



Welcome to Circle's Summer Newsletter

Circle have been incredibly busy with new homes and projects that we are excited to tell you about. If you have any thoughts, comments or feedback please do get in contact - we want to hear from you! Email Info@circlevha.ie or call us on 01 407 2110. A reminder that you can get this newsletter printed and posted to you, just let us know.



QUALITY IN OUR DIVERSITY

As part of our **Quality In Our Diversity** project we have been conducting a survey to better understand the experiences of people from different backgrounds, the aim of which is to create a quality framework for approved housing bodies to delivery appropriate services for people from all backgrounds. We will keep you updated on the progress of this project.

In the meantime we want to thank everyone who took part for their time and feedback. We will be announcing the winners of the voucher raffle shortly so keep an eye out for that!

**CHECK
INSIDE
FOR...**
Tenant
Satisfaction
Survey
2024



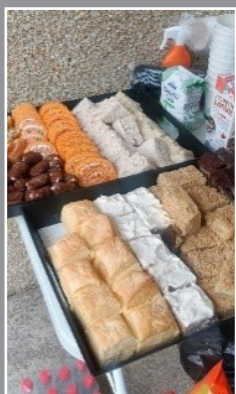
ESTATE EVENTS

We are organizing fun events on several of our estates over the summer. By the time you get this newsletter some will already have taken place, and we will share photos with you again.

None of these events can take place without your help and support. If you want to run an event or help on your estate, please contact your **Tenancy Services Officer (TSO)**.

If an event is being planned for your estate your TSO will let you have the details in plenty of time.

Below are some photos of a recent **Street Fest event** held in Butterfield in Waterford. Neighbours got together and shared food and stories from their different cultures. Our Director of Services even got to learn a Sudanese dance, but refused to do a demonstration for us in the office!





CLUAIN NA LAOI

In April the Development Team delivered its first scheme of 2024 in Kilkishen, County Clare. This sees us enter a new county and increase our presence further across Ireland.

The first phase of eight homes were delivered ahead of schedule and the second phase of eight homes will be delivered on schedule at the start of June, with thanks to Cuan Construction. **These homes are a sustainable mix of two-bed, three-bed and four-bed homes.**

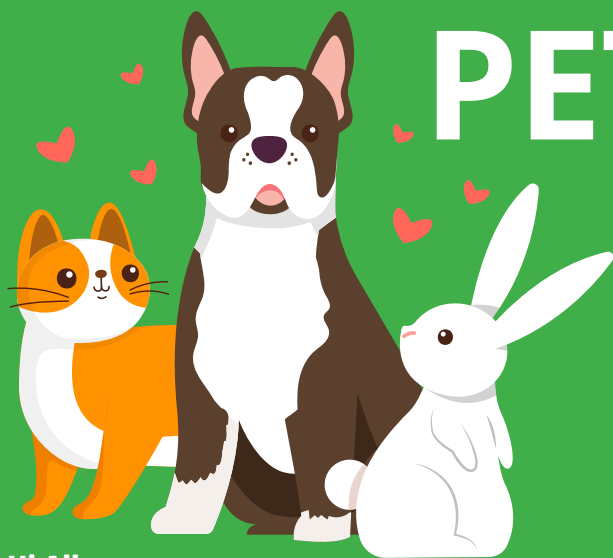
This brand-new development was constructed to the highest building and environmental standards, resulting in A-rated energy efficient homes. These superb new homes will immediately impress with their high-quality design. **For the successful tenants who will be allocated these homes, we wish you every happiness in your forever home!**

House Inspections

As you may know, we are currently carrying out house inspections. As a landlord we are legally obliged to do so on a regular basis. Many of you will already have been contacted by your **Tenancy Services Officer** and have had your property inspected in recent weeks.

For those of you whose homes have not yet been inspected, your TSO will contact you shortly to arrange this. The inspection will not take too long. **Thanking you in advance for your full cooperation.**





PETS CORNER

Hi All,

My name is **Stringer** and I am an **Irish Terrier**. I am 5 years old. My owner's name is Liz and she sometimes brings me into her office where everyone knows me. I think Gavin is my favourite person in the office, as he is very dog friendly. I can go in the lift and have a good mooch around the offices and make sure everyone is working hard. They can take a few minutes off to say hello to me, but then it is back to the grindstone for them, and I can continue with my mooch. I head out around the city at lunch time to do my own business and I really enjoy sniffing around outside and sometimes I even get a morsel of food. It is very important that I get my exercise, but like all dogs I need to be careful about what I eat.

