



Meet the team...

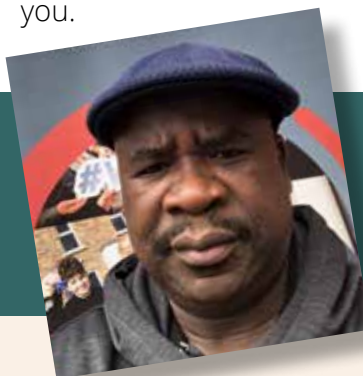
## New Staff Members

My name is **Suzanne Hynes** and I started as a **Tenancy Services Officer** (TSO) on the 28th of August. I have previously worked with Co-Operative Housing Ireland, Respond and HAIL. I am committed to working alongside tenants to ensure their homes and environs are kept to as high a standard as possible. I will be in touch with the tenants in my catchment areas soon with contact details. I look forward to meeting everyone in the coming weeks.



*Hi I'm Suzanne!  
Looking forward  
to meeting you.*

My name is **Charles Marufu**, and I recently joined Circle. My background had been in homelessness, having worked with Dublin Simon, Depaul Ireland and Novas as a Project Worker, Resettlement Officer and lately as a Tenancy Sustainment Officer. I am happy to have joined Circle as I feel it is a fast growing organisation and look forward to meeting you.



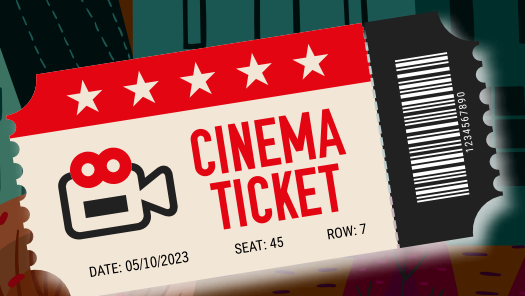
*Hi I'm Charles.  
Excited to  
work together*

## Welcome to Circle's Autumn Newsletter 2023

As the weather changes, the evenings start to get darker, and the children go back to school, we know that life is busy for everyone. Hopefully you will enjoy reading this newsletter and pick up some interesting information that you didn't know before.

Remember to let us know if you would like this printed and posted, and/or translated into a different language.

**PS: the cinema tickets competition is super simple to enter, make sure to check it out on the last page!**



Click to jump  
straight to the competition



## What's inside our Autumn Newsletter?




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# Tenant Satisfaction Surveys 2023

**Our tenant satisfaction surveys are still running on both a monthly and quarterly basis, and we continue to use this information to better understand where improvements can be made, and where we are performing well.**

In terms of the results from our surveys, we have created a series of detailed survey reports for each quarter of the year, which are now available in the 'About Us' section of our website, under 'Publications'. Here you will find a breakdown of the results from each of our surveys. Please have a look and let us know what you think!

**In summary, some of our latest results include the following:**

Survey Question		2023 Year to Date
	Almost nine out of ten tenants are satisfied with the safety and security of their home in the first six months of 2023.	<b>86%</b>
	Where Circle are directly responsible for facilities management services, almost all tenants were satisfied with their waste collection services during the first half of the year.	<b>87%</b>
	Up until August 2023, where tenants had reported a responsive repair, the majority were satisfied with the ease of reporting the repair.	<b>97%</b>

The feedback you are providing us through these surveys is vitally important and is something we are listening to and taking on board. We are making real progress across the teams in terms of studying the responses being received and implementing changes based on the survey responses, to ultimately improve the services we're providing you.

As the surveys continue, 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 **(00441273 093939)**. There is no cost to you for accepting this call.

## Thank You

**For participating again this season**

**Your Input is Valuable to Circle -**

**Please Continue to Take Part**

## The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) Update

**The TAG have had a busy few weeks working hard on the 'Tenant to Board Member' process, along with undergoing professional boundaries training.**

In addition to that, two TAG members and staff had an exciting few days, taking a trip to visit the Wheatley Group in Scotland.

The trip focused on learning from Wheatley and how they involve their tenants in every side of housing services to make sure they are tenant focused.

We learned lots and look forward to improving our services on the back of what we have learnt.

# Quality in our Diversity

**As we move towards the latter part of 2023, I have been reflecting on the work of Circle's Quality in our Diversity partnership project with Clúid and Respond.**

This year we have made some really dramatic progress with training and planning for the project. Tenant members of the Coordinating Group along with staff have completed training to help us understand more about Cultural Competence, Unconscious Bias, Privilege, the reasons people Migrate and Anti-Racism work.

