

Strategic Plan 2026/29



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INTRODUCTION: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Formed in December 1975, Newington Housing Association is proud to mark its 50th anniversary by reflecting on the history and ethos of an organisation rooted in community action and social purpose. From its beginnings, Newington HA has offered its tenants, the wider community and strategic partners a uniqueness that is increasingly rare within the housing sector.



Established by local people to address dereliction and empty homes during the early years of the Troubles, the Association has retained its strong community focus throughout its history. Operating exclusively in North Belfast, Newington HA has developed deep connections and long-standing partnerships with local residents and like-minded organisations committed to improving the quality of life for people in the area.

Today, the Association manages over 700 homes across North Belfast, providing secure housing for families, single people and older people. In partnership with Depaul Ireland, Newington HA also delivers

temporary accommodation for homeless families in partnership with DePaul, through the Mater Dei Family Hostel, responding to some of the most acute housing needs in the city.

Newington HA has benefited from the ongoing support of its statutory partners, including the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, in meeting housing need in North Belfast. In 2015, the Association joined the Apex Housing Group. This strategic partnership has enabled Newington HA to retain its distinctive culture and ethos while benefiting from the support, expertise and economies of scale associated with a larger housing organisation.

As the Association enters its next strategic planning period, it does so against a backdrop of increasing pressure on public services, particularly in health and housing. Recent decisions by the Department for Communities to reduce Housing Association Grant rates, especially in Belfast, have placed additional strain on the financial viability of delivering new social housing. Development is further constrained by the limited capacity of the NI Water infrastructure, which requires significant investment before new homes can be built. This challenge is particularly acute in North Belfast, where there is currently no additional capacity to support new housing development.



INTRODUCTION: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF COMMUNITY COMMITMENT Continued

We also recognise recent changes in demographics resulting in more diverse community, with greater numbers of ethnic minorities choosing to make North Belfast their home and we note the challenges that come with this.

Actions arising out of this Strategic Plan will support and compliment the positive work of the Northern Ireland Executive and the Programme for Government, and we aim to support this work by promoting opportunity, growth and sustainability locally.

In addition, as well as ensuring we work collaborative to support the vision and strategic outcomes of Belfast City Council's Belfast Agenda, a key strand of our work will be in supporting the ongoing development of the North Belfast Community Partnership, which is a coalition of community and voluntary organisations operating throughout North Belfast.

Looking ahead to 2030, there is also a growing need to invest in existing homes to meet climate and emissions targets and to reduce energy consumption. Unlike other jurisdictions in Great Britain and Ireland, where

governments provide matched funding for retrofitting social housing, Northern Ireland has no dedicated funding stream. This absence continues to delay essential investment in improving the energy efficiency of homes.

These challenges cannot be met by any single organisation acting alone. Newington Housing Association will therefore continue to strengthen its existing partnerships and seek new collaborative opportunities, playing its part in addressing housing need, supporting sustainability and improving outcomes for communities in North Belfast for the next 50 years and beyond.

This strategy has been developed through a series of consultation workshops with the Tenants Forum, stakeholder organisations, staff, managers and board members, both before the development of a draft strategic plan and afterwards.

The achievement of the Strategic Plan aims and priorities will be driven by the development of annual business plans with SMART objectives which will be monitored regularly by the board.



HOW WE PERFORMED BETWEEN 2023 – 2026

Reflecting on the past few years, we have continued to invest in our homes and our staff as well as reaffirming our Board's and staff commitment to ensuring we deliver for our tenants and the wider community.

Below are some of the key highlights and achievements between 2023 and 2026.

