allowed me to invest more into my education as I was able to purchase IT equipment to assist with my studies. Having this will benefit me massively, and the Choice Scholarship has made that possible which means the world to me.

I am thoroughly enjoying computer science as it has helped me further develop my problem-solving skills, my favourite aspect being programming as it is the most rewarding for me. In the future, I hope to work in a tech firm within the programming department.

I have always been interested in new and emerging technologies and with our world becoming more and more digitised, a career in tech will bring benefits in the advancement of society."

"We are very grateful for Choice's continued support which has made a life changing impact on many students, supporting them to complete a degree at Ulster University, learn new things, meet new people and kick start their career."

Karen Delgado, Head of Corporate Engagement at Ulster University

Karen Delgado, Head of Corporate Engagement at Ulster University said:

"For many, the biggest barrier to accessing Higher Education is a financial one. Not everyone has the same opportunities in life and the COVID pandemic has further heightened this disparity in personal circumstances often meaning that no matter how able someone is, or how much they want to learn and develop, they simply aren't able to access or undertake a degree qualification. Without scholarship support their talent, insight and potential as a future employee, problem solver, leader and employer may never be realised and this inequality of progression to Higher Education will impact the diversity of Northern Ireland's future workforce."

Choice are delighted to be continuing this important partnership with Ulster University and Queens University Belfast at this crucial time for young people in higher education. As part of the Choice commitment to local communities, we are investing in and developing thriving communities, using housing as a foundation for transforming people's lives. This commitment goes beyond the provision of housing, identifying the wider needs of people and the positive impact they can have in their local communities.



Patrick Roe, BSc Hons Computer Science and Michael McDonnell, Choice Group Chief Executive

# Help with apprenticeships



## Choice Apprenticeships

Choice employ over 400 staff at various locations throughout Northern Ireland, providing careers in housing management, development, administration, information technology, human resources, finance and a range of support roles in our sheltered living schemes.

At Choice we promote learning and development because we value the contribution of every member of staff. We recognise the importance of providing support and development opportunities to enable staff to achieve personal development goals and business objectives.

To ensure we continue to offer a high level of service we are careful to look ahead and make sure our work force is ready for the future, apprenticeships play a big part in this, and are working well in our direct services organisation, Choice Services Limited, which includes roles in building, plumbing, electrical and other maintenance services managing maintenance and repairs across more than 9,000 homes. Hiring an

apprentice is a productive and effective way to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. For the apprentice, apprenticeships offer the chance to gain valuable skills, higher earning potential and improved life chances.

Apprentice Electrician - Luke started his apprenticeship with Choice Services in 2019. Luke has been working hard and looks forward to completing his apprenticeship early next year.

Callum is an apprentice plumber. He has been developing his skills through his work with Choice Services, as well as, attending college one day a week and he will graduate in three years.

Dean is an apprentice joiner who started with Choice Services recently. Over the next three years Dean will learn his trade at Choice Services while attending college one day a week.



Dean McMillan,  
Apprentice Joiner



Apprentices, Daniel Mackey  
and Luke Patterson

Speaking of his apprenticeship with Choice Services, Daniel Mackey said: "I feel like my apprenticeship with Choice Services has allowed me to learn a new skillset and I have enjoyed this learning curve."



Callum McGrady,  
Apprentice Plumber

## Home Contents Insurance – are you covered?

**It is difficult to expect the unexpected, however over the past number of years there have been many examples of extensive damage to tenant's properties being caused by flooding, fire and severe cold spells. Unfortunately, many of the tenants affected had no home contents insurance. Choice strongly recommends all tenants insure their home contents.**

Choice are responsible for, and will carry out repairs to the structure of the properties. **It is however, the tenant's responsibility to have insurance cover for personal property, furnishings and the decoration of their home (Including floor coverings).**

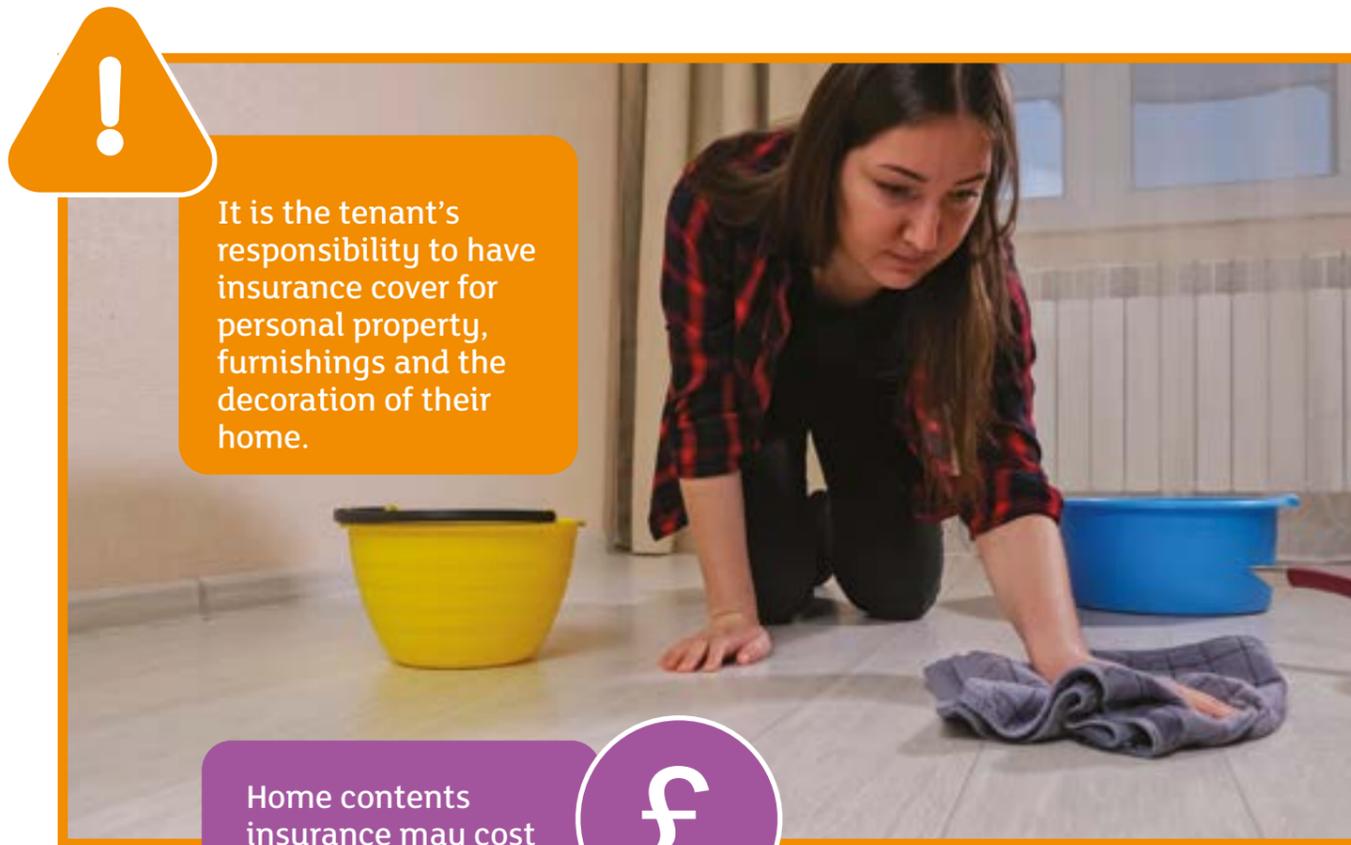
We realise that home contents insurance may be the last thing on many tenants' minds, especially when there are so many other outgoings. However, if you do not have insurance for your personal property, you run the risk of having to find all the money necessary to