The group have also developed a workplan for the project to deliver changes across the whole organisation on policy and practice, as well as tenant/staff supports and engagement. We are really looking forward to hearing tenant feedback and suggestions for our work. We are also looking forward to delivering additional training and putting a focus on intercultural celebrations and community building, which will help us with our overall goal of making Circle an even more welcoming organisation for people from diverse cultures.

**If you have any suggestions or feel you can help guide us with this work in any way, I'd encourage you to get in touch for a chat – I'd love to hear what you think!**

One of the most important actions that we have taken this year, and that we are very proud of, is our successful application in March to join INAR (The Irish Network Against Racism) to mark Anti-Racism Month. INAR is a national network of nearly 160 anti-racism civil society organisations that aims to work collectively to highlight and address racism in Ireland through the promotion and monitoring of Irish, EU and global trends and anti-racist initiatives. Looking towards March 21st 2024, which marks International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Circle will be actively taking part in the #TogetherAgainstRacism social media campaign. We will highlight our involvement closer to the time and let tenants know how they too can participate.

It is very important to Circle to have as much input and feedback from tenants as possible in areas that they have lived experience – we are committed to achieving real and



sustainable results/changes for tenants and not just ticking boxes, so please do reach out. As always if you have experienced racism or have witnessed a racist incident and would like to report it, please feel free to contact myself or your TSO for support and assistance.

Although we have covered a lot of ground and have done a lot of work on the project, our Coordinating Group is always looking for new members who might like to get involved in some way, big or small! There are opportunities to take part and have your say with all of our work, and I would love to hear from you if you are interested. Please feel free to contact me.

**My contact details are Marie Corr: [mcorr@circlevha.ie](mailto:mcorr@circlevha.ie) and my mobile is 086 1075089.**

# 2023

**Circle VHA join INAR**  
(The Irish Network Against Racism)



# Recite Me **Web Accessibility** and **Language Toolbar**

Circle believes in accessibility for all, through providing the opportunity to use the internet in the way it was intended.

Circle are committed to improving our communications and quality of services for our tenants, stakeholders and staff. To fulfil this mission, we now provide Recite Me assistive technology on our website, which enables our tenants and visitors to the site to customise their experience in a way that best suits their individual needs.

We have added the Recite Me web accessibility and language toolbar to the Circle website in order to make it more accessible and inclusive for as many people as possible.

It helps people who have a disability, including those with common conditions like sight loss and dyslexia, access our website in the way that suits them best. It also meets the needs of people who speak a language other than English, by translating our web content into over 100 different languages.

You can access the toolbar by clicking the 'Recite Me' button, located on the top right corner of the website. It allows users to access our website and customise the content in a way that works best for them.

The Recite Me toolbar has a unique range of functions. You can use it to:

- Read website text aloud (including PDFs).
- Download the text as an MP3 file to play it where and when it suits you.
- Change font sizes and colours.
- Customise background colours.
- Translate text into more than 100 different languages.
- Access a fully integrated dictionary and thesaurus.

For more information on Recite Me and the breakdown of what each button within the programme means you can visit:

<https://ciclevha.ie/accessibility-statement/recite-me-digital-accessibility/>

# Pet Policy You Said and We Heard

As the Pet Policy was recently due for review, this was a perfect opportunity to follow up with a group of tenants who have had experience of the Pet Policy.

Four tenants agreed to answer set questions on their experience of pets in the home along with how Circle dealt with any issues that came up with the pets.

The common themes were:

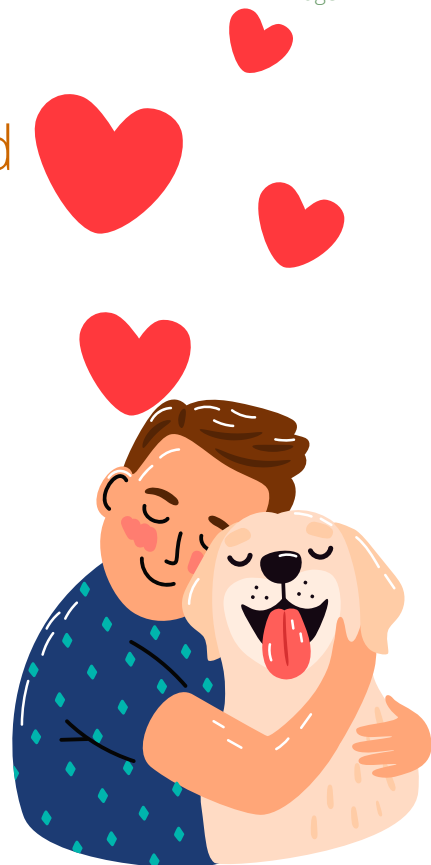
- 1. 100% of the group agreed that large dogs should not be in apartments. They all agree that small dogs, along with cats, should be allowed once they are approved by Circle and aligned with the OMC house rules.**
- 2. Pets are a part of the family and that it can be very worrying for the potential tenant at the housing interview not knowing if your pet can come with you. They enhance your life and the group felt very strongly about some not accepting a property if they were not able to bring their pet with them.**
- 3. The group highlighted the importance of responsible pet ownership.**

