



HOUSING

DIFFERENT HOUSING OPTIONS

SOCIAL HOUSING

A single application form from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive will allow you to apply for social or sheltered housing and also specialist accommodation where extra support is available for people with special needs.

SHELTERED HOUSING

Sheltered accommodation is a term used to describe a group of dwellings designed for older or disabled people and with support provided on site.

To apply for social or sheltered housing or to apply for a transfer:

- Obtain an application form from either a NIHE district office or local housing association office.
- Download an application from the following website:
www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/apply_for_a_home/application_process.htm
- You can apply over the phone by calling **03448 920 900**.

To find sheltered accommodation please visit http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/advice/sheltered_accommodation.htm

PRIVATE RENTING

The Housing Executive website offers advice on renting private property:

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/renting_privately.htm



If you are having problems with your landlord or in connection with your private tenancy you can contact:

Housing Rights on Telephone: **028 9024 5640**
Citizens Advice Northern Ireland on Telephone:
028 9026 1970 or you could consider getting legal advice.

HOMELESSNESS

If you are homeless or at risk of losing your home you should seek help at your local Housing Executive District Office or the Homeless Advice Centre. The level of help the Executive can give you depends on your particular circumstances.

Homeless Advice Centre: 32-36 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BA. Telephone: **03448 920 900**

For more information see the NIHE website at www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/homelessness-4.htm

MOVING HOME

It is advisable that you undertake a number of checks when moving into a new home.

- Check the smoke alarm
- Take gas, electricity and water readings
- Arrange to have your gas and electricity appliances serviced
- If necessary register with a new doctor/dentist/optician.

People and companies to contact:

- Gas and Electricity at the old and new address (at least two weeks before the move)



- Water (at least a week before the move)
- Telephone companies (landline, mobile, and internet) to advise the change of address and the date you want your new number to operate (at least a week before the move). If you are moving locally you may be able to keep your number
- Your landlord if you are moving out from rented accommodation
- Post Office (give at least seven days notice for redirection of your mail)
- Bank/Building Society/Credit Card Companies
- Benefits Agency/Pension provider
- Life/Private Healthcare policy provider
- Insurance Company (car, contents, building etc)
- Inland Revenue
- Doctor/Dentist/Optician (make sure you have enough medication/prescription to last until after the move).
- The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- TV Licensing Centre
- Provider of any cable or digital television service (find out if you will still have coverage in your new area)
- Subscriptions
- Social Clubs/Societies
- Vet
- Friends and Family.

RENOVATIONS AND BUILDING WORK

If you are considering doing renovations or building work on your home you need to consider whether or not you need planning permission.



The **Planning Service for Northern Ireland** can provide you with information on what adaptations you need planning permission for, how to apply, and how to make an appeal against a refusal for planning permission.

For more information contact Planning Service Headquarters on **028 9041 6700** or visit their website: www.planningni.gov.uk

The **UK Planning Portal** provides a simple guide to planning permission and building regulations around your home. It outlines your responsibilities when considering renovations to your home. It also provides information on how to make your home more environmentally friendly.

To visit their website go to: www.planningportal.gov.uk

'Secured by Design' is a website developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in the UK. This website provides guidance for the general public as well as guides for architects and constructors on how to carefully design your home to make it as secure as possible. This information is particularly useful if you are considering making adaptations to your home.

To visit this website go to: www.securedbydesign.com or alternatively call **020 7084 8962** to speak with the PSNI Crime Prevention Design Adviser.



BUYING YOUR HOME

Housing Executive Tenants

Housing Executive tenants wishing to purchase their homes can get an application form and advice leaflet from your local District Housing Executive Office or Belfast Land and Property Department.

Tenants can also now buy their house in stages under 'equity sharing' – part ownership and part rental.

Telephone: **08448 920900** or look on the following website: www.nihe.gov.uk/index/yh-home/buying_a_home/housing_executive.htm

This website also gives general advice on buying a home.

