

# Tenants' Newsletter

WINTER 2022



**Grove Community**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



## Contents

New Build Development Plans .....	2
The 3 Ps .....	3
Housing Awards .....	4
Community Clean-up .....	5
Good Relations Event .....	6
Bulb Planting Event .....	7
Festive Fun .....	8
Santa Claus is coming to town .....	9
Christmas Dinner .....	10
Tenant Voice Group .....	11
2023 Upcoming Events/Energy Bills Support ...	13
Cost of Living .....	14
Skegoneill Community Foodbank/Maintenance	15
Bulky Waste/Living Conditions .....	16
Energy Efficient Behaviour Savings .....	18
Domestic Abuse/Bogus Callers/Hate Crime .	20/21
Tenancy Fraud/Complaints/Adaptations/ Help Your Neighbour .....	22
Home Security/Belfast Warm & Well Project .....	23
Winter Freeze Tips .....	24
Kids Winter Art Competition .....	25
Tenant Satisfaction Surveys 2021-22 .....	26
Contact Details/Useful Numbers .....	28

The Association is delighted to have invested in a new Compliance & Assets Officer, Paul Pollock and warmly welcomes him to the Housing & Property team.



Paul brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Association. He has 40 years' experience with the NI Housing Executive and construction sector in both response and planned maintenance. He also is a qualified Chartered Building Surveyor (MRICS) and commenced his early career as a carpenter. He looks forward to starting work on our planned maintenance programmes and values work completed to the highest standard and to the happy satisfaction of tenants.

In his spare time Paul is a qualified IFA football referee and referees in the Belfast & District League and occasionally in the South Belfast Youth League. The rest of his spare time he likes to spend with his 2 young grandchildren.

## Full planning permission sought for the delivery of 30 new homes to the grove area

The Association is delighted to have agreed the final plans and worked through required revisions during the pre-planning stages. We have submitted our application for full planning permission approval. This can take several months to be assessed along with updates on NI Water solutions but with support from our elected representatives we hope we can achieve a positive outcome soon to deliver much needed homes. We will then go out to tender for the construction phase to get on site as soon as practical. We look forward to the positive regeneration the new homes will bring to the area.

15NO 3-PERSON, 2-BEDROOM GENERAL NEED HOUSES

7NO 5-PERSON 3-BEDROOM GENERAL NEED HOUSES

5NO 3-PERSON 2-BEDROOM WHEELCHAIR BUNGALOWS

1NO 6-PERSON 4-BEDROOM WHEELCHAIR BUNGALOW

2NO 2-PERSON 1-BEDROOM APARTMENTS



If it's not  
**PEE, POO**  
or **PAPER**  
it will block  
the pipes



**93%** of the material causing  
sewer blockages is  
made up of wipes.

This includes a high proportion of baby wipes  
- which are not designed to be flushed.

## DON'T FLUSH



**WIPES**



**SANITARY ITEMS**  
(PADS & TAMPONS)



**COTTON**  
**BUDS**



Find out more at  
**niwater.com**

northern ireland  
**water**



Delivering what matters



Headline sponsor:



## EXCELLENCE IN HOUSING INNOVATION

We have been shortlisted for All Ireland Housing Awards 2023 “More than Bricks and Mortar” category for our work in the community with residents.

We have invested heavily in digital transformation within the management of our assets, ensuring a single source of truth for compliance. We can gain real-time transparency, accountability and insight into all key areas of compliance. X Tag (formerly ‘Gas Tag’) enables us to have real-time visibility on our gas compliance processes, which means our residents.

We are delighted to be the first Housing Association in Northern Ireland to implement the use of the visual assistance software Host.com. Use of these robust compliance management systems has resulted in GCHA being announced winners of the CIH, Excellence in Housing Innovation Category at an award event hosted in May 2022.

We will continue to promote best practice in tenant safety.



**Grove Community**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



# Community Clean-up ☺

The scheduled community clean up event took place **20th September 2022**. This event was well attended by the local community who made their way to the community garden to offer assistance in any way they could. It was a fantastic fun afternoon for both tenants, local children, boys from Grove United Football and GCHA staff to get together and make a difference in the area. GCHA would like to say a BIG thank you for all your help.



We even found some spuds growing...





# Good Relations Event



Good Relations Week 2022 took place from Tuesday 20th to Monday 26th September 2022.

The theme for this year's celebration is

## 'CHANGE STARTS WITH US'



This year, Grove Community Housing Association partnered with Newington Housing Association to jointly run two events which seen tenants giving up a few hours of their time to enjoy a gardening session at Camberwell Court, facilitated by Grow Community Garden.

The following night tenants came together to test their general knowledge in a quiz and pizza event. Grove Community Housing Association would like to thank everyone who attended the events, and we would also like to thank Newington Housing Association and Grow Community Garden for all their help in delivering the events.





# Bulb Planting Event

Local residents and children came together on the 4th November 2022 to help prepare the planters and pots in the Community Garden with a variety of bulbs for both spring/summer.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for some outdoor working and a great neighbour bonding exercise. It was amazing to see the Community Garden back in use and residents taking ownership of this unique space.

GCHA would be keen to meet with any gardening enthusiasts willing to offer their time to become volunteers to help maintain the Community Garden, please contact a member of the Housing Team for further details.

Similar events to be scheduled in the New Year.







# Festive Fun

Tenants and staff came together on a cold afternoon in December to decorate the new community Christmas tree. Some of our tenants provided their own angel wings decorations in memory of loved ones who had recently passed and shared stories of old and new. This added a more personal involvement from tenants in remembering our past tenants at Christmas time. Tea & coffee were provided to warm up the hands after all the decorating. Same time again next year?







