



## December Closing Days and Times

With the holidays fast approaching, we are making plans for our office closure. **We will be closed from 5pm on Monday 23rd December and will reopen at 9am on Thursday 2nd January.**

Our out- of- hours service will handle all emergency repairs during this period, so please continue to call us on **01-407 2110** and press option 1 to report an emergency repair. You can also call **(053) 937 4832** to be put through to our out- of- hours team directly.

Tenant   
Approved 

## A word from Our CEO

### Dear Tenants

It's been another important year for Circle. We see the end of a year where we have delivered more homes than ever before. At the same time, we have increased the number of tenants involved in the decision-making within Circle. This year we introduced the Tenant First Link (TFL) Committee, a committee of the Board of Directors, made up predominantly of tenants who advise our voluntary board on key issues facing tenants. These issues include repairs, maintenance, complaints, and other matters relating to the services we provide. As a new tenant Committee, the TFL works closely with the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) to ensure that critical tenant issues are raised at the highest levels in Circle.

Circle remains committed to achieving our planned maintenance targets, whereby we will make our homes warmer and achieve higher overall standards. This work will take time, and we will tell everyone more about this over the coming months.

I want to acknowledge that we don't get everything right all the time, but our excellent teams will always try to resolve your issues in the best way we can. Sometimes, we don't have the resources to deliver everything, but we ensure that we have done what is possible. We welcome all your feedback, either directly, through our website, phone call, in person, or through the TAG.

I want to thank all the tenants who work with us through TAG, TFL and other initiatives, as well as our staff who are dedicated to ensuring that our services are the best they can be. As we look towards 2025, we are committed to delivering more homes and services, and we are optimistic about the positive changes we can bring.

**We wish all our tenants a very happy Christmas and holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous 2025.**

Kind regards

**John Hannigan**

Chief Executive Officer

Circle Voluntary Housing Association



# Be a Good Human - Look After Your Pets

**As the festive season approaches, many people start thinking about adding a new furry, feathered or scaly friend to their family, or think that it is the purrfect gift for a loved one. Puppies and kittens are often at the top of Christmas wish lists, and it's easy to see why — they're adorable, playful, and bring so much joy. But, while a dog or cat can bring happiness to a home, they also come with big responsibilities that last long after the decorations come down.**

Also, remember that giving a pet as a gift to a loved one who may be hoping for something more permanent most gifts you can buy in a shop, so can be returned if needed, but a pet cannot!"

**If you're thinking about getting a pet this Christmas, here are some things to consider:**

## **Life span:**

On average, a dog can live from 10 up to 15 years of age, cats for up to 22 years, rabbits for up to 12 years and even the humble goldfish can live up to 20 years. That's a long-term commitment, not just a holiday one. Ask yourself if you're ready to care for a pet for its entire life.

## **They need time and attention:**

Pets rely on their owners for everything from food to grooming, exercise, training, companionship and

more. If your life is already busy or unpredictable, think about whether you have the time to meet a pet's needs.

## **Pets can be expensive:**

Food, bedding, holiday care, grooming, vet bills, insurance and waste disposal can add up quickly. Unexpected costs, like an emergency trip to the vet or emergency pet boarding, can also be part of owning a pet.

Christmas can be chaotic, with visitors, parties, and changes in routine. This can be overwhelming for any new pet, especially a kitten or puppy who needs a calm and consistent environment to settle in.

**Instead of rushing into a decision, why not take some time to plan?** Talk to your local animal shelter or rescue organisation for advice. Many pets are waiting for loving homes, and rescue centres will help you find the right match when the time is right. It's always better to adopt and not shop.

Pets are wonderful companions, and they deserve a forever home where they're loved and cared for every day — not just as a seasonal gift or one to be rushed into for a convenient present. If you're sure you're ready, pets can bring so much joy. But if you're not quite there yet, that's okay too. Taking your time is the best gift you can give any future furry, feathered, scaly friend.



# Christmas Traditions



"How I deal with Christmas each year and is a long-standing tradition is that I take my notebook and do a bit of sketching. Usually at this time of year the decorations are out, and I will have a series of Christmas scenes.