Equity Release

Equity release is the term used to cover the various ways that older homeowners can use their homes to generate income or lump sums while continuing to live there. Age NI has developed an information leaflet on this topic.

To receive a copy telephone: **0808 808 7575**

CARE HOMES

Care homes provide accommodation, personal care and sometimes nursing care for older people whose care and support needs mean that they can no longer live independently. Your General Practitioner can refer you to a care manager who will be able to give you advice and assess your need for this type of care including a financial assessment. If you have assets (including savings, income,



property) of £23,500 you may be eligible to pay the full cost of your care. The value of the property will not be included as assets if the husband or wife of the person moving into the care home remains at home or if a relative aged 60+ or a disabled relative remains at home.

Care managers will be able to give you all the information you need and will provide you with an information pack. Full details of nursing home regulations can be found on the following website: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/health-and-well-being/health-services/residential-care-and-nursing-homes.htm>

If you have a complaint against a care home which cannot be resolved with the care home and/or the local Health and Social Care Trust, you should contact the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) who have responsibility for standards and quality of health and personal social services provision.

To make a positive comment or complaint to your local Health and Social Care Trust, Telephone: **028 9032 7156**

To make a positive comment or complaint to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority Telephone: **028 9051 7500**

LIVING WITH FAMILY

Moving in with relatives can seem like an attractive option and in many cases works well. However, if you are planning



to invest in a relative's property, or purchase one together, take legal advice and consider having a formal agreement drawn up. This can prevent misunderstanding and ill feeling later on.

For information for carers, go to the Health and Wellbeing section. (page 16)

STAYING IN YOUR OWN HOME WITH SUPPORT

Managing Poor Health at Home

If your health has deteriorated and your GP is managing your condition at home but you have worries that you can no longer manage without support at home then it is important that you talk to your GP about this. The GP will refer you to a social worker/care manager who will be able to carry out an assessment of your needs and link in with other health professionals as necessary.

Adaptations/Safety Equipment

If you are having difficulty with everyday activities such as washing, dressing or getting around, an Occupational Therapist may be able to offer advice and/ or equipment to allow you to be more independent and safer.

To contact an Occupational Therapist please ring:

South and East Belfast (including Castlereagh)

- **028 9056 5565**

North and West Belfast - **0845 606 6596**



For information on wheelchair hire, go to the Transport section. (page 135)

The **Centre for Independent Living Belfast** is a voluntary organisation run by disabled people for disabled people. They provide information on living independently and provide information/advice on using Direct Payments which is a benefit that allows you to employ a personal assistant or buy services from an agency of your choice to support you at home, as well as daytime activities and respite. Direct Payments are available to disabled people with any impairment, including learning disability, mental health service users etc. If you are not already getting a service from the Health Trust you can refer yourself to social services who will organise an assessment of your needs.

For further information on direct payments Telephone:

028 9064 8545 or textphone **028 9064 0598**.

Website: www.cilbelfast.org

To self refer yourself to social services please ring one of the following numbers depending on the area you live in:

South and East Belfast - **028 9056 5565**

North and West Belfast - **0845 606 6596**

Disability Living Foundation (UK)

Disability Living Foundation (UK) provides free, impartial advice about all types of disability equipment and mobility products for older and disabled people. They produce a wide range of fact sheets.



For more information telephone the Disability Living Foundation helpline on **0845 130 9177**.

Leaflets can be downloaded free from their website:
www.dlf.org.uk

Age NI: First Connect Service

The First Connect Service aims to support disadvantaged older people to access a range of services to improve their quality of life, help them remain independent and enable them to access the right support. The service works directly with older people and their local communities. An assessor will visit the person at home to discuss their needs, provide information on services and signpost to the agreed services.

For more information call Freephone **0808 808 7575**

For information on housing related benefits go to the income section (pg 107).

Supporting People

The Supporting People programme, administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive provides funding for housing support services for vulnerable people, for example older people living in sheltered or specialist accommodation, to help them live as independently as possible, but does not cover personal or care services. For more information about Supporting People and the housing related support services you receive please contact your housing association.



