

The Update

Newsletter for Radius Tenants



Everyone has a place



Service Improvement

Your priorities for service improvement in 2019/20

Pages 4 & 5



Community Chest

Offering grants from £250 to £1,000

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Get Involved

Keeping you at the heart of our business

Page 11

Welcome to the Update



Our Tenant Engagement Team have been very busy making sure that we create opportunities to meet with our tenants and our Estate Walkabouts are proving to be very successful. We have our regular Tenant Panel and Tenant Executive Committee meetings to make sure that the voice of our tenants is being heard and the Committee have been setting out what they believe are the priorities for improvements

Welcome to the latest edition of the Radius Update, our newsletter for tenants, which we hope you will find both interesting and informative. At Radius we are committed to keeping you informed of all our latest policies and developments and we are also very keen to hear any comments or suggestions from you.

in our service delivery. We would really like to see more tenants becoming involved and it doesn't have to be by attending meetings. We have included at page 11 a menu of how you might become involved, so please do let us know if you would be interested.

We have been focusing our attention on how we can support our tenants and invest in our local communities. You will see details in this newsletter of our Community Chest Grants, which have been awarded to fund some great local initiatives. We have been building partnerships with many organisations such as USEL, a local Social Enterprise which was formed to help people with disabilities gain employment. We are also mindful that many of our tenants may experience changes to their benefits and be faced with moving onto Universal Credit.

Our in-house Welfare Advice Officers are on hand to support tenants through any change and we have included a useful question and answer section on Universal Credit.

Finally, I am absolutely delighted to announce that our new Corporate Charity is Aware NI. Through this partnership, we will be helping to raise awareness of mental health issues and promoting good mental health. Our staff and tenants will be involved in raising much-needed funds for this excellent charity which will make a real difference in many people's lives.

I do hope that you enjoy reading the newsletter. Please let us know if there are any topics you would like to see covered in future editions.

Eileen Patterson
Director of Communities

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Cover Image



Tenants enjoying their new home in Rathgill, Bangor

Introducing our NEW Charity Partner

We are excited to tell you about AWARE NI, an incredible charity who will be our partner for the next two years.

Radius Housing has announced AWARE NI as the Association's charity partner for the next two years. Radius Housing is set for an action-packed schedule of fundraising on behalf of AWARE which will include everything from fun runs and bake-offs to raffles and bun sales. Radius staff have already planned a number of events to help raise essential funds for Northern Ireland's Depression Charity.

AWARE NI delivers mental health and wellbeing programmes in communities, schools, colleges, universities and workplaces throughout Northern Ireland. The charity has an established network of 23 support groups across the country, which are run by trained volunteers.

Support groups welcome people with depression and bipolar disorder as well as those who care for people with the illness. Many of the AWARE support group volunteers have personal experience of depression, having been to a support group themselves. The charity offers these support groups free of charge, with no appointment needed.



Find out more about AWARE NI and the support services they provide at www.aware-ni.org

Mary Smith, Tenant Board Member

Mary was welcomed onto the Radius Board on 26th September 2018, to bring a tenant's perspective and experience to the discussions and decisions of the Radius Board.



Mary has been proactively involved in her local community for many years. Her interest began almost 30 years ago when she first became a housing association tenant. Since then, Mary has been actively involved in various resident committees and forums and is passionate about seeking ways to improve her local community.

Mary is Secretary of the Lagmore Community Forum and together with her colleagues and neighbours

she has been involved in securing funding to build and maintain the Lagmore Community Hub. This Hub provides much needed vital space for local community groups and provides haven for the young people of the community through youth clubs and other fully subscribed activities.

Mary also represents the greater Lagmore Community on the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership Board. Mary has been involved in local resident panels for Radius Housing and formerly Helm Housing Association.