This can ease the tension of family gatherings and the rush of Christmas due to setting things up."



*Stephen (tenant)*

"Our family Christmas tradition is getting matching pyjamas and watching the Late Late Toy Show together.

My sister makes up treat boxes for all the nieces and nephews and delivers them to our homes just before the Toy Show starts. It's our favourite time of year."



*Joyce (tenant)*

"Our tradition usually starts around September, every year. We'll get the kids back to school and he'll say to me, "What do you fancy for Christmas dinner this year?" - use a global term here

As I haven't been drooling over thoughts of the turkey, and the gravy and the spuds [potatoes] and the gravy and the stuffing and the gravy and the sprouts (yes sprouts) and cranberry sauce and the ham and the gravy, oooh the gravy and the stuffing.....

Obviously, I opt for turkey, because hey, if I isn't broke don't fix it, right?!

But he will want something extravagant like goose... goose, the horror!



I suppose come Halloween we've pleaded our case to one another and then the battle begins... We spend the next 7-8 weeks bickering over a bird.

Even the kids will get involved and depending on which parent has the most sweets, they're usually on board, or utterly disgusted by the shame of no turkey at Christmas.

As they've gotten older, they have got wiser, and they will pull rank aaannnd peacemaker and offer a solution... McDonald's.

Needless to say, with only a few weeks left its all-out war in our house, carnage, I tell you.

But I'll tell you this much, we'll be having turkey for Christmas... (again)"

*Bronagh (tenant)*

# Coffee Morning, Peadar Kearney House

**Peadar Kearney House, in Dublin City Centre, enjoyed a warm and welcoming community coffee morning, hosted by their Tenancy Services Officer (TSO), Philip. This morning brought tenants together for a relaxed and enjoyable gathering. It was an informal event which gave tenants an opportunity to connect with each other and engage directly with Circle staff in a friendly and approachable setting.**

With the aroma of freshly brewed coffee filling the room, tenants were encouraged to share their ideas, discuss community matters, and build stronger relationships with their neighbours and Circle staff.

The event fostered a genuine sense of community spirit, creating an inclusive space for tenants to voice their thoughts and feel more connected to the organisation and their local area.

These gatherings are part of Circle's commitment to promoting tenant engagement in an approachable and meaningful way. The coffee morning highlighted the value of informal interactions in strengthening relationships and enhancing communication between tenants and staff. It was a wonderful opportunity to cultivate a sense of belonging, leaving attendees with a positive and uplifting experience.



# Coffee Morning, Aderrig Adamstown

**Aderrig Adamstown, located in Dublin, recently hosted its first-ever community coffee morning, marking a special occasion for tenants to come together and connect. As a new development, this was the first opportunity for tenants, many of whom had spent the past six months settling in and maybe only passing each other in the corridors, to meet and get to know one another.**

The event provided a relaxed and welcoming environment where tenants could share a cup of coffee, exchange ideas, and begin to build the foundations of a vibrant community. It was also a chance to meet their Tenancy Services Officer, Eoin, in an informal setting. Eoin took the time to listen to tenants' suggestions and aspirations for how Aderrig could truly feel like home for everyone.

Tenants shared their thoughts on ways to enhance communal spaces, organise future activities, and create a sense of belonging within the development. The morning served as a starting point for building relationships among neighbours and with Circle staff, fostering a collaborative spirit that will help shape Aderrig into a thriving, connected community.

The event was a resounding success, setting the tone for future gatherings and demonstrating the importance of creating opportunities for tenants to come together, share ideas, and build meaningful connections in their new homes.



# Heading Away for the Holidays?

## Here Are Some Tips To Keep Your Home Safe

If you're planning a trip over the festive season, it's important to make sure your home is safe and secure while you're away. A little preparation can go a long way in giving you peace of mind while you enjoy your trip.

Here are some tips to help you:

Lock Everything: Double-check all doors and windows to ensure they're securely closed and locked before you leave.