# Santa Claus is coming to town

There was a magnificent turnout for the Grove's Santa Sleigh event. Many people in the community and their children attended and enjoyed having their picture taken with Santa and his elves. Santa and his elves started their journey at the office, made their way through the streets of the Grove area and finished at the community garden. All the children received treats from Santa. Lots of fun was had by all – especially Santa as you can see by our pictures.





# Christmas Dinner

We hosted a Christmas Dinner and invited all of our older tenants to join us. As you can see the tenants (and staff) enjoyed a delicious meal at the Orchardville Café in the Grove Wellbeing Centre with some nice chocolate Santa treats given out as well - everyone definitely had full stomachs after. Special thanks to Reverend Sam Best for his wonderful singing and all the staff at Orchardville Café for an outstanding service.





# Why should I join the Tenant Voice Group?

As a tenant of Grove Community Housing Association, your knowledge of tenancy matters is integral to shaping the services we deliver.

# What is the Tenant Voice Group?

The Tenant Voice Group members are volunteers who give up some of their free time to help improve the services and information tenants receive from Grove. Members also meet to have their say on a range of topics. They discuss policy changes, home improvement specifications, events held for tenants and lots more.

# What's in it for me?

A chance to have your say and for your voice to be heard. To bring your expertise as a tenant. To attend training events, develop existing skills and learn new skills. This group will introduce you to other tenants. You will learn more about Grove and have your chance to respond to proposed changes.

# What's in it for Grove?

Feedback from the Tenant Voice Group members gives us a well-rounded view of the business and ensures we are doing right by you.



# How to apply

If you would like to join the Tenant Voice Group or find out how else you can get involved at Grove, please email Paul (Senior Housing Officer) [housing@groveha.org.uk](mailto:housing@groveha.org.uk) or contact him by phone **028 9077 3330**.





## Get in touch!

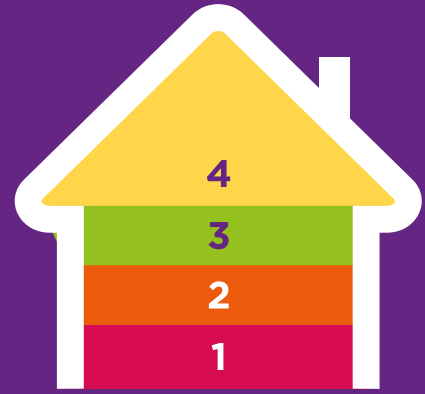
Do you have an idea you'd like to share, or a story to tell, or comments about our services?

Please get in touch with an email to:  
**housing@groveha.org.uk**

If you have any complaints or problems they should still be addressed directly to our offices.

**T: 028 9077 3330**

(Please note we are unable to respond to anonymous emails)



## Level of Participation choice for tenants

### LEVEL 1: Information and Communication

You receive regular information, participate in surveys, provide feedback and keep us up to date on how to communicate with you.

### LEVEL 2: Group Structure

You help set up and participate in the local tenants groups. You also participate in the organisation and planning of social activities in the community.

### LEVEL 3: Formal Based Tenant Group

You participate in a broader Tenant's Forum which looks at the work of the Association, scrutinises our activities and policies and engages in our business for the benefit of all tenants.

### LEVEL 4: Governance Structure

You agree to serve on the Board of Grove Community Housing Association having influence in its strategic direction and how it is governed.





# 2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

Grove have a number of events scheduled over the next couple of months, it would be brilliant if you could join us. If you are interested in any of the events, please contact our office and talk to a member of staff.

**16TH FEBRUARY 2023**

**MID MORNING BREAKFAST**

**29TH MARCH 2023**

**TENANT VOICE MEETING**

**13TH MARCH 2023**

**EASTER COMPETITION**

**14TH MARCH 2023**

**COFFEE & ADVICE MORNING**

**5TH APRIL 2023**

**EASTER EVENT**



## Energy Bills Support Scheme

Households in Northern Ireland are to receive a single non-repayable payment totalling £600 to help with their energy bills, regardless of how they heat their home.

### What the payment includes-

The payment is made up of the Energy Bills Support Scheme (£400) and the Alternative Fuel Payment (£200) and will be provided by the UK government through electricity suppliers.

The payment is automatic. If you get a message asking for your bank details, this could be a scam.

### Customers who pay by Direct Debit

Starting from 16th January, Direct Debit customers will:

- Receive the payment directly to their bank account.
- If suppliers have been unable to complete a direct payment for a Direct Debit customer into their bank account, then that customer will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder.

### Customers who pay by standard credit (bill pay)

- Starting from 16th January Credit Customers who pay for their electricity by standard credit (bill pay) will receive a voucher from the Post Office in the name of the electricity account holder. Customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will receive their vouchers first.

### Customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter

- Starting from 16th January customers who pay for their electricity via a keypad meter will receive a voucher in the mail from the Post Office addressed to the 'Occupier'. Customers who are on suppliers' Customer Care Registers will receive their vouchers first.

Please see link for additional information - [£600 Energy Bills Support Scheme information | Advice NI](#)





As we fast approach the winter months, many homes in the community are going to struggle to make ends meet this winter due to the rising energy bills and ever-increasing cost of living. Households are having to make difficult decisions and cuts to their spendings. If you are already struggling and worried about how you are going to meet your basic needs, please contact GCHA's Senior Housing Officer Paul for further advice. Alternatively, more help and advice can be found at: [www.adviceni.net/cost-of-living](http://www.adviceni.net/cost-of-living) or [www.consumercouncil.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/costofliving)

GCHA are currently offering a Warm Hub based in the office, Tuesday's – Thursday's from 9.30am to 4.30pm for all residents and members of the community. Why not pop by for a cup of tea or coffee (hot chocolate for the kids) and enjoy the warmth and comfort of our newly opened office.

There is some great work underway locally by community organisations offering various drop-in sessions and help with essentials throughout the winter months. Keep your eyes peeled to GCHA Facebook page for more details.

