

GROVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

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NEWSLETTER JUNE 2014

2014 TENANT SURVEY

Along with this Newsletter we have a survey form that we would like you to fill in and return to Grove.

It has been nearly 3 years since we last carried out a survey and we would like to find out again what you think about the service Grove provides. Some of the questions are also being asked by other housing associations so we will be able to compare our performance with theirs and see better how we are doing.

To encourage you to take time to fill in and return the survey form, we are offering a prize draw with a 1st prize of £50 in Asda vouchers and 2 further prizes of £25.

OFFICE HOURS

Doors are open Monday to Thursday from 9.30 to 1.00 and 1.45 to 4.30. On Fridays doors are open from 9.30 to 1.00.

Phones will be answered 9.00 to 1.00 and 1.45 to 5.00 (4.30 on Fridays). You can leave a message on the answering phone outside these hours.

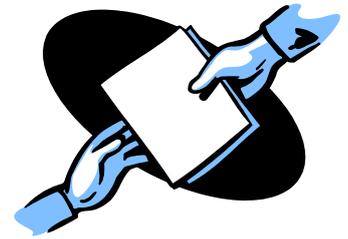
IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Grove out of hours repairs (Fold Telecare): 0800 731 3081

Emergency gas services	0800 002 001
Electricity supply	0845 7643 643
Police Service of N Ireland – emergency :	999
Police Service of N Ireland – non-emergency:	0845 600 8000
Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Water Service – emergency/flooding	0845 744 0088
Roads Service – flooding incident line	0300 2000 100
Citizen's Advice NI	028 9064 1120
Housing Rights Service	028 9024 5460
Women's Aid Helpline	0800 917 1414
City Council Noise Hotline	028 9037 3006
Reporting dog fouling	028 9027 0431

LOUGHVIEW AWARD

Our development at the corner of Skegoneill Ave won the Regeneration Award at the recent Royal Society of Ulster Architects awards.



WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

The Assembly is still debating the introduction of welfare reforms in N Ireland, so we are unsure what will happen.

The bedroom tax proposal reduces Housing Benefit if a tenant of working age is presumed not to need as many bedrooms as their home has. The reduction would be 14% of rent for one bedroom 'too many' and 25% for two 'extra' bedrooms.

RENT PAYMENTS

If you are having difficulty paying your rent or keeping to an agreement to pay off arrears, please contact the office immediately so we can work something out together before matters get worse.

Recently we have had to make use of the courts for arrears and evictions and we would much prefer not to.

If you would like this Newsletter in a different format such as larger print, please let us know.

FIRE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

While Grove tenants have a good fire safety record, it still makes sense to review your fire safety measures.

- If there's a fire, **GET OUT, STAY OUT & CALL 999.**
- Closing doors really helps contain fire and smoke, making it easier to get out and limiting damage to your home.
- Smoke & heat alarms – test them each week. They run on mains electricity but have a battery in case the power fails.
 - Vacuum inside them twice a year.
 - If they aren't working or are beeping, tell Grove. (If you can't stand the beeping, remember you have to push in the small lug before you can turn them and take them off the ceiling fitting to access the battery compartment.)
- Kitchen safety – keep electrical leads & items that can catch fire easily such as tea towels & oven gloves away from the cooker & toaster.
 - Keep appliances clean. A build-up of crumbs, fat and grease can easily catch fire.
 - Be very careful with chip pans. Don't fill them more than a third full of oil. If the oil starts to smoke, turn off the heat and let it cool.
 - If a pan catches fire, turn off the heat if you can, get out and call 999.
- Electrics – check for signs of loose wiring and faulty plugs or sockets such as scorch marks or flickering. Tell Grove.
 - Replace any worn or taped up cables or leads.
 - If you use an adaptor or gang extension lead, keep the total output running off that wall socket to 13amps.
 - Turn off switches when appliances are not in use.
 - Make sure that portable heaters will not fall over easily and that they are not near anything that can catch fire.
- Cigarettes – 50% of accidental fire deaths in N Ireland are caused by careless disposal of smoking material.
 - If you are likely to fall asleep, be very careful.
 - Don't smoke in bed.
 - Use proper ashtrays & make sure that when you put out a cigarette, it is fully out.
 - Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Candles – don't leave them unattended.
 - Put them out completely at night.
 - Candles & tea lights can melt plastic surfaces so always put them on a heat resistant surface.
 - Keep them well away from anything that can catch fire.
- Be prepared: make sure all your family know what to do in a fire and how to escape safely. Plan escape routes and keep exits clear. Keep keys handy and know which upstairs windows are escape windows.
- If a fire starts: if there is smoke, keep low where the air is clearer. Get everyone out as quickly as possible.
- If your clothes catch fire: lie down & roll around (Stop! Drop! Roll!) or smother flames with heavy material.
- If escape routes are blocked: if on the ground or first floor, throw out bedding to cushion a fall & lower yourself out a window. If trapped, block off smoke and phone for help.



PLANNED MAINTENANCE

We have completed schemes to upgrade loft insulation and replace defective kitchen doors. Unfortunately there are still some things to sort out in relation to last year's painting contact.

This year we have fairly small schemes - cleaning all gutters, doing periodic electrical inspections to some homes and checking for asbestos in older homes.

REMINDERS

Contents insurance

Grove insures the building structure, but not what you own. There are different levels of contents insurance, with quite low premiums for limited amounts of cover. We recommend that you take out contents insurance cover if you do not already have it.

Anti-social behaviour

If you are having problems with anti-social behaviour from other tenants of Grove, tell us about them. To take any action we need to build up a case and very occasional reports from only 1 or 2 people is not enough. Reporting incidents to the PSNI is helpful too.

If noise is the problem, you can also contact the Noise Control section at the City Hall from 8pm to 4am each night. Their phone number is 9037 3006.