



Tenant Handbook

**Everyone
has a place**

Our Mission

To make a positive difference by providing homes, support and care for people, building neighbourhoods and empowering communities.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

We appreciate that not all our tenants have English as their first language or need alternative formats to meet their requirements. Radius Housing offer all our leaflets, publications and written communications to tenants in a range of formats free of charge. These include:

- Braille
- Large Print
- Plain English
- Audio (CD / MP3 / DVD)
- Pictorial
- Non - English Languages

To request all communications in any of the above formats, please contact us and speak to our Corporate Assurance team.

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Welcome

On behalf of Radius Housing Association, we would like to take this opportunity to extend a sincere and warm welcome to your new home. We hope you will thoroughly enjoy your home and that the information contained within this handbook will provide assistance and guidance with regards to all aspects of your tenancy with us.

Radius Housing is dedicated to the provision of high-quality and affordable social housing and associated support services. We aim to provide modern, comfortable and secure accommodation to meet the housing needs of families, singles and older people. We seek to build sustainable communities where tenants can enjoy living in their homes with the mutual respect of neighbours. Through the provision of energy efficient housing designs we will protect the environment and reduce living costs.

Key to our service delivery is the role of our trained and experienced staff who respond sensitively to the needs of tenants; in a way that promotes and encourages independence, social well-being and greater participation in the delivery of a comprehensive housing management service.

After acceptance of a tenancy with Radius, you will receive a copy of the Tenancy Agreement. This document is legally binding between you, the tenant, and Radius Housing Association and sets out our respective obligations and responsibilities. This handbook provides you with explanatory information relating to the terms of your tenancy and should be read in conjunction with the Tenancy Agreement.

Radius Communities Management Team



Section One
Moving In

Useful Contacts

COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT

Call our Department

0330 123 0888 (Option 2)

Housing Officer

.....

Extension Number

.....

Email Address

.....

Area Housing Manager

.....

ASSETS DEPARTMENT

.....

Assets Officer

REPORT A REPAIR

0330 123 0888 (Option 1)

**OUT OF HOURS
EMERGENCY REPAIRS**

028 9039 3131

CONTACT OUR OFFICE

Write to us

Radius Housing Association
38-52 Lisburn Road
Belfast
BT9 6AA

Email us

info@radiushousing.org

Visit our website

radiushousing.org

Follow us on Twitter

 twitter.com/RadiusHousing

Follow us on Facebook

 facebook.com/RadiusHousing

What are rechargeable repairs?

As your landlord, we are responsible for some of the repairs and maintenance to your home by law. You can check this in your tenancy agreement and find out more about our repair responsibilities at page 26.

Most of our tenants keep their homes in good condition, but where damage is caused deliberately or through neglect the repairs needed will be fixed at the tenant's cost. These are known as 'rechargeable repairs'.

We do not want tenants who look after their homes to pick up the bill for others who cause damage deliberately or through neglect. Therefore, when any rechargeable repairs are identified, we will discuss this directly with the tenant who must agree to arrange and pay for their own repairs or pay Radius to do them.

Who is responsible for damage to your property?

Tenants are responsible for any damage caused accidentally, deliberately or because of neglect by you or other members of your household, including visitors, pets or contractors hired by you. This also applies to the removal of any fixtures and fittings that have been provided by Radius, for example internal doors or bannister rails.

DIY and home improvements

You must apply for permission before carrying out alterations and improvements to your home. All work will be inspected and must be done to our satisfaction.

If the work is unsatisfactory, you will have to repair the damage or provide replacement, but if we have to carry out the remedial work you will be recharged for the total cost of the work plus any administration costs.

Your safety remains of paramount importance to us as your landlord, so in the case of gas and electrical works we would not give permission for work to be completed by anyone other than our registered contractors.

What if the damage was an accident?

You are responsible for any accidental damage. You may be able to claim the cost of repairing this damage through your own household contents insurance. You should check with your insurance company. If you cannot carry out the repair and we have to do so, we will charge you for the work.

Do I have to contact you if damage is caused accidentally?

Yes, you will need to report the repair to us; you will be asked how the damage was caused and you will be notified whether you will be recharged.

Security of your home

You are responsible for the security of your home. If repairs are required due to misuse, neglect or carelessness such as:

- Loss of door keys or fobs or Broken glass to windows.

These will be recharged. We will secure the property if required and recharge you for this and any replacement of glass. You will also have to pay if keys are lost or stolen and we have to replace them.

Home emergencies

If you call our out of hours service and it is established that there is to be a recharge, we will make safe and write to you to confirm the cost of the recharge. Examples include:

- Attend to the emergency call out and you are not in.
- The contractor attends and finds that it is your appliance that has tripped the main fuse and this wasn't checked.
- A smashed wash hand basin or toilet.
- A blocked toilet, kitchen sink or bath through inappropriate use.
- A boiler reported as not working, but has actually ran out of fuel.

Please note that if you report any emergency out of hours and our contractor attends and establishes it is a non-emergency job we will charge you for a call-out fee on top of any work completed.

For emergency call outs our contractors are not always able to arrange an appointment, you will be advised of timescales by our call handlers and may need to wait at home for an operative to attend. If you are unable to stay at your property and you are out when we call but have not made any arrangement with us, you will be recharged for missing the appointment.

What if the damage is caused by crime?

If you have been an innocent victim of crime and criminal damage has been caused, you must report it to the police and inform us of the case reference number. You may be able to claim through your own home contents insurance for loss or damage caused as a direct result of theft or attempted theft (for example forced entry/exit). You will need to check this with your insurance company.

What if the police force entry to my home?

The police may need to force entry to your home to detect or prevent crime. If evidence of a crime is detected by the police, the cost of any repairs is your responsibility as a tenant. If there is no evidence of a crime, there will not be a recharge.

Will I be recharged if a leak from my property damages the flat below?

If the leak was due to damage or neglect and this is established, then we will look to recharge you.

Your Tenancy

Moving Into Your Home

1. Ensure your previous Landlord is given notice that you are moving.
2. Redirect your mail; eg benefits office, bank / building society, doctor, dentist and phone company.
3. You will receive your keys and information on electric and heating at sign up.
4. Contact electricity & gas supplier and / or ensure there is oil in the tank if applicable. **Power NI 03457 455 455 / Firmus Gas 08456 080 088**
Airtricity Electric & Gas 0345 900 5253
5. Contact Radius to advise that you have registered for your energy supplier. Radius will arrange for your water and gas supply to be turned on. You must provide access for this.
6. Arrange Home Contents Insurance to insure your possessions once you move in.
7. You are responsible for decorating, fitting floor coverings (except kitchen and bathroom) and for certain repairs (see Repairs section of this handbook).
8. If you want to make alterations to your home, you must write to us to ask permission.

Introductory Tenancies

Legislation was introduced and implemented under the provision of the Housing (NI) Order 2003, requiring social landlords in Northern Ireland to award an Introductory Tenancy to all new tenants who have not previously held a secure tenancy. Contained in the Tenancy Agreement and Conditions of Tenancy you will sign at the start of your tenancy are details of your rights and responsibilities and those of Radius.

These rights and responsibilities are set out to ensure that every tenant can enjoy peaceful occupation of their home and all the benefits of a Radius tenancy. They are also there to ensure that Radius can take any action that is deemed necessary against any breach of tenancy conditions, including acts of anti-social behaviour.

Radius is required to give all new tenants a trial period of 12 months to show they can keep to the conditions of their Tenancy Agreement. All tenants must demonstrate that they can look after their home and live peacefully with their neighbours. This trial period is called an Introductory Tenancy.

Introductory Tenancy

As a new tenant, you must sign a Tenancy Agreement before you move into your Radius home. If there have been no problems at the end of your Introductory Tenancy period, you will automatically become a Secure Tenant with all the rights of a Secure Tenancy.

