

# Respond

## Tenant Newsletter

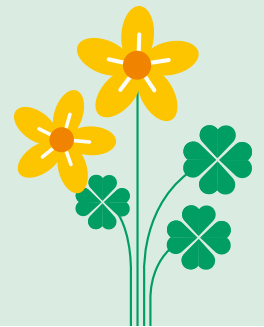
### Introduction

#### I hope you are all keeping well

As I start this newsletter there is definitely a touch of Spring in the air and the daffodils are starting to bloom. However, if we are to believe the weather forecast we still need to expect and be prepared for colder weather.

As you may be aware March, as well as having our National Holiday St. Patrick's day, is the National Month Against Racism, so is an ideal opportunity to tell you more about our ongoing Intercultural and Diversity project.

**Dolores Grady, Tenant Relations Manager**



### Intercultural and Diversity Project

Respond are committed to building inclusive and welcoming communities for people of all backgrounds and displaying our desire to demonstrate that, no matter what cultural background a person has, they will feel welcome and supported in their tenancy and community.

We are committed to improving standards and experiences of tenants from all backgrounds and we are acutely aware of increased anti-immigration activity that has emerged in our country quite recently and how that might impact on our tenant's day to day lives.

Currently we are collaborating with our colleagues in Circle and Cluid Housing and have designed a process for accrediting our commitment to diverse communities.

We are all aware that our estates, particularly those built in the last 15 years, have become very diverse culturally. We all see the vibrancy that gives to life in our communities. We also see the challenges that can sometimes arise between people of very different backgrounds. This accredited process will move through five key stages over a period of three to five years. The accreditation process is aimed at allowing each of the Approved Housing Bodies to enquire into the reality of cultural diversity for tenants, staff and management and to design its own responses to the challenges that emerge.

#### The five steps are as follows:

##### **Building a Guiding Coalition:**

Recruiting and inducting a coordinating group. This group will oversee the entire process and will be made up of staff who have various roles within the organisation and tenants. This group has now been set up within Respond with tenants who have expressed an interest in the project. This group are currently undergoing a number of team building and information sessions. We have room for more tenant involvement and if you may be interested please feel free to contact me [dolores.grady@respond.ie](mailto:dolores.grady@respond.ie)

##### **Promoting the project:**

This will involve promoting the project across the organisation.

##### **Inquiry:**

This step is the heart of the project. Everyone will have an idea of what issues will arise when the question is asked "How is our AHB doing on promoting positive diversity?" However, it is only by genuinely inquiring in all parts of the organisation that we will really know.

##### **Planning a response and monitoring its impact:**

The coordinating group will lead the process of planning a response to the inquiry outcomes.

##### **Monitoring:**

Developing an Action Plan and monitoring its effectiveness.

We will keep you posted as we progress through this process.

In the meantime, we would strongly urge any tenants who have any concerns or who have had any racist experiences or witnessed any racist incidents in our estates to contact us for support and assistance with dealing with any issues. Please call the Respond Customer Service Centre PH: 01 8087700 alternatively, email [info@respond.ie](mailto:info@respond.ie). Additionally, tenants may make contact directly with the Gardai for matters of a criminal nature.

All racist incidents, including crime and discrimination, can be reported in confidence to [www.iReport.ie](http://www.iReport.ie). Using iReport.ie does not replace reporting to authorities. iReport.ie is an easy to use online incident reporting tool developed by ENAR (European Network Against Racism) Ireland for people who experience or witness racism. It is a national, confidential and independent system for monitoring racism in Ireland. To report a racist incident go to [www.iReport.ie](http://www.iReport.ie) and fill out the online form to describe what happened. Photos, videos, screen grabs and other files can be uploaded. You can also report racist hate speech that happened online. If you don't have access to a computer or require support with reporting contact any of the listed representatives for assistance. ENAR Ireland is the Irish coordination of the European Network Against Racism which represents over 120 groups in 30 countries. ENAR Ireland

has nearly 90 member organisations working together.

