

# Tenants' Newsletter

Newington  
Housing Association  
(1975) Ltd.

Autumn 2024



## Newington Youth Forum's Information Day at Ulster University

**Following a decision by our Board to prioritise 'Investment in Youth' as one of our strategic objectives for 2023/24, an initial discussion was held with local youth workers and young people to get their views on what they felt the needs of young people were at present. Some of the issues that were identified by them were the lack of job opportunities, high levels of drugs use and poor mental health.**

As a result of these initial discussions a 'Youth Forum' was subsequently formed and is made up of young people from two local youth organisations.

On Tuesday, 20th of August, youth forum members and youth leaders, in partnership with Association staff and representatives from our Tenant Forum organised and delivered an extremely successful 'Information Day' for young people at the Ulster University's, Belfast Campus.

Young people from across the city attended this event which was designed to enable them to decide on their next steps for the future. Several groups and organisations were in attendance and provided practical advice and guidance to over 80 - 100 young people.

Speaking after the event, our Director of Communities, Jacqui Gilmore said "Over the past six months, the Association has been working closely with youth leaders

and young people from Holy Family Youth Club and New Lodge Youth Centre to seek their views and try to develop a new local Youth Forum.

We were delighted to see these working partnerships evolve, which has resulted in the recent establishment of Newington Youth Forum. This event, which has been attended by so many young people is a great example of partnership working at its best.

I also want to thank all the local service providers, training and employment agencies, our statutory and community partners and local mental health advisors who were in attendance today. This was the Youth Forums first ever event and, in my view, it has been extremely successful, and there has been a lot of positive feedback.

I am also delighted that this event was financially supported via our Brian Mullan Community Fund, as the fund was developed several years ago to support the delivery of these types of initiatives.

Finally, I wish to thank the dedication and hard work of the staff within the local youth centres and the young people. We look forward to working with the Youth Forum members and will assist in any way we can to deliver further joint initiatives moving forward."

# Communities News

Some of our Tenant Participation and Community Engagement activities during 2023/2024

During 2023/24 we invested locally and believe we are making a real contribution to people's lives by continued promotion of initiatives that encouraged tenant participation.

During 2023/24, our Tenant Forum members took part in various initiatives including organising and delivering community events, seasonal projects, training and the development and delivery of our new Tenant Participation & Community Involvement Strategy 2023 - 2026 and Community Investment Strategy 2023 - 2026.

To view our Tenant Participation & Community Involvement Strategy 2023 - 2026, please visit: <http://newingtonha.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/tenant-strategy.pdf>

To view our Community Investment Strategy 2023 - 2026, please visit: <http://newingtonha.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/community-investment-strategy.pdf>



## Community Investment Fund

We have continued to sustain all our existing partnerships, whilst continuing to forge new ones with various community, voluntary and statutory organisations.

This is to ensure our tenants receive the support to help them to fully integrate well within their new or existing surroundings.

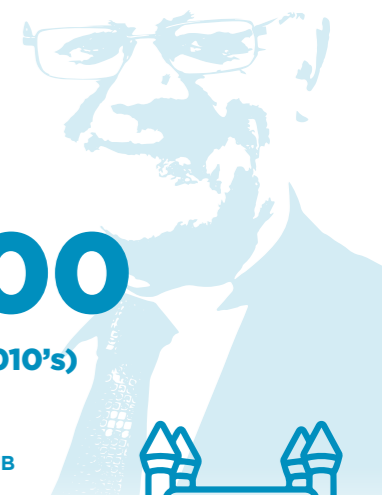
Via our Community Investment Fund budget, which is set by our Board each year, we have supported a range of strategic and community activities to allow us to provide greater financial support and to make more positive differences, locally.



