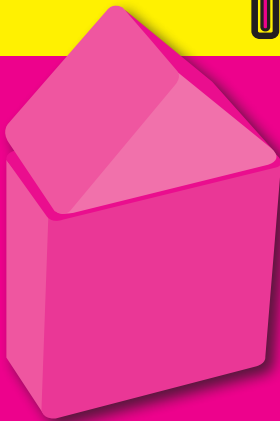


ALWAYS

THINK

O	X	X	OUTSIDE
X	<del>O</del>	<del>O</del>	<del>OUTSIDE</del>
O	X	X	OUTSIDE

THE BOX



SHARING A  
HOME

A GUIDE TO SHARED  
ACCOMMODATION





### **MOVING IN**

- PAYING RENT/HOUSING BENEFIT
- DEPOSITS
- TENANCY AGREEMENT
- REPAIRS
- HOW LONG CAN I STAY?
- THINGS YOU'LL NEED AND COSTS

### **LIVING TOGETHER**

- THE JOYS OF SHARING WITH OTHERS
- THE 'HOW TO' FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS
- BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

### **MOVING ON**

- KNOW YOUR RIGHTS
- DEALING WITH YOUR LANDLORD
- EVICTION WORRIES
- HELP IN EXTREME CASES

We work with young people and children who haven't had a fair deal to support them to try and make things that bit better. Everybody is different! MACS work with young people on the things that are important to them. This could be getting out more, making new friends, getting a place to live, sorting out problems or money worries, dealing with stresses or the things that get you down. We do this through three services below:

## VISION

LIFE IS GREAT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## MISSION

TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T HAD A FAIR DEAL IN RELATION TO HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS, MENTAL HEALTH AND PARTICIPATION.

## ETHOS

WE NEED EACH OTHER TO MAKE LIFE WORK.

## VALUES

WE MAKE OUR OWN CHOICES

WE TAKE RISKS

WE MAKE MISTAKES AND LEARN

WE RECOGNISE OUR DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGE JUDGMENTS

## AIMS

GETTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO WHERE THEY WANT TO BE

LED BY YOU

STRENGTH, EXCELLENCE, INNOVATION AND VISION



## WELLBEING

*LIVE, DREAM, SUCCEED*

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO LIVE, DREAM AND SUCCEED WITH INSPIRATION FROM VOLUNTEERS.



## FLOATING SUPPORT

*BUILDING FUTURES TOGETHER*

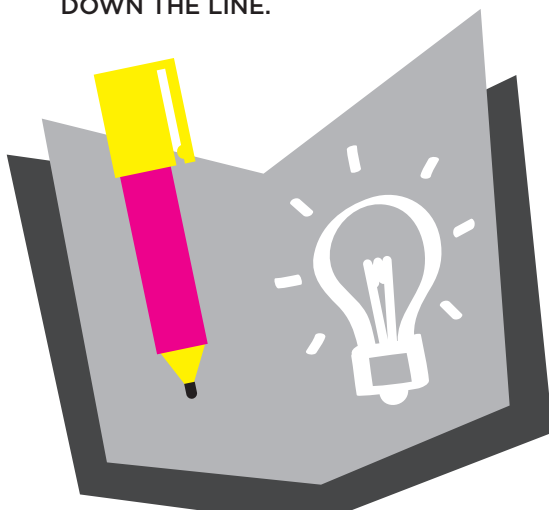
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE GET AND KEEP A PLACE TO LIVE.



## SUPPORTED HOUSING

*MOVE IN TO MOVE ON*

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LEAVING CARE OR HOMELESS SO THEY ARE BETTER PREPARED TO LIVE IN THEIR OWN PLACE DOWN THE LINE.



It can be scary finding yourself homeless, moving into a hostel, or a new home; being on your own for the first time. It can be fun to share with others & now with changes in Housing Benefit, it can be expensive to get a place of your own, so sharing rent & bills with others is a great option.

Sharing with other people can be both amazing & challenging. There are problems that can come up, but these can be resolved. Your Floating Support Worker will help you through the process. MACS will support you with information on what you need to know from first steps of paying rent, things you'll need to buy, repairs, to dealing with any tensions that come up with house mates. We will support you in knowing what your rights are as a tenant.