Housing Support for Older People: is an initiative run by Belfast Central Mission and funded by Supporting People. It provides housing related support to people aged 55+ living in Belfast including help with maintaining tenancies, home maintenance and safety and security of the home. Support is offered from six weeks up to two years depending on the circumstances. A referral can be made by any community or hospital based health and social care staff as well as directly from older people who would like support from the service.

For more information telephone **028 9024 5716**

Website: www.belfastcentralmission.org/what-we-do/for-older-people/housing-support

UPKEEP OF YOUR HOME

Grants may be available for repairs or to upgrade your heating system (see Heating your Home section for more information on the Warm Home Plus Scheme or Freephone **0800 988 0559**).

If you receive Pension Credit you may be entitled to a community care grant or budgeting loan from the Social Fund to help with the cost of minor repairs or decoration (see Income section for more information on these grants or contact your local Social Security Office or Citizens Advice office).

Grants available from NIHE

Grants available to homeowners and private tenants include:

- Home Repair Assistance Grants to carry out moderate repairs, improvements to those in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support or Housing Benefit



- Disabled Facilities Grant

Due to the reduction in grants funding, NIHE are currently only accepting applications for mandatory Disabled Facilities and Repair grants. Discretionary Renovation, Replacement and Home Repair Assistance grants are only available in exceptional circumstances.

For more information and application forms contact the NIHE Grants Office on **08448 920 900** or look on the following website:
http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/hig_home.htm

You can only access the disabled facilities grant if you have firstly been assessed by an Occupational Therapist (*see information on the disabled facilities grant within the Heating Your Home section*) (**page 97**)

Helping you Through the Grants Process

The local Housing Executive grants office will be pleased to answer your questions at any stage of the process. If you are elderly or have special needs the Housing Executive has made arrangements with some independent agencies to help you.

The “Staying Put” service provided by Fold Housing Association assists older people and/or people with a disability and offers advice and support to repair or adapt their homes through the Housing Executive Grants Scheme.



For help from FOLD Telephone: **028 9042 8314** or
download information from the FOLD website at:
www.foldgroup.co.uk/publications

Oasis Cleaning and Maintenance Services

Oasis Cleaning and Maintenance Services is a Social Economy Project of Oasis Caring in Action. They provide cleaning and maintenance services for private residence, rental and commercial properties. They can help you with

- Domestic cleaning
- Painting and decorating
- Garden and maintenance
- Small building work, and
- General DIY.

For further information on the service please contact Oasis Centre on **028 9087 2277** or visit www.oasis-ni.org

NIHE Repairs

If you live in a Housing Executive property they will carry out a range of emergency and routine repairs for you.

If you need repairs done Telephone: **03448 920 901**

Call Response Service/Personal Alarms

A number of organisations provide personal alarms which can summon help in the case of an emergency, such as a fall (see *Safety in the Home* section for more information)



HOUSING ADVICE SOURCES

Housing Rights

Housing Rights is a charitable organisation providing independent specialist housing advice.

You can telephone the advice line on **028 9024 5640** or call in to see the duty adviser between 9.00am - 5.00pm (Monday to Friday) at the following address: 4th Floor Middleton Buildings, 10-12 High Street, Belfast BT1 2BA.

If you have a housing problem outside their opening hours you can contact Shelter's helpline on **028 9024 7752** between 8am and midnight seven days a week. Website: www.northernireland.shelter.org.uk/advice/index.ofm to www.housingadviceni.org

Energy Advice

The Energy Advice section of the Housing Executive website can help you with energy saving tips and provides a Free Home Energy Check (www.nihe.gov.uk/energy_advice/)

The Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre can also provide information on saving energy in the home as well as advice on heating the home. Contact them on free phone: **0300 123 1234**

Housing Advice NI Website

'housingadviceNI' has been developed by the Housing Rights Service in partnership with Shelter and supported by NIHE www.housingadviceni.org



District/City Councils

Belfast City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council Environmental Health Departments can deal with complaints and enquiries about housing and public health. They can also give advice if you have a complaint about repairs in your rented flat or house; harassment or eviction. Other services include: dog wardens; noise control; pest control service; waste collection and disposal.