Within Radius, Mary is a member of the Radius Tenant Executive Committee, Radius Communities and Assets Committee and Radius Board. This has offered Mary the opportunity to bring a tenant's perspective on everyday housing related issues in her local community to the heart of Radius' Board of Management.



Tenant Engagement

At Radius, we want to maximise opportunities for tenant involvement to ensure that you, our tenant, are at the centre of everything we do. Our tenant engagement programme allows you to get involved and get the most out of your tenant experience and ensures there is something to suit everyone.

Why Work With Us?

Tenant engagement is a way for Radius and our tenants to share information and ideas and work together to improve our services.

Would you like to shape the services you and other tenants receive?

Your opinions matter to us. By working together you can:

- Influence decisions that affect your housing services
- Promote better communications between tenants, residents 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

First time getting involved?

Don't worry! We are interested in hearing views and suggestions from all our tenants and residents. We will provide you with support and training where needed and someone will always be here to help you.

How much will it cost me?

Only your time! Those who attend our meetings will have their travel expenses reimbursed at the public transport rate. Training and relevant support will also be provided to support you in your role.

Don't want to come to meetings?

From the comfort of your own home right through to the Boardroom, there are many ways to get involved. This could include filling in a survey, taking part in an Estate Walkabout or even sending us feedback on an upcoming consultation. We would love to have you on board **in whatever way you choose** to help Radius continually improve and grow.

If you would like to get involved or would like to know more, check out our Menu of Involvement on page 11. Please take a moment to consider how you would like to take part, complete the form and return it to us. Once we receive your form, our Tenant Engagement Team will be in touch.

Inset photo (L-R): Martin Downey, Tenant Engagement Officer; Siobhan O'Neill, Empowering Communities; Patrick Campbell, Chair, Area Panel 3; Christine Cackett, Tenant Engagement Officer; Grainne Mullin, Community Investment Manager; Danny O'Neill, Vice-Chair Area Panel 5; Stephen Pyper, Tenant Representative at Radius Communities & Assets Committee; Margaret Dillon, Vice Chair, Area Panel 1; Stephen Addis, Chair, Area Panel 4; John McLean, Radius Chief Executive.

Together in 2018/19 we...

In 2018, Radius tenants and our Radius Tenant Engagement Team successfully delivered:

- ✓ **Launch of the Radius Tenant Engagement Strategy**, along with Menu of Involvement & Engagement Structure
- ✓ **24 estate walkabouts** held with over 1,500 households invited to have their say – see page 7 for more information.
- ✓ **24 Area Panel meetings** held with elected office bearers in place
- ✓ Elected **Tenant Executive Committee** established
- ✓ Tenant **Representatives** on Communities & Assets Committee and Radius Board
- ✓ Programme of **service improvement** developed
- ✓ **40 nominations received** for Scheme Awards across categories including Community Pride, Healthy Living & Learning, Best Kept Garden, Good Neighbours and Outstanding Scheme
- ✓ **Programme of actions** created
- ✓ **7 Community Chest applications** approved and projects underway or completed
- ✓ **Tenant Approved Stamp**



- ✓ **4 Radius Sheltered Housing Tenant Forums**
 - > Over **700** delegates
 - > **97.62%** said the event overall was **Good/Very Good**.
 - > **77.3%** felt the event provided opportunity to meaningfully engage with Radius **A Lot/A Great deal**.
- ✓ **Tenant Engagement Conference** held October 2018
 - > Almost **100 delegates** in attendance
 - > **96.6%** told us the event overall was Good/Very Good.
 - > **85.7%** felt the event provided them with the opportunity to meaningfully engage with Radius staff **A Lot/A Great deal**.

"I enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere between management, staff and tenants."

Participant at Forums

Our Priorities for 2019/20

Your Tenant Executive Committee have selected the top priorities for service improvement in 2019/20

Over the last year we have been gathering information from our surveys, consultations, events, Area Panels and Tenant Executive Committee on areas of service that you would like to shape with a view to improving the services you receive.