We hope your Introductory Tenancy period is problem-free and that you will go on to become a Secure Tenant. We will always try to help you if you have any difficulties. However, if any problems arise, the following information will tell you what will happen if you break your Tenancy Agreement and the procedure that will apply.

An Introductory Tenancy means that you will not have the same rights as a Secure Tenant and could be evicted more quickly and easily if you break your Tenancy Agreement.

Rights

As an introductory tenant, the law does not give you the right to:

- Buy your home during the introductory year;
- Take in lodgers;
- Sub-let part of the property;
- Make improvements;
- Exchange your home with another tenant;
- Join the Transfer list.

Although you do not have an automatic legal right to the above, in exceptional circumstances you may apply to Radius to take in lodgers, improve your home or apply for a transfer/exchange. The Area Housing Manager will make a decision based on the circumstances.

If there are problems

We hope that our tenants will pass from an Introductory Tenancy onto a Secure Tenancy. Radius will take action against anyone who breaks their Tenancy Agreement. An investigation will be carried out to establish the circumstances and to consider how the situation can be best dealt with. However, if the problem is serious or if the tenant will not co-operate with our efforts to agree a solution, Radius will take legal action to evict the tenant straight away.

As an Introductory Tenant, Radius can take action against anyone who has failed to pay rent or other charges on their property.

Anti-Social Behaviour

We must protect our local communities and Radius property. Therefore, if we receive a report that a tenant, someone living with you or a visitor to your home has been acting in an anti-social way, Radius will carry out a thorough investigation of the complaint. This will include: the collection of evidence, interviewing witnesses and talking to the police. If this shows that a complaint is justified, we will take any action we deem necessary depending on the circumstances of the behaviour. We may bring in a mediation expert to assist in agreeing a solution.

If you are not mindful of your behaviour or if your actions are of an extreme form, we will seek to evict you. It is important to remember that we can take action if the anti-social behaviour occurs in your home, outside it or anywhere in the locality.

Ending your Introductory Tenancy

If we find that the terms of your Introductory Tenancy have been broken we will serve a 'Notice to Quit'. This means we intend to seek a decision from the court to obtain an order for possession and this will lead to your eviction.

You should seek independent advice on the 'Notice to Quit' by contacting the Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Rights Service or a solicitor.



Appeal

If you wish to appeal the decision you must send a written request within 14 days of receiving the 'Notice to Quit'. If we do not receive a written request within this 14 day period, there will be no further opportunity to appeal. The review will normally take the form of an exchange of correspondence, however, if you request a personal hearing, we will normally notify you 5 days in advance of the date, time and location of the hearing.

You have a right to:

- Be accompanied by another person (who may be your solicitor);
- Call upon other parties to give evidence;
- Put questions to any person giving evidence;
- Make representations to the Review Panel in writing.

Your request for a review should be made in writing to Director of Communities, Radius Housing Association, 37-52 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6AA.

A review will be carried out by a Review Panel consisting of Radius staff who have not been involved in the case. They will consider all the information available.

If the Review Panel accepts the original decision to terminate your Introductory Tenancy, Radius will apply to court for an Order for Possession. You do not have the right to appeal against the Review Panel's decision.

The court has the authority to terminate your tenancy and you will then be asked to vacate the property. If you do not do so, Radius will be forced to have the Court Order enforced through the Enforcement of Judgements Office. You may also find that other Housing Associations or the Housing Executive will consider you ineligible for housing assistance in the future.

Independent Advice

You should seek independent advice on a 'Notice to Terminate' by contacting the Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Rights Service or a solicitor.

Becoming a Secure Tenant

If there have been no problems during your Introductory Tenancy, you will automatically become a Secure Tenant on the date written on your Tenancy Agreement.

Your Tenancy Agreement

It is essential that all tenants have read and understood all conditions of the tenancy they accept. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask your Housing Officer who will provide an explanation or any advice required.

You can also seek assistance from other agencies including the Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Rights Service, Age NI or the Law Centre.

Heating Charges

Our Heating Charges are made up of two portions:

1. Units of energy used

This is set by our surveyors looking at the area of the entire scheme and the areas of the common areas and individual rooms. This allows us to calculate the % usage for each area and how much of the total scheme charge is to be charged to each resident.

2. Cost of heat & light

We then apply the %'s above to the total cost for the year. This gives us a heating charge for the year. The cost of the communal areas is entered into the service charge costs.

Rent

Rent is charged on a weekly basis. However, depending on your personal circumstances and by arrangement with your Housing Officer, it may be possible to vary your schedule for payment. All monthly payments must be made in advance. A period of 4 weeks' notice will be given prior to any rent increase.

Payment Methods

There are several ways of paying rent:

1. By Payment Card at:

- a. Any Post Office;
- b. Any Pay Point Outlet. Pay Point services are usually found at newsagents, corner shops and garages, many of which are open outside of office hours and at weekends.

2. By Direct Debit

From your Bank or Building Society. Your Housing Officer will provide you with a form to complete in order to set this up. There are advantages of paying by Direct Debit. Radius will automatically collect the rent due. Furthermore, you will not be required to take any action in the event of rent changes e.g. annual rent increase. If for any reason you wish to cancel your Direct Debit please contact your Housing Officer.

3. By Smartphone

On your smartphone, using the All Pay App via Apple Appstore, Android Marketplace, Google Play Store and Windows Store. This is free of charge to download.

4. By Telephone

If you have a debit or credit card you can also make payments by calling our office on 0330 123 0888 (Opt 2). You can make payments via the phone using your Pay Point card, you will be able to find their current telephone number on the back of your card.

5. By Post

Please do not send cash via post. Cheques should be made payable to Radius Housing Association and crossed A/C PAYEE ONLY. Please write your name, address and Tenancy Reference (if known) on the back of any cheques sent to Radius.

6. Direct to Staff

If desired you can make your rent payments by cash or cheque direct to your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer who will ensure your payment is posted to your rent account. Alternatively you can make payment direct to Radius at your regional office. You will be issued with a receipt for any payment received.

Rent Statements

Radius will send you a Rent Statement that will detail charges made and any payments received on a regular basis. Radius aims to send you your Rent Statement twice a year, however if you wish to receive a statement outside these times please contact your Housing Officer who will arrange to have this sent to you.

You should check this statement to make sure that the amounts correspond to the payments made by you. It is important for you to keep any receipts received for payments made.

You should be aware that payments made around the same time that the statement is produced may not appear until the next statement. If you notice any discrepancy in your rent statement, you should contact your Housing Officer.

Rent Arrears

It is an essential requirement of your tenancy to pay rent. Non payment of rent will lead to arrears. This in turn may lead to legal action being taken against you and this could lead to repossession of your home.

If you have difficulties in paying rent or your circumstances have changed, it is vital that you contact your Housing Officer. Non payment of rent constitutes a breach of your Conditions of Tenancy and may put your tenancy at risk.

In the event of rent arrears, Radius will seek to put in place an arrangement to repay the outstanding rent due. Normally such arrangements can be discussed and agreed with your Housing Officer. However, if this arrangement is broken, Radius will commence further debt recovery action and this could include the issue of a Notice Seeking Possession of your home and the commencement of legal action.

In such circumstances Radius may also apply for direct deductions from Social Security Benefits.

Court Action

If legal action has commenced it may mean that:

- You can be evicted from your home;
- You will be responsible for all legal costs in addition to your arrears;
- You may have difficulty getting credit or a loan in the future;
- You may not be considered for rehousing by the NI Housing Executive or other Housing Associations;
- We will not be able to give you a reference for mortgage lenders.

Please note that Radius will be pleased to advise on independent debt counselling agencies who can provide you with help and assistance in any aspect of debt management.

Housing Benefit and Welfare Changes

Benefits for working age claimants have changed recently and will continue to do so in the coming months and years. More information can be found on the Radius website radiushousing.org. You may have previously been entitled to Housing Benefit to assist you with the payment of rent and find that this is no longer the case.

Radius has dedicated Welfare Advice Officers who can assist you with benefits, money advice or inform of other independent advice services who can help. Please contact your Housing Officer for details.