If you are lucky, like Liz, my owner, and you also own a dog, you need to look after it very well during the warm weather. I am going to share some tips with you:

Handy Hints on minding your dog during the warm weather:

- If the weather is very hot, keep me in the shade.
- Do not allow me to run around too much, otherwise I will overheat.
- Like you, I can get sunburnt, so you need to put dog friendly sunscreen on me.
- If you do take me for a walk, allow me to walk on the grass as this is much cooler than walking on the pavement.
- Give me small amounts of water regularly to drink to make sure I stay hydrated. If you are taking me for a walk, make sure to bring water for both of us.
- If you think I am too warm you can wrap me in a cool towel and this will help me cool down quicker.

Do you own a pet and have a funny pet story? Please submit your stories and photos to info@circlevha.ie before the 2nd August 2024. We will give you a small prize for any stories printed in our next newsletter.



Pet Ownership in a Circle Home



From time to time we receive complaints regarding tenants and their pets. We have developed a Pet Brochure as a resource to help with these issues and we would everyone to familiarise themselves with it, linked here: https://circlevha.ie/publications/CVHA_Pet-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf

Here we highlight the section of your tenancy agreement that states what type of pets are and are not allowed, under the terms of the tenancy agreement:

3.29 The tenant shall not keep or permit to be kept any horses, poultry, pigs, large birds, reptiles in or about the dwelling. The tenant shall not keep any pets in or about the dwelling save without the express written consent of the landlord to be obtained in advance. The tenant shall not engage in the breeding of animals in or about the dwelling.

The landlord will not grant permission for a tenant to keep any of the following dogs or any of their crossbreed: **American Pit Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, English Pit Bull Terrier, Bull Mastiff, Doberman Pinscher, German Shepherd, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Rottweiler, Japanese Akita, Japanese Tosa and any crossbreeds.**

It is important that tenants pay attention to this section from the tenancy agreement. The above are the animals that you will not be given permission under any circumstances to have in the Circle home.

Please remember permission must be sought and granted before you bring a pet home. Written permission can be applied for here: https://circlevha.ie/print-forms/CVHA_Pet-Application-Form.pdf

Citizens Information has a very good page on dog ownership and what you need to consider before you decide to get a dog: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/environment/pets-and-wildlife/control-of-dogs/>

It is very important that tenants are aware and understand the tenancy agreement section on pets and **Circle's Pet Policy**. Even if a tenant has permission for a pet, but they are found to be a poor pet owner and allow their pet to be a nuisance to others, or we find a pet is not being looked after properly, we will ask the tenant to rehome their pet. It is a difficult situation to be in so please ensure that the correct permissions are sought before you get a pet.

If you are concerned about the welfare of an animal please contact any of the organisations listed below:

- 1. DSPCA**
Email: cruelty@dspca.ie
Phone: 01 4994700
- 2. ISPCA**
Email: helpline@ispca.ie
Phone: 0818 515515
- 3. Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine National Animal Welfare Helpline**
Email: animalwelfare@agriculture.gov.ie

If you would like any further information, please speak to your Tenancy Services Officer.






Tenant Satisfaction Surveys 2024

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

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.

To see the survey results in detail, you can find our survey reports for each quarter of the year, within the 'About Us' section of our website, under '**Publications**' (<https://circlevha.ie/about-us/our-publications/>). Please have a look and let us know what you think!

As an example, some of our results include the following:

Survey Question		2024 Q1
	Almost nine out of ten tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home.	87%
	More than four-fifths of all tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.	88%
	In the first three months of 2024, where Circle provide facilities management services, the majority of tenants were satisfied with grounds maintenance.	84%

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). We would encourage you to save this number to your phone so you recognise Acuity when they call. There is no cost to you for accepting this call.



Tenant Portal

The Circle VHA Engage Tenant Portal is now available on our website. This can be used to log a repair, access your rent statements, or view tenant related documents online.