### 1. Secure Tools and Sheds:

Don't forget about tools or equipment in your garden. These can be stolen or even used to break into your home, so lock them away safely.



### 2. Sort Out Deliveries:

Arrange for parcels or mail to be held or delivered at a later date, to avoid them being left out in the open or going missing.



### 3. Use Your Security System:

If you have an alarm or security system, activate it before you go. Test it beforehand to make sure everything is working properly.



### 4. Let a Trusted Neighbour Know:

Inform a neighbour or friend that you'll be away and ask them to keep an eye on your home.



### 5. Hold Off on Social Media:

Avoid posting about your trip until you're back home to reduce the risk of attracting unwanted attention



### 6. Prepare for Winter Weather:

If you're traveling during colder months, consider adding temporary insulation tape to exposed pipes or placing buckets under sinks to catch water, in case of freezing and leaks.

If you're heading away for an extended period, please let your Tenancy Services Officer know, or email us at [info@circlevha.ie](mailto:info@circlevha.ie). This helps us stay informed in case of emergencies.

**Have a wonderful holiday and stay safe!**





## Family Halloween Fun-Day in , **Castletroy,** **Limerick!**

Tenants in Castletroy enjoyed a lively Halloween event filled with activities that brought the community together for an unforgettable afternoon. Families gathered to take part in festive favourites like pumpkin carving, which let children and adults showcase their creativity, while music set the mood for a cheerful and spirited celebration. Goodie-bags were on hand to keep the kids happy, ensuring everyone had something to enjoy.

The event was made even more special with the participation of Simon Midwest, whose involvement added a valuable collaborative element. Their presence created opportunities for meaningful engagement, strengthening connections with tenants while offering support and resources.

Arranged by Cónan, one of our Tenancy Services Officers (TSO's), this fun-filled day provided families with a chance to celebrate Halloween in an interactive and welcoming environment. It also highlighted the importance of community partnerships in enhancing tenant engagement and fostering a sense of belonging among tenants.







## Family Halloween Event, Kilkishen

Our Tenancy Services Officer (TSO) Cónan, hosted a spook-tacular family-friendly Halloween event in Kilkishen, Clare, bringing tenants together for a fun-filled afternoon of festive activities. The event featured a variety of treats, games, and a best-dressed competition that encouraged tenants to showcase their most creative costumes. Tenants enjoyed a warm and inclusive atmosphere, with activities designed to entertain children and adults alike.

The event not only provided an opportunity for tenants to celebrate Halloween, but also fostered a sense of community among neighbours. Highlights included; themed decorations, costumes and interactive games that kept the children engaged throughout. The best-dressed competition was a crowd favourite, with prizes awarded to children for their outstanding costumes.

Overall, the Kilkishen Halloween event was a tremendous success, well done to all winners!



## Playful Streets Pilot Programme, Deerpark, Dublin.

**Circle, in partnership with South Dublin County Council, proudly supported the "Playful Streets" pilot programme in Deerpark. This is an initiative designed to reimagine public spaces as vibrant and safe areas for children to play. As part of this innovative programme, local streets were temporarily closed to traffic, allowing children to explore, connect, and play freely in a safe, supervised environment.**

The event featured a variety of engaging activities that encouraged active outdoor play, such as games, sports, and creative workshops. Parents, neighbours, and children of all ages came together, fostering a sense of unity and strengthening community ties. The initiative emphasized the importance of outdoor play for children's physical and mental well-being, while also creating opportunities for tenants to engage and socialize in their local area.

The "**Playful Streets**" programme is part of a broader effort to reclaim public spaces for recreational use and to create child-friendly neighbourhoods. By providing a safe and inclusive environment for play, the initiative not only supported children's development but also highlighted the potential for reimagining how streets can bring communities together. Deerpark's pilot event was a significant step forward in promoting active, healthy lifestyles while building a stronger, more connected community.