repair or replace items that have been damaged. There are a number of contents insurance policies available which you can pay monthly or annually.

Details of insurance companies are easily available on the internet or you can contact your local insurance broker for further details. Home contents insurance may cost less than you think and could save you a significant amount of money if something did go wrong.

The cost of your home contents insurance will depend on how much the contents of your home are worth and where you live.

Having home contents insurance will give you the peace of mind that should something unexpected happen, any potential damage to your home contents are covered, leaving you to concentrate on the things that really matter in life.



It is the tenant's responsibility to have insurance cover for personal property, furnishings and the decoration of their home.

Home contents insurance may cost less than you think and could save you a fortune if something did go wrong.



## Considering getting a mobility scooter? What you need to know.

We acknowledge that mobility scooters can be a valuable aid and we also recognise our duty to protect the health and safety of our tenants, staff and colleagues, as well as conform to fire safety regulations.

In this article we aim to inform you regarding the key considerations that must be satisfied before obtaining a scooter.

### You must apply in writing for permission to have a mobility scooter

If you live in housing with communal areas e.g. a sheltered scheme or an apartment block, then you need to request permission before obtaining a scooter.

This is because mobility scooters may pose a fire risk as they can be combustible and, if stored incorrectly, can block corridors and fire exits. A fire risk assessment must therefore be carried out before permission is granted.

### What other things are considered?

In assessing your request for a mobility scooter your Property Services Officer will also need to be satisfied that there is safe place for the scooter to be stored and charged. If not permission will not be granted.

### I have been granted permission- what now?

If your application has been approved there are a number of conditions including;

- You must not have a class 3 scooter for internal use
- Subject to approval you may obtain a type 2 scooter only
- You must show proof of current valid insurance
- You must commit to safe use of the scooter onsite
- You must abide by all terms in your mobility scooter agreement
- You will be charged an annual fee of £40 for charging your scooter onsite

### I was told there is no room for anymore scooters at my scheme – what can I do?

Unfortunately, applications may be refused simply because the site cannot accommodate further scooters eg there is no room to safely charge or store additional scooters. If this does happen you can re-apply when the numbers of scooters onsite reduce.

**If you have further queries please contact your Property Services Officer to discuss.**



## Choice tenant moves into newly modified home for son with rare condition

A Choice tenant, Lisa Faulkner, her son John Luke and their family have recently moved into their new home in Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor. The Association modified their home to fully meet the needs of John Luke who suffers from a rare condition named Angelman Syndrome.

Angelman Syndrome only occurs in 1:20,000 children and is a genetic disorder that primarily affects the nervous system. Symptoms include severe delayed development, intellectual disability, severe speech impairment and problems with movement and balance.

Following consultation with Lisa and her family, a programme of extensive renovation and adaptations were designed and delivered by Choice's Building Surveying team ensuring the property met John Luke's specialised needs. This included installing a downstairs wet room, wheelchair access and the provision of a hoist and low surface temperature radiators.

John Luke suffers from a sleep disorder which can manifest by only sleeping for 20–30-minute naps on some nights or going without sleep for a whole night. He is not mobile and unable to talk. The newly renovated property will allow John Luke to gain full use of his hospital bed, tailored for his needs which he previously had not been able to use due to the lack of space in their former property. John Luke, who up until this point has never had his own bedroom, will now also have a soft play sensory area aimed at helping with a range of visual and auditory processing, as well as fine and gross motor skills.



Talking about the process of moving into their new home, Lisa said, "My son John Luke, who is now six, was diagnosed in October 2018 after a very long battle over an 18-month period. The condition is often put down to delayed development and/or autism and diagnosis is not fully achieved unless a genetic blood test is done to detect abnormality in Chromosome 15. The Choice team along with their partner Fusion Heating listened to our needs and understood the importance that every detail of our new home would have on John Luke's life. Dimmer switches, low pressure shower and low surface temperature radiators were all put in place to protect John Luke and keep him safe.

Significant consultation was undertaken between Choice Housing and their partner Fusion Heating Ltd to ensure the property met the needs of John Luke now and for his long-term future. Working alongside John Luke's Occupational Therapist Sara McCrea, the team developed plans that would be fit for purpose throughout John Luke's childhood, accommodating a condition with wide ranging symptoms.

The property which was acquired by Choice as part of their transfer agreement with Victoria Housing Estates (VHE) was included in a £25m renovation and refurbishment programme to bring the properties up to a high standard of living. The four-bed bungalow was identified by the Choice Assets team as a possible fit to meet the specialised needs of John Luke.

Since John Luke's diagnosis, Lisa has become a health advocate, raising awareness of Angelman Syndrome, working with health professionals to highlight the day to day needs and challenges of this rare condition on patients and their families. Lisa also speaks at and participates in parent forums aimed at gaining as much information about the condition as possible.

For more information on Angelman Syndrome, you can visit [www.angelmanuk.org](http://www.angelmanuk.org)

Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive at Choice added, "When we acquired the VHE properties back in 2020, we were aware that there was a requirement for significant refurbishment to the properties. In the process of assessing these properties, the four-bedroom bungalow was clearly a viable option for Lisa and her family, and the refit ensured it met the needs of a family who could now look at their new home as their long-term home".



Talking about the process of moving into their new home, Lisa said,

"Moving into our new home hasn't just ensured that John Luke can live a normal life like any other six-year-old, but it secures our long-term future as a family. Before this, we were never sure if at some stage fulltime residential care would have to be an option if we weren't able to accommodate his needs at home."

