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Housing



Good practice compendium

Sharing the lessons learnt from CIH 2019 Housing Awards

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Best housing development

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This award recognises developments that provide desirable and sustainable places to live, improving the lives of people within the community.

Cullingtree Meadows

Clanmil Housing Association

Statement of support

Cullingtree Meadows is a new and exciting supported housing scheme of 30 modern, quality apartments, developed for people living with dementia.



Completed in June 2018, it is a partnership between Clanmil Housing and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The new development specifically addresses the need for a supported housing scheme for people living with dementia in West Belfast, as prior to this development there were no supported housing schemes for dementia in West Belfast.

The Supported Housing model developed at Cullingtree offers an alternative housing solution for those living with dementia who wish to remain in their own home, but require support to do so.

The building has been planned around the principles of the 'Dementia Design Standard': the two-storey building is orientated around a central triangular external courtyard, with circulation and communal spaces wrapped around this courtyard area, allowing tenants to easily understand their location within

the building at any time. The circulation corridors avoid dead-end space through the clever use of the triangular configuration, while places of interest and rest are provided throughout to allow lots of opportunity for tenants to meet and relax.

The design of the building elevations incorporated both the history of the site and the local residential context to create a structure that is 'of its place'. The elevations fronting onto Cullingtree Road and Grosvenor Road have a traditional Belfast 'street feel' and provide an easily recognizable domestic building.

The scheme also benefits from a linear garden, along the Grosvenor Road side, which provides tenants with an alternative external private space to allow meaningful wandering and a pleasant place to spend time with friends and family. Other communal accommodation provided within the scheme includes:

- Two tenant lounges for entertainment and activities
- Quiet room opening onto the courtyard
- Laundry facilities
- Hairdressing salon
- Potting shed

The scheme combines the very best of housing design: 24-hour support services and a range of assistive technology within each apartment allow discrete monitoring, with a call system, cooker alarm sensor, fridge alarm sensor, floor/water sensor, motion sensor, chair sensor, bed sensor and falls bracelets all linked back to a building management system which is continually monitored by staff. This helps promote independent living and enhance tenant safety.

The success of the scheme is best summed up by people who live there:

"This is fantastic. Everything is lovely, and everyone is so helpful"

"It's very relaxing here. I can forget my troubles and do my own thing at my own pace. I feel very safe. The staff are very pleasant. I like going down the stairs in the evening to the lounge for a chat."

Outcomes and achievements

Development of supported housing for people with dementia is strongly encouraged within the DHSS Bamford Living Fuller Lives Report and the NI Dementia Strategy.

This project has delivered high-quality accommodation that meets dementia-specific design standards, and focuses on a rights-based approach to supporting people to live well with dementia.

It also provides a hub to promote the development of a dementia-friendly community for local people living with dementia, and helps the wider community, to understand and include people with dementia in a social context.

Achievements to date include:

- Kidz in Control – a local children’s drama group are staging a play involving local children talking about dementia

- Partnership with the local primary school including residents of Cullingtree attending school activities
- Local Parish choir hosting their practice at the scheme to enable residents to join in

A spokesperson for Belfast Trust said:

‘It has been such a rewarding experience working with the local community around the development of a scheme that recognises and values the benefits of supported living for people with dementia. Being involved with the community has left us in no doubt that the people with dementia who will live in Cullingtree Meadows, will be welcomed and fully integrated into this supportive, caring community.’

Earls Court, Dungannon

Radius Housing

Statement of support

The Earls Court mixed tenure scheme located in the Carland area of Dungannon saw the construction of 49 high-quality family homes. Completed in July 2018, these homes were developed through a competitive design and build process, in partnership with Sandale Development Limited.



The design concept and vision has established a ‘tenure blind’ neighbourhood which offers a new level of choice in the locality. The Earls Court development has seamlessly integrated 11 private affordable homes (3 and 4 bedrooms) alongside 38 x 3-bedroom social rented homes.

Radius has demonstrated great innovation, leadership and tenacity in bringing its mixed tenure concept to fruition: All of the social homes are now occupied and ten of the eleven private affordable properties are sale complete, within just a few months of the site completing.

The proactive efforts of Radius in collaborating with a range of key stakeholder groups within the wider Dungannon community, including Mid Ulster District Council, the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, and An Tearmann Traveller Support Organisation, has also proved invaluable, helping to build a strong sense of place and cohesion within the development and in the surrounding area.