Section Two

Your Home

General Housing Issues

Individual Gardens

You may have responsibility for an individual garden. You should always keep the garden tidy and well maintained. Where gardens are not maintained by the tenant, Radius will take any necessary action in accordance with the Conditions of Tenancy to ensure gardens are maintained to a reasonable standard.

Communal Areas

In all communal areas, the tenant should co-operate with other tenants to keep the common parts clean, tidy and free from obstruction. Where common parts are not maintained in a clean and tidy condition, Radius will undertake this work and recover the cost with a service charge to the tenants. It is against the law to smoke in any communal area. Communal areas include corridors, lifts, bin stores and communal gardens.

Smoking in Radius Buildings

Under the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, all areas of Radius premises, except a tenant's own apartment, are designated smoke free.

Energy and Water Conservation

Radius is committed to reducing its carbon footprint through partnership with tenants, staff and suppliers. All tenants of Radius properties are encouraged to switch off unnecessary lights, heaters and other electric appliances. Tenants are asked to report dripping taps and shower heads and look out for water wastage.

As you move into your new home, Radius would ask you when you purchase new white goods such as washing machines, fridges, dishwashers and tumble dryers to consider energy efficient machines. Radius would recommend following the below preferred ratings under the EU Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme:

- Fridges, freezers and fridge/freezers – A Rating
- Washing machines and dishwashers – A Rating
- Washer dryers and tumble dryers – C Rating

Fire Alarms and Smoke Detectors

Tenants should take all necessary precautions to ensure they do not pose a risk of fire in the building and be vigilant about naked flames such as cigarettes and candles. Care should also be taken to prevent the occurrence of unnecessary fire alarms caused by burning toast and leaving grill pans unattended.

If a fire alarm does sound in the building at any time, you should evacuate immediately.

Bottled Gas

You are prohibited from storing bottled gas and paraffin appliances in your home and to do so would be breaching the Conditions of your Tenancy Agreement.

Hoarding

Radius Housing would request that you do not have an excessive amount of clutter in your property that may result in fire, structural damage, disease, injury and infection.

Pets

Written permission must be obtained from Radius before keeping a pet under the Conditions of your Tenancy Agreement. If you would like to apply to keep a pet at your home, you should request and complete a Pet Application Form and return to our office. You must receive permission before any pet permanently lives at your home. You will not normally be given permission to keep a pet in an apartment block. All tenants will be held responsible for the behaviour of their pets or the pets of visitors and we would request that they sign our Responsible Pet Owners Agreement.



Tenants must ensure that pets do not cause nuisance to neighbours, residents or visitors. You should make arrangements for the care of the pet if you are away from the property for a period of time e.g. holiday, hospital stay etc.

Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times and particularly whilst in communal areas including gardens and corridors of the scheme. In the interest of hygiene, pets are not allowed on communal furniture and owners must ensure any fouling is removed from the grounds.

Wildlife

At Radius, we understand the enjoyment that feeding wildlife can bring and ask that this is done with due care and consideration. You should always feed wildlife in a way which does not create nuisance or vermin problems in your area. Tenants must not use domestic food waste to feed the birds. If feeding wildlife only feed small amounts in a proper feeder and remove uneaten food in the evening.

Parking

Parking spaces are available throughout our housing schemes. However, the number of spaces may be limited and cannot be allocated to individual tenants. Commercial vehicles, caravans and untaxed vehicles are prohibited under the Conditions of Tenancy. In areas where we have provided disabled parking spaces, we request that permits be displayed.

Noise

When people live close to neighbours in an apartment development, they may not realise they are disturbing their neighbours. Noise travels through floors and walls. To avoid causing nuisance please:

- Keep TV volume at an acceptable and/or agreed level;
- Do not put music equipment against shared walls;
- Fit a layer of insulation under laminate or wooden floor.

Contents Insurance

Radius has building insurance for all our properties but unfortunately defects can occur within your property that are unforeseen. Radius is not liable for tenant's contents (i.e. decoration, furnishings, clothing, electrical and white goods and any other item in your home). It is vital that all tenants take out Contents Insurance cover for their belongings during their tenancy.

Example: For those living in general family and singles accommodation: A leak in the bathroom which leads to living room ceiling collapsing. Radius will carry out repairs to initial leak and make good any damage caused to the property. Radius **will not** replace any damaged possessions such as sofa, TV etc. These damaged possessions would be covered under the tenants own Contents Insurance.

Bins and Collections

Bins can be provided by your local council. Should a bin not have been left by the previous tenant, you will need to contact your local council directly to order a new one. Damaged or stolen/lost bins are the tenant's responsibility.

In communal blocks where individual bins are provided, the local council will provide a collection. Refuse areas are provided in communal blocks and your co-operation is required so these areas are kept tidy at all times.

Large items can be moved by arrangement with the local council and should not be left about the property/grounds. Medical refuse must be disposed of safely at all times in accordance with health & safety regulations on safe disposal.

Your local council will be able to provide you with information on how often collections occur in your development.

Independent Living for Over 55s

Apartments for Over 55s / Sheltered Housing

At Radius, you live independently. You have your own front door and come and go as you please. We offer apartment or bungalow style accommodation specifically designed for singles and couples aged 55 and over. It is provided unfurnished ready for you to make it your home.

Radius services have been developed to meet the housing and support needs of older people. Our services are designed to promote the quality of life and maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment that breaks down barriers of social isolation and promotes overall well-being.

Maintaining Independence

A key objective of our sheltered housing is to actively encourage tenants to maintain their independence. Radius' Support Planning and Review Process encourages tenants to make decisions and informed choices with the benefit of advice and assistance.

Safe Secure Living Environment

To achieve our objective of providing a safe and secure living environment, each apartment is fitted with an emergency Radius Connect 24 call system which, when triggered, alerts either scheme-based staff or Radius Connect 24 call advisors who will respond and take appropriate action.

Social Activities

Tenants are encouraged to participate in the broad range of social activities within the scheme and also in the wider community. Please speak with your Scheme Coordinator to find out what activities are available.

Tenant Involvement

The Radius Tenant Involvement Strategy aims to empower tenants through involvement in the management of their own homes and services. Tenants are encouraged to participate and influence the direction of Radius policies in the delivery and provision of services through involvement in their Tenants' Association (if there is one at your scheme, see page 32), the Annual Residents' Forums, Panel meetings and representation at the Housing Sub-Committee. For more information on tenant involvement, please see page 36.

Extra Support

Radius is committed to providing tenants with a home for life if that is their wish. Tenants can be signposted to agencies that can provide extra support, such as carers to their home, should they need more assistance. Except when their care needs can no longer be met adequately in the setting of their Radius home, or when medical treatment in hospital is required.

Scheme Coordinators

A Scheme Coordinator is employed on either a full or part time basis at all sheltered housing schemes. The Scheme Coordinator's primary duty is to provide a person-centred housing support to each tenant in a way that respects their dignity and confidentiality.

Each tenant will have their support needs identified by the Scheme Coordinator through the process of a Support Needs Assessment. The Scheme Coordinator will undertake regular reviews of individual support plans to ensure they reflect their tenants' needs. A tenant's support plan can be updated at any time depending on the changing needs of that tenant.

Sheltered Service Standards

To achieve the desired standards, Radius will provide the following services across most of its sheltered apartments:

- A Scheme Coordinator service (hours of work may vary);
- 24 hour Radius Connect 24 Response System;
- Support Planning and Review on a 6 monthly basis;
- Monday-Friday daily welfare calls to each tenant (except where tenants opt out of this service);
- A comprehensive housing management service;
- Fully furnished common rooms;
- Fully equipped laundry rooms;
- Guest Room facilities;
- Library/hobbies room;
- Lifts to all floors;
- Weekly luncheon clubs and coffee mornings;
- Organised regular scheme social activities and events;
- Intruder alarm system;
- Induction loop system;
- Wi-Fi access in the Common Room.

