



October 2021

Welcome

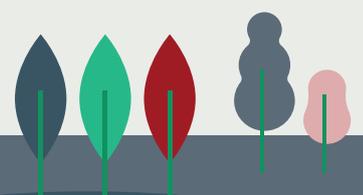
Welcome to our Autumn edition, we hope you and all your family are well. As the evenings get darker, the children settle back into school, and we all start to settle back into a routine, this edition will look at all things Autumn related. Included will be some hints and tips on safety around Halloween, including some updates and information that may be useful to you in the coming months. We hope this edition has something for everyone.

TAG Update

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) have met twice since our last newsletter, and signed off on our new Tenant Engagement and Communication Strategy, which you would have received in the last few weeks. If you have any questions or comments on this, please let us know.

Community

Several residents in the Dublin 8 area have come together to work on their rooftop garden. This has been an ongoing project, but residents are thrilled to see the fruits of their labour come to light! From standalone sunflowers and lilies, to vibrant flower boxes, this really is a sight to behold. It's lovely to see such appreciation and care in an open space. Well done to all involved. We can't wait to see the progress you continue to make.



Neighbourhood Dispute Self Resolution Guide

Everybody wants to live in peace and go about their daily lives without falling out with neighbours. However, from time-to-time minor disputes between neighbours do happen. They can be as simple as children being noisy while playing outside your home, or your neighbour getting up early on the weekend and singing in the shower to loud music. Some disputes can of course be more serious than others, but the most important thing to remember is that these disputes can be resolved amongst neighbours without the intervention of other parties. We encourage our tenants to resolve disputes at a local level with each other, unless it is unsafe to do so. If you find yourself unhappy with your neighbours or their Visitors' behaviour, try the following guidelines, when safe to do so.

1. The more understanding the better:

■ It can make a big difference to understand the other person's situation and what their experience is – and for them to understand yours. This may be the last thing you feel like doing, but here are three reasons to give it a try:

1. People are not always aware of the impact of their behaviour and especially why it might be making someone so angry or upset.
2. It may feel like the other person is doing things on purpose to annoy or upset you. Nine times out of ten this is not the case! When we don't know why something is happening it can feel a lot more threatening.
3. The other person might have things going on in their life that would make what they are doing more understandable to you. Although it may seem hard, if you can show understanding towards them, they are much more likely to show understanding towards you.

2. Take a moment:

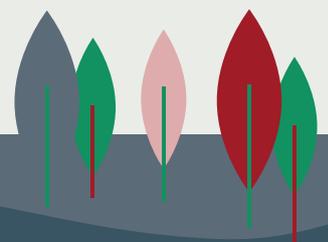
- We usually complain when something difficult has just happened and we have reached the end of what we can cope with. We are likely to be upset or angry – or both.
- When emotions are running high our communication skills aren't at their best. It can be hard for someone to listen to us and take in what we are saying – and much harder for us to listen.
- Unless there is an immediate threat to someone's safety, it is always worth taking time to calm down and reflect before contacting the other person.

3. Explain your concerns:

- Communicate when you are as calm as you can be.
- Avoid insults, personal remarks, and exaggeration (try and avoid words like always, never, every time, all the time).
- Be clear about what you're hearing, seeing, etc., e.g. "You're singing in the shower at 6am on Sunday mornings".
- Explain why you are finding it difficult, e.g. "Your singing wakes me up and I find it hard to get back to sleep once I'm awake".
- Make a request for a change that would help, e.g. "Could you please sing quieter, or shower a little later?".

4. Listen to the other person's point of view:

- This is not easy to do when you are annoyed with them, but it can make a huge difference if you can do it.
- Research shows that people are much more willing to compromise when they feel their point of view has been heard and understood.
- Listening to someone doesn't mean you agree with them e.g.: "I understand that you wake up early and like to sing in the shower. The singing wakes me up though".



5. See if it's possible to agree a plan – or some changes – that would work for you both:

- Remember you don't have to become friends – just people who can live peacefully next to each other or in the same community.
- You will probably both need to make compromises.
- It helps if you can agree how you will communicate in the future.

If it doesn't feel safe or respectful, find a polite way to talk and then end the conversation.

If you are unsure about any of these guidelines or need support in applying them, you can contact your TSO who will gladly assist you, as well as provide guidance on the next step in the dispute process, should self-resolution prove unsuccessful.

RENTS

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please don't bury your head in the sand, talk to our Income Management Team as soon as possible.

Whether the problem is due to:

- A change in circumstances;
- Your income or expenses having suddenly changed for the worse;
- Losing your job;
- Your partner moving out and no longer contributing to rent payments;
- A budgeting problem;
- A cut in benefits; or,
- You are living beyond your means.