■ Total no. of Disabled Adaptations completed	70
■ Total expenditure on completed Disabled Adaptation	£349,345
■ Total Community Investment Fund Expenditure	£351k
■ Total no. of Newington Student Bursaries awarded	27
■ Average annual Management cost	£1,180
■ Average annual Maintenance cost	£1,641
■ Total homes for tenants (new-lets and relets) - excl. Mater Dei	81
■ Average DfC regulatory rating 'the highest regulatory rating '1' - meets the standards'	1
■ Turnover over the past 3 years	£16,585,362
■ Total Response Repairs raised over the past 3 years	8,092
■ Repairs service - Emergency Repairs completed on time (%)	96%
■ Repairs service - Urgent Repairs completed on time (%)	88%
■ Repairs service - Routine Repairs completed on time (%)	82%
■ Repairs service - Total average repairs completed on time (%)	88%
■ Average Relets (days) for COT's	47
■ Total Rent, Rates and Service Charge (Income Receivable) over the past 3 years	£14,564,516
■ Total income collected per annum over the past 3 years	£14,653,069
■ Average Void loss % per annum over the past 3 years	0.72%
■ Total void loss over the past 3 years	£89,684
■ Investment in our homes over the past 3 years	£3,191,000

OUR VISION

Our vision is of a healthy, peaceful, and thriving community where people are proud to live and can achieve their potential.

OUR MISSION

To provide people with high quality, affordable and sustainable homes within a welcoming, safe, and supportive community.

OUR VALUES

Person Centred - We are committed to improving the lives of individuals and their families, via everything we do.

Community Focused - We believe that the community is vitally important to the wellbeing of individuals and families and should be continually supported.

Integrity - We are committed to being ethical, fair and trustworthy and our actions judged on what we say and do.

Excellence - We are committed to excellence in all aspects of its work.

Creativity - We are committed to being solution-focused and will embrace change in response to changing needs and aspirations.

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.



OUR DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY

We define Community as 'Our tenant base and the wider community of North Belfast, including our staff, community partners and key stakeholders.

WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE?

- Our Culture and Values
- We are fully integrated within the local community and embrace engagement and partnership working.
- We set aside 3% of our annual rental income to support and deliver local community projects and initiatives.
- We are a community-based housing provider that is held fully accountable by the local community.
- We put the needs of our tenants first.
- We are committed to make a real and meaningful difference within the community we serve.
- Our staff team go above and beyond to support and assist our tenants.

OUR CURRENT KEY SATISFACTION LEVELS (SURVEY FINDINGS FROM MARCH 2025)

■ Services provided by the Association	80%
■ Quality of Home	94%
■ How the Association keeps tenants informed	89%
■ Rent represents Value for Money	89%
■ Your Neighbourhood, as a place to live	94%
■ Our Contractors Performance in delivering our Repairs Service	80%
■ The way the Association deals with Anti-social Behaviour	84%
■ The way the Association deals with Repairs and Maintenance	74%



OUR STRATEGIC AIMS & PRIORITIES

PROVISION OF QUALITY HOMES

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Review our Asset Management Strategy to ensure our homes are safe, well maintained and fit for purpose.
- Enhance the standard of our homes via long term planning, investment and improvement works.
- Aspire to deliver 50 new homes during the life of this Strategy, whilst continuing to identify and appraise opportunities for new homes as they arise.
- Establish an in-house maintenance service.
- Develop and implement a Sustainability Strategy which sets clear environmental and sustainability targets and assists us to progress towards our own net zero objectives and legislative requirements.
- Enhance the local physical environment through biodiversity projects, in consultation with, and with active participation from our tenants.
- Sustain existing and develop new strategic partnerships with other housing associations and organisations which encourage best practice and support regeneration and innovation.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Provide a high standard of housing management service.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Ensure a supportive tenancy induction with clear and concise information outlining the standards and services we provide.
- Provide support, signposting and advice for tenants who face financial and other personal challenges.
- Develop digital platforms to enhance services and provide additional flexible payment options to tenants.
- Effectively and efficiently manage empty homes through, reducing void times, bringing properties back into use and disposing of properties when appropriate.
- Set, monitor and evaluate our key service delivery measures to ensure we are achieving a high standard of service to all.



