



Welcome to the fourth edition of our Community News - a newsletter produced by tenants, for tenants, co-ordinated and compiled by the Editorial Panel and members of Habinteg's Homes & Communities Team.

We hope you enjoy all the latest articles, fun activities, upcoming events and items of interest.

Competition winners

Lucky prize winners from last edition's competitions

Lisa, & family, receives her Colouring Prize from Lynne & Tom (Tenant Editorial Panel & Community Involvement Officer)



Jake, winner of the word search competition



Caiden, winner of the colouring competition. (collected by Aunty Sabrina)



Congratulations all

Would you like to join our Editorial Panel?

We are on the lookout for willing tenant volunteers. Gain experience of newsletter production and share news with tenants across NI. Email: newsletter@habinteg-ulster.co.uk

RENT & MONEY

It can be difficult juggling demands on your finances, but it's vital you continue to pay your rent on time and contact Habinteg if you're struggling.

▶ Rent is a legally required payment – as agreed in the Tenancy Agreement - and is used to pay for vital housing services, to fund repairs to properties and planned investment. Without rent, Habinteg might not be able to provide the services which all tenants deserve.

▶ There are many ways to pay your rent, including Direct Debit, with a debit card online or via the AllPay Payment App, over the phone and at designated outlets. For full details, check the direct link from the website homepage:

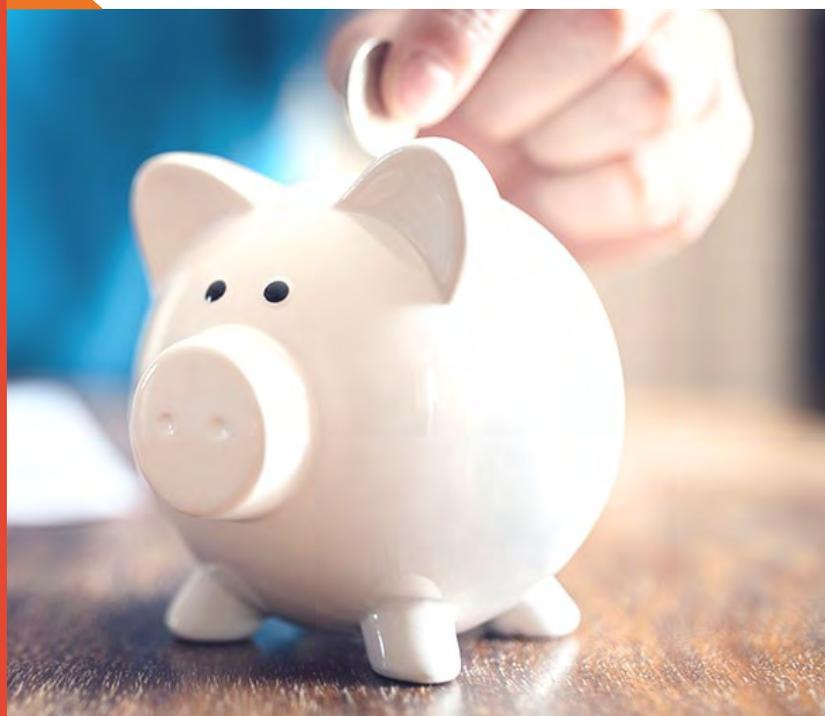
habinteg-ulster.co.uk or call during office hours on **028 9042 7211**

GET IN TOUCH, NOT IN DEBT

If you're struggling with rent payments, get in touch. The problem won't go away if you simply ignore it.

Habinteg offers an advice service to tenants, providing help with a range of issues including rent payments, debt, arrears and benefits; Universal Credit, Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIPs).

You can confidentially discuss your **circumstances and identify the issues you're** facing. Get the help you need to calculate your incomings and your outgoings - including your rent, and fuel bills - and help set up an affordable payment plan.



CLOSURE OF THE HOUSE SALES SCHEME

A reminder to all tenants that the Statutory House Sales Scheme will close to new applications later this year.

At midnight on 27 August 2022 the statutory House Sales Scheme* in Northern Ireland will close - permanently and completely - for tenants of NI Housing Associations. Where a valid application is received prior to midnight on 27 August 2022 the application will be processed in the normal manner.

Further information is available in the news section of Habinteg's website or at NIDirect.gov.uk



BRICKS & MORTAR

Maintenance and repairs is one of the most important issues for tenants and ensuring well maintained properties is a shared responsibility.

MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

Last year, Habinteg carried out nearly 9000 repairs at properties across Northern Ireland. The vast majority of these (94%) were completed within their target time.

- ▶ Emergency - 24 hours
- ▶ Urgent - 4 working days
- ▶ Routine - 20 working days

Repairs can be reported in person, by phone, email and via Repair Report online.



TENANT RESPONSIBILITY REPAIRS

Some repairs are known as Tenant Responsibility (TR)

It is important that you are aware of this list of Tenant Responsibility repairs - you need to carry out these repairs yourself. Check the Maintenance / Repair Liability section of Habinteg's website or your Tenant Handbook and if in doubt, ask your Housing Officer. **NB** If work is carried out by a contractor and it proves to be a TR, you may be liable to pay back the costs.

WHY TENANCY FRAUD MATTERS

Since Habinteg first commenced tenancy fraud actions, 60 properties have been recovered and then made available to people in housing need. 7 such recoveries took place in the last financial year, including the case example below:

Habinteg were recently advised, in the past year, of a suspected empty property that was held in someone's name. Investigations were able to confirm the tenant was no longer living there. Action was then taken to take possession of the property and it was subsequently let to a family who were homeless and living in temporary accommodation.

If Habinteg had been made aware of the tenant leaving the property, the family who moved in would have had a home much sooner. They were the real victims of the fraud.

If you suspect someone of being a housing cheat, please let Habinteg know immediately. Reports can be made by email: tenancyfraud@habinteg-ulster.co.uk or even anonymously over the phone. All information provided is taken seriously and treated in confidence.