To login you can go to the Circle VHA website at <https://circlevha.ie> and under the My Home section you will find the Circle Engage Tenant Portal page.

To login you will need the following information:

1. The email address you provided to Circle. We will have recorded these email addresses from your original forms submitted when you were signing your tenancy agreement. If you have changed your email address in the meantime, or have a preferred email address you can email **tenancy.officer@circlevha.ie** and we will update our system to grant you access to the Tenant Portal.
2. Your Tenancy Reference Number. This can be found on the top right-hand corner of your rent statement. If you need to confirm this reference number, you can email the same address, **tenancy.officer@circlevha.ie** and we will be happy to help.

Our tenancy, rents and customer services teams can still be contacted on **01-4072110** if you need to talk to one of the team.

NEW LAUNCH

The Launch of Black Professionals Ireland (BPI) on Thursday, 30th of May 2024

A piece by Comfort, our Income Management Officer



This amazing event took place on May 30th and I must say that it was such a great evening of meeting people, networking with sharp minds and celebrating what I hope will be an amazing journey of change in Ireland. The atmosphere was filled with so much positive energy and what I believe would be a transformative journey for BPI in Ireland. At this point I would like to acknowledge and celebrate BPI founders who are Enoch Adeyemi, Patricia Munatsi and Claudette Whyte. Thanks for putting this brilliant event together and I appreciate how classy the whole event was!

Secondly, I want to give a big shout out to **Circle Voluntary Housing Association** (where I work) who were one of the proud sponsors of the event. On a personal and professional level, I am impressed that they do not just tell their tenants about how they promote diversity, integration and inclusion, but they actually celebrate people from all backgrounds and they back their words with their positive actions. Special shout out to my amazing bosses, Liz Clarke and Gavin Connolly, for inviting me and my colleagues. I am grateful and I had a brilliant time.

It was very kind and noble of the British Embassy Ireland for allowing BPI to use their venue.

Thanks to the **Lord Mayor of Dublin, Daithí de Róiste**, for gracing the event with his lovely speech. I commend Mama Shee, who was the brilliant chef of the event who gave us brilliant starters and dishes!

BPI has so much potential, and I am beaming with pride to see this take off in a huge way in Ireland (PS: Special thanks to BPI for the souvenirs, it was a pleasant surprise).



HOME SAFETY CHECKS

Most of us don't think of our home as potentially hazardous to our safety and wellbeing. However, there are some simple practices which can be implemented that could save your life or that of your loved ones someday.

The below checklist will help you look for and eliminate potential hazards around the home.



SMOKE ALARMS



A working smoke alarm buys you time by alerting you to the presence of smoke. This gives you a chance to escape from injury and potentially death.

If your home catches fire, the smell of smoke will not wake you up. Inhaling smoke and other toxic gases can put you in a deeper sleep.

Smoke alarms should be present between the sleeping areas and the kitchen and living rooms. They should be tested regularly to ensure they are in working order.

Every smoke alarm is fitted with a test button which when pressed with sound an alarm – this indicates the alarm is working.

It is also important to change the battery in your smoke alarm when required.

If you find your smoke alarm beeping intermittently, this is an indication that the battery needs to be replaced.

If you have any concerns about the smoke alarms in your home, you should contact our repairs team immediately.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS



Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. Breathing it in can cause sickness and even death.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a risk in homes with open fires or gas/oil boilers. If you have an open fire or gas/oil boiler in your home, you should have a carbon monoxide alarm.

This alarm can be tested in the same way you would test a smoke alarm. Every carbon monoxide alarm is fitted with a test button which when pressed will sound an alarm – this indicates the alarm is working and this should be checked regularly.

You can prevent the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning by carrying out a few simple steps.

- Making sure flues and chimneys are cleaned regularly.
- Making sure your gas boiler is serviced annually.

- Testing your CO alarm regularly.
- Making sure your home is well ventilated and wall vents are not blocked.

What to do if you suspect a leak

If your carbon monoxide alarm sounds or you suspect a leak:

- Stop using all appliances and switch them off.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the property.
- Go outside into fresh air immediately.
- Stay calm and avoid raising your heart rate.
- Call the Gas Networks emergency line – 0800 300 363 to report the incident.
- Do not go back into the property - wait for advice from the emergency services.

