



2023 - 2026

**TENANT PARTICIPATION
& COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY**

Big Enough to Deliver & Small Enough to Care

Introduction from our Chair and CEO

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 over 700 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 high level of dereliction within the Newington area, as a result of the troubles and it has worked vigorously to transform and redevelop this interface area for the benefit of all communities.

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.

We reflect on our previous Tenant Engagement and Community Investment Strategy 2020-23 and our enduring voluntary and community partnerships and the benefits to individual tenants and the whole community.

In consultation with our Tenant Forum and community partners, a decision was taken to develop two separate Strategies, with this one focusing on Tenant Participation & Community Involvement and a separate strategy focussing on Community Investment.

We wish to extend our thanks and gratitude to our Tenant Forum and community partners who have helped to shape these new strategies, while working alongside our staff to make such a positive contribution to how Newington delivers our services to tenants and the wider community.



Niall Kelly
Chairman



Anthony Kerr
CEO

An update for tenants from our current Tenant Forum members

As Newington tenants we are delighted to work alongside the staff in Newington bringing our knowledge as tenants to help shape and influence the work of the Association.

We very much welcome the new strategies and will be working with Newington to develop an annual action plan for the Tenant Forum to make sure our priorities are heard as we are the voice of Newington tenants.

We have established positive working relationships with many of the staff and know the value Newington puts on us as Forum members.

We welcome the new strategies and look forward to continued positive engagement with all at Newington.

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 Strategic Objectives Over the next 3 years

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

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

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.



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Our Equal Opportunities Statement



We value involvement that reflects the whole of our tenant population and other individuals within the wider community and are committed to:

- Treating people respectfully, fairly and equally,
- Tackling discrimination and harassment and;
- Ensuring our services are accessible to all.

We will make sure all Section 75 groups and individuals have equal access and opportunity to engage in activities.

In accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, we will actively seek to remove any identifiable barriers that arise for individuals, groups or members of the wider community trying to access opportunities to engage in initiative or activities we deliver, by:

- Ensuring that our involvement opportunities are fully accessible,
- Providing written material is clear and easy to understand,
- Ensuring information is provided in other languages and formats, such as audio or large print, when requested to do so,
- Providing information in ways that are easy to understand for everyone with limited or no reading skills,
- Ensuring that everyone recognises the importance of equal opportunities, and;
- Encouraging active participation by all.



Finally, if you require any further information about Newington Housing's Equality Scheme, please contact our office for further details.



Expanding on our work to date

Our new Tenant Participation & Community Involvement Strategy has been developed to reinforce and build upon the 10 principles contained within the Department for Communities Regulatory Framework.



Principles For Tenant Participation

All parties must be committed for tenant participation to work effectively. Everyone needs a clear understanding of what participation is trying to achieve. It should build meaningful relationships between landlords, tenants and the wider community. It must also promote good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, or racial group.

The 10 principles below set the context for the measures that follow.

- 1 Tenant participation comes from and promotes a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, board members and staff at all levels. It exists when all these interests work together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.
- 2 Tenant participation is a continuous process. Participants share information, ideas and influence. They work towards a common understanding of problems and a consensus on solutions.
- 3 Good tenant participation is about sharing information. All participants need to have all the information available to consider issues properly. That information needs to be clear, timely and accessible. Information must be in a form that all participants can understand.
- 4 Decision-making processes should be open, clear and accountable.
- 5 Tenant representatives should have enough time to consider issues properly. They should have the opportunity to work out a common view before meeting landlord representatives.
- 6 The landlord must recognise the independence of tenants' organisations.
- 7 Good working relations evolve gradually so must be flexible to adapt to local circumstances.
- 8 Tenants' organisations need adequate resources for organisation, training and support.
- 9 Tenant participation in rural areas must suit the particular circumstances and needs of rural tenants.
- 10 Tenant participation must meet the requirements of legislation on equality and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.



Effective tenant participation methods, developed and delivered by landlords who have engaged, supported and have listened to their tenants' needs (including where tenants are living with disabilities), will remove barriers arising from ethnicity, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, age, sexual orientation or disability.

Strategic Themes and Objectives 2023 - 2026



Encourage our tenants to get involved

- Grow the Tenant Forum
- Develop a Youth Forum
- Keep all tenants appropriately informed
- Decision making on services that affect tenants

Work in partnership to create safe, diverse, vibrant and confident communities

- Continued engagement in existing networks
- Lead on emerging areas of work that benefit our tenants and communities
- Support our tenants to become involved in local partnerships and resident associations

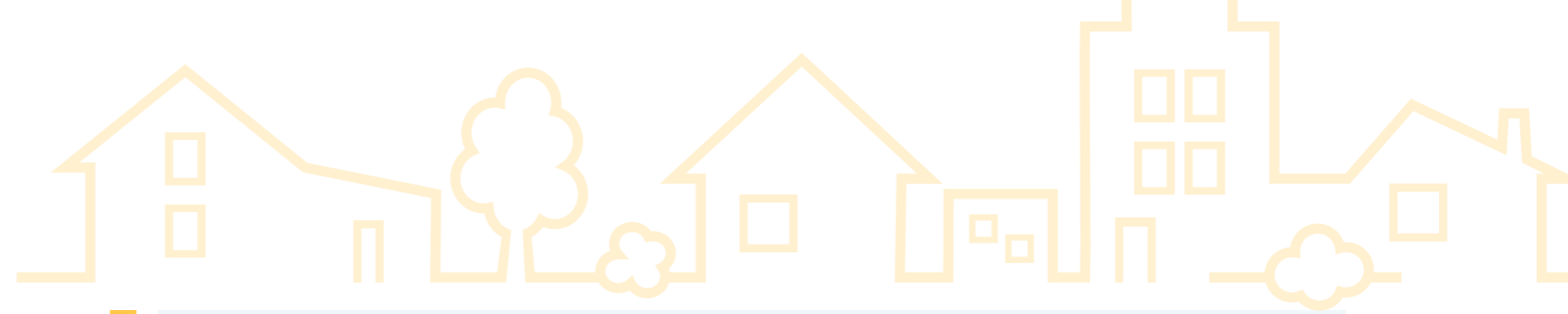


Support for Tenants to become involved:

- Regular Tenant Forum meetings
- Updates/newsletter for Tenant Forum and active tenant members
- Support from Tenant Engagement Officer
- Training
- IT support - provide tablets with data
- Funding - travel, food, childcare
- Support to develop community initiatives for local areas
- Annual celebration event

Ways to become involved:

- Conversations with any member of staff
- Estate walkabouts
- Local area meetings
- Community events
- Tenant Forum
- Tenant/resident groups
- Decision making and scrutiny panels



How we will monitor and evaluate

- o Develop an annual action plan working with our Tenant Forum, community, staff and board
- o Report on a quarterly and annual basis to our board and Tenant Forum
- o Develop update letter for Tenant Forum members
- o Review annually the action plan and update as necessary.



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Newington Housing Association

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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)**