## Reindeer Food Recipe

### Recipe

- 250g dark chocolate chips
- 360g creamy peanut butter
- 150g Shreddies cereal
- 120g mini pretzels
- 230g icing sugar
- 255g red and green M&Ms
- 170g mini peanut butter cups

### Instructions

- In a large bowl, combine Shreddies cereal and the pretzel pieces.
- Melt peanut butter and chocolate together, either on the hob or in the microwave.
- Pour peanut butter chocolate mixture over cereal/pretzel mixture and stir to combine.
- Chill in the fridge until the mixture just barely begins to set up (about 30 minutes).
- Remove the mixture from the fridge.
- In a separate large bowl, add 60g of icing sugar and half of the chilled mixture, then add another 60g icing sugar over the cereal and the remaining chocolate/cereal mixture.
- Gently stir until the icing sugar is evenly distributed, tossing to coat the cereal fully. Then chill the mixture again in the fridge until it's set (about another 30-60 minutes).
- Add the rest of the icing sugar, mixing well to coat everything.
- Add the M&Ms and peanut butter cups and stir to combine.
- Transfer to a serving bowl and serve.

## Salt Dough Christmas Ornaments

### Ingredients

- 1 cup plain flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1/2 cup water (approximately)

### Instructions

Preheat your oven to 90-100°C (200-210°F) for a slow bake. This low temperature prevents the dough from puffing up. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt. Gradually add water while stirring, until the mixture forms a dough that is firm but pliable. (Tip: If the dough is too dry, add a little more water. If too sticky, sprinkle in a bit more flour). Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 5 minutes, or until smooth and workable. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough to about 1/4-inch thickness. Avoid making it too thick, as this could affect baking. Use cookie cutters to create festive shapes or shape the dough by hand. Use a straw or skewer to poke a small hole near the top of each shape. Place the shapes on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 2-3 hours, or until completely dry and hard. Alternatively, you can let the shapes air-dry for 1-2 days. Allow the ornaments to cool completely. Once cool, paint with acrylic paint, and add glitter or other decorations if desired. For a longer-lasting finish, apply a clear varnish or PVA glue after painting. Thread a ribbon or string through each hole to hang the ornament on your tree.

**Tip:** Store your salt dough ornaments in a cool, dry place, and they can be used year after year!





**Your voice matters.  
Let's hear it!**

## **Shape Your Community**

### Get Involved with Circle Tenant Groups!

At Circle, we believe the best way to improve our services is by listening to you — our tenants. That is why we're inviting you to get involved in shaping the future of your community by joining one of our tenant groups or even starting your own community or tenant association.

Getting involved isn't just about attending meetings — it's about making a real difference where you live. You'll have the chance to:

- **Shape the Way Circle's Services Are Delivered:** Work with us to improve the services that matter most to you by sharing your insights and ideas.
- **Be Eligible for Estate Development Funding:** Tenant associations and community groups can apply for funding to develop projects that enhance your estate or improve quality of life for everyone.
- **Gain Skills and Training:** We offer free training and support to ensure you have the tools you need to succeed.

Whether it's improving shared spaces, organising events, or representing the voices of your neighbours, your involvement can spark positive change.

#### **No Experience Necessary**

If you have never been part of a group like this before, don't worry. We will guide you every step of the way with training, resources, and support.

#### **How to Get Started:**

To find out more about joining an existing group or starting your own, get in touch with our Tenant Engagement Team today. Let's work together to create a better, stronger community for everyone!

Email us at [tes@circlevha.ie](mailto:tes@circlevha.ie) to request more information, a member of our team would be happy to talk to you.

**Your voice matters. Let's hear it!**

# Staying Safe Online:

## Tips for a Secure Digital Experience

In our increasingly connected world, online safety is more important than ever. Whether you're shopping, banking, or simply browsing, here are some essential tips to help you stay safe online:



### Use Strong, Unique Passwords

Create strong passwords that combine letters, numbers, and special characters. Avoid using the same password for multiple accounts. Consider using a password manager to keep track of your passwords securely.

### Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

Two-factor authentication adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second form of verification, such as a text message or authentication app, in addition to your password. Enable 2FA on all accounts that support it.