Security & Master Key

When you move in you will be issued with 2 keys to your apartment. Should you require an additional key, please contact your Scheme Coordinator. You are limited to 3 keys per apartment for security reasons.

Radius will ask for the contact information of any key holders for safety and security reasons. We will need to know who has access to your apartment in the case of an emergency.

You should not seek to have copies of the main communal front door key made and circulated to friends and visitors as this will not be permitted. Should you lose your main front door key, you must inform the Scheme Coordinator and/or Housing Officer immediately.

We would ask you not to fix any additional bolt or chain to your front door because in an emergency the Scheme Coordinator must be able to gain access to any part of the building by using his/her master key. Your Scheme Coordinator will normally only enter your apartment in an emergency situation or by invitation from you. If you would like more information on when the master key could be used to enter your apartment, you can request a copy of our Procedure for the Use of Master Key or speak with your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer for details.

Communal Areas

Radius is responsible for maintaining all communal areas and would request that tenants co-operate with other tenants to keep the common parts clean, tidy and free from obstruction. Where common parts are not maintained in a clean and tidy condition, Radius will undertake this work and recover the cost with a service charge to the tenants. It is against the law to smoke in any communal area.

Pets must remain on a lead in the communal areas of any Radius property and are not permitted in the Common Room and/or Communal Kitchen; exceptions will be made for guide dogs. Pet owners are responsible for the care of their pet, including lifting foul from communal areas/gardens.

Communal Garden

Arrangements are made by Radius to have communal garden areas maintained. Garden maintenance is paid through the Service Charge and/or Rent. No planting should be undertaken or removed without prior consultation with your Housing Officer/Assets Officer.

If you are a keen gardener and would like to participate in gardening, please speak with your Scheme Coordinator and Assets Officer to discuss.

Refuse

Refuse areas are provided and your co-operation is required so these areas are kept tidy at all times. Your Scheme Coordinator will be able to provide you with information on how often collections occur in your scheme. Large items can be moved by arrangement with the local council and should not be left around the property/grounds. Medical refuse must be disposed of safely at all times in accordance with health & safety regulations on safe disposal.

Laundry Facilities

Laundry facilities are available for tenants in all of our sheltered accommodation. The tenants of each scheme are consulted on how to run the laundry facilities. For example, some schemes wish to have a laundry rota. Please speak with your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer to find out more about the laundry facilities in your scheme. The laundry facilities are for the use of tenants only and should not be used for washing clothes for family/friends. Soiled items should not be cleaned in communal machines and your laundry should not be left unattended.

Guest Room

Guest rooms are available for the family and friends of our tenants to stay over night, which is charged per night. Some of these facilities are en-suite and others will have neighbouring bathroom/shower facilities. Please speak with your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer to check availability and current charge. Continuous use of the Guest Room by the same guests should normally be restricted to a maximum of 14 days. The Guest Room is occupied on the understanding that the guest may be asked to vacate at short notice in an emergency such as, an ill tenant who requires friends or family to stay over night.

Contents Insurance

Radius holds Building Insurance for all our properties. Unfortunately defects can occur within your property that are unforeseen. In our sheltered accommodation, there is an element of Contents Insurance provided by Radius. If you would like more information on this, please speak with your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer. However, it is vital that all tenants take out Contents Insurance cover for their belongings during their tenancy, especially if their belongings are of greater value than the amount covered in the Contents Insurance provided by Radius.

Mobility Scooters

Before a tenant purchases a mobility scooter, they must seek guidance from the Assets Officer and Housing staff. All tenants must have written permission to have a scooter stored within their property or designated storage area. When requesting permission, Radius will take into consideration fire safety, if you have adequate insurance for the mobility scooter and where you plan to safely store and charge it.

Radius does not permit mobility scooters to be stored or charged in communal areas. Permission will be granted on the provision that the tenant will arrange an annual Portable Appliance Test (PAT) certificate to ensure it is in good working condition and this will be monitored via on-going fire risk assessments.

Tenants will be charged for any damage caused to Radius Housing property by their mobility scooter or those of their visitors. For further information, please contact your Scheme Coordinator, Housing Officer or Assets Officer for a copy of our Policy on the Use of Mobility Scooters.

Further Details

Further details on the specific services available at each apartment scheme are available from the Communities Department on 0330 123 0888 (press 2) or Radius website radiushousing.org. Some services may vary from scheme to scheme. Please speak to your Scheme Coordinator.



Health, Safety & Home Security

Radius Housing is conscious of the need to provide safety and security to all our tenants. Health and safety issues are very prominent in our daily management of housing schemes. Some security features are built into each scheme to help promote a safer living environment for our tenants.

However, there is also a need for you to be aware of what you can do to contribute to the overall safety and security in both your home and within a housing scheme. There are a number of sensible and easy precautions, which you need to take to make your home more safe and secure.

Fire Precaution

All Radius accommodation has been designed to comply with appropriate fire regulations.

Our general family accommodation has been fitted with smoke and heat detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, if gas is installed in the property. Tenants in our general family accommodation are responsible for testing detectors regularly.

In a sheltered scheme, where appropriate, the Scheme Coordinator will arrange for a fire drill to take place twice a year. It is essential that tenants attend the fire drill and cooperate fully with the Scheme Coordinator. Tenants of sheltered schemes are advised to inform the Scheme Coordinator if there is anyone staying with them as this information is required for evacuation purposes in case of a fire.

If you are unaware of what fire strategy is in place for your home or where your assembly point is located, please speak with your Housing Officer or Scheme Coordinator for further clarification. Please note: in the event of a fire you should never use the lift when evacuating the building.

Tenants should take all necessary precautions to ensure they do not pose a risk of fire in the building and be vigilant about naked flames, such as cigarette and candles. Care should be taken to prevent the occurrence of unnecessary fire alarms caused by burning toast and leaving grill pans unattended.

Radius is committed to promoting fire safety within our properties by completing annual Fire Risk assessments of the communal areas by a competent assessor.

Reducing the Risk of Fire

There are actions that you can take to minimise risks in your home, such as:

- Plan what to do in case of fire and be aware of escape routes;
- Make sure that smoke alarms are fitted and in working order;
- Make sure that exit routes are kept clear at all times;
- Check that all appliances have been switched off and unplugged before you go to bed;
- Report any faulty equipment or problems to your Assets Officer immediately.

Door Entry System

The Door Entry System enables you to identify visitors prior to permitting or refusing entry. **NEVER** permit entry to strangers into the scheme or your home. Before letting anyone into your home, ask yourself:

- Can you see them?
- Do you know them?
- Do you know why they are calling?
- Have they an appointment to see you?
- Have you asked for their ID?

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is a process of examining what in the working environment can cause harm to people. Judgement then can be made as to whether sufficient arrangements are in place to prevent harm as a result of accidents. Radius Risk Assessment policies and procedures are available on request.

In your home

The following requests are made purely in the interest of your own safety:

- Never use or store bottled paraffin;
- Never leave a saucepan unattended while the cooker is on;
- Never smoke in bed;
- Do not leave loose wires or flexes trailing across the floor;
- Do not overload electrical sockets. Be sure electrical plugs are correctly wired and fused;
- Do not leave carpets or linoleum turned up at edges;
- Never leave your home unlocked even if you are only out for a few minutes. Never leave keys in your front door;
- In the event of a power cut, do not use candles. We would recommend the use of a torch in this circumstance;
- When you go out, close all windows and lock both front and back doors.

And a bit more advice for the tenants of sheltered accommodation

- If you have a pendant to wear, please do so at all times when at home and around the scheme so that in the event of an emergency arising, you can press your pendant for assistance;
- Do not tie up pull cords on the call system - this may prevent you making vital contact with the Scheme Coordinator or Radius Connect 24 staff whenever you need to;
- Never let anyone into your home unless you know who it is. Always ask for identification. Any staff calling from, or on behalf of, Radius will gladly show identification. If you are in any doubt, please pull the emergency cord.