## Choice and Subsidiary Maple and May progress £10m investment in East Belfast

Choice Housing, one of Northern Ireland's largest housing associations and our subsidiary Maple and May have made significant progress on a new £10m housing development at Lewis Square in East Belfast, which will incorporate a mix of social housing and housing for private rent and affordable sale.

The development will comprise of three initial apartment blocks providing 44 new general needs and older people accommodation for 129 people at an investment of over £7m with £2.5m by Choice and a further £4.7m from the Development Programme Group by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The development, which first broke ground in October 2020 has seen contractors on site making good progress with projected timeframes for handover of these blocks will be towards the end of summer 2022.

In addition to the social housing provision at Lewis Mews, plans for a further investment by Choice subsidiary Maple and May will allow for the development of an additional two blocks (D and E) to include a mix of homes for affordable sale (12 apartments) and private rent (15 apartments).

Choice Group Chief Executive, Michael McDonnell said, "Since 2018, Choice has invested over £66m in new social housing provision in the Belfast area with fifteen developments completed in the last three years. Plans for further investment over the next five years are under way and includes this exciting new development in East Belfast.

"The number of people on social housing waiting lists in Northern Ireland has risen by 10% during the pandemic and developments like Lewis Mews, which will facilitate a mix of living needs across 44 new homes in accessible areas is vital in addressing this need.

Partners involved in delivering this project include main contractor Leo Mathesons Ltd and Like Architects.



Michael McDonnell added, "This new development is unique in its mixed offering of quality social housing provision alongside affordable sale and rental options, aimed at increasing the supply of affordable homes for young people and families trying to get on to the property ladder." The scheme, located in the Sydenham area of East Belfast is within walking distance of Victoria Park and Connswater Shopping Centre with accessible public transport offering short commutes to Belfast City Centre, the George Best City Airport, and the SSE Arena.

Leo Matheson from Leo Mathesons LTD added, "This is a significant investment in quality affordable housing for the East Belfast area, made more unique by the offering of a mix of private and social housing provision. Working with Choice and partners we were able to develop a project which provided quality sustainable living options to meet the growing demand for housing."

Choice provides a mix of supported, sheltered and general needs housing across Northern Ireland, providing over 12,000 homes across the region, with over 5,000 in the Belfast City Council area alone. Maple and May is a profit for purpose company and professional landlord, offering quality homes that people can rent and buy. We are unique within the Northern Ireland market and are using our position to improve standards in the private rented market, as well as increase the supply of affordable homes for young people and families.



L-R Michael McDonnell, Choice Group Chief Executive, Matthew Berry, Contracts Manager Leo Matheson Ltd, Siobhan McCrystal, Choice Head of Growth and Jon Anderson, Choice Group Director of Development.



"The development will also further enhance the visuals of the surrounding Connswater Greenway area whilst maintaining the convenience of nearby residential properties."

Leo Matheson  
from Leo Mathesons LTD

## Choice completes £150K refurbishment of scheme for young people

Choice Housing along with our partners at Simon Community NI have unveiled our latest renovation project, an investment of £150K on a supported housing scheme on the Antrim Road, Belfast which provides accommodation for young people aged between 16 and 21 who are leaving care.

The scheme, known as '242 Antrim Road' is owned by Choice and managed by homelessness charity Simon Community. It provides 10 units of accommodation for young people transitioning out of care.

The project, which was led by Simon Community in consultation with existing service users, included an extension to provide a much needed communal space. The refurb included a spacious kitchen and open plan lounge which has been fully equipped with a workstation and IT equipment. This modern, open and welcoming space will allow the service users to engage and communicate with their peers whilst offering greater opportunity for support staff to work with the young people to enhance their independent living skills.

Choice Group Chief Executive, Michael McDonnell said, "As an organisation Choice is committed to maintaining and ensuring the long-term sustainability of all of our housing stock. We understand that the needs of tenants can evolve and with that their living situation needs to adapt.

Working with Simon Community and tenants at 242 Antrim Road we identified a number of areas that would not only enhance the physical space of the property but would support tenants in their bid for independent living.

This new space now offers tenants the opportunity to engage more openly with each other, providing more space for facilitating a range of bigger group sessions and the opportunity to socialise and cook together. This all lends to better mental health and wellbeing which is vital for these young people who are looking towards independent living for the first time."

Speaking about the project, Jim Dennison, Chief Executive at Simon Community NI commented: "I'm delighted to see the extension of 242 Antrim Road launched in our charity's 50th year. In the past, 242 Antrim Road had very limited space for young people to meet and take part in group activities but now the extension allows for staff and clients at the project to plan meaningful activities based around the common room and kitchen that will help develop social and independent living skills."

With thanks to the generosity of funders and the commitment of staff and clients, we have created a legacy space that will not only support the current young residents in the project but also the many young people who will rely on Simon Community in the coming months and years."



L-R Jim Dennison, CEO at Simon Community NI, Liz Lundy, Simon Community NI and Grainne Donnelly, Supported Housing Manager Choice.



Nicole, a tenant in 242 Antrim Road said,

"Now that the extension is finished, it makes all the months of early morning building work worth it. Before, the place was really cramped but now we can socialise together, take part in cooking activities, and just have fun. Thanks to everyone who helped make this possible."

The upgrade work, which took 18 weeks to complete was delivered by contractors, VHL Construction, with funding from Choice and a grant secured through LandAid, the property industry charity, who works to improve the lives of children and young people in the UK who experience disadvantage due to their economic situation.

Simon Community were keen to secure funding to ensure the property could facilitate more open engagement and conversation between the young people, a space that allowed them to develop their skills and confidence.

The Antrim Road scheme offers independent living for young people in need, whether that is due to a breakdown in the family unit, or they have been living in foster care or in a family home. The Simon Community support team help these young people with day-to-day life skills, including help with managing their financial situation, understanding how they need to budget, including gas and electricity bills and food shopping, cooking, and cleaning.

**simon  
community**  
Northern Ireland  
ending homelessness

## REMINDER

# House Sales Scheme Ending midnight 27 August 2022



As many of our tenants are aware, legislation has been passed in the Northern Ireland Assembly which has resulted in the forthcoming end of the statutory House Sales Scheme. This legislation means that Choice tenants will need to apply to the scheme before midnight on 27 August 2022 should they wish to purchase their property. **Choice tenants will no longer be able to avail of the statutory House Sales Scheme after midnight 27 August 2022.**

Choice completed a mailing to tenants in eligible properties in October and have had many enquiries since then with tenants contacting us to check their eligibility to purchase before the August deadline. We have listed below some of the most common queries which have come up in relation to the end of the scheme and the house sales scheme in general.