## MACS PROCESS FOR SHARING

Are you interested in shared housing? MACS will give you the support to arrange for you to share and to support you when you are sharing accommodation

We will match you with another young person/ other young people and your worker will introduce you

Interested? We will complete a match form with you

Your worker will support you to find accommodation that is suitable for sharing

Once accommodation has been found your worker will support you in getting everything ready to move in (ie. Housing Benefit/ buying items)

When everything is in place it's time to move in! Your worker will support you with the move and setting up home and help you with any issues that come up in your tenancy while you're receiving support.

# FLOATING SUPPORT

You can get support with moving in & help with maintaining your tenancy. Here are some of the areas that MACS Floating Support can help you with:

- Help you find accommodation & maintain your home
- Help you budget your money, support with benefits & housing benefit. We can look at financial options such as grants
- Talk to the Housing Executive or landlord about any issues that you're having with your home
- Help with resolving any issues you're having with house mates
- Help you get to know your community & what's out there
- Help to make sure that your home is safe & secure
- Support you with any issues you are having with your neighbours
- Help you find other services that you may need
- Support you in your relationships & meeting new people
- Support with how you are feeling
- You will get support for 6 months & then if you require further up to 2 years

You can go online to look at the Belfast Directory for Floating Support [https://touch.nihe.gov.uk/fsd\\_belfast.pdf](https://touch.nihe.gov.uk/fsd_belfast.pdf)

# MOVING IN PAYING RENT

Housing Element UC (Universal Credit)

- You are entitled to the Housing Element of UC if you are on any of

the following key benefits: JSA, ESA, Income Support transferring to Universal credit

- If you think you may be entitled to the housing element UC your Floating Support worker will help you make a claim as soon as possible
- The current shared room rate for housing element UC (under 25s) depends on the area you live in. You are entitled to £\_\_\_\_\_ Per week
- If you're a care leaver the shared housing rate doesn't apply to you & you are entitled to \_\_\_\_\_ until you turn 22 where you will be entitled to \_\_\_\_\_
- You budget for this in a short term lease. Your worker will help you create a budget plan
- If you are working, you may still be entitled to a small amount of housing element UC. You will have to provide payslips as evidence of your earnings. You will need to pay £\_\_\_\_\_ You are entitled to £\_\_\_\_\_ in Housing element UC
- Housing element UC doesn't normally cover all of your rent you owe the landlord. In some cases, your worker can help you apply for help with the remaining amount through Discretionary housing payment
- If the Housing Executive decide to award you this payment, they will let you know how much they will give you & for how long you will get this payment. Complete this form with your worker & bring it to your local Housing Executive office. You can apply anytime, but

if you want it early apply two weeks before moving in



## DEPOSITS

- When you move into a rented property you are usually asked to pay a deposit. For some people this is hard and your worker will help you look at what help might be available for you ie: Grants
- Your landlord must protect your deposit within 14 days of receiving it & must give you a list of information including details of where the deposit is within 28 days of you giving them this money.
- Your landlord can keep some or all of your deposit if you do not give proper notice, owing rent to the landlord, or have caused damage.
- If your landlord refuses to return your deposit & you think that this is unfair, your worker can support you with landlord issues & get expert advice from The Housing Rights Service.
- When you move into a private rental you should be given a rent book, this means that your landlord is a registered landlord

## TENANCY AGREEMENT

When you agree to take on a tenancy you will be asked to sign a tenancy agreement.

If your tenancy is for a year & a day or longer your tenancy agreement must be in writing. Your tenancy agreement outlines the terms & conditions that apply to you living in your new home. If you break this agreement, your landlord can ask you to leave the tenancy.

While some of the terms may not be negotiable, you should be familiar with all the terms & conditions in a tenancy agreement before signing it. Your worker will go through this with you & help you understand it.