Responsive Repairs

Introduction

Radius Housing has produced this maintenance guidance section to be read in conjunction with other specific repairs and maintenance publications available on request from your Housing Officer and Assets Officer. As your landlord, Radius Housing is obliged to carry out certain planned maintenance and responsive repairs when necessary. As a tenant you are obliged to act responsibly in the care of the property and avoid neglect and damage to the property, either directly or indirectly through family or visitors.

Where intentional or unintentional neglect or damage occurs to the property, Radius Housing expects you, as the tenant, to carry out the repairs. Where the repair is not carried out and Radius Housing has had to carry out the repair on your behalf, you may be subject to recharge with the cost of the repair being passed on to you.

Repairs

Response Repairs that are the responsibility of Radius will broadly be defined as:

- **Emergency:** A response and repair will be carried out within 24 hours of the request being made;
- **Urgent:** A response and repair will be undertaken in four (4) working days;
- **Routine:** Repairs will be undertaken and completed within twenty (20) working days;
- **Long Term:** Repairs will be carried out within three months.

Common examples of Response Repairs are:

- **Emergency:** Burst pipes, entire loss of power to property;
- **Urgent:** Blocked bath/shower, leak from water/heating pipe;
- **Routine:** Internal doors not closing, plaster repairs.

In addition to Response Repairs, Radius undertakes comprehensive Major Repair schemes and an ongoing Planned and Cyclical Maintenance programme across the entire stock, ensuring high quality homes. Under the Conditions of your Tenancy, you are required to provide access for such works to be completed.



Target Times

Radius Housing will endeavour to better all obligatory target times for all repairs. However, due to many factors and in exceptional circumstances, it will not always be possible that repair response times will be met. For example, particularly unseasonable weather, holiday periods, contractor and material availability, will result in a reduction of service. However, Radius strives to ensure this does not occur in the majority of cases.

Tenant Access & Availability

In order for Radius to meet the target times for repair, it is essential that access for repairs is granted. The tenant must ensure they are available at pre-arranged times to ensure an efficient repair service is carried out. Aborted calls or restricted access by the tenant may result in unnecessary charges to Radius Housing which will be payable by the tenant. In the event that up to 2 access requests are denied or ignored and Radius has to perform essential inspection or servicing works, e.g. gas boiler servicing, Radius may seek access by way of legal action.

It is essential that all tenants have an adequate supply of gas or oil within the heating system to ensure gas/oil testing can take place at any time following a breakdown or service. Radius recommends, as a minimum, that 20m³ of gas or 100 litres of oil to be in supply. If Radius contractors attend a breakdown and tenants do not have any gas or oil, then tenants may be recharged.

Reporting Repairs

Radius Housing has introduced a number of ways to request a Response Repair:

Call us:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Response Repairs Team | 0330 123 0888 (Option 1) |
| Out of Hours Emergency Repairs | 028 9039 3131 |

Email us:

responserepairs@radiushousing.org

Online:

radiushousing.org/repairs/report
(see section on maintenance)

Write to us:

Repairs Team
Radius Housing
Head Office
38-52 Lisburn Road
Belfast
BT9 6AA
22 Radius

Emergency Procedures Repairs Service

After office hours or at holiday times, please ring 028 9039 3131

In the event of an emergency, please provide as much detail of the repair and a contact telephone number.

Please note that Emergency Repairs may only 'make safe' the problem and the final repair may then be completed during normal working hours.

Other Emergency Contact Numbers

In case of any emergency, you can dial 999 or 112 from mobile or landline to speak to the operator who will then connect you to the requested service.

Gas

If you smell gas call Phoenix Natural Gas directly on FREEPHONE: - 0800 002 001

National Gas Emergencies

0800 111 999

NIE

03457 643 643

Crimestoppers

0800 555 111

Flooding Incident Line

0300 2000 100

Water Service

0845 440 088



Repair Responsibilities

Family & Singles Type Housing

| Repair | Description | Responsibility |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Bath | Bath Unit | Radius |
| | Bath wastes including blockages | Radius |
| | Bath taps excluding washers | Radius |
| | Bath tap washers | Tenant |
| | Plug & chain | Tenant |
| Bathroom fixtures & fittings | Not including: towel rails, toilet roll holders etc. | Radius |
| Chimneys | | Radius |
| Communal Areas | | Radius |
| Decoration | External | Radius |
| Decoration | Internal | Tenant |
| Domestic Appliances | E.g. cookers, washing machines, dishwashers, fridges | Tenant |
| Doors | Internal & external | Radius |
| | Including frames, hinges, locks, door jambs, thresholds & handles | Radius |
| Downspouts | | Radius |
| Draught Proofing | | Tenant |
| External Stores | | Tenant |
| Floor Boards | | Tenant |
| Floor covering | Including adapting doors to accommodate carpets | Tenant |
| Fences & Gates | | Radius |
| Fire & grate surroundings | | Radius |
| Fixtures & fittings | E.g. coat hooks, curtains, curtain rails | Tenant |
| Fuel supply | Run out of oil or gas | Tenant |
| Fuses | | Tenant |
| Garages | Including doors (but only after inspection) | Radius |

| Repair | Description | Responsibility |
|---------------------|---|----------------|
| Garden Maintenance | Including dustbins & the supply of replacement dustbins & refuse areas | Tenant |
| Gas | Leak | Radius |
| Glazing | Re-glazing is a tenant's responsibility. In an emergency situation, Radius will only have damaged windows boarded up pending replacements. This may be reviewed in exceptional circumstances. | Tenant |
| Guttering | | Radius |
| Handrails | Where fitted by Radius | Radius |
| Heating | Including storage heaters & fitted electric fires | Radius |
| | Bleeding radiators | Tenant |
| Hot water cylinders | Including cylinder insulation | Radius |
| Internal Plastering | Plaster crack on walls including ceilings | Tenant |
| Immersion heaters | | Radius |
| Kitchens | Wall cupboards, re-secure | Radius |
| | Wall cupboards, refit doors (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Worktops including burns, scratches, chipped melamine | Tenant |
| | Base unit doors (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Base unit (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Drawers (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Extractor fan (excluding filter) | Radius |
| | Shelves to units | Radius |
| Letter boxes | | Tenant |
| Light fittings | Except light bulbs, dimmer switches, fluorescent tubes and starters and non standard light fittings fitted by the tenant | Radius |
| Locks | External doors. NOTE: Radius will only make good defective locks | Radius |

| Repair | Description | Responsibility |
|---|--|----------------|
| Loss of keys | External/internal doors to dwelling | Tenant |
| | Including repairs to force entry if you get locked out and including broken keys in lock | Tenant |
| Out buildings | Only if provided by Radius | Radius |
| Over bath showers | If fitted by tenant | Tenant |
| Paths | Including steps , footpaths and ramps | Radius |
| Plastering | External (only after inspection) | Radius |
| Plumbing repairs and leaks | Except for washing machine, dishwasher and radiators | Radius |
| Porches | | Radius |
| Rain water gullies | | Tenant |
| Re-lighting gas pilot lights | Including resetting of any heating controls or programmes | Tenant |
| Roofs | | Radius |
| Showers | Shower units and trays | Radius |
| | Shower wastes | Radius |
| | Shower curtain including fittings and rail | Tenant |
| | Shower doors | Radius |
| | Shower grab rails | Radius |
| Sinks | Sink unit (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Blockages | Tenant |
| | Sink taps excluding washers | Radius |
| | Sink tap washer | Tenant |
| | Plug and chain | Tenant |
| Skirting boards | | Radius |
| Smoke/Carbon Monoxide detectors | | Radius |
| Stairs | | Radius |
| Sweeping of chimneys (due to fire risk) | | Tenant |

| Repair | Description | Responsibility |
|--------------------|---|----------------|
| Switches & sockets | Except dimmer switches & non standard fitted by tenant | Radius |
| Telephone points | | Tenant |
| Tiling | Only after inspection and if provided by Radius | Radius |
| TV aerial | Unless communal | Tenant |
| TV sockets | Except non-standard fitted by tenant | Radius |
| Wash hand basins | Wash hand basin unit (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Blockages | Tenant |
| | Taps excluding washers | Radius |
| | Tap washers | Tenant |
| | Plug & chain | Tenant |
| Washing lines | | Tenant |
| WC, cistern & seat | WC & cistern (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Blockages to WC and waste pipe (dependent on cause) | Radius |
| | WC seat | Tenant |
| Windows | Including window sills, catches, sash, cords & frames (only after inspection) | Radius |

