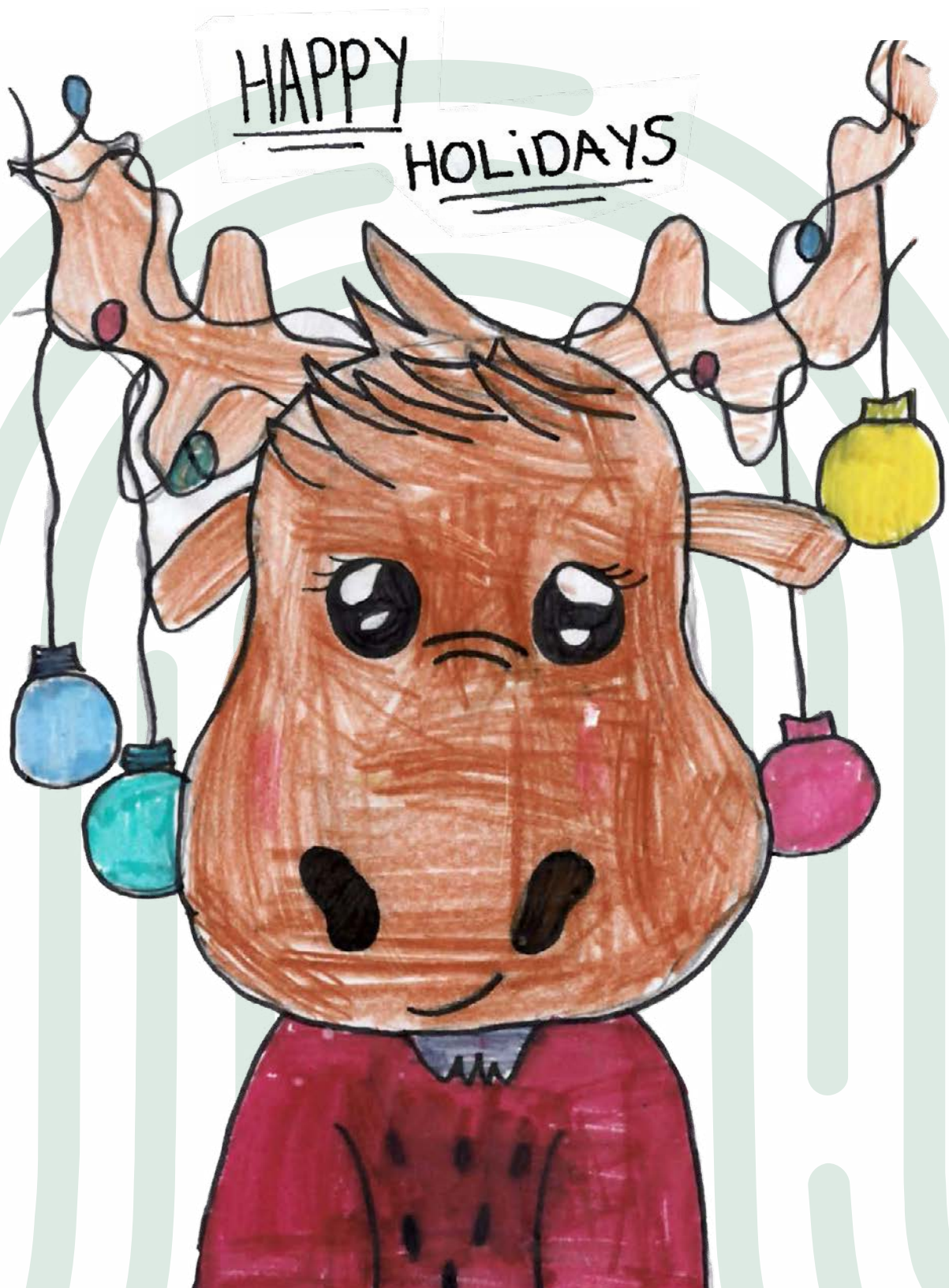


# Respond Round Up





# Hello and welcome!

to the latest edition of the Respond Tenant Newsletter. A special hello to our newest tenants across Respond estates. We are delighted to welcome you to our community and hope you are settling into your new homes. If you have any questions or need help with your housing, your Tenant Relations Officer is your first port of call. This goes for all tenants - we're here to help!