### When will the House Sales Scheme end?

The House Sales Scheme will end at midnight on 27 August 2022. Tenants who are eligible and wish to apply to buy their home must ensure that their application is received by Choice before this date. Choice Housing will not take any responsibility for applications not received, lost, delayed or received after this deadline. Applications received after this date cannot be accepted.

### How do I know if I am eligible to buy my property?

Tenants must have a minimum of five years tenancy with Choice Housing or other qualifying landlord to be eligible to apply for the House Sales Scheme. (Please note restrictions below.)

Full eligibility criteria, including the list of all qualifying landlords, is detailed in the House Sales Scheme Guide to Tenants which you can download from our website or request via post or email. Please note that Victoria Housing Estates is not a qualifying landlord.

The property must be the tenant's only or principal residence.

### Who cannot buy?

The following property types are excluded from the scheme:

- Tenants of sheltered/group dwellings.
- Tenants of 1 and 2 bed bungalows.

Instances of tenancy misconduct may restrict your ability to purchase.

### Am I entitled to a tenancy discount?

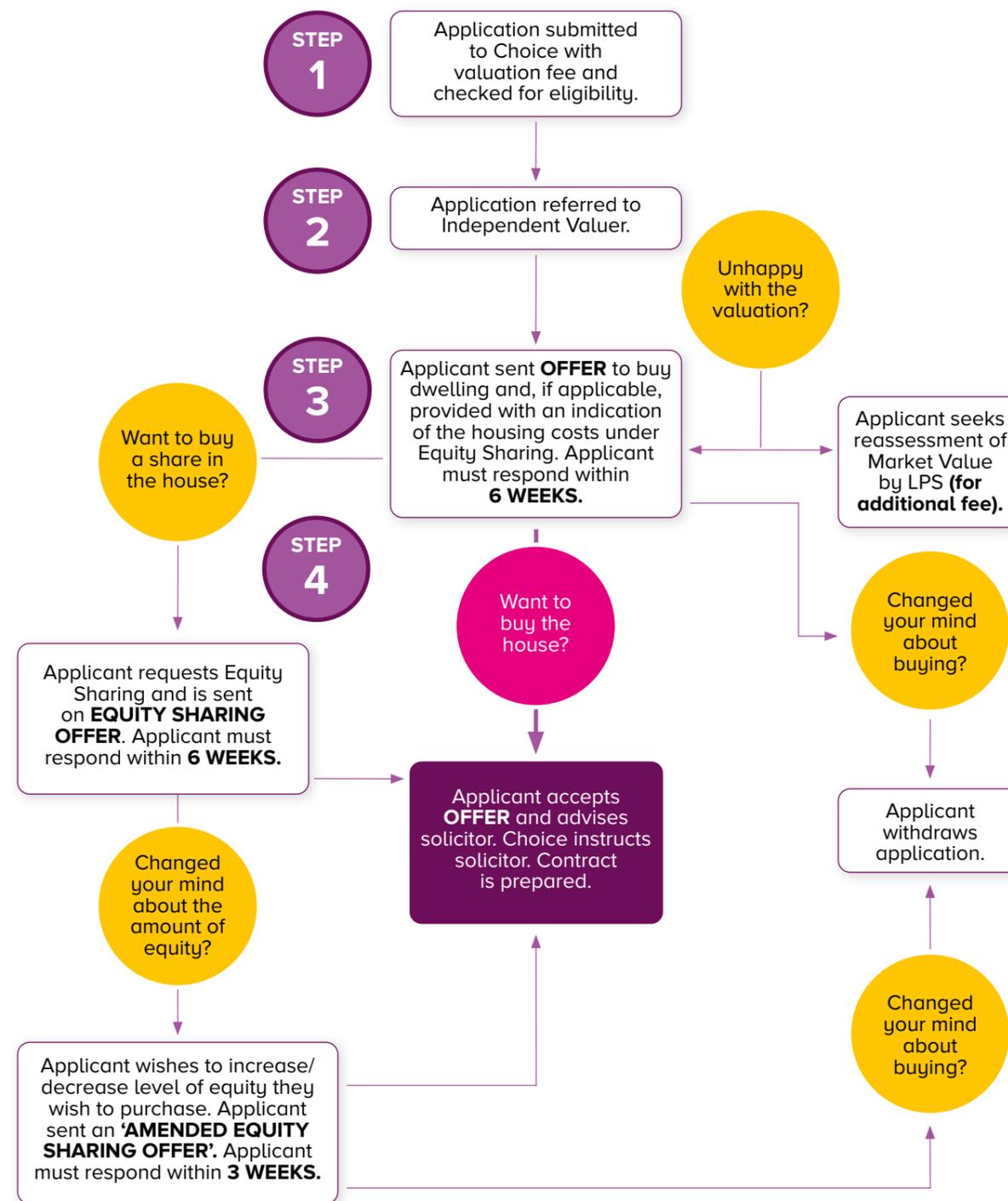
Tenants may be eligible for a discount depending on a range of factors including the age of the property in which you reside. For example if your home was built/purchased within the last 11 years, discount may not be applicable. This scenario is referred to as Historic Costs and is detailed in the House Sales Scheme Guide to Tenants.

### What if I have bought equity in my home and wish to buy more after the Scheme has ended?

If you have previously bought some equity in your home you will still be able to purchase more equity after 27 August 2022. The reason for this is because you entered the House Sales Scheme including equity sharing before the date the scheme was abolished.

**IMPORTANT:** Please be aware that this deadline is fixed. Any applications received after midnight on 27 August 2022 will not be eligible. It is your responsibility to ensure that your application has been received by Choice before this deadline as late applications will not be considered under any circumstances.

## House Sales Incorporating Equity Sharing Process - Main Steps



### How do I get more information?

If you would like more information and to find out if you are eligible to purchase your home, you can contact Choice Housing in the following ways:  
Call on 0300 111 2211 for an application pack, and we will send this out to you by post,  
Email: [treasuryteam@choice-housing.org](mailto:treasuryteam@choice-housing.org), Visit our website at [www.choice-housing.org](http://www.choice-housing.org) for House Sales Scheme information and to view and download an application pack including the House Sales Scheme Guide to Tenants. For the official guidance on the House Sales Scheme visit the Department for Communities website at [www.communities-ni.gov.uk/disposal-housing-association-property](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/disposal-housing-association-property)

## Are You Using a video-equipped doorbell device or CCTV system?

The installation of a video-equipped doorbell (ring doorbell) or CCTV requires written permission from Choice and must be in accordance with the Association's policy on alterations.

The following advice from GOV.UK's website will help you to understand what you need to do if you are considering installing, or have already installed, a CCTV system (or similar technology, such as video-equipped doorbell devices) on your home. A CCTV system includes the camera, storage, recording and all associated equipment.

### Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regulates and enforces the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

If your CCTV system or doorbell captures images of people outside the boundary of your private domestic property – for example, from neighbours' homes or gardens, shared spaces such as corridors, or from public areas – then the GDPR and the DPA will apply to you. You will need to ensure your use of CCTV complies with these laws. If you do not you may be subject to appropriate regulatory action by the ICO which can include a fine, as well as potential legal action by affected individuals.

The ICO has published guidance on the use of domestic CCTV and a CCTV checklist, which will help you to better understand and meet your obligations under data protection law. It is important that you read this guidance as well as the checklist, as this provides a fuller explanation of your obligations under data protection law. The ICO has also published guidance for people being filmed by domestic CCTV.

If you have any questions about the use of domestic CCTV, you can contact the ICO <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/> or call 0303 123 1113. If you are unhappy about the use of a domestic CCTV system, use the ICO's online tool to determine the best course of action in your situation.

You may be considering using a CCTV system as a necessary means to protect your property from acts of crime and anti-social behaviour. A domestic CCTV system needs to be operated in a responsible way that respects the privacy of others.

Below is a list of general considerations to help you reduce the risk of your CCTV system intruding on the privacy of others.

### 1. Reasons for considering a CCTV system

Think about:

- why do I need CCTV?
- could I use another means to protect my home, such as improved lighting?
- what do I want my CCTV system to view and record (this could be the front door, a parking space, the back yard, a shed, and so on)?
- does it need to record all the time?
- does it need to record audio?

### 2. How your CCTV system affects others

It is important to consider the privacy of others.

Ask yourself:

- where will I position the CCTV to minimise intrusion into my neighbours' and other people's privacy?
- will the range of the cameras include my neighbours' property, gardens, pavements or other areas? If so, you could consider systems that can reduce intrusion, such as those which have privacy filters
- how will my neighbours feel about my CCTV?

### 3. Letting people know about your CCTV system

Ensure that you are transparent to those around you when installing your CCTV system. You can do this by: informing your neighbour(s) about your system and/or putting up a notice informing people that recording is taking place.

### 4. Taking responsibility for your CCTV system

If you are thinking of installing a CCTV system on your property, and it records images beyond your private domestic property, you must be aware of your responsibilities:

- it is your responsibility to make sure that the CCTV system is installed correctly
- you are also responsible for all the information that is recorded by your system
- you must make sure that the information is not used for any other purpose than protecting your property
- make sure you read the manual, and if necessary, ask your installer to show you how to operate it and how to export footage if required
- you will need to be aware of individuals' data protection rights and make sure you take steps to allow the people you record to exercise these rights effectively (for example, you will need to respond appropriately to any subject access requests you receive from the people you record).

### 5. Storing the recorded information

Ensure you bear the following in mind when storing the information you record on your CCTV system:

- you should make sure that the date and time on your system are accurate
- it is important to check that you have enough recording space
- you should not store any information or images for longer than is necessary to protect your property which means you should delete the information once it is no longer required
- you should make sure that the information recorded is used only for the purpose for which your system was installed (for example it will not be appropriate to share any recordings on social



media sites)

- you must keep the recordings secure and keep access to them to a minimum (remember that you are responsible for what happens with the information)
- in certain circumstances, the information you record may be used as evidence by the police in an investigation (therefore, if you are not sure, it is important to check with your installer or local police authority that the information you record can be used for this purpose when required).

### 6. Maintenance

Once you have installed your CCTV system, you should regularly check that:

- you are complying with the GDPR and the DPA if your CCTV system captures images outside the boundaries of your home
- you regularly delete the recordings and do not keep them for longer than is necessary for the protection of your property
- your CCTV system is still needed
- it is important that you check your system regularly to make sure that it is working properly (this may include cleaning any debris affecting the CCTV device and wiping it down after bad weather)
- you should also check the position of your CCTV device from time to time to make sure it still captures the right images and privacy intrusion is minimised.

For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property><https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/domestic-cctv-systems-guidance-for-people-using-cctv/>



Passionate about making a positive difference in our communities.

The Community Development Team were delighted to welcome 30 Tenants' Forum members from across the Belfast region to its first in person seminar for over two years!

It was a fun packed day with a brilliant atmosphere and people meeting each other face to face and connecting with one another.

Tenants enjoyed presentations from staff across Choice including Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive, Richard Mealey, Community Development Manager and Ursula Toner, Regional Head of Tenant & Client Services outlining our passion about making positive differences in our communities through the help of our Tenants' Forum and wider community initiatives.

Throughout the day, tenants enjoyed wonderful cultural performances including a Chinese Fan Dance, Irish dance performance, and music and storytelling.

Tenants also had the opportunity to visit information stands from Bryson Energy, PSNI, NIFRS, Cancer Focus and Choice Financial Inclusion Team for help on money advice.

Regional events across the province will be taking place in the coming months. Choice are committed to building meaningful relationships with our tenants and the wider community and look forward to what we can achieve together.

**If you would like to get involved with our Community Development Team please visit our website: [choice-housing.org](http://choice-housing.org) or contact our Community Development Team on 0300 111 2211.**



## Welcome to the team Cyril!

Cyril Moorhead has recently joined the Community Development Team as a Good Relations Officer. Cyril will assist in delivering the Shared Housing Programme to create sustainable, thriving communities for our shared housing schemes across Northern Ireland. We asked Cyril a few questions about what he is looking forward to in his new role.

### What is your professional background before joining Choice?

Recently appointed in mid-January, I come to the role with 30 years' experience of the community and voluntary sector having worked for local and regional organisations during that time. This role is a great opportunity for me to apply the knowledge and key skills I have gained throughout my career for the benefit of the community, and good relations in general.

### What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

Making connections and making a difference by contributing to the creation of a caring, compassionate community.

### What challenges are you expecting?

Change is a challenge however I see it as a privilege to support individuals, groups or neighbourhoods in identifying issues and collaborating on projects that result in local solutions to local issues.

### What would you like to change/introduce?

My desire is to enable tenants to reach their full potential and, in so doing, nurture the process of advancing Choice's mission 'to enrich lives through great homes, services and communities'.



Cyril Moorhead, Good Relations Officer

You can contact Cyril and the rest of our Community Development Team by tel: **0300 111 2211** or email: [enquiries@choice-housing.org](mailto:enquiries@choice-housing.org)

## Celebrating Different Cultures

As part of Cultural Diversity Week, we were delighted through Housing for All to support and attend a Cultural Day with over 300 pupils at St. Patrick's Academy in Lisburn. The event celebrated the range of cultures within the school community through workshops about asylum seekers and refugees, music, dance and some yummy food tasting!