Independent Living for over 55s

| Repair | Description | Responsibility |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Bathroom fixtures & fittings | Including WC seats, bathroom medicine cabinets (if fitted by Radius), towel rails, grab rails and toilet roll holders (if fitted by Radius) | Radius |
| Fuel supply | Run out of oil or gas | Radius |
| Gardening maintenance | Including dustbins and refuse areas | Radius |
| Sinks | Sink unit | Radius |
| | Sink waste | Radius |
| | Sink taps | Radius |
| | Sink washer | Radius |
| | Plug & chain | Radius |
| Wash hand basins | Wash hand basin unit | Radius |
| | Washers | Radius |
| | Plug & chain | Radius |
| Washing lines | | Radius |
| WC, cistern and seat | WC and cistern (only after inspection) | Radius |
| | Blockages to WC and waste pipe (dependant on cause) | Radius |
| | WC seat | Radius |
| Communal flooring | | Radius |
| Communal heating | | Radius |
| Communal internal decoration | | Radius |
| Communal kitchens | Including Domestic appliances | Radius |
| Communal laundry equipment | | Radius |
| Corridor fire doors | | Radius |
| Corridor lighting | | Radius |
| Emergency lighting | | Radius |
| Fire alarm equipment | | Radius |
| Passenger lift | | Radius |
| Stair lift | | Radius |
| Warden call equipment/door entry | | Radius |

Maintaining Your Home

Condensation & Ventilation

Condensation occurs when there is an excessive build up of moisture in the air. Condensation can form mould patches and these patches generally appear on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners and on/or near windows.

Radius would advise that you try and find a balance of heat and ventilation to prevent mould growth in your home. Tenants can cause excessive moisture in the air in daily life e.g. drying clothes indoors. You can reduce condensation in your home by:

- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. Do not hang wet clothes directly over radiators;
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider. Use the bathroom/kitchen extractor fan where fitted.

There may be possible building defects that could cause the above issues and we would recommend that Radius is contacted and an Assets Officer will arrange to visit the property and inspect the possible cause(s) to allow any remedial works to take place.

Vermin/Pest Control

Radius does not take responsibility for eradicating vermin/pests from around or within our General Needs properties. The local council Pest Control Department should be contacted to deal with any instances of infestation. If any building defects are noted during the eradication then Radius shall make good these faults to stop any potential future issues.

Radius takes full responsibility for vermin/pest control within our sheltered housing accommodation.

Improvements & Alterations by Tenants

Alterations and improvements are defined as anything that alters the structure, appearance, size or any other construction type work to the accommodation or to the grounds in which they are situated.

Any alterations to your accommodation must be approved by Radius Housing Association prior to the works commencing. You must write to us to obtain permission for the works, to allow us to assess the proposals and to ensure your accommodation is not damaged or made unsafe. In some cases improvements and alterations you propose, may require building control approval and/or planning permission, which you will be responsible for obtaining.

Any works carried out without prior approval may result in corrective work to restore the property to its original condition with you being recharged.

Tenant Legionnaires' Disease Guide

Guidance on Legionnaires' Disease for tenants and residents of Sheltered Accommodation

Domestic hot and cold water systems can provide an environment where Legionella bacteria can grow. This can cause Legionnaires' Disease which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water containing Legionella bacteria. This advice sheet gives tips for residents of sheltered accommodation.

There are three fundamental aspects of ensuring that legionella is kept out of our water systems, these are:

- Hot water is circulated above 50 degrees
- Cold water is circulated below 20 degrees
- Water is kept moving and not allowed to stagnate.

Radius have a water hygiene contractor who manages and monitors the quality of the water at our schemes, they carry out regular water testing, monitor the temperatures of our hot and cold water and conduct regular risk assessments to ensure everyone is kept safe.

There are some things that you can do to help limit the risk of legionella growth:

- Flush taps and showers that are not used for a few minutes each week.
- If away for long periods of time (longer than 1 week) ensure that taps and showers are flushed for several minutes before use.
- Keep your shower head clean, disinfect this with regular bleach every 6 months.
- Report any problems you are experiencing with your water to your scheme co-ordinator or the customer service center on 0330 123 0888.

Legally, it is Radius's responsibility to take precautions to prevent Legionella being present in the hot or cold water system but tenants and residents also have an important part to play in taking these simple and practical precautions.

Planned Maintenance

In addition to repair maintenance, Radius Housing carries out an annual programme of replacement and servicing maintenance. Replacement works are carried out when a building element, such as windows, wiring, boilers, bathrooms or kitchens, reach the end of their life expectancy.

Works that become necessary as a result of legislative change are also included in the annual programme of planned maintenance when required.

Elements of the building which require regular servicing, like gas and oil boilers, are undertaken on a cyclical basis. It is a legal requirement for these annual services to take place and is essential to ensure the component operates safely and effectively. For the safety of your family and neighbours, where access cannot be made gas at your home will be capped or an injunction sought. Under the Conditions of your Tenancy, you are required to give full access for all of these works to be completed.

Disabled Adaptations

Radius Housing carries out Disabled Adaptations to properties upon receipt of an Occupational Therapist (OT) recommendation. Following a visit to the property to assess the needs of the tenant, the OT will forward a written recommendation to Radius Housing who will determine the feasibility of the works.

The tenant must be registered or eligible for registration under Section 1 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (NI) Act 1978 and meet the criteria set out by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) / Development Programme Group (DPG).

Recommended works can range from grab rails to level access showers and stairlifts. Major works would include extensions to properties where feasible. All OT recommendations are subject to Adaptation Pre-Conditions and eligibility criteria.

Tenants would be required to be referred to an Occupational Therapist either via their doctor or local hospital and the OT is required to visit the property to carry out an assessment prior to sending their recommendation to Radius Housing. Applications for adaptations will not be approved if you are currently on the waiting list for a transfer to other accommodation.



Section Three

Your Neighbourhood

Your Neighbourhood

Tenants' Associations

What is a Tenants' Association?

A Tenants' Association is a group of people who live within the same area. They work together to represent the views of their neighbours to make their neighbourhood a better place to live. Many of our tenants belong to a Tenants' Association but Radius is always encouraging more people to get involved. Please contact your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer to find out if there is an active Tenants' Association in your area.

The Benefits of a Tenants' Association

- This is a good opportunity to meet with your neighbours and arrange social activities;
- You can discuss any issues that need raised with Radius on behalf of your neighbours, such as, repairs;
- They can help find ways of solving problems and can suggest improvements and ensure that the tenants voice is heard;
- They promote a healthier community and can make your neighbourhood a better place to live;
- A good place to organise fundraising activities. For example, for a charity, to buy new plants for the area etc.

Setting up a Tenants' Association

Radius supports setting up and maintaining Tenants' Associations and can provide you with guide on how to set the association up. If there is no Tenants' Association in the area and you would like to set-up one for your area please contact your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Radius is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and nuisance in order to create safer and better communities for all our tenants. Radius' full policy on anti-social behaviour is available on our website radiushousing.org

What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

An individual may be deemed to have acted in an anti-social manner if he/she has:

- Been convicted of using the dwelling-house or allowing it to be used for illegal or immoral purposes;
- Been convicted of an arrestable offence committed in, or in the locality of the dwelling house;
- Directly or indirectly affected the management functions or matters relating to those functions.