For more information telephone:

Belfast City Council on **028 9032 0202**

Castlereagh Borough Council on **028 9049 4600**

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Flooding

Contacts for sources of flooding

Flooding Incident Line.

Telephone **0300 2000 100** - the single point of contact for reporting flooding

Overflowing rivers and watercourses - contact

Rivers Agency Telephone: **028 9260 6100** for the office responsible for the Belfast area

Burst water mains or blocked sewers - contact Water

Service. Telephone: Waterline **08457 44 00 88**

or textphone **08457 02 32 06** for those with hearing difficulties.

Roadway, footpath or blocked gullies - contact Road

Service. Telephone: **028 9054 0540** for the office responsible for the Belfast area.



Other Safeguards

Electricity

Electricity circuits affected by flooding should be checked by a qualified electrician. Northern Ireland Electricity can provide advice to customers (telephone: **08457 643643**).

Insurance

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible. They may offer advice regarding replacement or cleansing of damaged items.

Burst Water Pipes in the Home

Homeowners are responsible for burst pipes which occur inside the home. If a pipe does burst:

- Turn off the stop tap/valve
- Try and block the escaping water with thick cloth like towels
- Open all taps to reduce flooding
- Call a plumber (see below)
- Don't forget to turn off taps once the problem is fixed.

Northern Ireland Water Service recommends using plumbers registered with SNIPEF (Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation) – see yellow pages for full list of plumbers including SNIPEF registered plumbers

For advice on avoiding and dealing with frozen pipes see Northern Ireland Water website www.niwater.com or Telephone: **08457 440 088**



Use Water Wisely

Report all visible leaks on roads and footpaths to Northern Ireland Water.

The Freephone Leakline number is **08000 282011**

Repair all leaks, dripping taps and overflows on your premises promptly.

Power Failures

In the case of a power/electricity failure contact Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE).

For information on fault/supply enquires including new electricity supply; any physical supply matter or new supply and alterations to lines and equipment telephone:

08457 643643 (8.30am – 5pm Mon – Fri, 24hrs for faults)

or email: customercontact@nie.co.uk

Minicom telephone for customers who are deaf:

0845 714 7128

Fire

In the case of a fire in the home always call the Fire Brigade (see Safety in the Home section for advice on preventing a fire).

Emergency: Telephone **999**



Gas Fumes

If you think you smell gas leaking in the house telephone the Gas Emergency Number.

Telephone: Phoenix Natural Gas on **0800 002 001**

Medical Emergency

In the case of a medical emergency, telephone **999**.

If it is not an emergency contact your General Practitioner (GP). Keep your GP's number (including the out of hours GP), close to your phone.

INSURING YOUR PROPERTY/MAKING A CLAIM

If you are a home owner, your insurance should cover both buildings and contents. The amount you insure the buildings for should equal the amount of money it would cost to rebuild the house including fixtures and fittings (e.g. kitchen, bathroom etc) rather than the current saleable valuable of the property. If you live in rented accommodation you need only insure your personal property. Some insurance companies offer insurance for 50+ age group but it is advisable to shop around before making a decision. If you require advice on making a claim, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Waste Collection

Your local Council is responsible for the collection and disposal of household refuse. To report any **missed collections** contact your local council on:



Belfast City Council Customer Support Centre:

028 9027 0297

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical Services:

028 9049 4600 or **028 9049 4602**

If your blue or brown bin is missing, or needs to be replaced, you can order a new one by calling your local council. Blue and brown bins are free of charge but there is a charge for a black bin.

