

**Newington**
Housing Association
(1975) Ltd.

Strategic Plan

2023/2026



Building Community



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Introduction from our CEO & Chair



Our History

For nearly five decades, Newington Housing Association has operated within the North Belfast area providing high quality homes for a range of client groups.

The Association currently owns and manages 716 homes, including 77 sheltered homes for over 55's, and with De Paul Ireland, we jointly manage a homeless family hostel facility.

Newington was created in 1975 principally in response to the troubles in the Limestone Road area and it has worked vigorously to transform and redevelop this interface area for the benefit of all communities.

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As times have changed so too has Newington, broadening its role from simply meeting immediate housing need, to meeting wider community need and taking brave steps towards transforming and regenerating communities and resolving interface issues.

The organisation is making a unique contribution to some of the most complex societal divisions and, in doing so, setting a new benchmark for how housing associations can support and encourage tenants and communities to get behind the push for a more peaceful society.

We strive to create vibrant, sustainable places to live and work and are committed to improving the quality of life for all residents in the areas where we work.

Mainly through our formal strategic partnership with Apex Housing Association, we have delivered in excess of 350 additional homes throughout North Belfast in recent years.

Most of our services are managed directly by a team of dedicated and skilled staff, however we operate a successful joint management partnership with De Paul Ireland at our Mater Dei Hostel, located on the Antrim Road in Belfast.

Community

At Newington Housing Association we aim to provide the best possible service to our tenants and those residing within our communities.

We are committed to supporting and developing local communities. Our well established community relationships and joint working partnerships have assisted us to date in delivering programmes in line with the mission and values of the Association.

We recognise that tenants and resident feedback and active participation are vital in assessing our performance and identifying improvements in how we work. We encourage people to participate in the activities of Newington in a way that suits them, and we would like our tenants to continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the services we provide.

Our approach to service delivery and working in partnership with local communities has led to our work being recognised both locally and nationally. In recent years Newington has won several awards. These awards are as much a recognition of not only our hard work and endeavour; but also, the commitment and valuable work of our various community partners.



Our Vision

Building Community

Our Mission

To work collaboratively with our tenants and partners to provide sustainable homes and services in safe, diverse, vibrant and confident communities.

Our Values

Community

Focus on the needs of the community as well as the individual and work with others to nurture respect and promote inclusion in all the communities we serve.

Partnership

Work and engage with others to achieve results and provide solutions.

Accountability

Be open and transparent in what we do and maintain the highest standards of governance.

Quality

Continue to provide high quality homes, services and support.

Value for Money

Use our resources to obtain the best outcomes in the most effective and efficient way.

Our development aspirations

We are currently actively progressing several new build developments which we intend to deliver within the next 2-3 years.

We have also been selected as the Housing Association to deliver the next phase of the redevelopment of the New Lodge area of North Belfast, with an anticipated 120+ new homes to be constructed.

We intend to purchase existing homes from the open market and rehabilitate long term void properties to the highest standard.

How is Newington organised?

Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969. As an Industrial and Provident Society, we are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

We are registered as a Housing Association with the Department for Communities (Northern Ireland). We are also registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and our registered charity number is NIC102477.

We are a not-for-profit organisation and the Board of Newington Housing Association are all volunteers. All surpluses are re-invested into the Association and its activities.

Newington Housing Association has been a member of the Apex Housing Association Limited Group since 2015. Membership of Apex has enabled Newington Housing Association to grow and achieve greater value for money through the sharing of resources and common procurement.

What does Newington do?

We are a community-based Housing Association providing housing accommodation and assistance to all those in need in the North Belfast community and currently employ 23 members of staff.

We ensure our tenants and their families have high quality, affordable homes.

We also assist our tenants and their families and community in North Belfast to apply for benefits and we provide appropriate money advice if any get into financial difficulties.

We have established a reputation for excellence in service delivery, in community engagement, and in supporting the people of North Belfast.

Our priority is to continue to serve the people and community of North Belfast. We are an integral part of the community serve - where we:

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Employees
22 people



Manage
716 homes



Seek to deliver new
homes to meet
housing need



Engage actively in
the North Belfast
community



Deliver a programme of major
repairs and improvement to all
our properties

Our Corporate Highlights

How we preformed between 2019 - 2022

754

Welfare Advice & Support Referrals made (from Jan. 2020)

42

Disabled Adaptation completed

£236k

Community Investment Fund Expenditure

£816

Average annual Management cost

1

DfC regulatory rating

'the highest regulatory rating '1' - meets the standards'

22

New homes for tenants

£1,379

Average annual Maintenance cost

£14,336,369

Turnover

Average Income collected per annum

294

Community Meetings attended

9.193

Repairs service Repairs completed

99.5%



Reflecting on our last Corporate Plan

Although Housing Associations operate in an increasingly commercial and complex business environment, as a local housing provider, we believe we are at heart a community organisation and will continue to put our tenants and the residents of North Belfast at the centre of everything we do.