01 407 2110



www.circle.ie



01 407 2110
Rent@circle.ie

There are vital steps you can take to help get yourself back in control and avoid eviction. We are always able to help, and it is far better to get the issue out in the open.

Call us on 01 407 2110.

When you contact us, you must explain why you are going to be late with your rent payment, and be clear about what you are doing to address the problem to help ensure it won't happen again. Make sure you have a plan in place to pay your rent and clear any rent arrears that you have.

You will need to take some steps yourself to address the situation:

1. Use a budget planner to work out the shortfall between your income and expenses. The Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) has excellent budgeting planning tools to help you budget better. Visit the website or contact them direct on www.mabs.ie
2. Look at the possibility of stopping any of your monthly expenses, or cut back on luxuries.
3. Go on a cheaper tariff for your monthly bills – gas, electric, or telephone.
4. If you are spending too much on going out or on new clothes, you might need to cut down on this, as it is far more important that you are able to pay your rent. Cutting back can be difficult, but it won't be as painful as being evicted from your home, which is why you need to act now.

If you are having problems paying your rent call us today on 01 407 2110

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys 2021

Your Input is Valuable to Circle – Thank You, and Please Continue to Take Part

To better understand what is important to you and where we need to focus energy and resources, we have commissioned Acuity, an independent research company, to carry out surveys on our behalf. Since July, Acuity have been contacting tenants to ask about your experience of being a Circle tenant. They have also been contacting new tenants, those who have had a repair or gas servicing recently completed, and those who have raised a complaint with us.

We want to thank everyone who has taken part so far for their time and feedback. These surveys allow us to review and hopefully improve the services we offer you. So far, we can see that improvements have been made since our 2019 survey, but there are areas where further work is needed. For example, we have seen an improvement in satisfaction with Tenant Communication and Engagement (from 79% to 81%), however, there has been a decrease in satisfaction with Repairs and Maintenance Services (77% to 73%). We have already been following up with tenants and taking action based on the survey results.

The surveys will continue over the coming months, and we would encourage all tenants, if they are happy to do so, to please take part.

If you have call display on your phone, the call display will show a UK number with a Brighton area code (01273 093939). There is no cost to you for accepting this call.

Tenant Information Update

Dear Tenants,

My name is Emma and I've recently joined Circle as Data Administrator. My job is to make sure all the information we have for you (phone numbers, emails, dates of birth, etc.) is up to date so we can improve our services and be quicker in delivering them to you. Part of this work will involve contacting tenants directly to confirm information. In the coming weeks I will be ringing some of you for this purpose, I promise not to keep you on the phone for too long!

I will be calling you from the number 01 407 2110.

Development

The Development team were delighted to complete the acquisition of 40 new homes in Fairgreen Manor, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow on the 10th of August 2021.

These A2-rated homes were constructed using the latest form of construction: ICF, or Insulated Concrete Framework. This form of construction uses insulated blocks that are stacked, similar to lego blocks, and concrete is then poured into the cavity. This method provides durable, airtight, soundproof and energy efficient homes.

Heating is delivered via Air to Water Heat pumps which are operated using electricity. By combining ICF construction and the Air to Water Heat Pump heating system, tenants can experience as much as 60% reduction in their energy bills as a result.

So far, 22 of the 40 homes have been tenanted by our Housing Team, with the remainder of tenants to be signed up in the coming weeks. Circle VHA's Asset and Facilities Management Team have been working to ensure the entire development is set up and will be managed and maintained appropriately.

This development of 40 turnkey homes is Circle VHA's largest turnkey acquisition development to date. We would like to wish the new tenants the very best in this new chapter of their lives in their new homes. The Development team look forward to delivering more Turnkey schemes of this magnitude in the coming years for those in need.



On the 11th and 12th of August 2021, 21 very excited families moved into Fairgreen Manor, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow. The whole process was very smooth by all accounts and the anticipation, euphoria and gratitude was clearly evident in those 2 days.



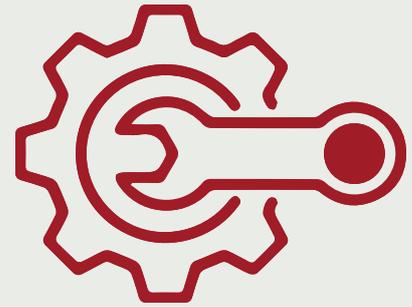
Tenants had waited a long time due to various delays but finally they were in. The estate was awash with the sound of happy and animated children, with the odd foreboding cat looking on! Nothing could give Tenancy Services Officers and indeed the whole team at Circle, more pleasure.