Anti-social behaviour might include amongst other things:

- Violence or threat of violence;
- Hate behaviours that target members of identified groups because of their perceived difference (e.g. religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability and dependant status);
- Noise nuisance (rowdy parties, loud music/TVs, dog barking, etc.);
- Arguing and door slamming;
- Environmental quality issues (e.g. litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly tipping, nuisance vehicles);
- Offensive drunkenness;
- Using housing accommodation for illegal/immoral activity or other unlawful purposes, e.g. selling drugs/drug abuse;
- Intimidation or harassment.

Legal action may be taken against tenants who are found guilty of anti-social behaviour or nuisance as this may be deemed as a breach of the Conditions of Tenancy.

What Radius will do?

Radius acknowledges that every individual is entitled to live in peace within their neighbourhood. We will seek to address the problem of anti-social behaviour and in doing so provide a quality and supportive housing service.

We will:

- Quickly and formally acknowledge reports of anti-social behaviour;
- Seek to investigate reported instances of anti-social behaviour in a timely manner;
- Provide advice and support to tenants;
- Identify, interview all interested parties and take appropriate and affirmative action within our remit as Registered Social Landlord;
- Liaise with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as appropriate;

- Establish inter agency working where appropriate;
- Use legal action when all efforts at conciliation have failed. Action can include possession, injunction and applying to relevant authorities for an Anti Social Behaviour Order;
- Endeavour to take action on behalf of Radius tenants who are the victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Seek to respond to instances of anti-social behaviour in Radius' schemes and properties whether the complainant is a tenant, private tenant or owner occupier; and
- In the context of re-housing, take full account of any anti-social behaviour carried out by the housing applicant or their household, to the extent that this is permissible.

Each case is regularly reviewed to determine when further action is required and regular updates are provided to those involved.



Section Four

Radius Service

Tenant Involvement

You are at the heart of our business

At Radius, we want to maximise the opportunities for tenant involvement to ensure you are at the centre of everything we do. Our Tenant Engagement Programme allows you to get involved, get the most of your experience as a Radius tenant and ensure there is something to suit everyone.

Tenant engagement is a way for Radius and our tenants to work together to improve our services. We want to hear from you, our tenants, about what matters to you to shape the service you receive.

Through tenant engagement you can:

- Influence decisions that affect your housing and maintenance services;
- Promote better communication between tenants and staff;
- Develop your skills and knowledge of our services and what you are entitled to;
- Meet new people and share ideas;
- Increase satisfaction levels within your home and neighbourhood.



You can make a difference

There are various options for tenants to get involved in shaping and improving the services they receive from Radius. Please see below information on how you can get involved:

- **Tenant Involvement Register**

This is a register of tenants who are interested in receiving correspondence about events and meetings in their area and provide feedback. Tenants on the register comment, as and when required.

- **Tenant Area Panel**

This Panel meets with Radius' Housing and Assets staff to discuss strategic topics in your area. These Panels meet every quarter for two hours.

- **Estate Walkabouts/Inspections**

This involves accompanying Radius staff on visits in your area to seek enhancements. This normally takes two hours and can take place annually when requested.

- **Scrutiny Panel**

The Scrutiny Panel looks critically at the services you receive and aims to bring about improvements. This panel meets four times a year for two hours.

- **Readers' Panel**

The Readers' Panel reviews Radius documents before they go to the general tenant body. Reviews can include policies, handbooks etc. This Panel meets as and when required.

- **Email Group**

You can register your email address with us to receive regular communication and updates from Radius.

If you are interested in any of the above tenant engagement options and would like to get involved, please contact your Scheme Coordinator or Housing Officer. You can also contact our Tenant Engagement Team on tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org or call our office on 0330 123 0888.

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

Periodically, Radius will contact a random sample of tenants to conduct a Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This provides Radius with an insight on how our customers feel about the service they receive including where tenants feel Radius could do better. The results of these surveys are available to tenants in our Annual Review.

Tenant Forums and Conferences

The aim of the annual Tenant Forums and the Tenant Conference is to promote the welfare of Radius tenants and improve the delivery of housing services.



Customer Service Standards

Radius seeks to be the provider of choice for families and others in need of housing, care and support.

Customer Equality & Choice

- You will be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, religion, political opinion, race, marital status, dependant status, sexual orientation or ability/disability (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998).
- You will be offered choice where reasonably practical in relation to service delivery, e.g. maintenance as per Tenants Handbook, transfer as per Transfer & Allocations Policies and complaints as per Radius' Complaints Policy.

Confidentiality

- You will not be asked for personal information unless it is relevant to your enquiry;
- All information will be held in confidence and in line with General Data Protection Regulations;
- Your confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Visiting Our Offices

- Our offices will be open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday, and 4.30pm on Friday; any changes to these hours will be displayed at regional and scheme offices;
- The receptionist will attend to you within 2 minutes of your arrival;
- If we are unable to directly assist you, we will explain why and refer you to the relevant body in relation to your enquiry;
- Our reception areas will be stocked with useful up to date information.

When we visit you

- Association representatives will identify themselves before entering your home;
- Staff will advise you in advance of their visit where reasonably practical.

The service you should come to expect:

- You will be identified by your name (when known) at all times;
- All staff will clearly identify their name, job title and contact details in all correspondence and visits;
- Staff will wear name badges/photographic identification, where appropriate;
- You will be responded to in clear, concise, plain language with the respondents name, job title and contact details;
- We will publish our performance against our customer service standards annually.

When you call us

- You will be offered the option to leave a message if the member of staff you wish to speak with is unavailable;
- You will not be transferred to other departments unless necessary, in which case you will be informed of the reason why and who your call is being transferred to.

When we receive your letter/email it will

- Be acknowledged within 2 working days and/or fully responded to within 20 working days where possible;
- Where your letter is a complaint, it will be dealt with as indicated in the Complaints Policy. You will find more information on our Complaints Policy on page 42.

Reviewing Radius Service Standards and Performance Targets

Radius' service standards and performance targets are reviewed annually by our Board of Management and the Senior Management Team. Details on our performance against these targets are made available to all customers in an Annual Report.

The Senior Management Team together with the Operational Managers Group review performance on a monthly basis to identify areas where action or improvements are required and to monitor progress of any planned actions.

Comparing our Performance

Radius Housing compares its performance against a wide range of other housing providers and regulators on an annual basis. There is a continuous informal benchmarking carried out regularly. The Association also performs Best Value Reviews from time to time in the pursuit of enhanced performance and value.

Quality Assessments

Radius recognises the added value of achieving externally assessed quality marks. We believe they confirm our ability to reach and maintain a high-quality service which is compared and set against nationally agreed and recognised standards.

Customer Satisfaction

Radius Housing carries out regular Tenant Satisfaction Surveys. The results of these surveys are used to develop targets to ensure continuous service improvement. The results are used to develop targets for continuous service improvement.



Equality

Radius Housing is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations with an overall objective of creating an environment of equality and embracing diversity.

The aim of the Radius Equality Scheme is to communicate the commitment of Radius to promote equality of opportunity to all our tenants. It is our policy to provide equality of opportunity to all, irrespective of:

- gender, marital or family status;
- religious belief or political opinion;
- disability;
- race, ethnicity or colour;
- nationality;
- sexual orientation;
- age.

Complaints and Compliments

Policy Statement & Aims

Radius aims to make a positive difference by providing homes, support and care for people, building neighbourhoods and empowering communities. We want to hear about the occasions where our service standards do not meet expectations. There may also be occasions when you wish to recognise exceptional customer service by Radius staff.



How to Compliment Exceptional Performance

If you are pleased with the performance of a staff member or believe Radius has given you a level of service above your expectation, we would be glad to hear from you.

We believe that where exceptional service is brought to our attention, we can showcase that performance within our Association and thereby enhance our overall customer service standards.