### Be Wary of Phishing Scams

Phishing scams often come in the form of emails or messages that appear to be from legitimate sources. Be cautious of unsolicited messages asking for personal information or containing suspicious links. Verify the sender's identity before clicking on any links or providing information.

### Keep Your Software Updated

Regularly update your operating system, browser, and other software to protect against security vulnerabilities. Enable automatic updates whenever possible to ensure you have the latest security patches.

### Use Secure Wi-Fi Connections

Avoid using public Wi-Fi networks for sensitive activities like online banking or shopping. If you must use public Wi-Fi, consider using a virtual private network (VPN) to encrypt your internet connection.

### Monitor Your Accounts Regularly

Regularly check your bank and credit card statements for any unauthorized transactions. Set up alerts to notify you of suspicious activity. Early detection can help prevent further damage.

### Be Careful with Personal Information

Limit the amount of personal information you share online. Be mindful of privacy settings on social media and avoid posting sensitive information that could be used to steal your identity.

### Download Apps from Trusted Sources

Only download apps from official app stores like Google Play or the Apple App Store. Be cautious of apps that request excessive permissions or seem suspicious.

### Educate Yourself and Others

Stay informed about the latest online threats and safety practices. Share this knowledge with friends and family to help them stay safe online as well.

### Backup Your Data

Regularly back up important data to an external hard drive or cloud storage service. This ensures you can recover your information in case of a cyberattack or hardware failure.

*By following these tips, you can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to online threats. Stay vigilant and proactive to enjoy a safer and more secure digital experience. Happy browsing!*





# Keeping Your Home Safe This Christmas

As the holiday season approaches, excitement fills the air with festive decorations, Christmas lights, and holiday gatherings. However, amidst the joy and celebration, it's crucial to prioritise safety, to avoid accidents and ensure a safe and happy holiday. Here are some essential tips to keep your home safe this Christmas.

## 1. Fire Safety with Christmas Lights and Decorations

Christmas lights are beautiful but can pose a fire risk if not used properly. Before decorating, inspect all lights for frayed wires or broken bulbs. Use only certified lights for indoor or outdoor use as specified on the packaging. To prevent overheating, avoid plugging too many lights into one socket and turn off all holiday lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

## 2. Safe Use of Candles


Candles are a traditional part of Christmas decor but are also a common cause of home fires during the holidays. Place candles in sturdy holders away from flammable materials like curtains or decorations. Never leave a burning candle unattended.

## 3. Tree Safety

If you have a real Christmas tree, make sure it's fresh and watered daily to prevent it from drying out and becoming a fire hazard. Keep your tree away from heat sources like radiators, fireplaces, and space heaters. For artificial trees, ensure they are labelled as flame resistant.

## 4. Kitchen Safety During Holiday Cooking

Holiday meals often mean more time spent in the kitchen. Avoid distractions while cooking and never leave the stove unattended. Keep flammable materials, such as kitchen towels or potholders, away from hot surfaces. It's also a good idea to have a fire blanket easily accessible in case of emergencies.



Consider using battery operated candles instead as a safer alternative.





### 5. **Protect Your Home from Theft**

Christmas is also a time when theft can increase. If you're traveling for the holidays, take precautions to secure your home. Set your lights on timers, ensure doors and windows are locked, and avoid leaving expensive gifts visible from outside. If you're expecting deliveries, make arrangements to pick up packages promptly to avoid theft.

### 6. **Child Safety Around Decorations**

Children are often fascinated by holiday decorations, but some can pose a risk. Keep breakable ornaments out of reach, and avoid decorations with small, detachable parts that could be choking hazards. Also, ensure that all cords and wires from lights are safely tucked away to prevent tripping or electrical accidents.

### 7. **Safe Use of Ladders When Decorating**

If you need to hang lights or decorations in hard-to-reach places, always use a stable ladder. Make sure it's positioned on a flat surface and avoid climbing to the very top step. When decorating outside, be cautious of power lines and wet surfaces that could cause slips.

By following these safety tips, you can enjoy a worry free holiday season with your loved ones. A little caution can go a long way in ensuring that your Christmas is filled with joy, laughter, and peace of mind.