Your worker will help you with the areas;

- How much rent to be paid
- When rent is due
- What expenses the deposit can be used to cover
- How to pay rates if you are legally liable
- The length of the tenancy
- If you can leave before the end of the tenancy



- If furniture will be provided (make sure you complete the inventory form)
- If you are responsible for internal decoration & if so, to what extent
- Who is responsible for external & structural repairs
- If you can keep pets (most landlords do not accept tenants with pets)
- If you can smoke in the property

**Remember, never sign anything that you do not understand. Make sure you read the entire contract/agreement with your worker especially any small print.**

## HOW LONG CAN I STAY?

Most tenancy agreements with private landlords last 12 months. If you decide that you want to leave before the end of this period you will need to consult your tenancy agreement, discuss with your landlord & your Floating Support Worker. You may be liable for the remaining rent for the period left in your agreement. If you have any worries about this your Floating Support Worker will help you & can link in with Housing Rights Service.

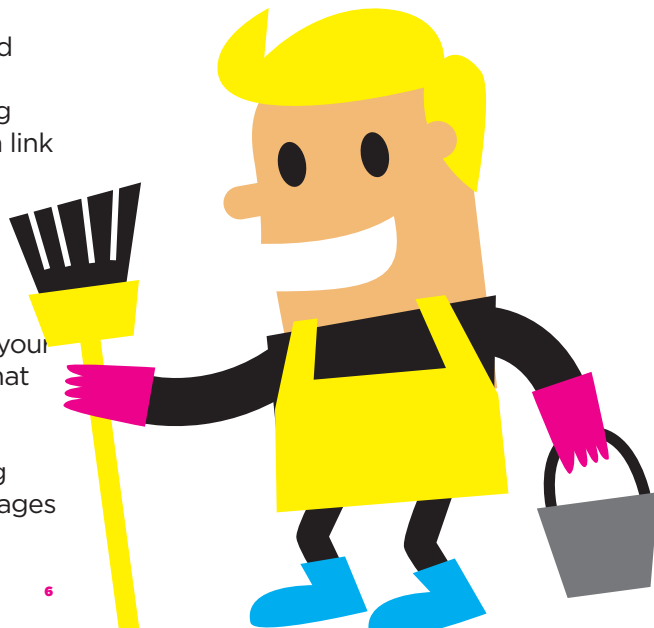
## REPAIRS

- Identify any repairs before you sign the tenancy agreement & your worker can help you request that they be completed before you move in. It is better if this agreement should be in writing you don't want to pay for damages that you didn't cause

- Your worker will help you take a detailed list of any furniture & household items in the property
- Don't forget it is your responsibility to tell the landlord as soon as something breaks or needs fixed. Your Floating Support Worker can help with reporting any concerns or repairs
- If you or your guests cause the damage you will have to pay to get it fixed
- MACS will help you to follow up any requests by email or a letter to prove that you have told the landlord about the problem

## THINGS YOU'LL NEED & COSTS

When moving into a new place there are things that you will need. You may





have to agree with the people that you're sharing with who will buy which items. Here are some of the items you may need.

### **BEDROOM STUFF**

- Duvet set (personal)
- Pillows (personal)
- Duvet & Pillow Cover set (personal)
- Fitted sheets x 2 (personal)

### **BATHROOM STUFF**

- Towels (personal) x 4
- Laundry (personal)
- Loo brush (sharing)
- Bin (sharing)

### **KITCHEN STUFF**

- 16-piece cutlery set (sharing)
- 5-piece knife set (sharing)
- Utensil set (sharing)
- Glasses set of 6 (sharing)
- 16-piece dinner set (sharing)
- Saucepan set (sharing)
- Frying pan (sharing)
- Chopping board (sharing)
- Oven gloves (sharing)
- Oven dishes (sharing)
- Measuring jug (sharing)
- Salt & Pepper shakers (sharing)
- Tea Towels x 5 (sharing)
- Kitchen bin (sharing)
- Iron (sharing)
- Ironing board (sharing)
- Brush (sharing)
- Mop & Bucket (sharing)
- Dust pan & brush (sharing)
  
- Hoover (sharing) (optional)

### **TOILETRIES & CLEANING STUFF**

- Washing up liquid
- Shower gel
- Loo rolls
- Toilet bleach
- Hand soaps

- Kitchen & Bathroom sprays
- Floor Cleaner
- Washing powder

Your worker can look at what money is available through benefits or grants & support you in going out to buy them.