If you wish to compliment our performance we would invite you to write to the Director of Communities at Radius Housing Association, Freepost BEL4078, BT18 9BR or email info@radiushousing.org.

What is a complaint?

A complaint will arise when our service levels fail to meet your expectations. For example, this could mean:

- A service not being delivered on time;
- Poor quality of service;
- Provided with incorrect information;
- Complaint about a member of staff or a contractor, working on behalf of Radius.

How to make a complaint

Many issues can be dealt with informally by approaching Radius managers or staff directly. You can use the complaints procedure if you consider your complaint is too serious to be dealt with informally. If you are dissatisfied and want to make a formal complaint, you can lodge your formal complaint in a number of ways, including:

By telephone: 0330 123 0888

By email: complaints@radiushousing.org

Online: Via the complaints section of our website
radiushousing.org

In person: At your regional office or your sheltered housing scheme.

In writing to: Complaints Officer, Radius Housing Association,
FREEPOST RSBH-RZZA-UUAE, 38-52 Lisburn Road,
Belfast, BT9 6AA

Via a third party: for example a relative, councillor, solicitor or MP.

If you do make a complaint it would be helpful if you could tell us what we can do to improve things. If you would like a copy of our Complaints Policy, you will find this on our website radiushousing.org or contact our office to receive a copy. Our complaints process has three stages - every complaint must start at the first stage.

Step 1 - Formal Complaints

We will acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days of receipt and will provide a full reply within 20 working days.

If we cannot meet this target, we will write or telephone and advise you of a new target date for response and the reason for delay.

If we do not receive a response from the complainant, within 20 working days from the date of our full reply, Radius will consider the complaint resolved.

Stage 2 - Your complaint has been investigated but you are dissatisfied

If you are not happy with the outcome of the first stage investigation of your complaint or if the problem/complaint has continued, you can request that the Chief Executive or the Director of the department review your complaint. You must write to us within 20 working days from the date of our initial response letter.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days and you can expect a full response within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. A response may take longer if your complaint is more complex but we will contact you to let you know when you can expect a full response and the reason for delay.

Stage 3 - Still not satisfied: what can I do?

If your complaint has not been settled to your satisfaction, you can ask the Ombudsman (the Commissioner for Complaints) to investigate. The Ombudsman will normally expect you to have used Radius' internal complaints procedure first before bringing a complaint to this office.

The Ombudsman is completely independent of Radius Housing.

Radius will co-operate fully in the course of any investigation carried out by the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman Service can be contacted at:

Post: Freepost NIPSO
 or
 Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman,
 Progressive House
 33 Wellington Place
 BELFAST
 BT1 6HN

Telephone: 028 9023 3821
Text Phone: 028 9089 7789
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
Website: nipso.org.uk



Section Five

Moving Out

Closure of Statutory House Sales Scheme

The Statutory House Sales Scheme which Radius operates will close to new applications at midnight on the 27th August 2022. This reflects the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2020 passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 30 June 2020 and given Royal Assent on 28 August 2020.

Where a valid application is received prior to midnight on 27th August 2022 the application will be processed in the normal manner.

For further information regarding this, please speak to your Housing Officer.

COPIES OF THE FULL POLICY ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Buying Your Home

Radius Housing operates a Statutory House Sales Policy which came into effect in December 2004, in accordance with the Housing (NI) Order 2003.

Radius House Sales Policy provides Secure Tenants, in certain circumstances, with the opportunity to purchase their property.

Further information on buying your property is available from Radius offices or the Radius website radiushousing.org and the notes below should provide you with a brief guide.

Can I purchase the property I live in now?

You must have held a social housing tenancy for at least 5 years before you can apply to purchase. This does not have to have been in the same property.

If you hold an Introductory Tenancy, you cannot apply to purchase until you move onto a Secure Tenancy. Time spent as an Introductory Tenant may count towards the discount entitlement.

You cannot buy a property if it is:

- A Sheltered Housing Property;
- A bungalow with 2 bedrooms or less;
- Any specialist Radius accommodation.



How much will my property cost me?

The cost cannot be determined until the market value is requested. It is only then that Radius can calculate your discount entitlement and advise you of the offer of sale price. If your property has been built or improved within the previous full 10 calendar years before the date of your application, the amount of discount will be restricted. Please contact Radius for more information. The amount of discount is now capped at a maximum of £24,000.

How do I apply?

To apply, you need to request an application from any Radius office and return it with a cheque for an independent valuation of your property. Please note: The Statutory House Sales Scheme will close to new applications at midnight on the 27th August 2022.

Radius will then aim to have an offer of sale out to you within 10 weeks of receiving your completed application form.

Radius will provide guidance and assistance to help you become a homeowner. Please contact your Housing Officer for details.

Ending Your Tenancy

Under the terms of your tenancy, you are required to provide Radius Housing with four weeks notice in writing of your intention to bring an end to your tenancy. Your tenancy begins on a Monday and the period of notice and tenancy will end on a Sunday.

A forwarding address will be required and the property must be left in an acceptable condition with all items of furniture and personal possessions removed from the property. Radius Housing will not accept any responsibility or liability for anything left in the property once you have moved out.

When we receive notice of your intention to terminate your tenancy, Radius staff will carry out an inspection of the property before you leave. They will inform you of any repairs or works required that are your responsibility under the terms of tenancy. If these are not completed before you leave and passed by our staff as acceptable and up to standard, Radius will have no option but to charge you for any repairs or works required to bring it up to a lettable standard.

The property must be left in a clean, tidy and safe condition with all keys returned before midday on the last day of your tenancy. You will also be charged for any damaged items that are classed as a tenant's responsibility that are not repaired before the end of your tenancy. Your tenancy will not be terminated until the keys are returned and the weekly charge will continue to be applied until the tenancy has been terminated.

Radius Housing must be given vacant possession of the property and no one should remain living in the property after the tenancy has been terminated. Radius will take whatever action deemed necessary to ensure we retrieve the property, including legal action if required.

When leaving the property you should ensure that you also notify the following agencies:

- Your electricity provider: Power NI/SSE Airtricity;
- Your gas supplier: Phoenix Natural Gas/SSE Airtricity (if applicable);
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit);
- Social Security Agency (if you are in receipt of Welfare Benefits);
- Telephone company (if applicable);
- Post Office (to have mail redirected);
- Northern Ireland Water Service.

Ending a tenancy as the representative of a friend or relative who has died

We understand and fully appreciate that coping with the death of a friend or relative is never easy and trying to deal with their affairs can be complicated and upsetting. If you are unsure how to bring the tenancy to an end in this circumstance, please contact a Housing Officer who will provide you with assistance and advice on how to proceed.

It is important that we receive notice of ending the tenancy in the event of a death in writing. We will confirm the date when the tenancy will be brought to an end. The weekly rental charge will continue to be charged until the tenancy has been brought to an end and the property has been cleared of all possessions. Please note that Housing Benefit will cease to be paid once the tenant has died and will be recouped by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, if overpaid.

If you are entitled under the Rules of Succession to take on the tenancy, you should contact your Housing Officer who will advise you on actions required.

Notes

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Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

Radius HOUSING




Head Office

38-52 Lisburn Road,
Belfast, BT9 6AA

t: 0330 123 0888
e: info@radiushousing.org
w: radiushousing.org

Hollywood Office

3-7 Redburn Square,
Hollywood, BT18 9HZ

 @RadiusHousing
 /RadiusHousing
 radiushousing

North West Office

7 Racecourse Road,
Derry-Londonderry, BT48 7RB

Southern Regional Office

Ballybot House,
22 Cornmarket,
Newry, BT35 8BG

North East Regional Office

Deerfin Fold, Wakehurst Road,
Ballymena, BT42 3LJ

Emergency Contacts

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs 028 9039 3131

Northern Ireland Electricity 03457 643 643

24 hr Gas Emergency Service 0800 002 001

Water Service 0845 440 088

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

If you would like to receive this handbook in an alternative format,
please contact Radius Communities Department on: 0330 123 0888