P.S. Don't forget to follow us on social media for the latest updates and announcements!

 @respondhousing

 @respondhousing

 respond housing



## Seasons greeting from CEO, Aoife Watters

As we approach the end of another year, I want to extend my warmest wishes to all our tenants across Respond. This season is a time for connection, reflection and gratitude, and I want to thank each of you for being part of our community.

Your support, feedback and partnership throughout the year helps us continually improve the services we provide. Whether it's working together to maintain safe, comfortable homes or collaborating on new community initiatives, your involvement makes all the difference.

I hope this festive season brings you peace, joy, and moments of rest with the people who matter most.

Wishing you and your families a very happy Christmas and a healthy, fulfilling New Year. We look forward to continuing to work with you in 2026.

Warmest regards and a Happy New Year,

**Aoife Watters,**  
**CEO, Respond**

### TENANT SPOTLIGHT

## Life in The Westlands – Meet Kathleen Moran



### Community Spirit and Relationships

Neighbours regularly check in on one another, offer lifts, run errands and keep an eye on older residents. Children who once played on the estate now return with their own families. Cultural diversity is now part of daily life which Kathleen warmly welcomes.

### The Community Centre and Local Services

Although daily meals no longer run, the centre remains a hub for services and local groups. A long-running art group operates every Thursday, funded by the WWETB, and attended mostly by estate residents. Kathleen also leads Monday diamond art sessions with two local residents.

There is also a sensory group on site, run by a local Garda's family, offering assessments and supports for children with additional needs. Two mental health group homes are also part of the broader estate community.

### Life as a Respond Tenant

Before moving to The Westlands, Kathleen lived in poor-quality private accommodation, including a home with an external bathroom that was prone to rats. Being offered a Respond home was transformative.

"I woke up warm for the first time, and I felt safe. It was the first time in years I wasn't afraid of the cold or the house falling down around me," Kathleen recalls.

"Respond as a landlord, I've never had any issues with them. Anything that went wrong in the house was fixed as quickly as possible."

"And in the last few years, we got in new heating, we all got new windows, doors, triple glazing – we got a new fireplace with a stove, and it's so cosy. I haven't lit my fire since we got the air-to-water. It's brilliant because I only have one bill to pay, electricity bill, that's it."

### Staying Active and Connected

Now retired, Kathleen still volunteers, attends craft groups and continues to support neighbours. At home, her two rescue cats — Al and Isla — keep her company. Kathleen believes strongly in the value of community and credits the estate's close-knit culture for maintaining connections between older and younger tenants. Living in a Respond home and working with Respond for more than two decades has shaped her life significantly — from stability and support to opportunities for employment and community involvement.

Even now, neighbours check in on one another, especially when someone is away or living alone. She describes Westlands as a place defined by care, connection, and mutual support.

### Background

Born in the village of Kilmore, Kathleen grew up on a small family farm. Her father worked in a local factory in Wexford Town, while her mother managed the farm. After moving into Wexford Town in 1960s, Kathleen attended the Presentation primary and secondary schools leaving at 17 after the passing of both her parents. Later in life, at the age of 48, Kathleen returned to education and earned a Diploma in Business Management and a Certificate in Community Workplace Management.

### Moving to The Westlands

Kathleen moved into The Westlands in 1994 and began working with Respond the following year, remaining with the organisation for 22 years. Running the community centre, she oversaw the laundry service, helped manage daily dinners for residents, and worked closely with the Sisters of Mercy who supported older residents. Over time, she became community centre manager, a supervisor, and later carried out housing assessments across the Southeast.

The Westlands includes 40 homes for older residents and 19 homes for families, the estate has grown into a vibrant mix of ages and backgrounds.



## TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

### 2025 Key Highlights

Our latest tenant satisfaction survey, carried out by Behaviours and Attitudes, showed tenant satisfaction at 95%, reflecting the commitment of colleagues across our estates, supported by our continued investment in tenant engagement, energy upgrades and repairs.



**95%**  
Customer Service Satisfaction



**86%**  
Quality of Home



**89%**  
Repairs Satisfaction



**70%**  
Effectiveness in Dealing With Anti-Social Behaviour



**91%**  
Keeping Tennants Informed



**89%**  
Safe and Secure in Neighbourhood

Thank you to everyone who took part — your feedback helps shape our services.