## Community Christmas Curiosity at W5

Families from the Brickworks, Belfast, visited W5 in December.

W5 is Belfast's science discovery centre and has over 250 amazing interactive exhibits, fantastic fun for visitors of all ages. Everyone enjoyed a lovely evening exploring, with a visit to Santa at the end of the day.

Brickworks Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Choice for providing the funding for the trip. If you would like to find out how Choice can support your community event please speak to your housing officer.



## Bringing together Ballymena

Our Community Development Team brought residents together from across Ballymena for a trip to Dublin Zoo. A great day was had building friendships and making connections!



# The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2022



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.

Closing Date:  
Friday 29th July 2022.



# Best Kept Garden Competition 2022

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 29th July 2022** to the Editor, **Choice News** FREEPOST BEL2371, Belfast BT1 6BR.



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

Ts & Cs apply.

## The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2022

### 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 29th July 2022.



## Best Kept Garden Competition 2022

### Your details

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....

### Nominee Detail (if different)

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....



## 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.*

## Join the Choice Editorial Team

The Choice Tenant Editorial Team meet on a regular basis to discuss content for Choice publications including Choice News and the Tenants' Forum Calendar.

If you would like to join the Editorial Team and bring some fresh ideas please contact us on 0300 111 2211 or email [enquiries@choice-housing.org](mailto:enquiries@choice-housing.org)

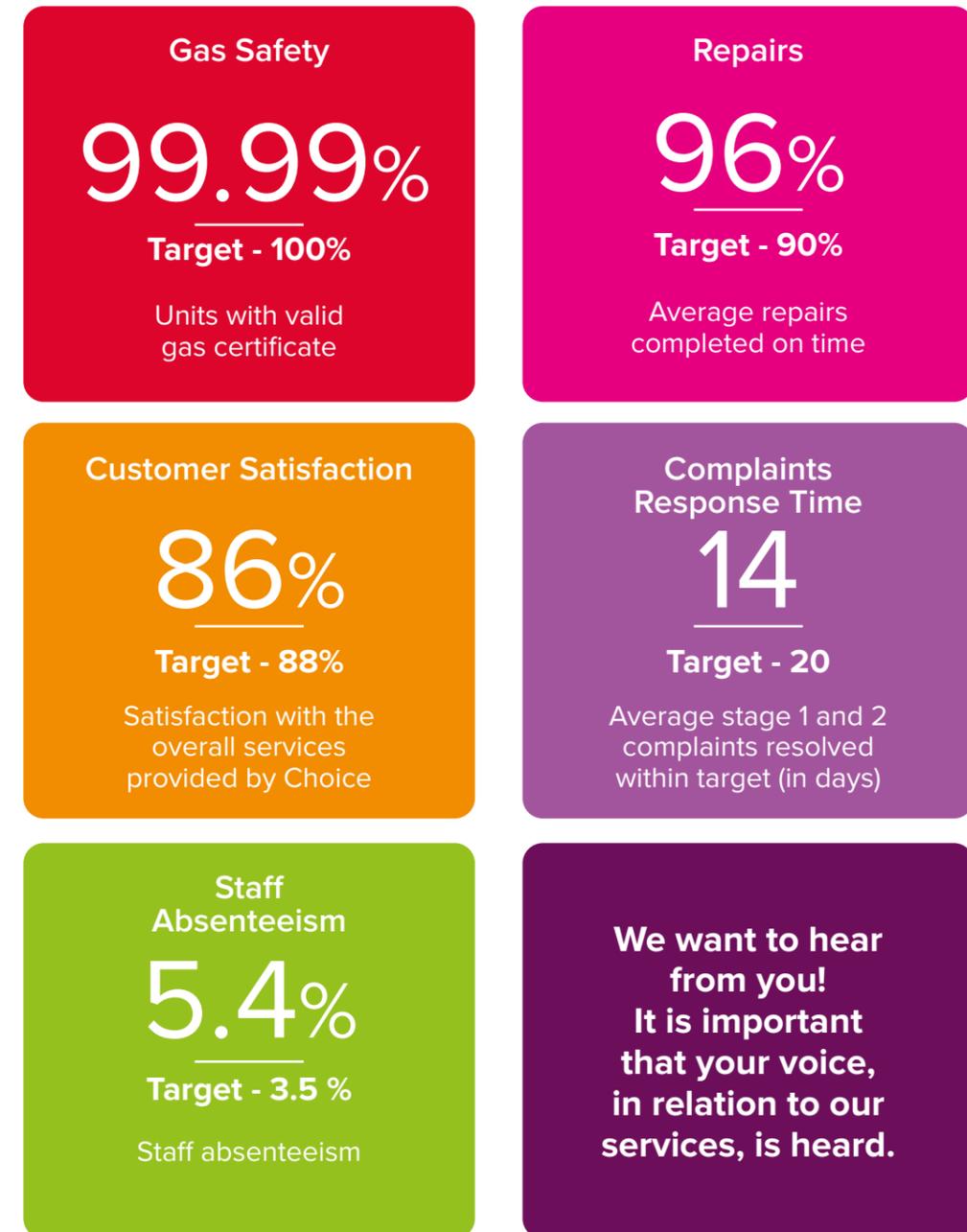


## How we're performing



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.



Performance figures are for the year ended March 2022

# Delivering New Homes In 2022

We are working on new housing developments across Northern Ireland to deliver much needed homes.

## Ballyoan, Derry~Londonderry

New plans lodged for over 250 homes in the Waterside

Plans have been submitted to Derry City and Strabane District Council to build 255 new homes in the Waterside area of the city. The new development will be at Ballyoan on lands adjacent to Clooney Road at Gransha Roundabout.

The proposals are being brought forward by a new partnership between Derry~Londonderry based property developer South Bank Square and Choice.

The exciting new plans include a mix of social and affordable homes ranging from one to four bedrooms, comprising a mix of terrace, detached and semi-detached houses as well as a number of bungalows and apartments aimed at those aged 55 and over. The proposals also include significant areas of open space, a woodland walk, allotments, children's play area, and a tenant hub. The entire project represents a very significant £120million of investment to the City Region, and will see the creation of approximately 850 new jobs over a period of 8-10 years.



## Minorca Drive, Carrickfergus - 146 New family homes

The new development will be located at Minorca Drive, Carrickfergus and will provide a total of 146 family homes with roads, footways, public open space, landscaping and a children's playground area.

The development will contain a mix of accommodation as supported by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive:

- 9 x 6 person 4 bedroom houses
- 3 x 6 person 4 bedroom house wheelchair accessible
- 39 x 5 person 3 bedroom houses
- 6 x 5 person 3 bedroom houses wheelchair accessible
- 81 x 3 person 2 bedroom houses.
- 6 x 3 person 2 bedroom houses wheelchair accessible
- 2 x 3 person 2 bedroom bungalows wheelchair accessible

The Developer for Minorca Drive will be McGreevy Construction Ltd building work started on site on 31st March 2021 with an estimated completion of Spring 2025.



