



6 Your neighbourhood



6.1 Your neighbourhood

Your first priority will probably be to arrange your new home the way you like it. Over time it is likely that the way your neighbourhood looks will become increasingly important to you. The upkeep of the communal areas and the general tidiness of the scheme say a lot about how people feel about living there.

We have designed and built our estates with the aim that they will be attractive places long into the future. However, quality housing and well-designed schemes do not in themselves guarantee success. At the heart of every neighbourhood, which looks appealing and inviting, are residents who have invested time, energy and effort into making that area what it is. We hope you will feel pride in your area.

What's my part in this?

It's you and your neighbours who determine how your neighbourhood develops. Whether or not you become actively involved in the residents group, you still contribute to the development of your scheme in a number of ways:

- How you keep your home and garden or balcony
- How you get on with your neighbours
- How you resolve difficulties with your neighbours
- Whether you support local activities such as clean-ups, residents meetings etc.

6.2 You and your neighbours

Getting on with your neighbours is your responsibility and common sense plays a large part in making this happen. To ensure that our understanding of common sense is similar to our residents we compiled the suggestions put forward by residents at the pre-tenancy courses as to what it means.

- Residents respect each other's right to live peacefully.
- Residents do not engage in behaviour that offends or upsets others.
- Residents look after their homes and gardens/balconies.
- Residents drive and park their cars in a way that doesn't endanger or interfere with others.
- Residents take responsibility for their pets.
- Residents keep an eye on each other's property.
- Residents are responsible for the behaviour of their visitors.
- Residents are mindful of noise, especially at night and early in the morning.

These are very reasonable expectations of what people can hope for from each other.

What should I do when difficulties arise?

There will be occasions when difficulties arise between neighbours. Before approaching your neighbour, stop and ask yourself:

- Are you being reasonable?
- Do you have all the facts?
- Are you willing to listen to what they have to say?
- Explain to your neighbour how their behaviour is affecting you. Try to resolve the problem yourselves and don't get other neighbours involved if they are unaffected. If the problem persists and interferes with your peace and quiet then contact your Housing Officer and they will suggest a course of action which may involve a third party such as a mediation service.



What is Clúid's role in neighbour disputes?

Generally Clúid does not get involved in neighbour disputes but we can recommend mediation services if you are experiencing difficulties with your neighbours. A very small number of incidents may be considered anti-social behaviour and these cases will be dealt with by the Gardaí, ourselves and where applicable the local authority anti-social behaviour teams.

What can be done about noise in apartments?

Flats cannot be completely soundproof. Noise can be heard relatively easily through floors and walls. We therefore expect neighbours to be tolerant and to show each other respect. Keep the noise you make at reasonable levels, particularly the sound from radios, music systems and TVs. Talk to your neighbour if you are troubled by noise.

6.3 Anti-social behaviour

Clúid knows that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have an extremely negative effect on the day to day lives of tenants and their families. Clúid will not tolerate ASB and is committed to preventing and addressing ASB on our estates. We will investigate and endeavour to resolve all complaints of ASB made to us. In order to take effective action against people who cause ASB we need to receive reliable accounts from residents.



What is anti-social behaviour?

The type of conduct that can constitute ASB includes:

- Intimidation, threats
- Racial harassment or other hate behaviour/bullying
- Actual violence against people
- Sale or supply of drugs
- Targeted vandalism, i.e. vandalism used to harass or intimidate

What should I do if I witness or experience anti social behaviour?

You should report it to the Gardaí immediately and to your Clúid Housing Officer. When reporting an incident you must give full details:

- Exactly when it happened (time/day)
- The location
- What happened
- The names and addresses of those involved
- When the incident was reported to the Gardaí
- When, and if, the Gardaí responded
- The name of the Gardaí who attended the incident (if possible)
- Your Housing Officer can give you an ASB complaint form to report the incident and also a log sheet to record any further incidents. This is important for us to build up evidence of any ASB occurring.

What will Clúid do about a complaint of ASB?

All reported complaints with enough substantiated information will be investigated by us. Where complaints are found to be substantiated a written warning will usually be issued to the person who was involved in ASB. Clúid will liaise with the Gardaí and other relevant bodies to ensure the situation is dealt with effectively. If necessary, Clúid will take legal action against the perpetrator and repossess the dwelling.

6.4 Residents involvement

Clúid Housing Association is keen that residents get involved in the running of their estate or apartment complex. We are happy to talk to you about the various ways in which you can get involved. Activities are usually carried out through residents associations or small working groups.

A residents' association is an elected group of people who take on a number of responsibilities on estate issues. A working group consists of people who are interested in a particular issue on a scheme, such as the environment or children's activities. These groups are task focused and tend to finish when the task has been achieved.



How do we start?

Whether you are part of a new housing scheme or an existing scheme it can be difficult to know about getting things up and running. Clúid can help in a number of ways. We can offer suggestions to all groups starting out on where to source training and support. We also offer help and advice directly which includes:

- Information on setting up a residents group
- Helping residents to look at ways of getting involved
- Support and advice
- Help fund activities and provide insurance for events

What kind of activities could we get involved in?

The range of activities that associations/working groups get involved in is varied. Here are some of the activities that are currently going on around the country:

- Welcoming new residents
- Overseeing landscaping of communal areas
- Organising clean ups
- Organising social events
- Working with Clúid staff on issues that affect residents
- Representing residents of the scheme in groups involved in the wider area
- Traffic calming
- Setting up Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
- Advising architects on regeneration/refurbishment plans

Who can get involved?

Everyone has something to contribute! If you are interested in seeing your scheme develop and you would like to be part of a group, then why don't you give it a try?

What is the Community Grant?

The Clúid community grant is there to fund projects that involve people in their estate in addressing local issues, for example environmental projects, social events, community arts or any ideas that you think will benefit your community. The group must aim to benefit the whole of the Clúid community, but it doesn't need to be a formal residents association. The Community Grant is awarded annually, and the amount is based on the number of properties in your apartment complex or estate. Contact your Housing Officer to find out how much is available for your estate.

6.5 You and your area

Our housing schemes are very often located in areas which have a range of community activities already going on. It's important that you are aware of what's going on and how it can impact on you and the scheme.

We are keen to see Clúid schemes becoming part of the wider community and residents usually create links with neighbouring estates over time.

Below are some of the activities which may be going on where you live.

- In some areas there are forums where representatives from local estates/the locality meet to discuss relevant issues. It is important that your scheme is represented on these forums as they may make decisions which will affect you.
- Committees set up to work on a specific issue such as traffic calming, vandalism or the environment.

Once again we would be delighted to support you in getting involved so please talk to us about how we can do this.