GCHA are delighted to have Marie Fennell from North Belfast Advice Partnership based at the office. Marie has a vast knowledge of the welfare benefit system and has been providing this service since 2011. The main focus of Marie's role is to assist service users with benefit entitlement and information. Marie also aids with completing application forms.

Marie's highlights of her job are being able to empower people to apply and manage their benefits with her advice and support. Marie takes great delight when people receive good outcomes especially when benefits have been identified which in turn makes their life's a lot easier.

Should you wish to arrange an appointment with Marie, she is available for a drop-in Service Tuesday 9.30am – 12.30pm and from 9.30am Wednesday & Thursday (appointments necessary).

Please contact the office for further information.



Telephone: 028 9035 1020  
Email: [frontdesk@vinecentre.org](mailto:frontdesk@vinecentre.org)  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/nbapadvice/>



# Skegoneill Community Foodbank

Skegoneill Community Foodbank is run by local volunteers and aims to offer help to all residents in the local area, no referral is necessary. The Foodbank offers assistance, providing food parcels and other essentials to those in need. Skegoneill Community Foodbank also are able to provide clothing for homeless or other families or individuals struggling at any time. If anyone would like to visit the unique boutique or wish to have a browse please contact a member of staff at the foodbank or GCHA for further details.



Skegoneill Community Food relies on donations and any contributions would be greatly accepted as all funds raised go towards the running of the food bank.

This essential service caters for all those in need in the strictest of confidence in a friendly non-judgemental manner. For more information follow on their Facebook page or speak to a member of staff at GCHA.

## Maintenance

### Immediate Call Out

This category of repair will be attended by the contractor within 4 hours.

These are faults which can affect the health and safety of the tenant, the general public or which could present an immediate risk to the fabric of the building. Immediate Call Out.

**Examples:** escape of gas or fumes and similar types of faults as the emergency category

### Emergency Repairs

The fault will be attended to and made safe within 24 hours.

These are faults which can affect the tenant or public who could be endangered or there is a risk of serious damage to the property.

**Examples:** serious electrical faults.

- sewage overflow into the dwelling
- securing the dwelling from vandalism or forced entry
- water penetration via the roof
- and burst water pipes, tanks and service pipes in your home

### Urgent Repairs

The fault will be attended to within 4 working days.

**Examples:** partial loss of electrical power

- a minor leak
- insecure external window
- communal door lock

### Routine Repairs

Faults in this category will be attended to within 4 weeks.

**Examples:** broken roof tiles, slates and lead flashing.

- clearing out rainwater goods
- easing /refitting doors or window sashes
- repairs to external render or plaster work
- repairs to solid or suspended floors or floor tiles
- repairs to internal joinery
- chimney stacks
- pots caps and cowl
- kitchen units and fittings

### Emergency Out of Hours Repairs

In the event of an emergency outside of normal office working hours, tenants are requested to call Radius Connect 24's Out of Hours Service.

## Freephone 0800 731 3081

This must only be used in real emergencies, for example, a burst pipe or serious electrical fault.

An emergency repair of this nature may in some cases only make safe the fault, in which case the full repair will be carried out during normal working hours.

### Tumble Dryer

Do you have a similar tumble dryer? If you do and would like the machine vented outside, please contact a member of the maintenance team and arrangements will be made free of charge.





# Bulky Waste

This year GCHA has instructed contractors on several occasions to attend various areas to remove disregarded rubbish and household items, these removals are a costly expense to the Association. As a tenant you are responsible for your own waste management at your home. If you are finding it difficult to bring your bins in and out of your home, please contact a member of staff who could contact Belfast City Council on your behalf to arrange for an assisted lift.

If you have a large item, you no longer want, such as a sofa, cooker, bed or mattress. You can request a free bulky collection from Belfast City Council

To arrange a collection, just call **028 9027 0230**. You will be asked for your name, address and asked to explain what items you are requiring to be lifted. You will be given a collection date and confirmation of where the item should be left for collection (usually from the place your bin is collected from).



To see a full list of items which can be lifted by Belfast City Council please refer to **[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bulkywaste](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bulkywaste)**

Alternatively, please contact a member of staff at GCHA who could assist you in making the call.



# LIVING CONDITIONS

**Many things can affect the comfort in your home. One common issue that frequently arises is mould and mildew. Condensation is what occurs when moist air comes into contact with a cold surface, for example you will note this when your windows steam up. This surface can become moist and encourage mould growth. We create moist air in our homes all the time, by cooking, showering and drying clothes indoors.**

If mould grows in your home, it can give off an unpleasant smell and be unsightly but more worrying is that it could actually cause you to become ill, often worsening any conditions like asthma. It can affect the more vulnerable like children and older people.



## WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE CONDENSATION AND MOIST AIR?

To avoid these health risks and prevent this moist air turning into condensation, try and keep your home as warm as possible (between 18-21 degrees on your thermostat). Make sure you air all rooms well, even in winter months.

When cooking ensure that you cover your pans with a lid to reduce moisture. Also ensure that you have opened a window, or you are using an extractor fan if you have one fitted. Close the kitchen door.



When taking a shower or a bath ensure that you turn on an extractor fan or open a window to get rid of the steam that is created. Afterwards, leave the extractor running or window open for at least 15 minutes.



If you have a tumble dryer in your property, ensure that it is vented correctly. Contact our maintenance team who can call and assess if this can be fitted to an external wall and arrange for this work to be carried out.

### **NEVER BLOCK OR COVER AN EXTRACTOR FAN OR VENT OR KEEP A TUMBLE DRYER VENT INSIDE.**

Do not stuff your cupboards and wardrobes so full that the air cannot circulate inside.

Try to dry clothes outdoors to prevent excess moisture indoors. If you need a clothes line fitted contact our maintenance team. If you have to dry clothes inside, we advise that you open your doors or windows in these rooms if not using a vented or condenser tumble dryer.



