

# Newsletter

## 50th Anniversary

2018 is Family Housing Association's 50th Birthday. In 1963 a group of people set up Birkenhead Catholic Housing Aid Society, one of many across the country, to help support local people buying their first home. They provided free financial and housing advice to the local community, setting up saving schemes to help people save for their deposit. They went on to purchase properties, charging a low rent for future home owners. After the Housing Corporation was founded in 1964, Birkenhead Catholic Housing Aid Society became Family Housing Association in 1968, as this allowed them to apply for loans to buy properties to rent. And so it began. In 2018 we will be running a number of events and competitions to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. We will contact tenants with details closer to the time. You can also 'like' us on Facebook and check the website for further information.

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- Gas Safety
- Welcome our new Tenants
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## Condensation Advice

A common repair issue reported to us is damp. However in most cases, the damp or mould growth we find in peoples homes is actually condensation. Condensation is not necessarily caused by a defect in the property, it is often caused by peoples lifestyles.

In the cold weather, every home will experience condensation at some point, especially when moisture and steam is being produced from daily household activities. Small changes in your household routines can improve your living environment. A well ventilated home, free from condensation and mould is a healthy home.



### What is Condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air. Condensation occurs when the air gets so cold that it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny droplets of water appear. You will notice condensation when you breathe on a cold day and when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation usually occurs when there is a big difference between the temperature inside your home and the temperature outside, so it occurs most often in cold weather. Condensation will form on cold surfaces within the home and in places where there is little air movement, such as corners, behind wardrobes and cupboards.

Soft furnishings can also have condensation form on them and often absorb moisture from the air. There is usually a musty smell where condensation forms. Condensation does not leave a 'tidemark' (this is the mark left by dampness after the moisture has dried). Other forms of dampness such as rising damp and leaks from plumbing can often leave a tidemark. If condensation is allowed to happen regularly, mould can form on walls and furniture. Mould usually appears on the inside of external walls - often north-facing walls - and tends to get worse in cold weather.

### **Other Forms of Dampness**

Some types of dampness are not caused by condensation.

Penetrating damp can be caused by leaking pipes, wastes and overflows, or by rain getting through holes in roofs, spilling from a blocked gutter or leaks through cracked pipes. Penetrating damp will show as a damp patch on the walls or paint may peel off.

Rising damp can be caused by a faulty damp course. Rising damp could lead to a white salt like substance appearing up to a metre above ground level. Both these types of damp leave 'tidemarks'.

### **How to avoid condensation -Produce less moisture**

Every day the average UK household puts about 12 litres (around 20 pints) of moisture into the air in their home. In homes where clothes are dried indoors, or where paraffin

or bottled gas heaters are used, the total amount of moisture being produced can be over 20 litres (36 pints) a day.

### **Examples of household activities that produce more moisture:**

- Having a Shower
- Filling A Bath
- Cooking
- Drying Clothes Indoors
- Boiling a Kettle
- Bottled Gas Heaters
- Using a Tumble Dryer



Obviously these household activities are part of every day life and can't be avoided, so the key is to ventilate your home.

Ventilation can help to reduce condensation by removing moist air and replacing it with drier air from outside. You can ventilate without making draughts.

Cross-ventilate your home - Try to cross-ventilate your home at least once a day for 30 minutes. To cross-ventilate your home open windows (they do not need to be wide open, slightly open is fine) at opposite sides of the house, or diagonally opposite if you live in a flat. At the same time open interior room doors, this will allow the drier outside air to circulate through your home.

## **Occupied Rooms**

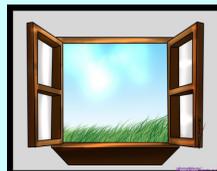
In occupied rooms some ventilation is needed all of the time. This is to get rid of the moisture being produced, which includes water vapour produced by breathing. Keep a small window ajar or a trickle vent open.

## **Bedrooms**

Try to leave a bedroom window slightly open at night, or use trickle vents if fitted. This will allow moisture that causes condensation to escape. Remember to think about security. Do not overfill cupboards and wardrobes. Overfilling reduces air circulation and increases the risk of mildew forming on clothes. Leave sufficient space to allow air circulation between the backs of large furniture, such as wardrobes. Avoid locating wardrobes and large furniture against external walls wherever possible.