## **BILLS**

Sharing with others will mean that you will need to decide who will be responsible for putting things in their name & how you will share the costs. You can do this together, & if there are any difficulties your worker can help you come to a fair decision.

- Electricity & oil/gas
- You may have to pay for rates
- Do you want the internet? Who pays for this & if they leave can you take on the full cost?
- TV licence - (you can pay online on [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk), buy at any paypoint, apply for tv licensing payment card, Direct Debit, or by cheque)

# LIVING TOGETHER THE JOYS OF SHARING WITH OTHERS

Part of living together is having your own private space that should be respected by everyone & communal spaces that you all will want to look after for example your bathroom, kitchen, living room, halls and garden.

## **SOME PEOPLE ARE MESSY**

It's tricky to share a space & everyone's idea of what's tidy/untidy is different. Don't leave things so that it annoys you more, have a chat, it doesn't have to be awkward. Do a chore list so that you can share the responsibilities of keeping the place clean. So together you will decide who will do certain chores ie: taking the bin in & out, keeping outside clean, clean the toilet & mopping the floors in communal areas.

## **WE CAN HAVE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES**

Sometimes house mates just don't get along. No matter what happens it's better to work things out earlier rather than letting things build up & then things blow up.

## **SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO BE ALONE**

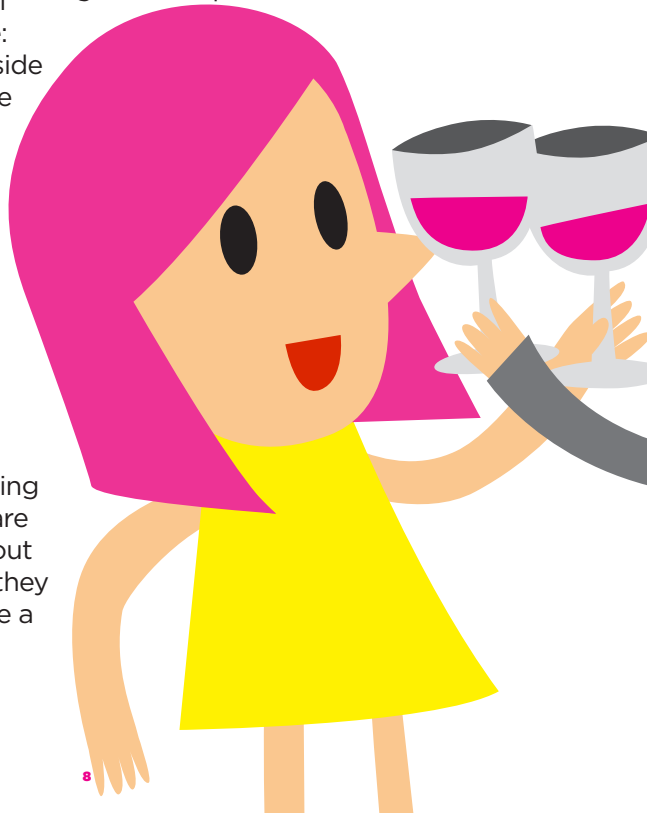
Maybe you were excited about moving in with someone but now that you are living together, your house mate is out all the time & never around. Maybe they are busy with hobbies/training. Have a chat & see what they've been up to, see if you can organise something together

## **SOME PEOPLE CAN BE CLINGY**

Maybe your house mate is ALWAYS around & it's driving you mad! Maybe they struggle to make friends, don't have any family they can go to, or are shy & are nervous about getting out. Invite them somewhere, introduce them to new people, let them know of things that may be happening in the area that they may be interested in going to. If this doesn't work have a chat & be clear that you also need your space & would like some time on your own

## **NIGHT OWLS**

Your house mate is on a different schedule to you. You're up during the day, they're up all night. Talk to your house mate, they might not even know it's bothering you. Talk about times where things can be quiet for you & for them. Or get some ear plugs & some great headphones!



## **BORROWERS**

Your house mate is borrowing things or taking them without asking. They're eating your favourite cereal or eat that last biscuit. Boundaries are important for each person, let each other know what you will or will not share or what makes you uncomfortable. Maybe have your own shelves or areas in the fridge. Do a joint shop or share the cost of some groceries like milk, bread, sugar, & cleaning products. If it continues it may be about asking them to replace the items as you'd already agreed that things were going to be separate.