Throughout the lifetime of our previous Corporate Plan there were a series of significant challenges. Most of 2020 was unprecedented for all of society and the challenges we faced as an organisation due to Covid-19 did unfortunately impact on our strategic and operational priorities.

Whilst Newington showed tremendous resilience and was able to adapt to a rapidly changing working environment, some services and plans had to be reshaped or completely postponed. These changes to our service were necessary to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our tenants, staff, contractors and the wider public throughout this very challenging period.

With Covid-19, the increase in fuel, energy and household running costs, there is no doubt these will lead to real hardship for our tenants and the wider community. We are currently working with our statutory, community and voluntary partners to provide support to those who will need it most in the difficult days to come.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our tenants and partners who have worked with us proactively and have been extremely understanding of the challenges we as an organisation have faced over the past three years.

Facing the challenges ahead would be hard at the best of times, but without a functioning Executive or Assembly it makes it much more difficult. We call on our elected representative and political parties to form an Executive to provide the political and economic leadership that will no doubt help at this time.



How does Newington support the community in North Belfast?

The North Belfast community faces many challenges:

- An area of multiple deprivation;
- Segregation
- Chronic housing need
- Mental health crisis

All of these issues have been made worse by the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

Newington supports the people of North Belfast in a wide range of different ways. For example, we:

- Provide funding for welfare advice
- Provide financial support to various organisations and local charities
- Support local community festivals
- Invests in the local community
- Support the work of local Foodbanks
- Support the publication of the local community magazine
- Provide student bursaries to our tenants and family members
- Provide small grants to community groups throughout North Belfast via our Brian Mullen Community Fund

What makes Newington unique?

- Our values and culture
- We are a genuine part of the community — we embrace engagement and partnership
- We dedicate a set percentage of income towards Community Investment
- We put the needs of tenants first
- We are involved locally and fully committed to make a real and meaningful difference to the community we serve
- We are a community- based housing provider that is held full accountable by the local community
- We attend all community meetings in the area - We actively engage in various local partnership working groups, forums
- Our staff team go above and beyond to support and assist tenants

Our Strengths

- Supporting the community of North Belfast.
- Engaging with local charities and partner organisations.
- Genuine care for our tenants.
- We are progressive in our approach.
- We are agile and can be adaptable in responding to changing needs of tenants.
- We have a strong Board
- A Good Reputation - Well regarded by tenants and stakeholders.
- Strong asset base — good quality accommodation.
- Financially stable.
- We have a positive relationship with our tenants, the community and with other key partners.



Our Achievements and Challenges

We are proud of our many achievements during the period of our last Corporate Plan 2019-2022 as we:

- Development of new builds and home improvements
- Maintaining service level standards throughout Covid 19
- Completing our new office premises development
- Implementing our Community Investment Strategy
- Supporting our local community in North Belfast, in particular during Covid 19
- Establishing our hardship fund to support struggling families
- Introducing a community hub in Camberwell to provide food, warmth and company
- Funding the advice worker post which has had a huge impact on the lives of many people
- Supporting our staff with hybrid working arrangements
- Strengthening our relationship with the Apex Group

However, during the period of this Strategic Plan, from 2023-2026, Newington faces an increasingly difficult operating environment. The external challenges we are likely to encounter include:

- Current cost of living crisis, higher fuel costs and high rates of unemployment
- Budget cuts across every Government Department
- Difficulties in securing properties for purchase and new sites for housing development within North Belfast.
- Increased demand for community services
- Increased levels of mental health issues
- High levels of poverty and deprivation
- Anti-social behaviour
- Impact of the cost-of-living crisis on rent arrears
- Polarisation of communities in North Belfast
- Climate change — and the challenges of the green agenda and the need to make our homes and communities more environmentally sustainable
- Historically high levels of inflation and interest rates Increasing costs of materials
- Lack of a skilled workforce — especially tradespeople
- War in Ukraine and all the uncertainties arising from this ongoing conflict
- Loss of European Union funding following Brexit



A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt, leaning over a table. She is looking at a small, colorful toy on the table. A young child with curly blonde hair, wearing a pink shirt, is also looking at the toy. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with blue walls.

Our new Corporate Strategy and Mission

This Corporate Strategy sets out a vision of making a positive difference by empowering people and local communities.

With nearly 50,000 people on the waiting list for social housing in Northern Ireland, and with an increasing social housing shortage,

Newington Housing believes it is excellently positioned to play a key role in delivering social housing and other value-added services to those in greatest need and will continue to make sound and rational decisions based on the information it has available at the time and will be accountable for the actions that we take.