### **10 pints of moisture is released into the air just from drying a batch of washing!**

Make sure that your furniture is at least 5 cm away from the surrounding walls so that air can move around the property. Leaving a gap enables the air to move freely. If you don't, mould can form

at the bottom of the walls, not good in a bedroom!

Watch out for the physical signs of mould. These range from a build-up of moisture on windows or to peeling wallpaper and black spots/patches on walls.

## **HOW TO TREAT MOULD AND MILDEW**

If you have areas of mould or mildew for example in your shower or behind furniture or window cills, the cheapest and most effective treatment is a diluted solution of household bleach and water. Or you can use a mould-removing spray.

If the mould is extensive we encourage you to contact our Maintenance staff for a home visit and advice and consideration of the need for professional treatment.



## **FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

Damp can also occur in properties, several factors can contribute to this, particularly older properties. For example water coming in from a missing or damaged roof tile, a damp proof course that has broken down etc., or an old chimney stack. If you note anything like this please contact our Maintenance staff and request a home visit for further advice and treatment to determine the cause and best course of action.

We are here to support you and provide friendly advice and to work with you to ensure your home is a comfortable and healthy a place to live as much as possible.

**If you are currently struggling financially to heat your home adequately please in the first instance contact Paul Stuart for confidential advice for potential further referral for financial assistance. We work with many agencies who provide extra advice and assistance.**





# Energy efficient behaviour savings

## Washing and drying

- Setting your washing machine to wash at 30 degrees rather than higher temperatures will save around £10 a year on energy bills and around 12kg of carbon dioxide.
- Setting your washing machine to wash at 30 degrees uses around 57% less electricity than washing at higher temperatures.
- You can save on average £40 a year on your electricity bill, and 50kg carbon dioxide in emissions, by line drying clothes instead of using a tumble dryer during the summer.
- Only filling the kettle up with as much water as you need could save around £8 in energy bills a year.

## Thermostat

Your room thermostat switches your heating system on and off according to the set temperature. A common misconception is that turning your thermostat up will heat up your home quicker; but all that will do is heat your home to a higher temperature at the same rate. Insulation increases the speed your home heats up as less heat is being lost through the building.

- Turning your central heating thermostat down by 1 degree could save you £80 and 300kg of carbon dioxide every year.

## Switching it off

Avoiding standby and turning appliances off when you're not using them could save £40 and up to 45kg of carbon dioxide ever year .

- Turning off your lights when you don't need them could save you around £14 on your annual energy bills, and avoid 16kg of carbon dioxide emissions a year.

## Home appliances Cold appliances

- The energy label for cold appliances has rescaled; that means some of the appliances have had their energy ratings changed. Make sure you keep a look out for the new label that has the UK flag and the word 'Energy' at the top.
- Check the new energy ratings when looking for a new cold appliance. The new labels go from A to G with A being the most energy efficient; this means they will use less electricity, they will be more sustainable and cost you less to run.
- When buying a new freezer, choosing a E-rated freezer over a G-rated model will save you around £25 in energy bills and 25kg carbon dioxide a year.
- When buying a new fridge, choosing a D-rated fridge over a G-rated model will save you around £10 in energy bills and 11kg carbon dioxide a year.
- When buying a new fridge freezer, choosing a D-rated fridge freezer over a G-rated model will save you around £30 in energy bills and 30kg carbon dioxide a year.

## Wet appliances

- The energy label for most wet appliances has rescaled; that means some of the appliances have had their energy ratings changed. Make sure you keep a look out for the new label that has the UK flag and the word 'Energy' at the top. This new energy label applies to dishwashers and washing machines. Tumble driers are on a A+++ -G scale, but are due to be rescaled in late 2021.
- Check the new energy ratings when looking for a new wet appliance. The new labels go from A to G with A being the most energy efficient; this means they will use less electricity, costing you less to run. Tumble drier labels go from A+++ to D, with A+++ being the most energy efficient.
- When buying a new washing machine, choosing an A-rated washing machine over a D-rated one could save you around £8 and 9kg carbon dioxide a year.
- Choosing a D-rated dishwasher over a G-rated one could save you around £14 and 16kg carbon dioxide a year.
- Choosing an A+++ non-vented tumble dryer over a A-rated one could save you around £35 and 40kg carbon dioxide a year.



## Home computing Computers

- Choosing a laptop over a desktop and reducing standby could save up to £25 and 25kg of carbon dioxide every year.

### Tablets

- When turned on, tablets use on average 68% less power than laptops.

## Lighting

- In 2019, 47% of light bulbs in homes were energy saving bulbs (combination of compact fluorescent lamps and LEDs), 51% were halogens and 3% were traditional incandescent light bulbs.
- LEDs are the most energy efficient bulbs you can buy, followed by compact fluorescent lamps. Whilst halogen bulbs can still be bought in the UK, they have much lower efficiencies than their LED or other energy saving equivalents.

## LEDs

- By replacing all the remaining standard incandescent and halogen bulbs in your home with energy saving LEDs, the average household could save around £35 a year from your energy bills, and 40kg of carbon dioxide every year.

## Electronics TV

- Choosing an F-rated 65"TV over a G-rated 65"TV could save you almost £25 and 30kg carbon dioxide a year.

In general, smaller TVs use less energy. Choosing a 32" LCD over a 42" LCD TV could save £15 and 16kg of carbon dioxide a year.

## Water Showers

- You could save around £25 off their yearly gas bills by replacing your inefficient shower head with a water efficient one .
- Spending one minute less in the shower each day could save as much as £15 a year in the average household.

## Washing up

- Using a bowl to wash up rather than leaving the hot tap running saves a lot of water; a typical 10 litre washing up bowl fills up in just 95 seconds.