On the 16th of September 2021 another 10 families will move into their new homes, with a further 9 planned for move-in during the coming months. The estate itself is well laid-out, with beautiful communal green areas and breath-taking views. We wish the tenants well in their new homes in the beautiful village of Dunlavin.

Customer Services and Repairs

Cleaning and Maintenance Products for Drain Pipes & Sinks

Blocked drains and pipes are a tenant's responsibility to clear. That being said, before you call your plumber you can try the following products: (Please be advised that all product instructions and guidelines should be read before use, safety gloves and glasses should be worn, and used in a well-ventilated area. Keep out of the reach of children).



Ready-To-Use Hair Unblocker

HG hair unblocker has been strengthened with potassium hydroxide and therefore makes quick work of hair, dissolves soap remnants, and all the materials blocked by it. HG hair unblocker is extremely easy to use for blocked shower drains and bathroom sinks.

How do you use HG Hair Unblocker?

Complete the following steps to unblock the shower drain, sink or bath by using HG hair unblocker:

1. If there is standing water in the blocked shower drain or bathroom sink, shower tray or bath, try to remove as much of this as possible.
2. Carefully pour the entire contents of bottle 1 down the clogged shower drain and then carefully the entire contents of bottle 2.
3. Leave the hair unblocker to work for 1 hour.
4. Finally, rinse with plenty of water.

Longer-working mould spray

Mould, damp or weather stains often appear on the silicon seal between the bathtub and the tiled wall, in the shower cubicle or on plaster. This mould and mildew remover immediately eliminates mould in damp areas, both indoors and outdoors. The foam remains on the surface longer, allowing for better and longer working.

This black mould remover has a milder fragrance and is easier to spray directly on mould or mildew. For the spray variant, we advise HG Mould spray.

How Does HG Mould Remover foam spray work?

Follow the steps below for the correct use of HG Mould remover foam spray:

1. Spray the surface from a distance of 3 to 5cm with HG mould remover foam spray.
2. Leave the mould remover spray to work for approximately 30 minutes.
3. Clean with water and a sponge.
4. The result is a mould-free environment!

These products can be purchased at your local hardware like Woodies or Home Store + More.

Those Bleedin' Radiators

Did you know that September and October are our busiest times of the year due to heating calls? More often than not, heating issues are due to the radiators.

Radiators are susceptible to internal build-ups that affect the performance of the system, especially after being off for the summer. Trapped air causes cold spots within the radiator, reducing their efficiency. When you bleed your radiators, you improve the performance. It takes less energy for your radiators to achieve your desired heat, which enables you to gain a warmer home for less.

As it is the tenant's responsibility to bleed the radiators, we wanted to give you some guidance with this:

Bleeding an Oil or Gas Radiator in 8 Steps

- 1 Locate your bleed key/flat head screwdriver and bleed valve (normally at the top of the radiator). Bleed keys can also be picked up in your local hardware shop.
- 2 Turn the heating on and be very careful when checking radiators. Look for cold spots or note if it takes a long time to heat up and/or is not heating at all. Note the radiators with these issues.
- 3 Turn the heating off and let the radiators cool completely.
- 4 When cool, make sure the intake and exit valves are open.
- 5 Place a cloth/kitchen towel under the bleed valve (normally at the top of the radiator).
- 6 Open the bleed valve. If there is air trapped in the system you will notice a hiss coming from the valve. This will continue until you get water coming from the open valve.
- 7 Close the valve and repeat on any other radiators that you have identified as being faulty.
- 8 Check your boiler pressure levels to ensure that you haven't affected the overall pressure within the houses heating system. If this is the first time you have had to do this, you should consult the instruction guide as provided by the manufacturers.

If the pressure gauge on your boiler shows a reading of under .5bar of pressure and your boiler will not ignite or the radiators are still not heating, please give our Customer Service Team a call at 01 4072110 and we will arrange a call out for repair.

Please visit [Bord Gais Energy – How to Bleed Your Radiator on YouTube](#) for instructional videos if you need further guidance.

Annual Gas & Oil Boiler Service – An Update

As your landlord, it is our responsibility to ensure safety standards when it comes to your heating and fire safety. As of now, 95% of your gas & oil boilers have been serviced. A big and heartfelt thank you to all tenants who provided quick and easy access.

If you were not able to give access to Gas Wise Limited previously, please contact us immediately to arrange an appointment for service.

Please call the Customer Service Team at 01 407 2110 to arrange an appointment.



Get in Touch

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