## **Kitchen / Bathrooms**

These rooms need more ventilation when you cook, wash up, bathe or dry clothes. You will need to open windows and use the cooker extractor hood or extractor fan, if fitted. They are relatively cheap to run and very effective. Close kitchen and bathroom doors whilst these rooms are in use and for a while afterwards to allow the moisture to be vented to the outside. This will help to reduce the passage of moisture to other parts of your home.



## **Reduce cold surfaces in your home**

Condensation commonly forms on cold surfaces. Loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and draught proofing windows and external doors helps keep the surfaces within your home warm. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely, fuel consumption is reduced, meaning potentially lower fuel bills.

Family Housing will carry out the above measures where possible. If you don't have any of the above, please contact us and we will see if it is possible to install them.

## **Heat Your Home Effectively**

Keep your home adequately heated when occupied (ideal temperature 18°C-24°C). Try to keep a reasonable level of heat throughout your home. Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold can make condensation problems worse in the unheated rooms. Warm air will always try to escape to the colder areas of the home, once the warm air hits the cold surfaces condensation will occur.

If you don't have heating in every room, try to leave the doors of unheated rooms open to allow heat into them. If you need additional heating in rooms without central heating, use plug in electric oil filled radiators or panel radiators, with thermostatic controls (use a low setting). The thermostatic control will ensure that the heater is not using constant electricity. Try not to use electric fan heaters, as these will use a lot of your electricity. Never use bottled gas heaters as they make condensation problems worse.

## Dealing with Mould Growth

If you follow the advice in these pages, it is less likely mould will form in your home. However, if condensation has created mould you will need to treat it. If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear.

- Dry the condensation on your windows and windowsills every morning. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'
- Make sure you wear rubber gloves and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Do not brush or vacuum mould as this will cause mould spores to be released into the air which can cause breathing problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to prevent condensation.



## ASB Out Of Hours Service



Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can include but is not limited to noise nuisance, shouting, swearing, verbal and physical abuse, verbal threats, threatening or intimidating behaviour, damaging property or vehicles.

If a crime has been committed, we encourage people to contact the Police as they can respond 24/7 and have legal powers that we don't have. However, we understand that if the behaviour is not criminal, it might not be a Police matter. Depending on police resources, they may not be able to attend quickly.

We would still encourage you to ring the Police, but you can also ring our office outside of opening hours to report ASB. When you hear the answer phone message, please select option 3 to report ASB.

This will put you through to Magenta Living's Out of Hours Security Team. We have an agreement with them to provide an ASB out of hours response service. If the ASB is ongoing, they will send out their Security Officers to witness the behaviour. They will assess the situation and if it is safe to do so, will speak to the perpetrators. For more serious incidents they will contact the Police or any other support agencies if necessary. They will collect evidence and report to us what they have seen and heard. They

will then provide Witness Statements and attend Court where necessary.

Understandably people are often afraid to sign statements and attend Court. Unfortunately this makes it very difficult for us to take legal action as Witness Statements are a crucial piece of evidence. This is why we think the ASB Out of Hours Service is important.

ASB can also be reported on our website [www.familyha.org](http://www.familyha.org) under the Tenant Services menu. Again this gives you a way of reporting incidents when our office is closed whilst the information is fresh in your mind. Information logged on the website will be picked up in our office the next working day and the appropriate member of staff will contact you to discuss the matter.

Most Environmental problems can be reported to Wirral Council online at:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/environmental-problems>

However in the event of an emergency you can report problems relating to:

- trees
- road and pavement maintenance and repairs
- road signs
- traffic management
- fly tipping
- highway drainage and flooding



Monday to Friday 8.00am – 5.00pm 0151 606 2004

## **Universal Credit Freephone Numbers Now Operating**

There has been a lot of controversy and media coverage over the Department of Work and Pensions Universal Credit telephone helpline numbers charging up to 55p a minute. Claimants of Universal Credit are likely to be on low income or living on no income at all if their claim is still being processed. Pressure from MP's and claimants has now resulted in the charges being abolished and Universal Credit can be contacted free on the following telephone numbers:

Universal Credit Live Service: 0800 328 9344

Universal Credit Full Service: 0800 328 5644



Universal Credit give us little or even no information about your claim, so please remember to keep us updated.