Your Tenant Executive Committee has considered all the proposed service areas and prioritised, in no particular order, the following five areas:



Communication



Reporting a Repair



Anti-Social Behaviour



Communal Cleaning



Parking

This is your opportunity to shape the service you receive...

All tenants will have the opportunity to have their voice heard when we open for consultation. As part of this process, we will also be looking for a core group of tenants, staff and relevant external agencies to review the comments made in response to our consultation and bring forward suggestions and actions for Radius.

If this is something you would be interested in, please have a look at our Menu of Involvement on page 11, which lists all the opportunities available for you to get involved.



Community Chest

Radius is proud to offer grants from £250 to £1,000 to support community projects organised by our tenants, their communities and other organisations working in our areas through the Radius Community Chest.

We are excited and proud to support this new initiative which aims to empower a wide range of projects that will contribute to the wellbeing and development of our communities. An excellent example of how the Community Chest can help improve the lives of those living in our communities came from an application we received from Ballyclare High School.

Project: Sensory Garden for Dementia & Alzheimer's

Amount Awarded: £1,000

Benefit to Radius Community:

The project is located beside two Radius sheltered schemes that can avail of the garden when completed.

Themes Met:

- Building neighbourhoods (environmental issues)
- Working for Community Change (students involved in education on Dementia/ Alzheimer's)
- Developing participants' pride in where they live
- Enhancing participants' wellbeing, confidence and social skills (students involved in education on Dementia/ Alzheimer's)
- Promoting inclusion within communities

Working together:

The school provided clear communication from start to finish and was able to provide any additional information Radius requested.

Conclusion:

This application was completed to a high standard.

The applicant worked well with Radius and the project had a clear benefit to our tenants.

The Radius Community Chest is a great opportunity for us to work together to contribute to our communities. Do you want to...

- get together with your neighbours on a garden project?
- provide training for people in your area to get back into work?
- support young people's activities in your area?

If you have an idea for a project that will benefit our community, contact our Tenant Engagement Team to express your interest and request an application pack on 0330 123 0888 (Option 2) or email us at tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org.

To keep updated on Radius, follow us on:



Like us on Facebook
f RadiusHousing

Follow us on Twitter
t @RadiusHousing

Follow us on Instagram
i RadiusHousing

Visit our website:
www.radiushousing.org

Estate Walkabouts

Dedicated time to get to know you, your neighbourhood and what matters most in your community.

As part of our commitment to keep you at the heart of everything we do, our Estate Walkabouts enable you to make a genuine difference to the service you receive and the community in which you live.

What is an Estate Walkabout?

An Estate Walkabout is time dedicated to an identified Radius estate during which you will be able to talk to your Housing Officer, Assets Officer and Tenant Engagement Officer. On occasion we may ask other local authorities, such as the council and/or Roads Service, to join us if required. Estate Walkabouts last approximately 1-2 hours and you will be notified in advance of our visit.

What is the aim of an Estate Walkabout?

During an Estate Walkabout the main areas we look at are:

- **You & Your Home**
Repairs, your tenancy and how you can get involved
- **Communal Areas**
Any corridors, noticeboards, gardens, outdoor space, litter, bins etc
- **Your Community**
Community concerns, setting up a tenant group/association, anti-social behaviour etc

