

# Think before you park

In November, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) introduced new restrictions to crack down on the Northern Ireland-wide problem of pavement parking.

Drivers now face fines for parking on footpaths at certain locations. The PSNI can also issue a fixed penalty notice if a car is obstructing the pavement. But no matter where you are, it's important to think before you park.

Parking on a footpath can inconvenience all of us, but it has a particularly negative impact for:

- pedestrians with pushchairs and prams,
- pedestrians with small children,
- our elderly community,
- visually impaired pedestrians of all ages,
- wheelchair users, and
- mobility scooter users.

Sustrans in Northern Ireland has been calling for a ban to be implemented on pavement parking for some time. On its website, Sustrans shares the experience of June, who is visually impaired. Walking the streets of our cities, towns and villages should be a simple thing but for her and her guide dog Clyde, it can be an enormous challenge.

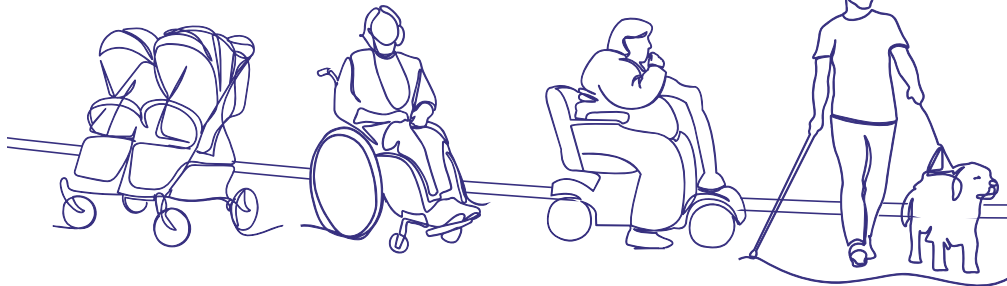
“One of my biggest challenges is vehicles parking on the pavement, says June.

“When Clyde takes me out round a parked vehicle, I can't tell if it is a car, a van, a lorry, or a whole line of them. I don't know how long I will be on the road for. Traffic can be very busy and can put me in danger,” she explains.

“I often have to orientate myself back and start all over again to find an alternative route, or just return home.”

So you may think you're doing the right thing by keeping the road clear, but next time you're tempted to pull up onto a pavement to park, please think about the needs of the people you could be forcing off the footpath.

For more information on parking enforcement go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/parking-enforcement](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/parking-enforcement)



# Reducing food costs



Consumer Council research shows 94% of consumers in Northern Ireland are worried about food prices. Here are some useful tips to help you save money at each stage of your food shop.

## Before the shop

Take time and plan ahead. Set a weekly budget, plan meals and check what you have in the house already to use things up and avoid impulse buys.



## During the shop

Search, swap and save. Choose supermarket own brands, look at the price per unit to compare deals and check for longer use by dates.



## After the shop

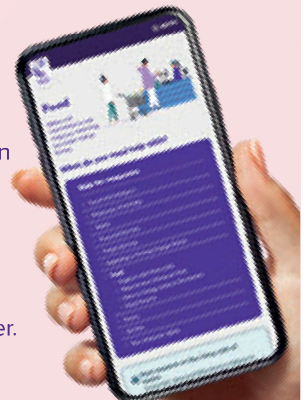
Make your food last. Inspect your food to make sure there's nothing going off before storing it away. Take food that will rot out of its plastic packaging. Look at what you can freeze, and make sure your fridge is set cool enough.



## Reduce cooking costs

Ask if there's a more efficient way to cook something (air fryer, slow cooker or microwave) or try batch cooking to make maximum use of the energy being used.

The Consumer Council's new website has lots more information on how to save money on your food shop and make the food you buy stay fresher for longer.



For further information visit [www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/consumers/help-consumers/food](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/consumers/help-consumers/food)

# Landlords - know your responsibilities

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) are properties that are rented to at least three non-related individuals who share some or all amenities. HMOs help to meet the need for affordable living accommodation within the city.



## If you are an HMO landlord, your responsibilities include:

- licensing your HMO with us before it can be occupied
- making sure your managing agent is competent
- keeping safety and maintenance certificates up to date
- putting in place and maintaining adequate security arrangements
- providing an adequate means of heating that is under the control of the tenants
- making sure boundary walls, hedges and fences are safe and do not cause an obstruction
- maintaining the fabric of the building and responding to repairs within:
  - 24 hours for emergency repairs,
  - four working days for urgent repairs, and
  - four weeks routine repairs
- having sufficient funding in place to maintain the property
- providing suitable bins for refuse and litter
- removing graffiti from external or boundary walls within four weeks
- putting a plan or policy in place to deal with any antisocial behaviour.

For information on HMO licensing and to view the register of licensed HMOs, go to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/nihmo](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/nihmo)

For further information visit [www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/consumers/help-consumers/food](http://www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/consumers/help-consumers/food)