## NEWS FROM RESPOND

### Respond Wins Two Awards at 2025 Irish Council for Social Housing Awards

Respond were delighted to receive two awards at the 2025 Irish Council for Social Housing Community Housing Awards.

- **Regeneration Award**  
**Millfield Cottages, Cork.**  
This regeneration project transformed 18 nineteenth-century houses into modern social homes with a strong community focus.
- **Large Family Housing Project Award**  
**Elanora Court, Dublin.**  
A flagship passive development of 153 homes, prioritising tenant empowerment and local engagement.

Our **Baltinglass Brain Health Village** was also shortlisted — a strong recognition of innovation and teamwork.

## 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

### Respond in the News: 2024 Annual Report Launch

In October, we welcomed Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne TD, to officially launch our 2024 Annual Report.

A special thank-you to tenants Kim Arthur (Dundalk) and Sifon-Abasi (Seven Mills), who shared personal and powerful stories about their experiences living in Respond communities. Their testimonies remind us why our work matters.



You can read the report at: [www.respond.ie](http://www.respond.ie)

## TENANT ENGAGEMENT

### Respond at the All-Ireland Tenant Engagement Conference

Respond took part in the Supporting Communities All-Ireland Tenant Engagement Conference in Belfast, alongside Approved Housing Body colleagues and tenants.

- **Plenary session:** Niamh Randall, Director of Strategy and Public Affairs presented on our innovative Brain Health Village.
- **Panel discussion:** Reyhana Cushnan, Policy Lead and Aisling Corcoran, Quality and Performance Manager joined colleagues from Clúid and Circle to discuss the social impact of AHBs.
- We showcased our **Social Impact Measurement Framework**.
- Tenant **Siphiwe Moya** spoke powerfully about the Quality in Our Diversity project.



## CELEBRATING LOCAL STORIES

### Life Coaching in Killure Grove with Eleanor Mc Grath

In October 2025, a Life Coaching Programme was delivered to tenants and members of the local Waterford community. Hosted on our Respond estate in Killure Grove, the programme covered a range of helpful topics including stress management, resilience, breathing and relaxation techniques, and goal setting for everyday life.

Organised as part of Mental Health Week 2025, all participants received a self-care pack to support their wellbeing. Respond tenant Eleanor McGrath, who took part in the programme, kindly shared her experience and offered some supportive tips as Christmas approaches.

"Enough said - I have bit the bullet. I am spending Christmas 2025 alone. Now, don't get me wrong, I've received plenty of invitations, but it's time to enjoy my own company and create my own Christmas spirit.

"I recently had the pleasure of attending Life Coaching classes in Respond, Waterford, presented by Deirdre Lindy, a qualified Life Coach Practitioner.

"These classes were excellent and gave me space to think

about being alone – and more importantly, enjoying a stress-free Christmas.

"Here are some practical but gentle ways to lower anxiety levels over Christmas and in your everyday life. They may not be for everybody, but they are worth the read.

Creating a cosy home environment is essential. I have started already - with scented candles, fairy lights to brighten my mood, a relaxing playlist and more.

"I've also decided to be as organised as possible, and these are some goals I have set for myself.

**1. Set realistic expectations.** Give yourself permission to enjoy a good enough Christmas rather than a perfect one. Decide what really matters and let go of the rest.

**2. Reduce gift pressure.** Finances can cause huge stress. Try setting a budget and agreeing as a family to scale back. Remember the real reason we celebrate Christmas.

**3. Plan ahead, but don't overschedule.**

**4. Delegate if you are hosting.** Ask your guests to bring dishes or drinks and accept help with setup and cleanup.

**5. Limit social media.** Constant comparisons to curated online holiday moments can trigger anxiety.

**6. Practice calming techniques** such as slow breathing, mindfulness.

**7. Acknowledge your feelings.** If you are happy, sad, grieving, lonely or exhausted.

"These are very valid feelings. Embrace them. Make your Christmas a warm and peaceful one. Many thanks to Niamh Flavin in Respond's Family Support team for organising these classes."



## FESTIVE FOOD CORNER

A traditional holiday  
bake, perfect for  
sharing.