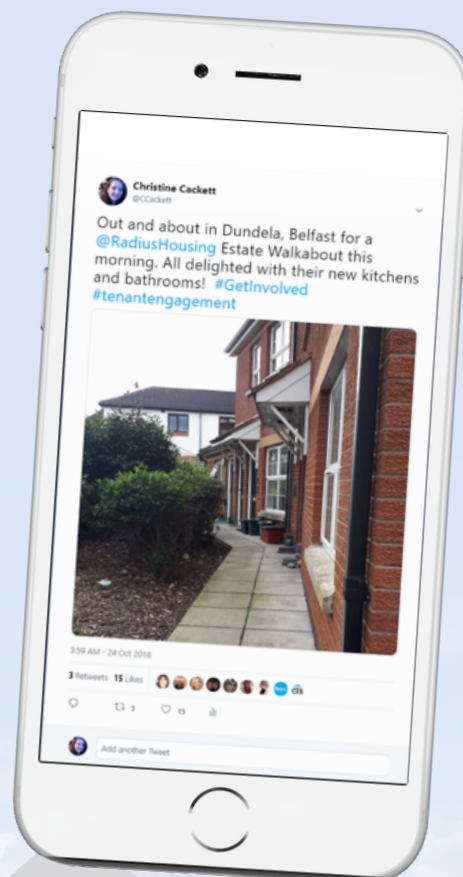
This is not an exhaustive list as each estate will have their own unique circumstances and topics they wish to discuss.

What if an Estate Walkabout is planned but I cannot attend?

We will write to you with at least 2 weeks' notice prior to any Estate Walkabout in your neighbourhood. If you are unable to attend, you will be able to contact us to discuss anything you would like us to look at in your area in your absence.

How do I request an Estate Walkabout where I live?

Radius aims to carry out Estate Walkabouts for 10% of our properties and we are currently working on our schedule for 2019/20. If you would like to put your neighbourhood forward for an Estate Walkabout, please contact our Tenant Engagement Team on 0330 123 0888 (Option 2) or email tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org



End of Mitigations



You may be affected now or in the future...

What are Mitigation Payments?

Mitigations are the measures that the NI Executive put in place to reduce the immediate impact of recent changes to the welfare and benefits system in Northern Ireland known as Welfare Reform. They take the form of Welfare Supplementary Payments which are paid to those social housing tenants who are financially worse off as a result of the recent welfare changes. They may end in March 2020.

How will I be affected when Mitigation ends in March 2020?

- **You will be affected** if you currently receive these mitigations and will have to start paying any shortfall in your rent when they end.
- **If you remain affected** by the benefit cap and/or Bedroom Tax, then you will have to continue to pay the shortfall between your actual housing costs and the amount of benefit you receive for housing.

BENEFIT CAP

What is the benefit cap and how does it affect what help I receive towards my housing costs?

As part of Welfare Reform, the government has capped the amount of benefit income coming into a household. The current benefit cap limit is:



£384.62

a week if your household is made up of a couple (with/without children)



£257.69

a week if you are a single person

The benefit cap works by calculating your total income from certain benefits. If applicable, it will reduce the amount you receive towards housing costs.

The cap will not impact households who claim certain benefits such as Working Tax Credit, disability or carer's benefits, those of pension age or those living in exempt accommodation.



CASE STUDY

Angela and Mark's household receive benefits that amount to £400 per week (all of which counts towards the cap). As this is over the benefit cap limit, the amount they receive will reduce by £15.38, towards their housing costs. Currently Angela and Mark receive **Welfare Supplementary Payments** that cover this shortfall. However, when mitigation ceases in March 2020, they will have to pay the £15.38 per week to Radius.

You should check to see if you are affected by the current cap and are receiving Welfare Supplementary Payments. If you are, then you need to prepare for these payments stopping next year and start to think about how you will make up any shortfall in your housing costs.

You should also check to see if you are eligible to apply for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) as this may also help to make up for some of the reduction in housing benefit.

What action do you need to take?

- ☐ Check with Radius to see if you are currently receiving Welfare Supplementary Payments and be aware that these mitigations will end in March 2020.
- ☐ Think about how this will apply to your household going forward and how you will manage to pay any shortfall thereafter.
- ☐ You could also consider moving to a smaller property.
- ☐ Depending on your household circumstances, you may need the extra room. If so, you could apply for this to be taken into account when assessing your housing costs.

BEDROOM TAX

What is the Bedroom Tax and how does it affect what help I receive towards my housing costs?