Circle took the above feedback and changed the policy to reflect this. But we do need to know what pets are still in your home.

Please download this form **pet application form** or fill it out on our **website** under the pet section to apply to keep a pet in your home, Circle need to consider OMC rules and the suitability of your home before approving.

If you would like a copy of the Pet Policy, please get in contact with Circle via email **info@ciclevha.ie** or phone **01-4072110**.

**Thank you to those tenants who took part in this focus group.**





# Seasonal Repairs

As we approach the autumn and winter seasons, please see some useful tips and tricks below to keep everything in check in your home, ahead of time.

## Boiler Checks

## Bleeding Your Radiators

## Balancing Your Radiators

## Draught Proofing Windows & Doors

### Boiler Checks

The first and most important tip for your boiler is to ensure you keep on top of its servicing, this will ensure your boiler is running efficiently and safely. Please check the sticker on the front of the boiler to see when your boiler was last serviced. If it's past its due date, give the office a call on **01 4072110** to schedule it.

Get ahead of the cold weather by turning on your boiler and checking the pressure. There should be a gauge on the front that shows you this. It runs best around 1 to 1.5 bars, if it is below 1 and the boiler is not working, give repairs a call or email us on **repairs@circlevha.ie**

Also, ensure your thermostat is always at 20.

If the boiler turns on and is working, leave it on for about 15 minutes to check if water and radiators are heating up too.

If the radiators are only half warm, they probably need to be bled. See below for some tips on how to do this.

### How to Bleed your Radiators

What you'll need: A radiator key (you can get one from a DIY store) and a cloth or rag to catch any water.

- Turn off your heating. You can't bleed a radiator when the heating is on, as it may be too hot to touch. You could also get hot water spraying out of the radiator.
- Use your radiator key to turn the valve at the top of the radiator. Attach the key to the square groove in the centre of the valve as shown in the diagram and turn it slowly anticlockwise. You should hear a hissing sound. This is the trapped air escaping. Use your cloth to catch any water that comes out.
- Retighten the valve once the hissing stops and only liquid comes out. Do this quickly to stop too much water escaping.
- Turn your central heating system back on.
- Check the pressure by looking at the gauge on your boiler. Bleeding your radiators can cause the pressure to drop. If the pressure is too low, you'll need to top it up. Use the lever or tap on your boiler, known as the filling loop.
- Check if your radiator is now heating up properly. If the heat is evenly spread through the radiator, you've fixed the problem.



## Balancing your Radiators

If you notice that some of the radiators are hotter than others, your radiator system may need to be balanced. This simply means ensuring the flow from the boiler and pump is distributed evenly throughout all of the radiators. If they are unbalanced, it usually means the upstairs of your property is warm, but the downstairs is not.

To balance your radiators please see guidance below.

YouTube link:



Balancing your radiators

Bleed radiators that have cold spots and then check that they're now heating up all over the surface of the radiator.

- Turn off your central heating. Switch it off completely and allow all your radiators to cool down.
- List all the radiators in your home. Do this on a piece of paper (or a spreadsheet if you prefer). You'll need this later once you've opened all the valves.
- Open your radiator valves.
- Identify the fastest heating radiator.
- Turn the heating off and then on again.
- Turn the lockshield valve on the fastest heating radiator.
- Take temperature readings.
- Balance is restored.
- Do this for the rest of your radiators and balance is restored!

YouTube link:



Balancing your radiators

How to Balance Heating System Radiators - Plumbing Tips

Once you have ensured your heating system is working correctly and efficiently, please take these extra small steps to ensure a cosier, more cost-effective way of staying warm this autumn and winter.

## Draught Proofing Windows and Doors

- Fit draught strips around the door's perimeter.
- Use brush strips on the bottom of the door.
- Don't forget to deal with the letterbox.
- Use a draught excluder at the base of the door.
- Hang a heavy curtain.
- Check windows are closing properly, and handle is secure.
- Fit new seals to windows as these perish over time.