## **MR/MISS POPULAR**

While having friends around some of the time is great, all of the time isn't, & it isn't always going to work for everyone.



Find out times that work for each of you to have people over. Look at your schedules & see what's going to work. You could arrange to meet each other's friends so you know who is in the house, & if there is anyone you're not comfortable with, you can agree that they come round when you're out, or just be honest & say you'd prefer they didn't come to the house at all.

## **THREE'S A CROWD**

If you or your housemate have a partner, remember that they won't be included in the contract, so you must be respectful of the amount of time that they are spending in the home. Make an agreement with each other on how much time they can be there.

## **THE PARTIER**

It's OK to get wild every once in a while, we all like our music & a bit of down time, but try & work out with your house mate when the best time to do this is & agree on who can come round, how many, & when. Agree on when it's OK for music to be on & when it isn't going to work for either of you.

## **NOT PAYING RENT**

People go through tough times sometimes & need help with managing their money. This can be tricky & put you in a tough situation if they miss paying their part of the rent. Talk with your house mate & see what's happening & how the situation can be resolved. If this puts you at risk of eviction, it may be best to bring the landlord into the conversation so they're aware of what's happening. Speak to your MACS worker as soon as you are having difficulties, don't bury your head in the sand there's always something that can be done.

# WAYS TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS

Remember you have a worker who is there to help with any difficulties that come up.

## SET GROUND RULES

Come up with rules you all can live with & set these out early.

## HAVE A ROTA

Housework can definitely cause problems between house mates. A rota can help share responsibilities between house mates. People are clear then on what they have to do. Be sure to include the garden/yard and who will be responsible for keeping it tidy.

## DON'T BE A THERAPIST

People like support, & you can be a shoulder to cry on sometimes, but you're not there to help with things that might need someone who is more

qualified, like a counsellor, or a doctor. How you can help is knowing what upsets your house mate or things that can trigger them.

## DO IT SOBER!

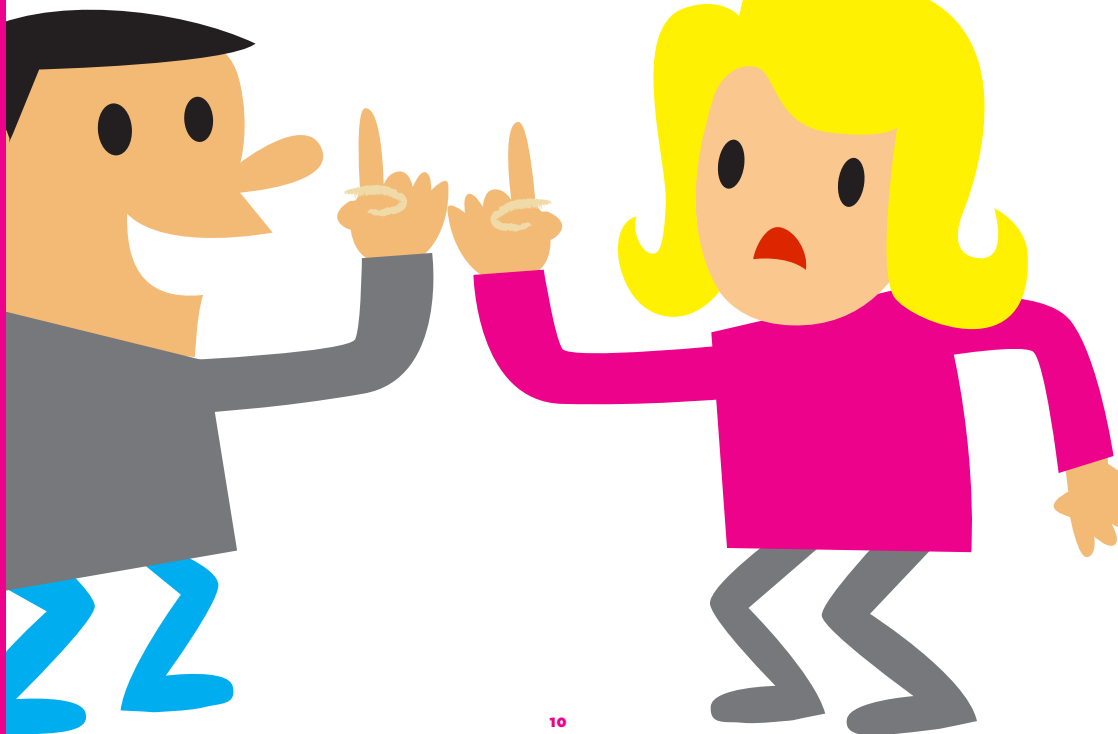
Things can get heated if people have had a bit to drink, & problems are created not solved. Talk things out when sober.