Strategic Themes

Our Homes



Our Tenants and Communities



Our Services



Our Team



Strategic Theme 1 Our Homes

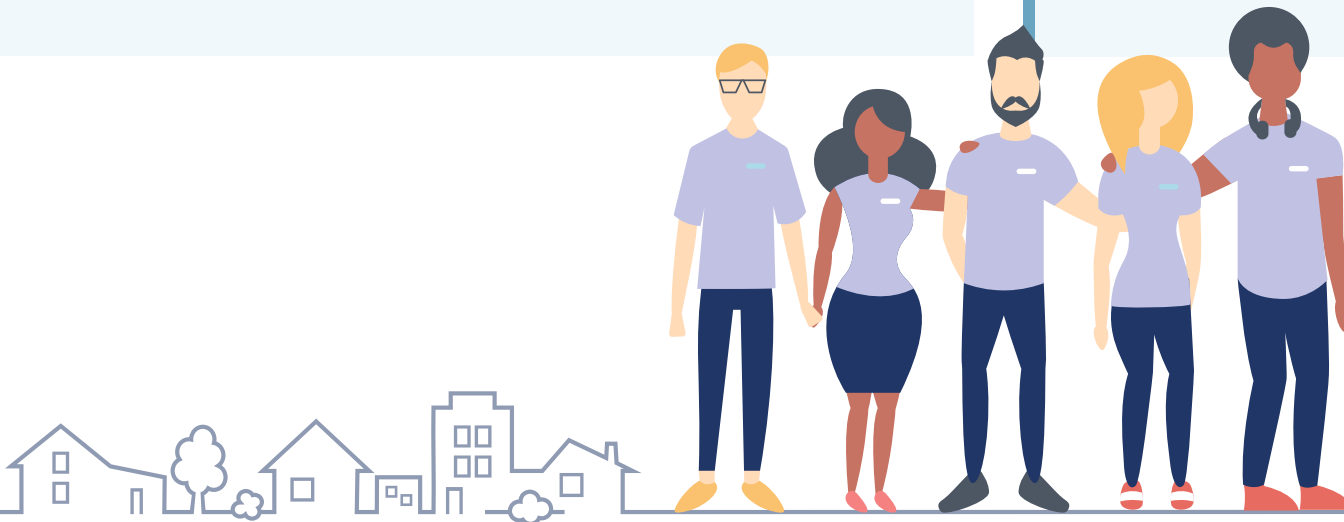
Newington will:

- Provide high quality, sustainable and affordable homes by:
- Maintaining our existing properties to the highest possible standard.
- Identify and implement best practice in terms of environmental standards and sustainability.
- Review and renew our Asset Management Strategy.
- Continue to seek opportunities to meet the need for high quality social housing in North Belfast both through the acquisition and renovation of existing residential properties and through the development of new housing projects.

Strategic Theme 2 Our Tenants and Communities

Newington will:

- Promote effective tenant participation so that the voice of the tenant and their families informs all our work and our services.
- Continue to lead and engage effectively with our tenants, their families, the community in North Belfast and our statutory partners in order to create safe, diverse, vibrant and confident communities.
- Support tenants and their families to improve their quality of life.
- Inform and influence public policy and debate around housing supply, housing quality, tenancy and other related issues.
- Provide a respected voice to advocate on behalf of our tenants and the North Belfast community and raise awareness of the many challenges faced by our tenants and their families, with statutory agencies and political representatives.
- Promote and celebrate our tenants and communities.



Strategic Theme 3 Our services

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Newington will:

Provide high quality, sustainable and affordable homes by:

- Review our existing services and ensure they continue to be fit for purpose.
- Innovate and develop new services in order to meet the challenges our tenants and the community are likely to face in the future.
- Provide both a quick response and value for money in all our services.
- Continue to develop effective service partnerships in order to deliver efficient outcomes and value for money.
- As a community-based Housing Association, continue to develop our wraparound/enabling services such as: access to welfare advice; signposting to other services; employability support; floating support; and family support hubs.

Strategic Theme 4 Our Team

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Newington will:

- Continue to prioritise our financial sustainability and viability through good financial management practices.
- Deliver Value for Money while not compromising on outcomes.
- Ensure we provide the staff resource to meet the needs of the organisation.
- Continue to invest in the skills and professionalism of our staff.
- Prioritise the wellbeing of our employees and board members.
- Improve communications both internally and externally and develop an effective communication strategy.
- Celebrate our successes as an organisation.
- Develop our Board by applying best practice in terms of Board governance, compliance and risk management, and ensuring our Board has the skills necessary to be effective.
- Maintain the strategic relationship with APEX Group.





How we will monitor and evaluate the Strategy

Annual business plans will be produced to assist in delivering this strategy over the next three years.

Our business plans will outline our commitments in line with this strategy and set out in more detail the tasks to be undertaken to achieve the strategic themes.

Monitoring and review

We will continuously monitor and periodically evaluate the success of this strategy.

Quarterly Progress

Our annual business plans will be reviewed quarterly, with regular updates provided to Newington's Board.

Annual Progress

Newington's Board will receive an annual review of the business plan and our Annual Report will provide an update on achievement of this strategy and the associated business plan.



Newington
Housing Association
(1975) Ltd.

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Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 and is a Registered Housing Association.

Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited is a registered charity **(Charity No. IP158)**.

Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland **(Registration No. NIC102477)**.

Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited is registered with the ICO **(Registration. No. Z7623596)**