# Planning for Autumn Jobs in the Garden

**Tidying the garden in autumn keeps it looking neat in winter and means that you'll get a head start next spring. Here are the areas to tackle:**

## 1.

Tidy your borders: Remove dying leaves, collapsed stems and weeds, then spread compost.

## 2.

Collect autumn leaves: Remove leaves from your lawn, paths (which can be slippery) and borders.

## 3.

Clean out nest boxes and bird feeders.

## 4.

Leave your grass looking trim by cutting and edging it.

Check for  
**new deals...**



## Energy Costs Review

It is always recommended to check with your service providers for new deals that are available once you are coming to the end of your contracts. Switching provider can save you several hundred euros and it only takes a few minutes to check by using comparison websites. Put a reminder in your phone every year to help remind you of when contracts are due for renewal. Below are two websites which can help you if you are planning to switch.

[www.Bonkers.ie](http://www.Bonkers.ie)

[www.switcher.ie](http://www.switcher.ie)

## Autumn **Open Day in Deerpark,** Tallaght, D24

Saturday 21st of October  
from 11am-3pm

**Come join Circle staff, along with the Foróige team, on Saturday 21st of October from 11am-3pm at the DeerPark Office. There will be treats and entertainment for all.**

Pop in and say hello, meet the staff, ask any questions you have and find out more about Foróige and other local services.





# Cost Rental Homes

This new housing tenure offers a long-term, secure rental option that will contribute to the development of a healthy housing market in Ireland. It is aimed at people who are above the threshold for social housing but have difficulty affording private rented accommodation.

It is called '**Cost Rental**' because the rent charged is based on the cost of building, managing, and maintaining the homes. This makes the rent cheaper than standard private rents and means it is an affordable housing solution.

Circle is delighted to present our first Cost Rental homes at Lanestown View, Donabate, North County Dublin. Lanestown View is a brand-new development built by Cairn with mixed tenure A2 rated homes that are finished to the highest standard. Circle is offering a total of 29 homes, consisting of one- and two-bed apartments, two bed houses and two and three bed duplexes.

If you would like to find out more, please have a look at our **website: <https://circlevha.ie/cost-rental/>** or call us on **01 4072110**.





# Opportunities in the Community

**?** Legacy is a global campaign by Common Purpose  
Are you 18-25 years old?  
Well, this programme might be for you.

Legacy invests in young people (18-25) across the world so they can become a connected generation of leaders with a clear vision for what their legacy will be.

The programme delivers impact to participants in the following areas:

- Creating better Human Capital.
- Developing Social Capital.
- Delivering Civic Capital.

Legacy Dublin 23 is a leadership development programme and will take place on the evening of November 1st in the IDA Headquarters, Hatch Street Upper and all day on November 2nd and 3rd in Google's The Foundry (food provided).

This is a free programme, so if you are interested, register your name now on their website **Legacy Dublin23**.



## DCC's Inclusion and Integration week, November 2023

Dublin Inclusion and Integration Week 2023 will take place from the 6th – 12th November. This will include a range of different activities for all ages. Keep on eye on the DCC website (<https://dublincityinclusion.ie/>) to see what is on in your area.

**Save money  
and get ahead  
of the cold weather...**

check out our seasonal repairs  
info on pages 5 and 6



# Summer Events



Circle had a busy summer with many events happening around the county. The team were busy planning something special for our tenants throughout the summer to get involved and enjoy coming along to. We used a few local community centres to bring a number of our estates together and avail of what was in their local community. We provided face painters, games, bingo, cycling and food/afternoon tea for all to enjoy. This is a great way to meet staff members and have a chat while winning a game of bingo!

**If you would like your estate to be included and have some ideas about what we can do, please get in touch.**

Your opinions and thoughts are always wanted, and we would love for you to get involved.







# WIN

## Cinema Tickets

As the evenings get darker, it is the perfect time to go to the cinema! Simply text, WhatsApp or email your favourite film to be in with a chance to win local cinema tickets. The closing date to enter is 31st of October.

**Text 086 103 4833**

**What's app 086 103 4833**

**Email [competitions@circlevha.ie](mailto:competitions@circlevha.ie)**

**What's your  
favourite film?**



## Summer Pictures Competition Winners

Thanks so much to everyone who entered the competition.

**The winners were Maria in Dublin 18 and Michael in Dublin 8. They both got 50 euro one for all vouchers.**