FIRE BLANKET



Fire blankets are fire-resistant sheets of material that you can use to cover a fire to cut its supply of oxygen or wrap around a person whose clothes are on fire.

They should be mounted on the wall in your kitchen within easy reach.

How To Use a Fire Blanket.

- Turn off the heat source if it is safe to do so.
- Pull the tapes to release the fire blanket from its box.
- Hold the blanket in a shield position and, if possible, wrap the blanket around your hands for protection.
- Place the fire blanket over the fire to smother the blaze.

- Leave it to cool completely and ensure the fire is fully extinguished, with no chance of it reigniting.
- If the flames are larger than the blanket itself, do not attempt to put it out yourself. Instead head somewhere safe and call the fire service.

The following link will bring you to a video which demonstrates how to use a fire blanket: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D18qJ8kjLXc>

The following link will bring you to Fire Ireland's website, which has some guidance on how to carry out a routine fire safety check in your home: <https://www.fireireland.ie/fire-safety/fire-safety-in-the-home/conducting-a-routine-fire-safety-check/>

New Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy

We are currently working with tenants and staff to review our existing Tenant Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 and to develop a brand-new strategy for the coming years.

Before work on the new strategy began, we wanted to get as much feedback as possible on the existing Strategy, so we asked both tenants and staff to complete a short survey. We want to thank everyone who took part in the online survey, your feedback is important and will drive Circle's approach to tenant engagement from 2025-2028.

A raffle was held amongst those tenants who took part, and we're happy to say that Elena in Bellewsbridge was the lucky winner of the €50 One4All voucher – congratulations!

The findings from the survey have given us an opportunity to understand the positive things about our current strategy and what areas we can improve on for the future.

Both tenants and staff thought the document should be shorter, easier to read and include more photos. It has been suggested that we should be clearer about how you can get involved and give a bit more detail about this. There was agreement across the board that there was a great variety of choices on how you can get involved. Suggestions were also made on what we should be communicating with you on.

With the assistance of Supporting Communities, we are currently running several workshops, over a number of weeks, to develop the next strategy. The workshops are comprised of both tenants and staff and whilst we do have a laugh, there is a lot of hard work being done and we are benefiting hugely from your input and suggestions. We hope to have the new strategy ready to launch by the end of the year. We will of course keep you posted on its progress.



HOUSING WITH SUPPORTS



Housing with Supports is a new model of housing, support and care provision for people over the age of 60. Circle and ALONE are delighted to soon launch our Housing with Supports homes at Richmond Place, Inchicore.

This scheme will offer age-appropriate homes with own-door living and onsite non-medical staff supports. They will allow people to live independently for as long as possible in their community.

These are lifetime adaptable homes with communal spaces on the ground floor for socialising, green spaces and outdoor seating. The scheme is made up of 2 bedroom and 1½ bedroom homes, all designed with older persons comfort, support and security in mind.

Support and care will be provided **by ALONE**, with the HSE. As support staff will be based within the scheme, the individual needs can be continually assessed, and support and care can be tailored to the older persons needs.

What are the eligibility requirements for Housing with Supports, Richmond Place?

Single people and couples can apply. To be considered, you must meet the following:

- Be 60 years of age or over.
- Have been assessed as qualified for social housing support by Dublin City Council and be placed on the Housing List, or

- Have been successfully assessed as being qualified for Dublin City Council's Financial Contribution Scheme.
- Your current housing is not suitable for your current and future housing needs (too small or large and cannot be easily adapted to meet current or future needs).
- Have care and/or social support needs due to a recognised vulnerability that would prevent you from remaining living in the community.

To check if you are on the Housing List you can contact **Dublin City Councils Allocations Team** by calling **01 222 2201**.

How do I express an interest in a home at Richmond Place?

If you are interested in a transfer to this scheme, you can get in touch with your **Tenancy Services Officer (TSO)** who will assist you in submitting an **Expression of Interest form** to **ALONE** and **Dublin City Council**.

Please call 01 407 2110 to speak to your TSO, for more information and assistance.