## Toilets

- By fitting a dual flush mechanism to an old toilet, a four person household could save over 50,000 litres of water a year.

## Electricity and behaviour

**Householders can reduce their electricity bills using the following tips:**

### Standby

By avoiding standby and turning off devices when not in use, the average household could save £40 off their annual electricity bill.

### Lighting

Turning off your lights when you don't need them could save you around £14 a year.

LEDs are the most efficient lighting technology; they are available for most types of light fittings.

### Line-dry clothes

You can save on average £40 a year on your electricity bill by line drying clothes instead of using a tumble dryer during the summer.

### Television

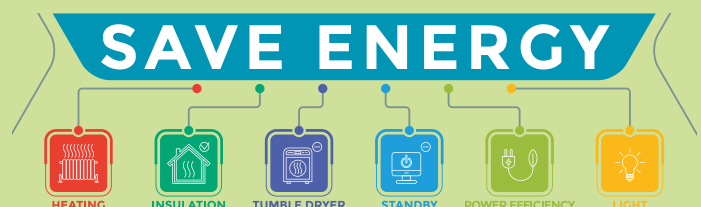
Choosing an F-rated 65"TV over a G-rated 65"TV could save you almost £25 a year.

### Fridge-freezer

When buying a new fridge freezer, choosing a D-rated fridge freezer over a G-rated model will save you around £30 in energy bills a year.

### Tumble dryer

Choosing an A+++ tumble dryer over an A+ -rated model could save you around £35 a year off your energy bills.





# PROMOTING SAFE AND



## Domestic abuse

**Domestic abuse can take many forms and can affect anyone**

Domestic abuse can be broadly defined as a pattern of threatening, violent or abusive behaviours (including coercive or controlling conduct) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.

This behaviour may be psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional in nature and inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).

No-one should be subjected to any form of domestic abuse.

**Remember, you are not to blame for any abuse that is happening to you.**

### Sexual abuse

If you have been sexually assaulted you can report this to the police directly who will arrange for you to visit the Rowan.

The Rowan is a specialist regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre which provides a range of services for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

Its services are available for men, women, children and young people.

Alternatively you can also access the Rowan directly via its contact number.

### Children

Domestic abuse can have an impact on children (including unborn children) which may not be immediately obvious. Early intervention will ensure that any impact is kept to a minimum.

It is police policy to share information with the local Family and Child Care Manager where children are resident or present at home at the time of a domestic incident or where the victim is pregnant.

### Support agencies

There are several organisations which can help by offering emotional and practical support

### 24 Hour Free Phone Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline

**Freephone Helpline 0808 802 1414**  
(free from all landlines and mobiles)

The 24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline is available 24 hours, seven days a week to all women and men affected by domestic violence and sexual violence.

### The Rowan

**Freephone Helpline 0800 389 4424**  
(from all landlines only)

See 'Sexual Abuse' section for more information.

### Victim Support

**028 90 244 039**

Victim Support NI helps people affected by crime. It offers a free and confidential service, whether or not a crime has been reported and regardless of how long ago the event took place.

You can find out more about the warning signs of Domestic Abuse here: [www.psni.police.uk/crime/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-behaviours/](http://www.psni.police.uk/crime/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-behaviours/)



# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Tenants have contacted us directly about concerns of bogus callers and drug misuse in the area, we hope that you find the information below helpful. We continue to engage regularly with our community safety police officers and are grateful for their advice and extra footfall in the area.

## How to deal with bogus callers



Most callers to your home will be genuine, however there are some who may not be. These callers are 'Bogus Callers' or 'Distraction Burglars' who may want to trick their way into your home to steal from you. If you are in any doubt simply check your caller out with **Quick Check** on Freephone 0800 012 3390.

### Easy Steps with QUICK CHECK

- Before you answer the door, make sure your back door is locked.
- If you have a door chain remember to use it before you open the door.
- Ask the caller for their identification and check it carefully.
- Ask them to wait outside and close the door - genuine callers will not mind.
- Ring Freephone **0800 013 2290**, your call will be answered personally and promptly by a trained operator. They will check with the company on your behalf, that the person at your door is genuine. If they are not or they think there is something suspicious, they will contact the police immediately.
- Do not let anyone into your home until you are satisfied as to who they are. **QUICK CHECK** is a **FREE** telephone service, which is available 24 hours a day all year round to residents throughout Northern Ireland.

Remember if in doubt check your caller out with **QUICK CHECK** on **0800 013 22 90**. In an emergency dial **999**.



## Hate Crime

The Association understands the detrimental impact hate crimes have on people's lives. We will continue to report any incidents of hate crime to the PSNI. We realise that people that carry out such crimes on others in society are in the minority however **any tenant found guilty of hate crimes by the PSNI is putting their tenancy at serious risk.**

A hate crime will be recorded where it is perceived that the perpetrator's hostility against any person or property is based on the victim's ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political opinion or disability.

You can use the True Vision Online Reporting Form which will be sent immediately to the PSNI.

In a **non-emergency** you can also contact police by dialling '**101**' or use our **Minicom number: 028 9090 1246**.

Reporting incidents will help the Police Service tackle hate crime. The information you provide is important and will enable the police to identify areas of concern, patterns of behaviour, and may assist in identifying and prosecuting offenders.

**In an emergency, always call '999'.**

Information about hate crime in your neighbourhood can also be passed on anonymously through the independent charity '**Crimestoppers**' on freephone **0800 555 111**.

[www.psnipolice.uk/safety-and-support/advice-and-information/hate-crime](http://www.psnipolice.uk/safety-and-support/advice-and-information/hate-crime)







## Tenancy Fraud

### Tenancy Fraud and Subletting of GCHA properties

**Grove Community Housing Association are committed to tackling tenancy fraud to ensure our properties are used to their full potential by those designated to reside within them.**

Addressing tenancy fraud can only be achieved with the support of our tenants and the information we receive. If you suspect that someone is committing tenancy fraud or subletting their home to someone else, please contact us immediately.