# Makowiec, Polish Poppy Seed Roll



Prep Time  
2 hours



Cook Time  
40 minutes



Makes  
Two Rolls

### Ingredients for Yeast dough:

- 125g Butter
- 35g Yeast
- 500g Plain flour
- 50g Lard
- 1 Egg

### Things you need for Poppy seed mixture:

- 250g Poppy seeds
- 1 Pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup Raisins
- 3 tbsp Honey
- 100g Candied Orange peel
- 2 tbsp Sugar
- 1/4 cup Lukewarm Milk
- 1 tbsp Potato flour
- 2 tbsp Heavy Cream (18%)
- 3 Eggs
- 1 tbsp Powdered sugar

### Instructions:

1. Boil the Poppy seeds in water for about 30 minutes, during which time, the dough can be pre-pared.
2. Combine all the ingredients for the dough together, knead and set aside for 15 minutes.
3. After the Poppy seeds are boiled, strain the Poppy seeds through a fine sieve and then grind the Poppy seeds twice in a meat grinder.
4. Combine all the ingredients for the Poppy seed mixture except the 3 eggs. Separate the 3 eggs into egg whites and egg yolks. Beat the 3 egg whites until foamy. Combine the egg yolks and beaten egg whites to the Poppy seed mixture and mix everything together well.
5. Divide the dough mixture into two equal parts. Roll out one part into a rectangle shape that is 1-1.5cm in thickness.
6. Place half of the Poppy seed mixture on the rectangular dough mixture and spread the Poppy seed mixture so that most of the surface area of the dough is covered. Roll the dough to create a cylindrical shape. The cross section of the roll should look like a spiral.
7. Wrap the completed roll in baking paper twice. This assures that when the roll is transferred to a baking tin, there is 1cm of free space between the baking paper-covered roll and the in-side of the baking tin.
8. Repeat steps 6 and 7 for the other half of the dough mixture. Place rolls in a pre-heated oven at 200°C / 400°F / Gas Mark 6 for 40 minutes.



Quick, indulgent and  
ideal for Christmas  
gatherings.

# Terry's Chocolate Orange Cheesecake pots

### Base:

- 200g Digestives
- 100g Unsalted butter

### Filling:

- 100g Terry's Chocolate Orange (melt a little and cool slightly)
- 300g cream cheese
- 80g icing sugar
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 150ml double cream

### Filling:

1. Blitz the biscuits, mix with the butter, press into your pots/cake tin.
2. Chill in the fridge while you make the filling.
3. Whisk cream cheese, icing sugar & vanilla.
4. Fold in the chocolate
5. Whip the double cream & gently fold in the chocolate mixture
6. Pour onto the chilled base & smooth on top.
7. Chill for 4 - 6 hours (or overnight)
8. Add a half of Terry's chocolate orange and voila, it's done.

## Tenant Achievements

Two of our Brain Health participants proudly received Level 3 awards at the Baltinglass FETC graduation ceremony, earlier this month.

Delivered in partnership with Kildare and Wicklow ETB and Respond, Thomas and Ray took part in the Time for Me programme and bakery classes. Through this collaboration, the pair built strong connections with tutors and the centre coordinator, which pushed them to continue on their learning journey. This year, both successfully completed the Level 3 Health and Fitness programme — a fantastic achievement for each participant.

Ray Brookes, Rathcoran tenant said: “The Brain Health classes and activities have been great. They’ve gotten me out of the house and helped me meet people in the community I wouldn’t have met otherwise. It’s nice to recognise familiar faces in town now and stop for a chat. The Time for Me programme led me back into education. I’ve since completed the Level 3 Health and Fitness course in Baltinglass Further Education Centre, and I also did

some computer classes with my tutor to help with the coursework. It was lovely to catch up with the group and our tutor at the graduation and receive our certificates.”



## Fire Safety at Christmas:

Christmas is a magical time, but it does come with additional fire safety risks. Here are some tips to help you avoid any catastrophes at home or in the workplace (Provided by Dublin Fire Brigade).

### Christmas Trees

Artificial Christmas trees are safer than real ones as they are fire-resistant. When choosing an artificial tree, check for a genuine CE mark. This indicates that it meets expected European safety standards. (You can learn more on the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission’s website.)