## GET SOMEONE TO MEDIATE

Having someone else step in & help you & your house mate(s) talk things through can work. Your worker can support with this. They can arrange to be part of a house meeting bringing everyone together to work towards agreeing on how to resolve things.

## SUCK IT UP!

Sometimes you can't bring someone round to your way of thinking & it may be easier to ignore annoying things.



# BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

- Everyone has the right to live peacefully in their own home and we all have different lifestyles.
- We all have a responsibility to be a good neighbour.
- Warn your neighbours if you are going to be doing something noisy.
- Keep music down and move your stereo away from any joining walls
- Try and be quiet when you're getting home at night
- Put your rubbish in the bins provided and keep any outside areas clean/tidy
- Be a responsible pet owner
- You are responsible for anyone living in or visiting your home. Being anti-social, causing trouble, or bothering your neighbours stop them from enjoying their home

## MOVING ON

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Your worker will help you know your rights as a tenant

### PROBLEMS WITH YOUR LANDLORD

- Your landlord must arrange with you if they want to visit the property.
- Your landlord can't cut off access to your electricity, water, heat or other essential services. They can't change the locks in the property or mess with your stuff. If this happens contact your worker or the Housing Rights service.

- If your landlord threatens you, contact your worker, or the Environmental Health Officer at the Belfast City Council 028 9027 0428 & out of hours' emergency 07850 499 622 or PSNI.
- MACS can support you by speaking to your landlord, Housing Executive or even to neighbours.

## EVICTION WORRIES

- If you have fallen behind on your rent or broken the terms of your contract your landlord may decide to end the tenancy agreement. To do this the landlord will have to give you at least 28 days' notice to quit in writing explaining why you have to leave. Your worker will have explained terms of your tenancy at move in.
- If you don't have a tenancy agreement or the tenancy agreement has expired the landlord can give you 28 days' notice to quit at any time, without needing a reason.
- If you stay on in the property after the notice to quit expires then the landlord will have to apply to the court to have you evicted. If you have not kept to the terms of your agreement (for example causing damage to the property) the judge will probably allow the landlord to go ahead with the eviction. If this happens you may end up paying the landlords legal costs.
- If you get a notice to quit speak to your worker as soon as possible or the Housing Rights Service to

see if there are grounds to evict you & what your housing options are.

- It's good to email any issues as this is a written record of all conversations
- Your worker can help you If you are sharing & you've signed one tenancy agreement with everyone you live with, this is most likely a joint tenancy. You all have the same rights. Your worker will support you through this though it's important to realise that you are all responsible for sharing rent.
- With individual tenancies, each person has signed a separate agreement. This is usually the case if you share a kitchen, bathroom, & accommodation is in the same building. The landlord may be able to evict one of the tenants causing problems, your tenancy won't be affected.
- If only one person's name is on the tenancy, then the other people living there are licensees & have fewer rights. You could be asked to leave the property without much notice. Get advice from your worker & Housing Rights if you find yourself in this situation.

## IN EXTREME CASES

If you've been

- Threatened with violence
- If noise or damage has gotten severe
- If you are experiencing racial or sexual harassment
- Or if you are being harassed because of your religion

**Contact your council or the Police for help**



# WHAT TO DO NEXT?

I want to share

Yes

Contact details  
MACS Floating  
Support Belfast/  
Downpatrick  
Lisburn/Newry  
check out  
[www.macsn.org](http://www.macsn.org)  
for contact numbers

Complete  
referral form

Complete a  
“getting to  
know you”  
(assessment)

Begin process of  
final accommodation

**You have decided that you would like to share a home with another/others. In order for us to help you find your home, and your housemate(s), we want to make sure we are getting the best match for you. These questions we will act as a guide for us to do just that.**

How soon do you want a shared tenancy?