Tenancy Fraud has a major impact on all those currently awaiting a new home. To report any suspected Tenancy Fraud, please contact our Housing Officer on **028 9077 3330**.



## Complaints

### How to make a complaint

Contact Housing (Paul) on **028 9077 3330** or email [housing@groveha.org.uk](mailto:housing@groveha.org.uk).

## Adaptations

We understand that our tenants can be affected with health and mobility issues and will continue to support our tenants as their needs change.

The local Occupational Therapy Service (located at the Grove Well-Being Centre) provide a free assessment of your needs. For example they can recommend to us installation of level access showers, stair lifts etc. (We can only provide minor items such as additional hand rails without at OT report - contact your Housing Officer for further advice.)



These works support tenants to retain their independence, reduce the possibility of falls and hospital admissions and enables ability to remain in their home for as long as possible.

**If you would like any help with disability adaptations to your home please contact our Housing Officer Paul Stuart by emailing [housing@groveha.org.uk](mailto:housing@groveha.org.uk) or by calling him on 028 9077 3330.**

## Help your neighbour

During extreme weather conditions please check on your neighbours if they are elderly, have a disability or are housebound as it can be a difficult time for them to get out and about. A friendly visit from a neighbour will be appreciated.



# HOME SECURITY

Sometimes we tend to take it for granted that our homes are secure, many burglaries are committed by opportunistic criminals. Open or unlocked doors and windows are used to gain quick and easy access to homes.

Good home security, such as using window and door locks, is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled.

If you are a Homeowner or Landlord spending money on security for your property is a good investment. Security fittings will last a long time and can add value to your property. Make sure that your home security improvements don't stop you escaping from the property quickly if there is a fire. Safety is important while you are in the property AND security is important while away.

## Preventing Burglary

- Check all doors and windows for any weaknesses
- Fit mortise locks to all front and back doors and locks to all downstairs windows or windows which are easy to reach
- Fit barrel locks to the top and bottom of doors
- Make sure you keep the appropriate keys nearby in case of an emergency
- Keep your house and car keys safe and away from doors and windows
- Ensure your burglar alarm is installed properly and works. If you don't have a burglar alarm consider installing one
- When you are away from home, use timer switches to turn on some lights when it goes dark
- Make sure you have up-to-date contents insurance
- Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries when you go away
- Before you go out, go into each room in the house and make sure all the windows are tightly shut and locked. A burglar may be less likely to enter your home if a window needs to be smashed. Check all doors leading into your home are secure and locked.
- If you have a garage, put your car inside if you are not using it
- Recent improvements in car security mean that the easiest way for a thief to steal a car is to break into your house and steal the keys for it therefore

keep car keys where they will not be easily found

- Ensure your main garage door is shut and locked.
- If there are any bicycles or toys sitting around the outside of the house, put them away

## Protect Your Keys

- Always keep your keys safe
- Never give keys to workmen or tradesmen
- Change your locks if you think other people might have copies



## Belfast Warm and Well Project

The **Belfast Warm and Well Project** is coordinated by National Energy Action (NEA NI) and is supported by Community Planning Partners from across Belfast. The project is available to vulnerable people who are finding it difficult to keep their home warm.

Our aim is to help local people struggling to keep their home warm, by offering advice and practical support to stay warm and well, and where appropriate, the provision of heating measures and discretionary financial assistance (subject to assessment) to alleviate the affects of living in cold and damp homes.

NEA will work with local community and voluntary groups, to provide helpful independent and confidential advice and practical support. If you or someone you know is vulnerable and finding it difficult to keep your home warm, contact **NEA** on **028 9023 9909** or **warmandwell@nea.org.uk** to see if they can help.



# WINTER FREEZE TIPS

Winter Freeze Advice Handy hints to protect your home in winter Every year, during spells of freezing weather, households across Northern Ireland are faced with the possibility of damage to their home and belongings, as a result of freezing and burst water pipes. With a few simple precautions, however, the risk of damage can be considerably reduced.

## LOCATE YOUR STOP COCK

- Your stop cock controls the water supply entering your home. Stop cocks are usually found in your kitchen, below the sink unit. However in some houses they are in a front or back hall or in a larder unit. Take time to find out where yours is located, should you need to close it in the event of a burst pipe.
- We recommend that you check the stop cock every few months to ensure that it can be opened and closed easily.
- If you are planning to be away from your home for lengthy periods, during spells of cold weather, please turn off the water supply at the stop cock. This will minimise any damage to your home, should a burst occur in any of your pipes.

## HEATING/FUEL

- Please ensure, throughout any period of adverse weather conditions, that there is enough oil to run the oil fired central heating or credit to run the gas fired central heating at your property. It is vital to maintain a supply of fuel and/or credit to operate the system.
- Ensure that your heating system is left running - even if at a low temperature and for short periods, throughout the day - when you are away from the property. A minimal, regular supply of heat will greatly reduce the risk of frozen pipes.
- If possible, leave the trap door to your roof space slightly open to allow warm air to circulate in the loft.

## THAWING OUT FROZEN PIPES

- Turn off the water supply at the stop cock. Don't leave any taps running or dripping, as the exit of water down the plughole may be restricted if the down pipes or drains are frozen.
- Protect everything around the pipe that appears to be frozen to avoid damage if it bursts.
- Never attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion heater or central heating boiler.
- Check for leaking joints or bursts in the pipes.
- Gently heat any frozen pipe sections with a hairdryer (at its lowest setting) or a heated cloth/hot water bottles wrapped around the pipe. Do not warm them too quickly or they may burst. NEVER apply a direct flame.
- Thaw along the pipe from the end nearest the tap.