Below are some of the main activities we have supported throughout the reporting period:

<b>Seasonal Events Funding</b>	<b>(£3,500)</b>
<b>Community Funding</b>	<b>(£37,932)</b>
<b>Financial support to a local advice service</b>	<b>(£5,000)</b>
<b>Community Training Events</b>	<b>(£10,000)</b>
<b>Youth Intervention</b>	
<b>Summer Diversionary Initiative</b>	<b>(£8,000)</b>
<b>Student Bursaries</b>	<b>(£5,200)</b>
<b>Camberwell Hub Initiative</b>	<b>(£3,352)</b>
<b>Kindness Fund</b>	<b>(£7,155)</b>
<b>Welfare Advice</b>	<b>(£20,700)</b>
<b>Camberwell Grow NI Project</b>	<b>(£7,000)</b>
<b>Tenant &amp; Community Support</b>	<b>(£10,335)</b>
<b>Brian Mullan Community Fund 2023</b>	<b>(£14,720)</b>

## Our Brian Mullan Community Fund



In July 2024, via our Brian Mullan Community Fund (summer funding pot), the Association distributed community grants ranging from £250 to £1,000 to seven local organisations operating and delivering services throughout North Belfast. The total amount distributed was £6,300.

The Association also intend to rollout a Winter Fund, that is designed to help support projects that will be held between Dec. 2024 and March 2025

Via our Brian Mullan Community Fund, which was established in 2016, Newington tenants have played a pivotal role in distributing nearly 100 grants to local organisations/community projects.

**£1000**  
PROJECT  
**St Malachys (2010's) Foyle Cup**  
Organisation  
**ST MALACHY'S OLD BOYS YOUTH CLUB**

**£1000**  
PROJECT  
**New Lodge Fun Day**  
Organisation  
**STRATHEDEN STREET SUMMER FESTIVAL**

**£1000**  
PROJECT  
**Newington FC**  
Organisation  
**NEWINGTON FC EXPANSION**

**£1000**  
PROJECT  
**Team Wear**  
Organisation  
**COLLEEN DANCE COMPANY**

**£1000**  
PROJECT  
**Youth Forum Information Day**  
Organisation  
**NEWINGTON YOUTH FORUM**

**£360**  
PROJECT  
**St Pats Summer Training Camp**  
Organisation  
**ST PATRICK'S FOOTBALL CLUB**

**£1000**  
PROJECT  
**Women's Craft Classes**  
Organisation  
**TEACH EILIS**

## Local projects and community initiatives held over the past few months.

### Air Fryer Classes at Camberwell Court

Throughout May and June, several Newington residents participated in a six-week programme on how to effectively use an Air Fryer.

This initiative was delivered in partnership with Bryson House and funded by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and it catered for all ages. Fourteen participants took part in this programme aged between 30 and 90 years old. The participants cooked a range of different recipes including, mini quiches, egg muffins, mini pizzas, dirty fries, etc.

All participants who took part in the classes also received a free Air Fryer, cooking utensils and a store voucher. These sessions were extremely informative and a huge success.



# Women's DIY Training at Newington

In April 2024, Newington/Limestone and Tiger's Bay Women's Group (NEWS) and Association staff partnered up with Women's Tech. Eight participants took part in a Women's DIY class, each learning new skills to enable them to carry out minor household duties.

This included replacing door handles, fixing holes in walls, wiring a plug, erecting shelves. All the participants who completed this training each received a free tool kit to enable them to complete these and other small household tasks, moving forward.

NEWS Women's Group also took part in a stress management and budgeting training. The stress management class included mindfulness hand therapy and coping mechanisms. This initiative was delivered by Newington and all participants received a stress management kit after completing this class.

Following on from the stress management training, Newington arranged for BPerfect Cosmetics to deliver a makeup class to all the participants who took part in the above training.

Participants acquired new skills and tips on how to correctly apply make-up and received free make up and a voucher to buy something in the BPerfect Cosmetics store.



## Community in Transition's Information Event which was held on International Women's Day

In March, some members of our team attended a very successful Information Event held in Girdwood Hub. This event was planned to coincide with International Women's Day.

This event was organised by the Communities in Transition (CIT) programme and was hosted within Girdwood Community Hub.

This event was very well attended by community organisations including MindSkills and Bridge of Hope, who provided on the spot therapy and acupuncture,

Representatives from Newington provided housing and benefit advice and provided free promotional material to attendees.



# Camberwell Court's Residents Trip to Newcastle, Co. Down

Our residents of Camberwell Court recently took advantage of some rare, good weather, during their trip to Newcastle, Co. Down.

Residents enjoyed a nice lunch, a relaxing walk beside the sea, a bit of shopping and the beautiful scenery.