What areas would you like to live?

Do you know who you'd like to share with? Do you have more information of their housing needs?

Do you have a preference of who you live with?

What is the maximum amount of house mates you would share with?

Are you prepared to share with someone who does not have the same routine as you?

- Education/training/employment during the day? Or night workers?
- Likes to party and have friends round?
- Who drinks or doesn't drink?
- Who smokes?
- Has pets?
- Someone who has difficulty sleeping and is awake at night?

What age range of house mates would you want to live with?

Do you need a furnished property?

What are your feelings about guests staying over?

How long do you want to stay in the tenancy?

Do you have any money for deposit?

Are you working or are you entitled to Housing element of Universal Credit?

**IF HOUSING IS A PROBLEM FOR YOU OR IF YOU ARE HOMELESS, YOUR FIRST STOP SHOULD BE THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE 034 4892 0900 IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE 'OUT OF HOURS' (OUTSIDE NORMAL OFFICE HOURS INCLUDING WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS), 028 95049 999 PLEASE USE THIS NUMBER IN AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS SITUATION ONLY.**

### HOUSING ADVICE

Housing Rights Service 028 9024 5640 [www.housingadvice.ni.org](http://www.housingadvice.ni.org)

### BENEFITS ADVICE

Benefit freephone number: 08000224250  
 Finance Support (including advance payment & discretionary support) 08005872750

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

24 Hr Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline N. Ireland 0808 802 1414  
 Text: SUPPORT - 07797 805 839 . The helpline is for ANYONE regardless of gender, sexuality, etc.. If appropriate, you will be referred onto a refuge (available throughout NI). Refuges will accept male children, but age restrictions apply.

### CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Childline 0800 1111  
 CHALKY FREEPHONE (Children's Law Centre) 0808 808 5678  
 Housing Rights Service 028 9024 5640  
 NSPCC (if you're worried about a child) TEXT 88858 0808 800 5000  
 VOYPIC Help Line (leaving care) 084 5074 2942  
 Concerned about a child or young person's safety? contact a Gateway Service:  
 Belfast Trust area 028 9050 7000  
 Northern Trust area 030 0123 4333  
 South Eastern Trust area 030 0100 0300  
 Southern Trust area 080 0783 7745  
 Western Trust area 028 7131 4090  
 REGIONAL OUT OF HOURS SOCIAL WORK SERVICE 028 95049 999

### OUT OF HOURS SERVICES

OUT OF HOURS GP / SOCIAL WORK  
 North & West Belfast 028 9074 4447  
 South & East Belfast 028 9079 6220  
 Northern Trust Area 028 2566 3500  
 Lisburn & Downpatrick 028 9260 2204  
 North Down & Ards 028 9182 2344  
 Southern Trust area 028 3839 9201  
 Western Trust area 028 7186 5195  
 REGIONAL OUT OF HOURS SOCIAL WORK SERVICE 028 95049 999

### HELPLINES

Samaritans Freephone 116 123  
 LifeLine NI 0808 808 8000  
 Parenting NI 0808 801 0722  
 Debt Action 0800 917 4607

### LGB&T SUPPORT

The Rainbow Project, Belfast 028 9031 9030  
 LGBT Switchboard NI 0808 8000 390

### DRUGS & ALCOHOL

A list of services (by area) can be found on the Public Health Agency's website: [www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services)

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS CAN CHANGE. IF YOU'RE HAVING PROBLEMS GETTING THROUGH CHECK THE NUMBER ONLINE OR VISIT: [www.chini.org.uk/advice.html](http://www.chini.org.uk/advice.html)**

[www.macsn.org](http://www.macsn.org)

[facebook.com/macsn](https://www.facebook.com/macsn) [twitter.com/macsn\\_ni](https://twitter.com/macsn_ni)

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