To show our commitment to building inclusive and welcoming communities for people of all backgrounds Respond have now joined INAR who are the Irish Network Against Racism and is made up of over 100 member groups nationwide working together against racism.

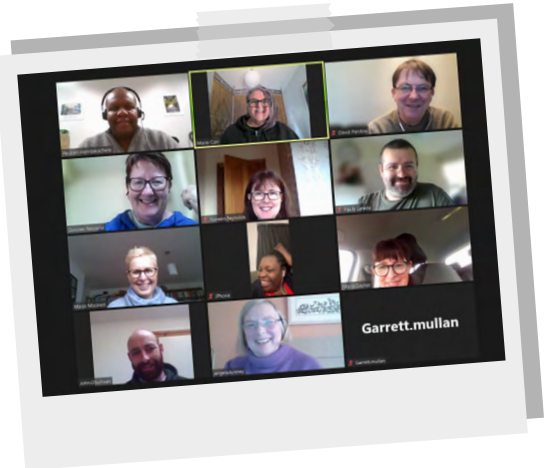


Photo of Responds' steering committee at a recent online training session.

## Brigid's Day Intercultural Event at Glor, Ennis

On Brigid's Bank Holiday, February 6th, Respond's Refugee Resettlement programme in County Clare came together with other local Clare organisations to organise an intercultural event.

The event brought together communities across the county to share cultural performances, dance, music and storytelling. The event was held on St. Brigid's bank holiday because of what the day represents. The day has its origins in the Celtic festival of Imbolc, it was the festival of fertility and marked the beginning of spring in Ireland. The celebration represented light, new beginnings and prosperity for the year ahead.

There were excellent performances by musicians from Nepal, South African, members of the Travelling Community, the Ukrainian community and many other local artists. A selection of homemade cakes from Syrian, Afghanistan and Ukraine were available to sample in the foyer.

The event sold out with over 500 people in attendance. It really highlighted the vibrant and diverse culture we have in County Clare and Respond were delighted to be part of it. It also gave the families on the resettlement programme an opportunity to enjoy Irish music and culture, and meet new people in the community.



## Annual Rent Review

Many thanks to all of you who have already submitted your income documents as part of our annual rent review process.

Feedback from the changes made so far have been positive. We appreciate that some of you grapple with the technology involved and as always, we are here to help. We are constantly learning and reviewing the process so that we can make it better for you and next year we can make further changes based on your feedback.

The winner of our One 4 All Voucher for €250.00 for submitting their completed documentation prior to the initial closing date of 14th February is **Linda McEvoy from Birch Grove, Portlaois.**

Can I ask that any of you who have not submitted your documentation please do so as soon as possible. If you need any assistance in this regard please do not hesitate to **contact us on 01 8087700.**

## Changes to issuing of Quarterly Rent Statements

We are all becoming more conscious of our environment and the increased costs. We are looking for ways of protecting our environment and reducing costs.

The next change we are proposing is to cut down on the amount of paper used in the production of your quarterly rent statements and the subsequent costs of posting same. We are conscious also that more and more of you manage your finances and banking online and we wanted to provide you with the option of viewing your rent account and viewing the maintenance jobs on your property online.

You will receive one more paper quarterly rent statement. Thereafter they will be available, to you, through our tenant portal. Already your rent statement is available to you 24/7 through this but very few of you are using it. You will all have received details on TIPS, our Tenant Information Portal System, over the last number of years and for newer tenants you will have received the information as part of the documentation received when you moved into your home. The system allows you view the full history of transactions on your rent account. You can also keep track of any maintenance and

repairs you have logged through our Customer Service Centre.

TIPS also shares with you the information we hold on our system about you and any other people in your household. If there are any errors please let us know, so that we hold only the correct information about you and the people living in your home.