## BURST PIPES

- Turn off the water supply at the stop cock immediately.
- Switch off your immersion heater, central heating boiler and, if there is any chance that water could come into contact with electrical wirings or fittings, your electricity supply.
- Open all COLD water taps to drain the system. DO NOT TURN ON THE HOT TAPS AS YOUR HOT WATER CYLINDER MAY COLLAPSE IF THE PIPES LEADING TO IT ARE FROZEN.
- Warn your neighbours so they can take steps to minimize damage to their property.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR HOT WATER SYSTEM IS REFILLED BEFORE YOU RE-LIGHT BOILER OR SWITCH ON THE IMMERSION HEATER.**

If you live in an apartment in a communal building, your procedure is as above but you may have a shared water supply. Make sure you can get to the stop cock; this is normally located where the water supply enters the building. Let your neighbours know if you are turning off the water in case it affects their supply.

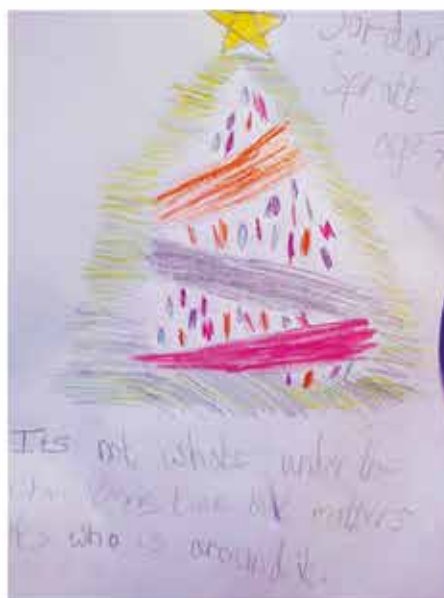


# Kids Winter Art Competition

As Winter was in full swing, as a treat for the children, we arranged the Winter Art Competition. Those taking part were tasked with creating a picture, drawing or poem of what Christmas meant to them. There were 5 lucky winners and the prizes were a £20 gift voucher for Smyths Toy Superstore. This is a selection of some of those drawings.



Jemma McCann



Jordan Spratt



Jemma McCann



Sarah-Jane Dair



Shelly Rodgers



Tasha Dale



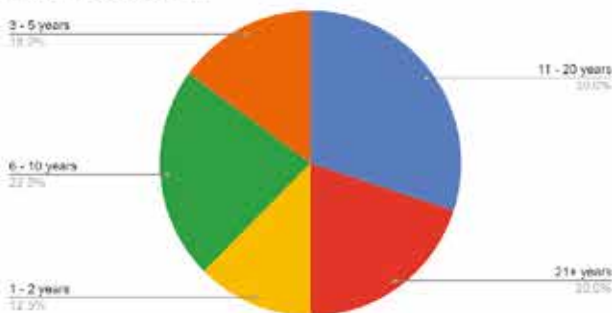
Tasha Dale



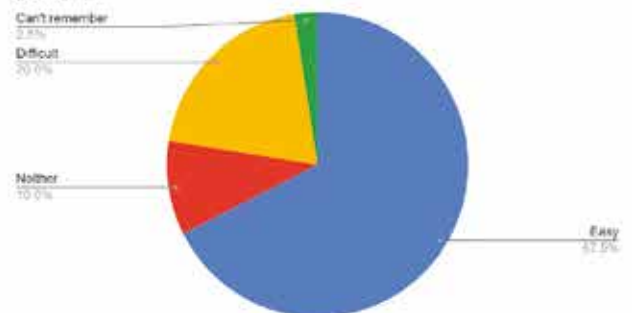
# Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

Take a look below to see your feedback on how you think we're performing.

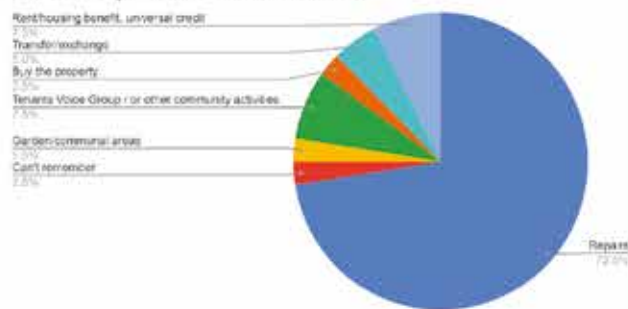
1. How long have you been a tenant of Grove Community Housing Association?



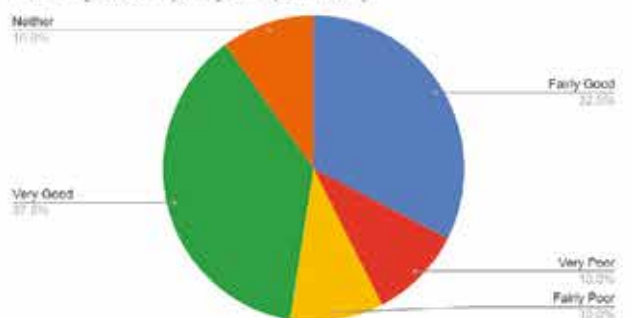
6. When you last had contact, was getting hold of the right person?



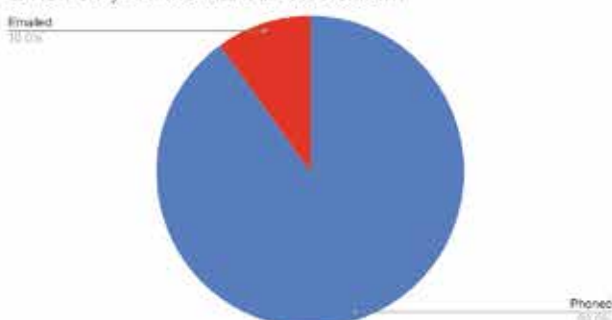
4. What did you last have contact about?