# Why not join Newington's Match Savings Scheme

Newington Housing continues to work in partnership with Newington Credit Union to deliver a Match Savings Scheme to our tenants. When joining the scheme, you must initially save a minimum of £10 per month on a regular basis for the first 6 months.

At the end of the 6 months, we will check with Newington Credit Union to ensure you have adhered to the terms of the Scheme. If you have met the terms of the Scheme, the Association will deposit the amount of £60.00 (i.e., match the minimum savings amount you will have saved over the first 6 months into your account as a reward).

You can qualify for Newington's Match Savings Scheme **if you do not currently have a credit union account or if your credit union account has been inactive for more than 2 years.**

If any tenant is interested in joining the Match Savings Scheme, please call us on 028 9074 4005 and we will be happy to assist you through the application process.



## Information about our Annual Student Bursary Scheme for 2024

The Association announced the opening of our annual Student Bursary Scheme in July 2024 and is delighted to confirm that we recently distributed ten student bursary awards this year totalling the sum of £5,000 to our tenants or members of their households.

Seven were awarded to new students, along with three renewals to existing awardees, to help them financially during this current academic year.

Also, the Association will be awarding some additional young people from lower North Belfast with smaller bursaries, which will assist with their personal development studies in 'youth work'.

Below is a testimony from a Newington Student Bursary recipient who has now graduated with a Fine Art's Degree from Ulster University.

"I want to express my gratitude to Newington Housing Association for their support during my higher education. As a single parent, pursuing higher education presented me with certain challenges, not to mention having a disability and being a mature student.

I began my Fine Art Degree at Ulster University in 2021 and recently graduated with First Class Honors. I am now due to start my Masters in September.

Fine Art is an expensive course, requiring students to purchase all their own materials such as paints, canvas, clay, carving tools, and more. The costs are significant. Managing costs for utilities and study materials during an economic crisis was quite challenging.

I applied for a Newington Student Bursary and was thrilled when I received the news that my application was successful. Knowing that I would receive financial support from Newington at the start of each academic year, it alleviated the economic pressure considerably.

For these reasons, I cannot underestimate the benefits of the Student Bursary Scheme that Newington offered me."



## Newington Housing Tenant Experience Survey 2024/25



During 2024/25 the Association plans to undertake a survey of all our tenants.

Currently members of our Tenant Forum are working alongside Newington staff to re-design and reduce the size of our current survey to make it more easily completed.

# Asset Update

## Some of our Maintenance Programme & Home Adaptations for 2023/2024

### Delivery of our Planned Maintenance Programme for 2023/2024

Throughout the year, we continued to invest in our homes and carried out essential works to ensure the homes we provide are safe and well maintained.

Despite the challenges within the construction and maintenance sector, the Association steadily progressed through and invested in our homes via our Planned & Cyclical Maintenance Programmes during 2023/04.

Unfortunately, some of the works planned for completion by the end of March 2024 have slightly overrun and will be carried out during 2024/2025. In total, the Association spent £296k on planned and cyclical maintenance works during 2023/24, along with an additional £480k on response maintenance repairs.

### Our Planned Maintenance Programme for 2024/2025

The Association has commenced the rollout of our Planned & Cyclical Maintenance programmes for the year ahead.

Via our Asset Management Strategy, we were committed to investing £740k on planned and cyclical maintenance works to our homes during 2024/2025.

The works will cover various projects such as gas boiler replacement, landscaping, energy efficiency measures, kitchen replacements, etc

### Home Adaptations

Do you have a current impairment which restricts you from easily accessing your property or which prevents you from managing sufficiently within your home?

Association staff are available to carry out a quick assessment with you to identify if minor adaptations can be incorporated into your property, to make life easier for you.

We can also assist in referring you for an Occupational Therapist assessment, if major works to your home are required.

For further advice and information, please contact a member of staff on 02890 744055.

### Contents Insurance Are YOU Covered?

The Association would advise all tenants that it is their responsibility to take out their own Contents Insurance.

The Association is not liable for any loss or damage caused to Tenant's belongings.

Contents Insurance can be obtained from most Insurance Brokers.



# General News

## Meet our new Board Member

Everyone at Newington is delighted to welcome Carmel Grant onto the Board of Newington Housing Association.