*Stay safe, and happy holidays!*





## Jorja

### A Kid's Point Of View Of Their New Family Home

**Circle are amazing!! I really feel like I can call it home. Especially after homelessness for two years, but that may be just me and my family.**

I know a lot of friends who miss their old towns, but they are settling in now.

It's not just us who have made new friendships, but the parents as well. Making the environment all the more welcoming for everyone. Halloween night, us kids got the opportunity to meet other children in the neighbourhood, as not every child comes outside.

One thing I'd like to bring up is the problems for us teens. The park. When it was first opened it was alright because of the excitement, but we got bored pretty quickly. When kids have nothing to do, there comes trouble. So, if next year we get a bigger park suitable for all ages it would be great, and at least a better place for us to run around and play football.

Going back to the topic of houses quickly. They're very nice inside and out, everyone has loads of

space to feel less stressed and more organised. I've noticed even the apartments and duplexes are big and pretty and I wouldn't mind living in one. We knocked there for Halloween and the inside looked beautiful the way they designed them and the way the home is built.

And lastly, I'd just like to say how I'm excited for the future. Christmas is soon and my mom has already decorated the house with bright, cozy decorations that make the house more welcoming. And I've planned many things with friends for Christmas as well. That will keep us busy from being bored some days!

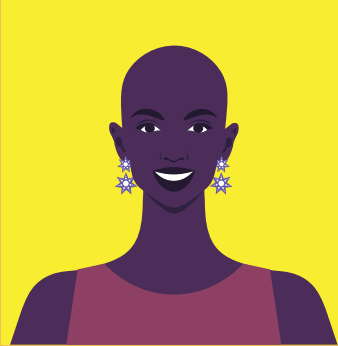
Thank you for dedicating your time to reading this article. And I hope the kids' point of view is more understood.

Best of luck in everyone's new houses!

*Jorja Carroll.*

*...I'm excited for the future. Christmas is soon and my mom has already decorated the house with bright, cozy decorations*



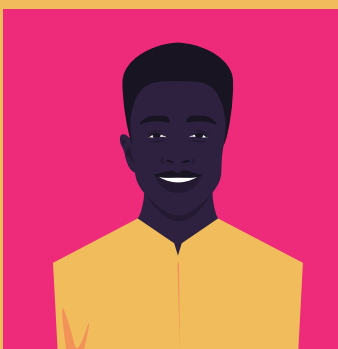
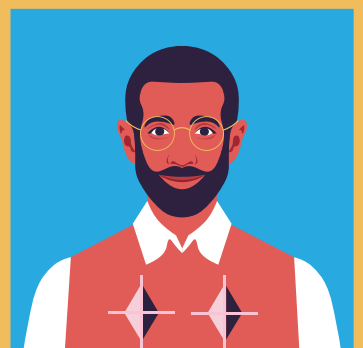
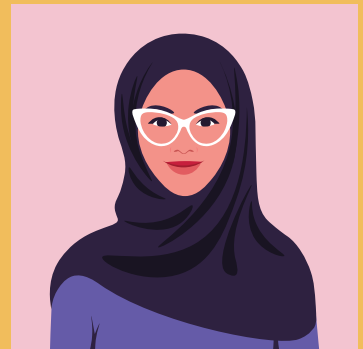


## International Migrants Day

International Migrants Day falls on the 18th of December 2024, and this year's theme is Honouring the Contributions of Migrants and Respecting their Rights.



Migration is a strong feature of the history of the world and will continue to be due to factors such as environmental change, conflict, natural disasters etc. Humans have always moved, to find better prospects, to find safety or to escape difficulties and hardships. International Migrants Day draws attention to the contributions and challenges of those who have left home seeking a better life, as well as the interconnectedness of our global community.



Many Irish people have experienced migration over our history and we have a proud reputation for welcoming people from across the globe. It is in this spirit that Circle would like to acknowledge the contributions and rich diversity of all migrants who are part of the Circle family/community and to support and respect the rights of all.