View your account online by visiting [www.respond.ie](http://www.respond.ie) and clicking on 'Tenant Information Portal' which is on the top right hand side of the home page. To protect the privacy of your information you must login using the details previously given to you.

Your data is encrypted when being viewed across the Internet to protect the security of your account and your information.

If you have any problems using TIPS or have any other questions, contact our **Customer Services Centre on 01 8087700**



## Garden Project in St. Johns College, Waterford

Early in 2022, tenants in John's College approached Respond for funding to develop allotments to the rear of their apartments.

Trojan work has been carried out over the last year in developing the area. Eleanor sourced A tutor from the Education and Training Board (ETB) ran classes for the tenants to increase their knowledge on developing allotments and identifying suitable items for planting.

Over the year, this work has provided an opportunity for learning, for tenants to share





ideas, an area to socialise, a space to work in and to improve the mental wellbeing of all involved. Work continues on the area and a picnic area is being developed. Thanks to the ETB for recent funding that they provided and we await with baited breath to see what wonders will be produced this year. Thanks to the tenants who have been working hard in developing this project - we wish them continued success! Maybe we can get to share in the fruits of your labour at some stage soon.



## Family Support Survey

Our Family Support service recently sent a survey to a number of estates to find out what programmes you, our tenants, would like to see the Family Support service providing.

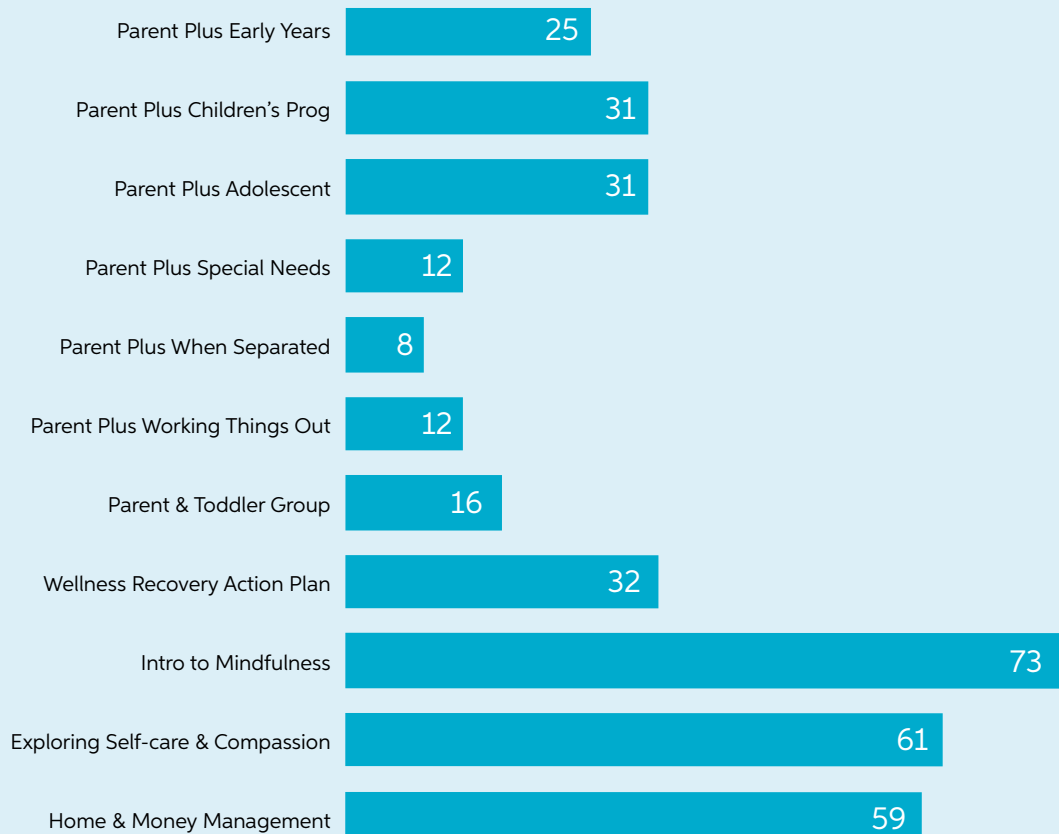
Surveys were sent to estates across the country and a BIG THANK YOU to the 258 people who took the time to respond. The information you provided will be used by the Family Support service to plan their programmes going forward.