## Out & About

Choice has more than 12,000 tenants, over 400 staff and works with 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 to find out more and don't forget to let us know about your events!

Email us: [enquiries@choice-housing.org](mailto:enquiries@choice-housing.org)



### LOWTHERSTOWN COURT SAYS FAREWELL TO ETHNA

Ethna Donaghy is retiring after 23 years working at Lowtherstown Court in Irvinestown. Ethna was a cleaner as well as a project worker at the sheltered living scheme, providing day care support to the residents. Ethna's contribution over the years has added to the cohesive community at Lowtherstown Court.

Tenants and staff were delighted to present Ethna with leaving gifts which included a Galway Crystal bowl and bouquet of flowers amongst other things. A valued member of Choice Housing, Ethna will be sorely missed.



### SCOUTS SPREADING FESTIVE CHEER

Our residents at Lowtherstown Court in Irvinestown were delighted to receive festive hamper from the local Scouts Club at Christmas.

Included in the hamper was a beautiful crafted reindeer – a festive plant, box of biscuits, sweets and a hand crafted wooden decoration to trim their trees.

All tenants appreciated the gifts and the wonderful generosity of the Irvinestown Scouts Club.



*We're festive ready!*

### SANTA PAWS

Well done to our Scheme Coordinator, Scott on getting Strand Court festive ready with a little help from Santa Paws!

## CHOICE STAFF RAISE £14,710 FOR TWO LOCAL CHARITIES

Our staff are committed, caring and creative, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the work of our Staff Fundraising Committee. In 2021 Choice staff chose to support Action Cancer and Alzheimer's Society.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity, campaigning for change, fund research to find a cure and supporting people living with dementia today.

Dementia is the UK's biggest killer and there is currently no cure. One person develops dementia every three minutes which is why the work of Alzheimer's Society is so vital.

The restrictions in place to limit the spread of Covid-19 did not limit the ingenuity of our fundraising committee. Throughout the year staff participated in the 100 Mile Challenge, Belfast City Marathon, Easter Hamper raffle dress down Friday, Christmas Jumper Day and many other events.

Our Fundraising Committee were delighted to hand over a staggering £14,710 raised by our staff and their amazing supporters to Action Cancer and Alzheimer's Society. Well done to everyone involved, in particular to our dedicated Fundraising Committee. We look forward to another successful year supporting local charities.

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happiest of birthday's to Mrs Sarah Smillie from Strand Court in Belfast who turned 91 years young recently! We hope you enjoyed all your birthday celebrations!





## CHOICE CHAMPIONS!

As part of Homelessness Awareness Week our colleagues competed in, and won a 5 a side tournament hosted by Street Soccer NI.

Street Soccer are a local charity using football to bring positive change to people's lives. They work with the homeless, refugees, people with addictions and more.

On the day, 13 teams competed for the Homelessness Awareness Week Cup, battling it out at Ormeau Park in Belfast. Hosford Homelessness services sponsored the food and Outside In provided gloves and hats for the players. It came down to penalties in the end, with Choice beating the Radius Housing Team to take home the winner's cup!

Choice are proud to partner with and sponsor Street Soccer NI. For more information about their services contact: Justin McMinn [justin@streetsoccerni](mailto:justin@streetsoccerni)



## IT'S A DOUBLE WIN FOR THE DOUGALL FAMILY

Congratulations to father and daughter, Stephen and Isla Dougall, who have won two Choice competitions recently!

Last year Stephen won the 2021 Best Kept Garden, the judges were impressed with his colourful and thoughtful space. Stephen's 9 year old daughter also impressed the judges with her beautiful entry to the colouring competition. Isla will be taking her family to the local Ark open farm! Congratulations again to the Dougall family and don't forget to keep an eye out for our competitions in the next edition of Choice News for your chance to win some fantastic prizes!

## TENANT REPAIR FEEDBACK WINNER

We are committed to delivering excellent customer service, and we use the information gathered from tenant repair feedback surveys to improve our services.

Mrs Bambridge from Bangor completed the short questionnaire and returned it to Choice in the prepaid envelope, and has won £200!



## HAZEL BELL RECEIVES OBE

Hazel Bell, a long-standing former Board member and Chair of Choice has received an OBE.

Hazel has been recognised for her service to the NI Housing Sector and wider community, having spent the last 41 years working to address the growing need for housing provision across Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on supporting the most vulnerable in society.



Throughout her career, Hazel has worked with a range of housing associations, always with the same focus and commitment to making people's lives better through the provision of affordable housing and using it as a tool for further investment in local communities.

In her role as Chair of Choice since 2016 until 2020, Hazel worked with the Senior Management Team to develop a strategic approach towards the ongoing housing situation in Northern Ireland, identifying the need to work with one voice and as a sector when lobbying for change for the better, specifically funding and policy reform.

Congratulating Hazel on her award, Michael McDonnell, Group Chief Executive of Choice said: "I wish to thank Hazel for her wonderful leadership at Choice. Since becoming Chair in 2016, Hazel has guided the Group through a period of considerable change and positive transformation. Choice staff, tenants and the wider community can attest to her vision, dedication and rock-solid social values. Congratulations on behalf of everyone at Choice on receiving this special honour."

Hazel also served on the Board of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing

Associations (NIFHA) where she has worked hard to deliver housing and support services for communities across the country. Ben Collins, Chief Executive of NIFHA added: "Hazel Bell joined the NIFHA Board in May 2018 and has been a very constructive member of the Board. As Chair of Choice Hazel played a leadership role for the sector and helped to ensure that we continue to provide much needed new homes, services for tenants and community investment."

## CLONARD AT CHRISTMAS

Clonard House in west Belfast looking exceptionally festive and welcoming at Christmas.





## LET'S GET QUIZICLE!

For over 7 years the regular quiz afternoon has been a big hit with everyone at Hill Court in Lurgan. Maureen Carville never misses a quiz, and everyone, including Maureen was over the moon when she took first prize with the highest score. Well done Maureen!

## FESTIVITIES AT LILLIE COURT

Crafts, clubs and craic are back on the menu at our sheltered living schemes. Tenants at Lille Court in Lisburn celebrated St Patrick's Day together, as well as, getting back to the art club, music evenings and more!



## TENANT WINS LITERARY COMPETITION

Mr Drain from St. Bronagh's Belfast, has won a short story competition as part of Féile an Phobail.

