



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Affordable Rent Support Services

JUNE 2026



Affordable Rent tenancies are a form of private tenancy, offering homes at below market rents, providing good quality homes to eligible tenants. The Department for Communities has published a policy which sets out what Affordable housing for rent is, how tenancies should be offered, and so on. The Department is providing financial support to Maple and May to stimulate the development of a supply of Affordable housing for rent.

Affordable Rent landlords, regardless of whether Government funded or not, must provide support services to their tenants as detailed in the **Intermediate Rent Policy**. The provision of support services is a key feature of Affordable Rent, differentiating it from the rest of the Private Rental Sector which may not routinely provide or signpost tenants to expert advisory and support services. It is not expected that Intermediate Rent landlords would be required to offer support and advice on specialist matters, such as benefit / debt / financial advice, but may helpfully signpost tenants to such services using the information contained in this document.

Tenant support services can be provided in-house by the landlord or through signposting to other established or specialist services. In addition to any other mandatory Tenancy Information Notice, it is good practice to provide tenants with a handbook, setting out information which can help them effectively manage their home and their tenancy. A handbook provides information on a tenant's rights, the responsibilities of both the tenant and the landlord, rent payment arrangements, staying safe in the home, how the fixtures and fittings of the property operate, how to report a repair or maintenance issue, how to access support services, and what to do in an emergency.

This type of support could improve a tenant's access to information and services, which could assist with improvements in their financial situation, employment opportunities or health and wellbeing which together could help them to sustain a tenancy.



SUPPORT SERVICES FOR AFFORDABLE RENT TENANTS

Below are details of support service providers and organisations which Affordable Rent landlords may wish to include in their Tenant Handbook or signpost tenants to. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and there will be other support services available beyond what is listed here. The Department will review this list and the links provided regularly.

BENEFITS / FINANCE SUPPORT

Advice NI Tel: 0800 915 4604 (formerly Citizen's Advice NI) – Provides free debt advice across Northern Ireland. The AdviceNI Debt Service can provide advice and information to help people take back control of their finances. This includes:

- Free, confidential tailored debt advice
- Budgeting advice
- Solutions to deal with your debt
- Negotiate with creditors on clients' behalf

DfC 'Make the Call' Tel: 0800 232 1271 – Contact the Make the Call service to check on benefits, services and support you are entitled to.

DfC Supports and Advice Services – This document collates a wide range of financial information, support services and contact details to assist people who are struggling with the cost of living crisis.

Step Change Debt Charity Tel: 0800 1381 111 – Offers free, impartial and confidential support and clients receive expert, personalised advice to help them deal with their debts. The service provided is available online or over the phone.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Education Authority – Gives information relation to school admission, special educational needs, transport to school, free school meals and uniform grants.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) Tel: 0300 555 0114 – Is responsible for providing health protection and health and social wellbeing improvements to people in Northern Ireland. The website gives information on PHA initiatives and links to other sources of health information.

GENERAL SUPPORT

Bryson Intercultural Tel: 02890 325835 – Gives support to ethnic minorities and communities in Northern Ireland, including those who have no or limited recourse to public funds.





LOCAL COUNCILS

Councils provide a range of services for households including bin and recycling collections, registrar for births/deaths/marriages, local leisure facilities and community centres. Environmental Health Officers at local Councils have certain responsibilities when it comes to private rented tenancies and repairs/maintenance. Links for each Council's website, where you can find more information on the services provided and contact details, are:

- **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council →**
- **Ards and North Down Borough Council →**
- **Armagh City, Craigavon and Banbridge Borough Council →**
- **Belfast City Council →**
- **Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council →**
- **Derry and Strabane District Council →**
- **Fermanagh and Omagh District Council →**
- **Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council →**
- **Mid and East Antrim Borough Council →**
- **Mid Ulster District Council →**
- **Newry, Mourne and Down District Council →**

nidirect – Is a government website which signposts to advice and support on a wide range of topics including housing, travel, money matters, crime, education and training, health and wellbeing among others.





HOUSING SUPPORT

Housing Rights Tel: 02890 245640 – Housing Rights is a charity with over 50 years' experience helping people with their housing problems. Their website has a large amount of information on **private tenants** rights including:

- Deposits in private tenancies
- Renting in Northern Ireland
- Eviction from a private tenancy
- Taking on a new tenancy
- Housing Mediation Service
- Rent, rates and housing benefit
- Repairs and safety for private tenants
- Ending a private tenancy
- Tenancy agreements
- Your rights and responsibilities as a private tenant

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) – Provides a range of information on housing related matters including advice on private renting, available grants and the following:

- Apply for a Social Rented Home
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- Home Repair Assistance Grant
- Replacement Grant
- Renovation Grant
- Repair Grant
- Homelessness services
- Housing Benefit
- The Social Housing Selection scheme and the points system
- Buying a home privately or through the co-ownership scheme
- Help with disabilities
- Advice for Irish Travellers
- Local Housing Allowance
- Financial Inclusion





GUIDANCE

ASSISTANCE

INFO

If you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, you will need to register as homeless with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. They can be contacted by calling **03448 920900**.

Shelter NI – Provides advice and assistance to people who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Other housing and tenancy support organisations and advice services are also available online.

SAFETY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE

Energy Saving Trust Tel 028 97 442475 – Offers energy efficiency advice for households. It provides energy saving tips, a guide to buying energy efficient products and advice regarding some of the home heating grants potentially available.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Tel: 028 9266 4221 – Provides advice and information on fire safety (tips on prevention and detection), carbon monoxide detection, how to reduce the risk of trips and falls at home, and how to store hazardous substances at home.



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