They will try to provide the most commonly requested programmes first. These programmes may be provided online due to the demand across the country but it is hoped that some will be delivered in person.

A few people listed programmes that they would like to avail of but, unfortunately, did not leave their contact details. If you listed programmes but didn't leave your contact details please contact: **Jillian Gillick** on [jillian.gillick@respond.ie](mailto:jillian.gillick@respond.ie) 087-2671634 and she will take your details.



Here is a list of programmes Family Support currently facilitate.





## Importance of Adequate Heating and Ventilation

No one wants to live in a damp home. Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and cause wooden window frames to rot.

It is also unhealthy. Some damp is caused by condensation. This can lead to a growth in

mould that appears as a cloud of little black dots. Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface like a wall, window, mirror etc. The air cannot hold the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. It also occurs in places the air is still, like the corners of rooms, behind furniture or inside wardrobe.

### How to Reduce Condensation at Home

**01 Simple things make a huge difference** like keeping lids on pans and use the cooker hood when cooking, drying clothes outdoors (not on radiators), venting your tumble dryer to the outside.

**02 Let the damp air out and the fresh air in:** Extractor fans are a good way to get rid of moist air and steam so that less condensation forms. They use little electricity and don't add much to your bill.

When cooking or bathing, keep the kitchen or bathroom door shut and open the window to let the steam out. Meanwhile, let fresh air circulate to avoid mould forming where the air is still.

Make sure there is a gap between your furniture and the walls, and give wardrobes and cupboards a good airing when possible.

**03 Always leave trickle vents and wall vents open** and unblocked by curtains or furniture, even in winter. You will use a little more energy to heat your home but you will have fresh air to prevent illnesses.

**04 Check and clean** any wall vents and extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens. It is a good idea to clean them at least every 6 months.

**05 Make sure your home is heated:** While you do not want to waste money heating rooms you don't use, very cold rooms are more likely to get damp and mould. Set the thermostatic radiator valve to 1 in unused rooms so the radiator gives out a little bit of heat whenever you have the heating on. If you don't have central heating, consider using a room heater with a timer and temperature control. Remember, unused rooms will need a good airing from time to time.



## Dangers of Burning Rubbish

**01 Damage to fireplace**  
It is essential to have your chimney cleaned annually. Servicing helps to ensure that your chimney is safe to use and without damage. Any damages identified at the time of service can be repaired.

**02 What should you burn in your stove/fireplace?** You should only use approved coal/fuels and seasoned (dried) wood. Burning scraps of wood, wood that has been varnished or treated, rubbish or waste will cause damage to your chimney over time.

**03 Health risks:** Burning plastic in your stove/fireplace is a serious health risk. The burning of plastic releases harmful toxins into the air that you and your family are then exposed to. The toxins commonly found in plastic include dioxins and PCBs, hydrogen cyanide, hydrochloric acid, and sulphuric acid. These toxins can be harmful to humans as well as pets.

**04 Damage to the environment:**  
Burning plastics can also have an impact on the environment. Once toxins escape out of your home from the chimney, they are then present in the atmosphere. This can be harmful to anyone who breathes them in outside of your home. The toxins can also settle in the environment and linger for a long period of time, meaning that a quick decision to burn some plastic could have a long-term impact on the environment around you.

**05 Important notice:**  
Unless there is a Back Boiler installed in your home, a stove/fireplace is considered a secondary heating and it is only capable of heating the room there it is located. Ensure your gas/oil boiler/heat pump/electrical storage heaters to adequately heat your home.