Carmel has been a resident of Newington for over 20 years and an active member of Newington's 'Tenant Forum' for nearly 5 years. Carmel more recently accepted the position of Chair on the 'Forum'.

Carmel also holds the position of Treasurer within 'Newington Residents Group' and is extremely proactive and passionate about her work within the community.

For over 25 years, Carmel has been an active volunteer, member and mentor within the 'Catholic Guides of Ireland' and originally starting out to help cover a leader whilst she was on maternity leave and has remained there since. Carmel advised that she loves working with the girls, taking them on weekend trips and helping them grow into bright young women Carmel states that they're one of the reasons why she just loves helping others.

With regards to her hobbies, Carmel enjoys arts and crafts, which she does a lot of with the girls within the Catholic Guides of Ireland and is passionate about her gardening. She just loves making things, taking part in projects/local activities, etc. Over recent months, in partnership with other members of the Tenant Forum members and Newington tenants, she participated in Arts and Crafts and DIY classes, Stress Management session, and other local initiatives and projects.

Carmel states she loves being an active citizen and helping her community develop and grow.

Carmel says "By engaging in voluntary works, it provides me with a platform to access opportunities which are designed to help people, may it be



through her involvement in the organising and deliver community events, fundays, participating in street clean ups or other local projects and events.

Carmel states "I was brought up by some strong women (i.e. my mum and granny), so I'm committed to work hard and help strengthen my local community in any way I can."

In September, Carmel was elected on to the Association's Board and will undoubtedly bring her passion, skills and abilities and an added value, to Newington.

Carmel stated "At first, I was bit apprehensive, as I felt it may be a step to far for me and a big responsibility; however, upon meeting some of the senior staff members and other board members, I felt honoured to be invited to join. It's nice to have the trust from everyone, which encouraged me to take the step to join, and if it means I can help other Newington tenants and the community in general, then that means the world to me".

Say hello!  
Meet some of the new members of our Team!



Stuart Rafferty  
Senior Officer  
(Communities)



Glenn Ashfield  
Director of Finance  
& Corporate Services

## Tenant Participation Training delivered by Supporting Communities

In June, our Tenant Forum members, Staff and Board all jointly attended Tenant Participation training sessions within our office.

At Newington, we continually strive to develop new ways of engaging and working positively with our tenants to improve not just our homes, but the communities we serve.

On behalf of everyone who attended, we wish to express our gratitude to Supporting Communities for delivering the sessions, which were enjoyed by all.





# Need a Repair?

## Contact details

If you require a repair, when contacting the Association, please provide us with your correct contact details. Also when our contractors are due to call with you, please ensure you have made adequate arrangement for them to gain access. If you request a repair and you then fail to provide access, you will be requested to repay the Association the associated callout charge.

## Boiler Service

The Association is still conducting our annual programme of cyclical gas servicing to all our properties. We appreciate all your assistance in facilitating access to our contractors. If anyone has not had their gas boiler serviced within the last 12 months or is aware that an engineer has recently called with them and failed to gain access (i.e. they have left a calling card with you), can they please contact the Association immediately?



# How to make a Complaint?

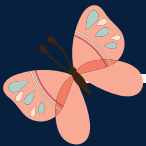
## Are you dissatisfied with the service we provide?

If so, please contact us immediately. Information on how to make a complaint is provided within your Tenants Handbook. Complaint Forms can be provided to you, by contacting or calling into our office.

We welcome your feedback and views, and strive to put things right when they go wrong. Staff are available to assist you with this simple process and to ensure a satisfactory resolution is found. **Just call us on 028 90 744055.**

If we cannot resolve your complaint immediately, we will forward you a complaints form or take your complaint over the phone.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and investigated. Our team aim is to treat all complaints as opportunities to improve our services to tenants, so please contact us when you need to.



# Tenancy Fraud and Subletting of NHA properties

Newington H.A. is committed to tackling tenancy fraud to ensure our properties are used to their full potential by those designated to reside within them.

Addressing tenancy fraud can only be achieved with the support of our tenants and the information we receive. If you suspect that someone is committing tenancy fraud or subletting their home to someone else, please contact us immediately.

Tenancy Fraud has a major impact on all those currently awaiting a new home. To report any suspected Tenancy Fraud, please contact our Housing Team on **028 90 744055.**