If you choose a real tree, make sure to use a base that allows for watering of the tree. This will keep the tree hydrated and greener, ensuring that it sheds less, lasts longer and is more resistant to fire.

When decorating your Christmas tree, use low-energy, low-heat LED Christmas tree lights. Never use candles on or near your Christmas tree.

### Christmas Lights

When decorating your home use low-energy, low-heat LED lights wherever you can. Check that they have a genuine CE safety mark too. Before putting lights up, check the wiring for fraying, kinks or broken connections. It’s best to throw away the lights if you find any issues.

### Candles

Candles pose a fire safety risk any time of year. Try to opt for reusable LED candles over real ones. However, if you choose to use real candles, ensure they are placed in a holder at least one metre from anything flammable. You should also ensure they are placed out of reach of children and pets.

Don’t place the candle holder on a television or surfaces that are made of plastic or fibreglass. Choose a fire-resistant surface instead. Never leave a candle burning when you leave a room - even just for a moment.

### Charging devices safely

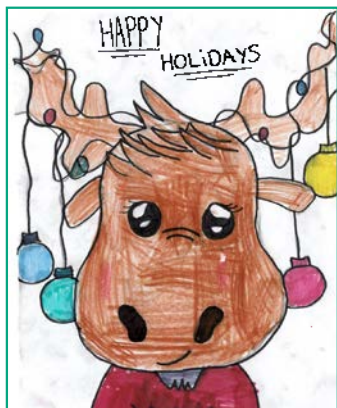
Only charge your device for as long as required, until it reaches 100%. Don’t overcharge it. Don’t charge your devices overnight, while you are asleep or when you leave your home. Leave your device to charge on a flat, hard, non-flammable surface.

Charging naturally creates heat within the battery, so never cover a charging device with a pillow, cushion, blanket or anything else. Let the heat dissipate. Unplug the charger from the wall socket when it’s not in use.



# Christmas Card Competition: Congratulations to Our 2025 Winners!

A huge festive well done to all the children who entered this year's Christmas Card Competition! We were thrilled by the creativity, colour and Christmas magic in every entry. Each winner takes home a €100 Smyths voucher. Thank you to all the young artists who took part. Their wonderful artwork brought festive cheer to Respond this Christmas!



**Overall Winner**  
Breda Lynch, age 9



**Age 0-5 Winner**  
Ehab Tahir, age 4



**Age 11-16 Winner**  
Lilly Mae Hickey, age 11

As we approach the Christmas season, we know this time of year can bring joy but it can also be a challenging time for many of us. We want to remind you that you are not alone, and support is available if you are finding things difficult.

## *If you need someone to talk to:*

- **Samaritans:** Free, confidential support 24/7 at 116 123
- **Childline:** Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year 1800 666 666, Free Text 'Talk' to 5010
- **ALONE:** Support for older people, including friendship and practical help: 0818 222 024
- **Dublin Rape Crisis Centre:** Freephone 24-Hour National Helpline at 1800 77 8888

- **Aware:** Support for people experiencing depression or anxiety: 1800 80 48 48

- **Women's Aid:** Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, Freephone 1800 341 900

- **Men's Aid:** Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Phone 01 554 3811  
Helpline Email: [Hello@mensaid.ie](mailto:Hello@mensaid.ie)  
Christmas hours: Open 27th, 28th, 29th December from 9am to 5 pm.  
Reopen as normal from 9am to 5pm from Tuesday 2nd January 2024

- **Pieta House:** Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, Freephone 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444

## *If you're worried about finances:*

- **St. Vincent de Paul (SVP):** Assistance with food, energy costs, and essentials.
- **MABS:** Money advice and budgeting support: 0818 07 2000

## *If you have a Respond housing-related concern:*

Our team will be working limited hours over the Christmas period, but emergency contacts are available for urgent repairs or issues.

- **General queries:** Opening Hours. We will respond as soon as offices reopen after the holiday period.

*You are part of our community:*  
Christmas can be a tough time, whether due to financial pressure, loneliness, or stress. Please don't hesitate to reach out for yourself or someone you're worried about. Support is only a phone call away.

*From everyone at Respond we wish you a peaceful Christmas and a gentle, hopeful start to the New Year.*

High Park,  
Grace Park Road,  
Drumcondra,  
Dublin 9,  
D09 N2N7

Airmount,  
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