TENANT & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Place tenants at the centre of the association by facilitating the active engagement of tenants in decisions that affect their housing and lives.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Develop an older person's strategy to help address the needs of our current and future older tenants.
- Develop a Domestic Violence Strategy to respond to the needs of all current and future tenants and wider society.
- Implement and continually review targeted outcomes and achievements from our Tenant Participation and Community Involvement Strategies; whilst ensuring they remain fit for purpose.
- Develop and encourage greater tenant participation and engagement through:
 - Initiatives that empower our tenants.
 - Platforms that strengthen our tenant voice.
 - Projects which encourage greater membership and participation in our Tenant Forum, Youth Forum and other engagement initiatives.
- Identify and set our community investment priorities annually and assess the impact and value of our investment, to ensure our resources are used effectively to deliver positive outcomes.
- Provide grants, bursaries and other targeted support to promote and enhance our tenants' lives and which support local community projects and initiatives who aim to create thriving community and support our tenants to achieve their aspirations and potential.
- Consult tenants on significant proposals or changes which may affect their homes or the delivery of our services.
- Respond effectively to the increasing diversity of the tenant population, including cultural needs and requirements.
- Sustain existing and develop new partnerships with local voluntary and statutory organisations to improve support for tenants and the wider community.
- Promote and celebrate the strengths, achievements and contribution of the local community.

PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

Contribute to the development of public policy in support of the organisation's mission.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Develop clear advocacy priorities and messages.
- Build relationships with key decision-makers and partners.
- Advocate for changes in policy, practice and investment.
- Work collaboratively to influence local and regional priorities.



SUPPORTING AIMS

COMMUNICATIONS

To ensure the organisation is effectively promoted and communicates effectively with its stakeholders.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Review and refresh the Association's communications approach to ensure it remains effective internally and externally.
- Promote the Association's role, services and impact clearly and positively.
- Communicate effectively with tenants, staff and other stakeholders.
- Respond to complaints promptly and use learning to improve services.

FINANCIAL & DIGITAL RESOURCE

To ensure the association is sustainable, has the financial & digital resources it requires, and these are effectively and efficiently managed.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Ensure the Association is effectively and efficiently managed with the appropriate resources in place to achieve its aims and objectives.
- Ensure we effectively, ethically and efficiently procure good quality products and services from external suppliers.
- Ensure the Association maintains appropriate reserves and effectively and prudently manage investments.
- Maximise the potential of social value contracts.
- Make effective use of digital platforms and emerging technology to strengthen our current systems to enhance our service delivery standards.

HUMAN RESOURCES

To ensure the association has the appropriate level of staffing it needs to achieve its aims and objectives; and that all staff are effectively supported and managed and given the opportunity to develop.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Ensure the Association has the workforce capacity and structure required to deliver its strategic and operational priorities.
- Foster a positive organisational culture in which staff feel valued, supported and able to contribute.
- Support effective leadership, management and staff development to strengthen performance and build organisational capability.
- Promote staff health, wellbeing and engagement as central to a sustainable and effective organisation.
- Ensure terms, conditions and people policies support recruitment, retention and good employment practice.
- Strengthen internal communication and teamwork to support a cohesive and high-performing organisation

GOVERNANCE

To ensure the governance of the association reflects the requirements of the law and best practice.

Priorities for the period of the strategic plan:

- Maintain a skilled, diverse and effective Board with the capacity to govern well.
- Maintain robust governance, assurance and policy frameworks that are legally compliant and fit for purpose.
- Provide clear oversight of strategy, performance, risk and compliance.
- Promote continuous improvement in Board effectiveness through review, appraisal, training and development.
- Strengthen accountability and insight through engagement with tenants, staff and stakeholders.

OUR DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS

We are currently actively progressing several new build developments and aspire to deliver at least 50 new homes within the next 3 years.

In addition, we have 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 plus new homes to be constructed within the next five years.

We will continue to consider purchasing existing homes from the open market and rehabilitate long term void properties that we acquire to the highest standard.

HOW WE WILL MONITOR AND EVALUATE THIS STRATEGY

Annual Business Plans will be produced to assist in delivering this Strategy over the next three years. These 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.

We will continuously monitor and periodically evaluate the success of this Strategy. Our annual Business Plans will be reviewed quarterly, with regular updates provided to Newington's Board.

Newington's Board will also receive an annual review of the Business Plan objectives delivery, and our Annual Report will provide an update on achievement of this Strategy and the associated Business Plan to our tenants, community partners, and key stakeholders.





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9:00 am – 4:00 pm (Fri.)

(Closed at weekends and on Public Holidays)

Out of Hours Emergency Number:

0330 123 0341

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)**