Féile an Phobail was established in 1988, its purpose to celebrate the west Belfast community, its creativity, its energy and its passion for the arts.

The story, Belfast 72, is a gritty atmospheric account of loss during the turbulent period of the early 70s. Kenneth Branagh will know where to come for his next screen play!

*Congratulations Mr Drain!*



## A FULL HOUSE AT THE SILVERGROVE

Tenants and staff are delighted to be together again enjoying communal events at The Silvergrove in Belfast and they aren't wasting any time! All the events are proving popular, especially the bingo!



## CELEBRATING A CENTENARIAN AT ST. ELIZABETH'S

Mary Orr at St. Elizabeth's Court, Dundonald, marked her 100th birthday in February. Born when George V was on the throne, Mary has enjoyed a long life so far!

Mary worked for BT and after retiring she indulged her creative passion and attended art courses at Queens University Belfast, now in her spare time she enjoys going out for lunch with her friends. Mary is well loved at the sheltered living scheme, not only has she lived there for over 25 years but she is also the oldest resident. She was joined by family, friends and the Lord Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh, at the scheme to celebrate her special birthday.



## ROYAL TAMAR COURT

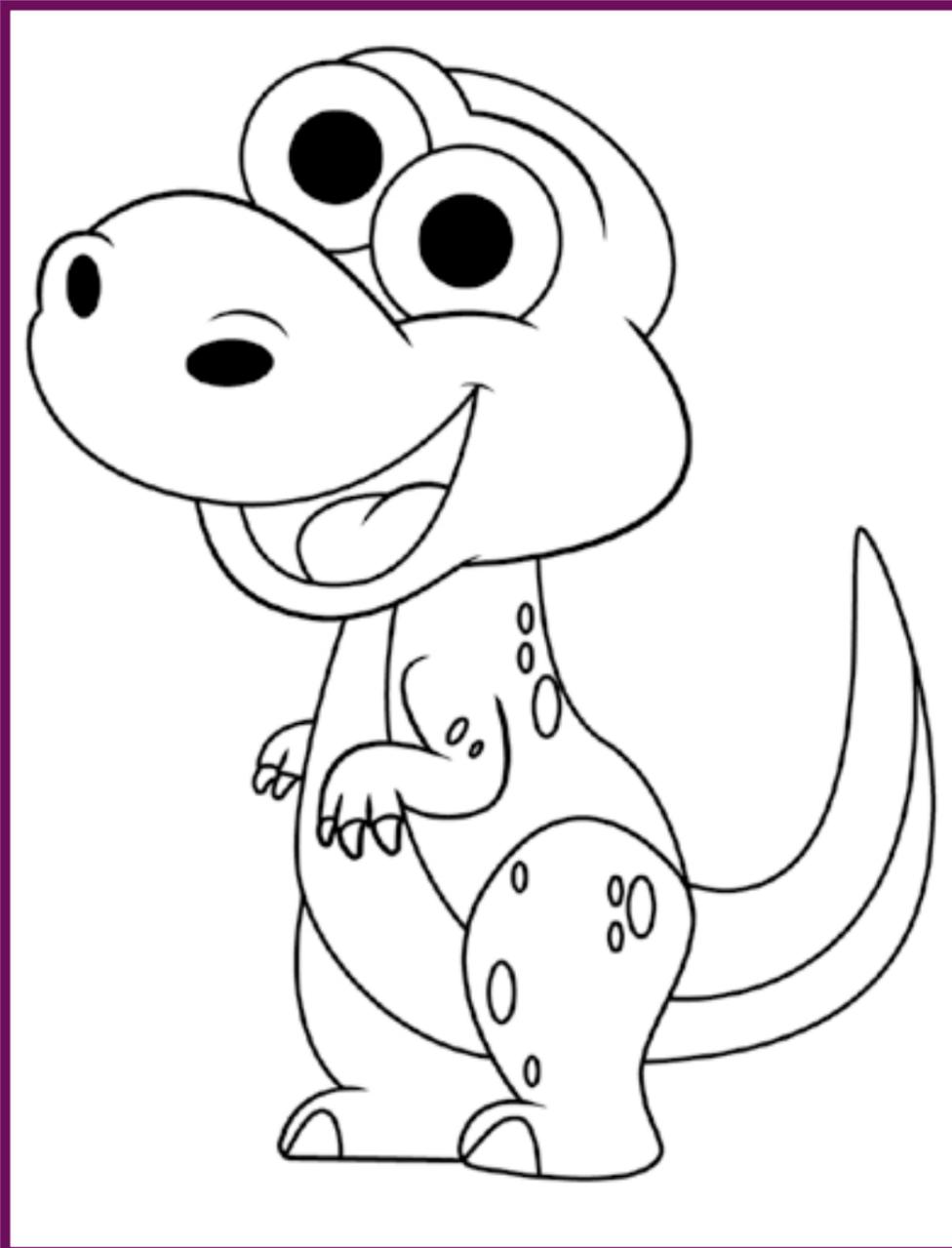
The residents of Tamar Court, Belfast, were delighted to be invited to welcome the HRH Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall to east Belfast on their recent trip to the province.

On a beautiful sunny spring day, the royal couple visited CS Lewis Square where they spent time talking to local residents and enjoying the festivities that were laid on for the special occasion.



# Children's Colouring Competition

Open to children 16 years and under



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 29th July 2022.**

*(Please note that the parent or guardian must be a tenant of Choice Housing Ireland).  
Ts & Cs apply.*

**Win a family pass to a local Open Farm!**

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

Name .....	Age .....
Address .....	
Daytime Tel. ....	Evening Tel. ....

## 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:



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



**Going Online** – You can pay your rent online at [www.choice-housing.org](http://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.



**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 is automatically paid directly to your rent account. However, if this does not cover the full amount of your rent you need to pay the difference.



Our Financial Inclusion Team are here for you. Give us a call and see how we can help.

# 0300 111 2211

It's much easier for us to help if you get in touch straight away.

# Properties to Let - Greenisland House

We currently have 1 and 2 bed supported living apartments available for older people who require help and support to live independently.

Greenisland House consists of 32 apartments in a specially designed tailored building. Support on the site is provided by our partner Triangle House.

We have immediately available accommodation at Greenisland House, contact us if you would like to apply.

✉ [enquiries@choice-housing.org](mailto:enquiries@choice-housing.org)

📞 0300 111 2211

TRIANGLE



## 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**

**choice**   
Together we enrich lives

**Choice**  
Leslie Morrell House  
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Belfast  
BT1 4DN

**T:** 0300 111 2211  
**E:** [enquiries@choice-housing.org](mailto:enquiries@choice-housing.org)

[choice-housing.org](http://choice-housing.org)