## **Gas Safety Is Our Responsibility**

If you are ever contacted by unknown companies offering to do a Gas Safe check on your property, it is not necessary. As a landlord, Family Housing are required by law to do a Gas Safety check in your property every year. We also do a check whenever a property becomes empty and before a new tenant moves in. We employ a local gas engineers firm called IDS to do this on our behalf. We will contact you when your gas safety check is due.



## Welcome To Our New Tenants



In December 2017 Family Housing Association completed the purchase of 5 two bedroom properties in Beckwith Street / Livingstone Street, Birkenhead. The properties have been built within the last 3 years and are occupied by families and couples.

This purchase continues our commitment to deliver good quality housing stock meeting all the latest energy efficiency standards. We welcome our new tenants and hope they enjoy being part of Family Housing Association.

## Like Us On Facebook

Family Housing Association is now on Facebook. Please like us to keep up to date with news, information and details of any events, especially as 2018 is our 50th Birthday.



# Merseyside Fire & Rescue

## Home Fire Safety Advice



### Smoke Alarms

You are 6 times more likely to die in a fire if you do not have a smoke alarm.

Having a smoke alarm fitted and working is the only sure way to know when a fire occurs, especially when everyone is asleep.

Smoke alarms should be tested weekly and the batteries replaced every year unless a 10 year battery is fitted.

At least one alarm should be fitted to the ceiling on each floor.

### Smoking

If you smoke in your property, use an Ashtray.

Ensure that the contents are cold before emptying into metal waste bin.

Never smoke in bed.

### Portable Heaters

Do not place portable heaters near to furniture or curtains.

## **Cooking**

Cooking under the influence of alcohol is extremely dangerous.

Chip pans must never be more than one third full.

Do not leave cooking unattended.

## **Electrical**

Replace worn or damaged leads.

A qualified electrician should replace sockets when they are worn or scorched.

Never run wires under carpets or rugs.

Have electric blankets tested annually.

Do not overload sockets. One plug, one socket.

## **Refuse**

Keep your bins in a secure area and only put out on the day of collection.

## **Night Time Check**

Empty Ashtrays.

Close All Doors.

Switch off and unplug electrical appliances.

Make sure a key is left near to each door.

Never smoke in bed.



## Make An Escape Plan

- Try to identify two escape routes from each room.
- Have an arranged meeting point outside so you can check if everyone has escaped.
- Wake up all members of the household.
- If a door feels hot, do not open it.
- If you have to go through smoke, crawl under it.
- If you have to escape from a window, never jump, lower yourself to arms length and drop.
- When outside, call 999 and ask for the Fire Service.
- If you are trapped close the door of the room you are in and use clothing, towels, blankets to put around the gaps to prevent smoke coming in.
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire Service.
- If there is no phone, go to the window and shout 'FIRE'.
- If your only means of escape is through a double glazed window, use a heavy object and aim at the bottom of the window. Make any jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket.
- Do not return to the property until the Fire Service tell you it is safe to do so.



Family Housing works with the Citizens Advice to deliver a Money Management Service. The aim is to help people get the most from their money. There are lots of ways to make your money go further, from negotiating the best tariffs for your gas and electricity, to managing debt. Citizens Advice is independent and their advice will benefit nobody except you. They can help you:

- Maximise Your Income
- Understand your Finances
- Get The Right Benefits
- Reduce your Fuel Costs
- Manage your Debts
- Advice on when to use Credit Cards
- Advice on Payday Loans
- Make the most of your Money



Think about it. What have you got to lose? Don't wait, pick up the phone now and call Citizens Advice on 0151 346 8782 and book your free appointment.

## **Would you like to help guide the Association?**

We need tenants to help us ensure we are providing the services you want to the standards you expect. Any tenant can apply to join our Customer Panel where they can influence the work we do. They don't have to come to meetings as postal, telephone or e-mail membership is also available. Contact the office for more information.

# Birds of Britain Word Search



- Robin
- Collared Dove
- Great Tit
- Goldfinch
- Chaffinch
- Wood Pigeon
- Blackbird
- Starling
- Blue Tit
- House Sparrow
- Magpie
- Carrion Crow
- Greenfinch
- Jay
- Wren
- Goldcrest
- Dunnock
- Coal Tit
- Long Tailed Tit



Family Housing Association

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web: [www.familyha.org](http://www.familyha.org)

Call the office for Out of Hours

Emergency Repairs /

Anti social Behaviour