The introduction of social sector size criteria (SSSC), commonly known as 'the Bedroom Tax', has changed how Housing Benefit and housing costs are calculated for tenants in social housing.

People of pensionable age will not be affected by the Bedroom Tax.

Under the new criteria, housing costs are calculated on the number of bedrooms required by the household. If you have more bedrooms than you need, your housing benefit / UC will reduce by:



-14%

for **one** extra bedroom



-25%

for **two or more** extra bedrooms

One bedroom is allocated for:

- Each adult couple
- Each person over 16
- Any two children of the same sex under 16
- Any two children under 10, regardless of their sex
- Any other child
- A carer who provides overnight care but does not live with you

Extra rooms can be allowed for foster care provision, disabilities and/or caring needs. You may also be allowed a room for a student or member of the armed forces who is away but due to return.



CASE STUDY

Bill and Marie live in a 3-bedroom house with their daughter Lucy, aged 7. They receive assistance with their rent which is £100 per week. This is paid to Radius on their behalf.

As they currently under-occupy by 1 bedroom, their housing benefit is **reduced by 14%**. Thus they have to pay £14 per week towards their housing costs. The government currently pays this £14 per week as a **Welfare Supplementary Payment**.

This payment will end in March 2020. Bill and Marie will then have to pay the shortfall of £14 per week in their housing costs to Radius.

Your Welfare Advice Officers

Dedicated welfare and benefit advice for Radius tenants and residents.

Cathy Jackson and Frank Rogers are our in-house Welfare Advice Officers. Both Cathy and Frank are very much engaged with our tenants and on a daily basis they provide advice, guidance, information and advocacy on all aspects of benefit entitlement.

The service is offered by telephone, email, letter, in person at our offices or in the tenant's home.

If you would like to find out more information regarding Welfare Reform, please contact our Welfare Advice Officers on Tel: 0330 123 0888, or by email: info@radiushousing.org; alternatively you can visit the Welfare Reform section of our website radiushousing.org/welfare-changes or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/welfarechanges



Tenant Representatives

Radius Housing is fortunate to have a number of Tenant Representatives who we can link with to help maintain our areas to such a high standard. We greatly value the role these people play, and it is our wish to recruit more tenant representatives in each of our areas to increase the standard of service we can provide. The improved communication is also a vital benefit for everyone involved in the process.

What is a Tenant Representative?

For us, a Tenant Representative is someone who is committed to improving their Radius Housing neighbourhood. This is particularly beneficial in areas where there may not be enough tenants to form a Committee:

What does the role entail?

As a Tenant Representative, you will have the opportunity to:

- Make contact with people and groups within in your community.
- Listen to people and find out their ideas and suggestions for improving service in your area.
- Provide feedback on the service you receive from Radius (for example, by attending Estate Inspections).

What a Tenant Representative Should Never Have To Do

As a Tenant Representative, you should never feel pressured into doing something you are uncomfortable with. For example, you will not have to:

- Contact Radius or any other bodies/agencies on behalf of others
- Fill out any forms for other tenants
- Intervene in any disputes

Please note this list is not exhaustive. If you are ever unsure about your role as a Tenant Representative, please get in touch with us and we can provide the necessary advice.

How do I get involved?

It couldn't be easier to get involved! If this is something you would like to do or would like to know more, please contact our Tenant Engagement team who will be happy to talk to you:

Call us...

0330 123 0888

Martin Downey (Ext. 2237),
Christine Cackett (Ext.7263)

Email us...

tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org

Want to join us or find out more?

If you have a Scheme Coordinator, please contact them to express your interest, or you can call the Tenant Engagement Team on 0330 123 0888 (Option 2) or email tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org to book your place!

RADIUS AT THE RITZ

Over 55? Join us at our movie extravaganza in Queens Film Theatre, Belfast on

Next dates to be confirmed

**We want to hear from you:
What movies would you like to see?**

Movies will be announced closer to each date and will be chosen from the suggestions you give us.