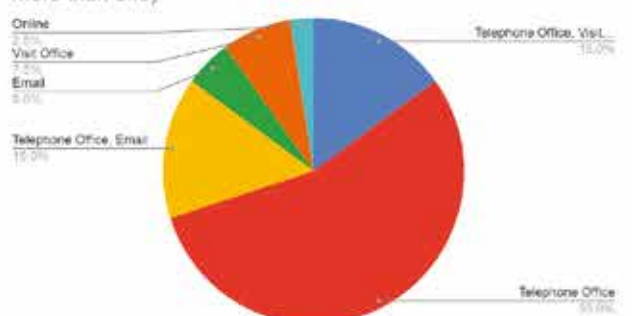
13.5 Thinking about the last completed repair, how would you rate it? [Overall quality of repair work]



5. How did you last contact the Association?



14. How would you prefer to report a repair? (You may tick more than one)



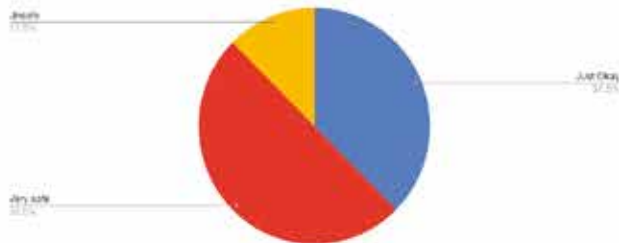
75%

of our Tenants are fairly or very satisfied with the overall standard of their home.

OVER 67%

of our Tenants are fairly or very satisfied, that their rent provides value for money and with the tenant involvement that GCHA provides.

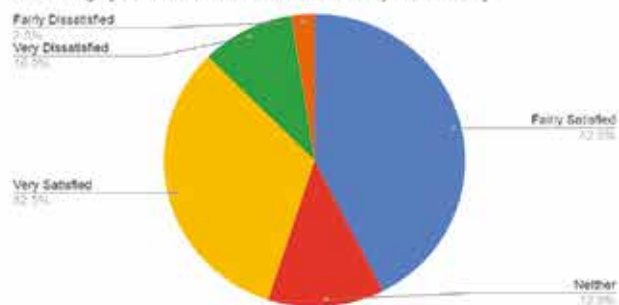
17. Grove is committed to ensuring your home is safe and secure and meets your changing needs (e.g. gas servicing, handrails etc).



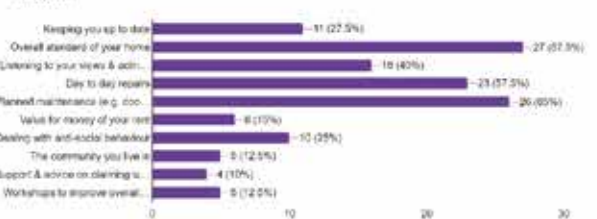
19.5 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Grove deals with the following? [Tenant involvement (eg. activities, info., meetings)]



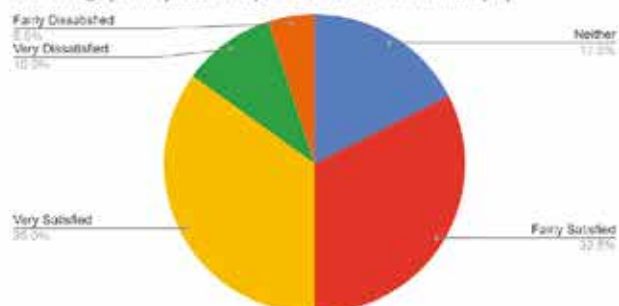
18. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following: [With the overall standard of your home]



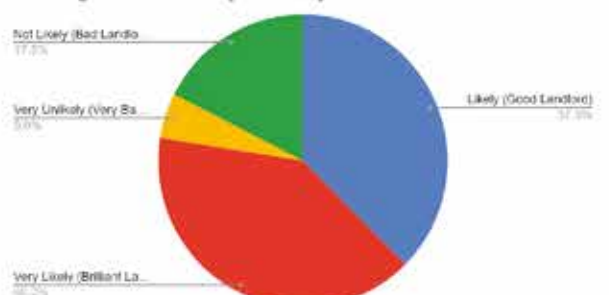
20. Which three do you consider to be top priorities for Grove to improve on?



18.2 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following: [That your rent provides value for money?]



22. How likely are you to recommend Grove Community Housing Association to your family and friends as a landlord?







## Grove Community

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

### Contact Details

#### Registered Office

171 York Road,  
Belfast,  
BT15 3HB

#### Telephone

(028) 9077 3330

#### Out of Hours Repairs Line

0800 7313 081

#### E-mail

[info@groveha.org.uk](mailto:info@groveha.org.uk)

#### Website

[www.groveha.org.uk](http://www.groveha.org.uk)

### USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Grove out of hours repairs (Fold Telecare)	0800 731 3081
Grove Office	02890 773330
Gas emergency service if you smell gas	0800 002 001
Electricity supply faults	03457 643 643
Police Service of N Ireland – emergency	999
Police Service of N Ireland – non-emergency	101
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
NI Water – emergency/flooding	03457 440 088
Housing Benefit	03448 920 902
Make the Call (Benefits Helpline)	0800 232 1271
Universal Credit	0800 012 1331
Citizen's Advice NI	028 9064 1120
Housing Rights Service	028 9024 5460
Women's Aid Helpline	0808 802 1414
City Council: Noise Hotline	028 9037 3006
Anti-social behaviour officer	028 9027 0469
Reporting dog fouling	028 9027 0431
Waste collection	028 9027 0230
Phoenix Gas	03454 55 55 55
Firmus Energy	0800 032 4567
Power NI	03457 455 455
Budget Energy	0800 012 1177
Click Energy	0800 107 0732
Airtricity	08454 555555



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