Belfast City Council: **0800 0328 100**

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical Services:

028 9049 4600 or **028 9049 4602**

Bulky Waste Collection/ Special Collections

Belfast City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council offer a free bulky waste/ special collection service for people over the age of 60 for items such as sofas, cookers, doors, mattresses and beds.

To book a collection call Belfast City Council:

028 9027 0230

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical Services:

028 9049 4600 or **028 9049 4602**

Assisted Bin Lifts

Applying for an assisted lift can take up to four weeks; the steps for Belfast Council area are as follows:

1. Call **028 9027 0230** or email refusecollection@belfastcity.gov.uk
2. A registration form will be sent to you



3. Get a health care professional to stamp or sign the form to prove that you are unable to leave your bin out for collection
4. Return the completed stamped or signed form to us.
5. An assessment will be made to decide whether you are eligible for an assisted bin lift
6. If you are eligible, you will be added to the assisted bin lift register and be notified in writing.

For more information about getting help with your bin you can call Belfast City Council on **028 9027 0230**

If you are physically unable to wheel your bin to the footpath, Castlereagh Borough Council can also lift your bin on your behalf, providing you submit a note from your doctor. Please contact Technical and Environmental Services on **028 9049 4600** to arrange a pull-out of your bin.

Belfast City Council Address:

Operations Manager Waste Collection and Recycling
Belfast City Council
Duncrue Complex, Duncrue Road, Belfast, BT3 9BP
Telephone: **028 9027 0230**

Castlereagh Borough Council Address:

Technical and Environmental Services Department
Castlereagh Borough Council
Civic and Administrative Offices
Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB
Telephone: **028 9049 4600**



Recycling Bins/Boxes

People living in Belfast City Council or Castlereagh Borough Council area will have several recycling bins or a Bryson Recycling 'kerbside' black box for recycling purposes. If you have any questions on recycling and are unsure what items should be placed in these boxes contact:

Belfast City Council: **0800 032 8100**

Castlereagh Borough Council Technical and Environmental Services on **028 9049 4600**

For more details about black Bryson Recycling kerbside boxes contact Bryson Recycling on **028 9084 8494**

Recycling Centres Locations

In Belfast City Council area there are four centres for recycling household waste, free of charge located:

- **Alexandra Park Avenue** off Antrim Road, North Belfast
- Blackstaff Way off Kennedy Way, West Belfast
- **Ormeau** off Ormeau Road, South Belfast
- **Palmerston Road** off Hollywood Road, East Belfast.

Belfast City Council can also provide free heavy duty plastic sacks to make it easier for you to carry your waste to your nearest recycling centre. These are available at the recycling centres.

Castlereagh Borough Council recycling centres are located:

- Cregagh Road Household Recycling Centre, Belfast
- Comber Road Household Recycling Centre, Carryduff



DOMESTIC WATER CHARGES

The Consumer Council have from April 2007 legal responsibility to represent the interests of water consumers in Northern Ireland.

For more information contact the Consumer Council on: **028 9067 2488**. Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Information is also available from the Water Reform helpline.
Telephone: **0800 051 5445**;
Minicom 0800 051 5446
Website: www.waterreformni.gov.uk

NIHE DISTRICT OFFICES IN BELFAST/CASTLEREAGH

Shankill District Office

Address: Spencer House, 71 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1FE

Telephone: Main: 0344 892 0900;

Repairs: 0344 892 0901; Housing Benefit: 034 4892 0902

- **North Belfast District Office**
- **South Belfast District Office**
- **West Belfast District Office**
- **East Belfast District Office**

The Address and Telephone numbers below cover the District Offices listed above

Address: 38 Great Victoria St, Belfast, BT2 7BA

Telephone: Main: 0344 892 0900;

Repairs: 0344 892 0901; Housing Benefit: 0344 892 0902



Castlereagh District Office

Address: 30 Church Road, Dundonald, BT16 2LN.

Telephone: Main: 0344 892 0900; Repairs:
0344 892 0901; Housing Benefit: 0344 892 0902