**Supported by
Fusion Heating & MW Advocate**

GET INVOLVED



Keeping you at the centre of our business

Radius Housing aims to keep you, our tenant, at the centre of everything we do. Together with feedback from our tenants and residents, we have created the Menu of Involvement below. The Menu lists many great opportunities for you to the service you receive by meeting with us, speaking with your neighbours, receiving updates and much more. All you need to do is complete the form below and return to us to get started...

Type of Involvement	Level of Commitment	✓
Tenant Involvement Register Receive letters regarding events and meetings in your area and provide feedback.	Comment as and when necessary	
Tenant Area Panel Meet with housing and property services staff to discuss strategic issues in your area.	Every two months for 1 1/2 hours	
Estate Walkabouts/Inspections Accompany staff on visits around your area to seek enhancements. (For more information, see page 7.)	When required (annually) for 2 hours	
Tenant Representative For those who are committed to improving their neighbourhood and the services they receive.	When required	
Service Improvement Group Help staff look critically at the services Radius provides to bring about improvements. (See page 5 for our priorities in 2019/20.)	Every quarter for 2 hours	
Readers Panel Meet to review Radius documents before they go to the general tenant body.	Comment back as and when necessary	
Email Group Register your email address to receive regular communication and updates from Radius.	Comment back as and when necessary	

Name: Tel. No.:

Address: Email:

You can also find out more and express your interest via our online form on our website:
www.radiushousing.org/tenant-engagement

Thank you for taking the time to consider your options for getting involved with Radius.

Please return your completed form to: Tenant Engagement, Radius Housing, FREEPOST BEL4018, Hollywood, BT18 9BR or email us at tenant.engagement@radiushousing.org.

The Update Wordsearch

Here is a Radius word search containing all five of our regional offices, Can you find them all?

The added benefit of having regional offices means we can be closer to you our customers.

They also serve as an excellent base to engage with our customers further.

BALLYMENA

BELFAST

HOLYWOOD

LONDONDERRY

NEWRY

M	B	U	K	S	D	C	E	D	Q	B	R	O	G	B
H	E	E	K	C	Y	B	O	L	E	A	N	N	X	L
A	D	U	L	R	S	O	I	Y	L	Q	H	D	B	V
B	Y	F	W	F	W	S	M	X	Y	Q	K	C	U	J
V	L	E	H	Y	A	O	S	T	Q	S	M	P	V	M
P	N	N	L	Q	S	S	G	R	D	L	N	O	M	P
U	Z	O	U	C	D	J	T	I	L	J	H	C	D	Y
D	H	G	R	L	O	N	D	O	N	D	E	R	R	Y
H	G	L	T	P	E	Q	N	I	B	X	H	P	O	T
U	N	B	A	L	L	Y	M	E	N	A	G	U	Q	T
R	O	L	D	K	Z	N	B	J	E	E	A	D	F	N
U	L	N	X	U	F	J	G	Q	L	M	Q	G	O	J
L	U	D	F	N	E	O	P	N	P	E	K	T	O	P
K	Z	Y	I	B	W	I	O	O	C	T	F	X	I	O
J	T	B	P	S	U	X	K	M	E	Y	C	M	I	K

Radius HOUSING

Why not pay your rent
using the allpay App?



The allpay App is a **FREE** mobile application (App) available to download for your Apple or Android smartphone that enables you to pay your bills quickly and easily at the touch of a button.

Simply download the allpay App from the Apple App Store or Google play or scan the QR codes below using your smartphone and start making payments the smart way!



Available on the iPhone
App Store

GET IT ON
Google play



App

*The allpay App is available free of charge to customers of allpay clients who have signed up to use allpay for accepting debit and/or credit card payments.

Contact *us*

Radius housing

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3 Redburn Square, Holywood BT18 9HZ

NORTH WEST REGIONAL 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

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