Earls Court is also one of 20 “Housing For All” developments designated by the Northern Ireland Executive’s “Together Building A United Community (TBUC) Strategy, which seeks to address housing segregation and promote greater cultural and socio-economic diversity across new build social housing schemes. The demographic of Earls Court is extremely diverse with a range of foreign nationals, members of the traveller community and members of the catholic and protestant religions living side by side and positively engaging in group activities which promote cohesion and integration.

Earls Court resident Sharon Webb commented “The additional support being offered by Radius through the TBUC initiative is great. As a settled traveller family it is helping my family overcome feelings of social isolation. The events and activities are helping break down some of the barriers among residents because they are coming together and mixing.”

Radius’ move to introduce mixed tenure as a further enhancement of the Housing For All designation at Earls Court adds a further dimension to its ability to inform, influence and impact. The forward-thinking

approach adopted by Radius challenges the status quo, and illustrates the potential for the creation of new and exemplar neighbourhoods which embody many of the overarching principles of the 'Together

Building A United Community Strategy', as well as the Department for Community's draft Mixed Tenure Report.

Outcomes and achievements

- The creation of the first TBUC 'Housing For All Scheme' in Dungannon which has helped facilitate the creation of a new, diverse multi-cultural community
- Creation of the first tenure blind TBUC development which integrates both social and private affordable housing. This innovative approach has been held up as a model of best practice and used as an effective tool to lobby elected representatives and departmental officials on the merits of mixed tenure in challenging the social housing provision status quo
- Development and allocation of 38 high quality social homes;
- Sale of 10 out of the 11 affordable homes within a few weeks of completion and being placed on the market
- Creation of a welcoming environment for the diverse community that has settled in Earls Court and who are working with Radius in a vast array of good relations and community development related projects and initiatives
- Establishment of an Earls Court Residents Committee

Ernedale Heights, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

Clúid Housing Association

Statement of support

Clúid Housing partnered with Donegal County Council to carry out a full refurbishment of eleven houses, originally built by the Council in the mid-1970s, at Ernedale Heights. Over the years the properties had fallen into varying states of disrepair; some houses were hot-spots for anti-social behaviour, in a prominent location within Ballyshannon town.



By 2015, four of the houses were long-term unoccupied and the seven residents in the remaining houses were living in poor conditions: the houses

were damp and cold, with mould problems, while several had structural issues and leaking roofs.

Clúid Housing partnered with Donegal County Council to upgrade the houses and provide warm, comfortable homes. To achieve this, the houses were transferred into the ownership of Clúid Housing, who utilised private finance from the Housing Finance Agency and CALF funding from DHPLG to finance the extensive refurbishment works.

Through Clúid's experience of regeneration projects, we have learned that a vital part of the process is resident consultation and active involvement in the design process. With this in mind, the existing residents played an important role in identifying the key issues and making decisions on how best to improve the houses.

Clúid Housing engaged a local architecture practice, Rhatigan Architects, who facilitated the design consultation process. The following were the key issues that emerged from the process:

- Heating: Houses were cold and in need of an upgraded, energy-efficient heating system
- Site Security: Area around houses was very open. Residents did not feel safe and secure in their homes
- Leaks: Residents reported ongoing issues with leaks, highlighting issues with existing roofs and building fabric
- Windows: Most houses still had original timber windows. Some residents had installed uPVC windows at their own expense
- Small Back Yards: Inadequate private open space
- Condensation & Mould
- Poor Insulation

- Poor Electrical Layout
- Small Kitchen
- Dark Rooms: North-facing living spaces

Clúid worked closely with the project design team to best resolve the key problems within a very restricted budget: residents were consulted several times to ensure all proposals were in line with their expectations, while Donegal County Council secured new temporary accommodation for all residents who were then re-housed prior to the construction works.

The regenerated scheme displayed the following improvements:

- Improved Internal Layouts: Open plan living spaces with larger kitchens.
- Bright, Comfortable Living Rooms: South facing windows and patio doors were installed.
- Energy-efficient Heating System: Air-to-air heat pump.
- External Wall Insulation.

- Improved Air-Tightness: Reducing heat loss.
- New Roof with Improved Attic Insulation.
- High Quality Windows & Doors.
- Cramped bathrooms were upgraded to wet-rooms with new sanitary ware and level access showers
- Mechanical Ventilation was installed, giving houses much improved internal air quality.
- All houses were fully rewired.
- A larger, enclosed private space was provided to the rear of each house. The patio areas are now comfortably sheltered sun traps.
- As the site is very sloping, a network of ramped footpaths was installed to ensure level access for all to every home.
- Zones which previously invited anti-social behaviour, have now been closed off and secured. All open space is now well overlooked, affording passive surveillance and discouraging negative activities.

Outcomes and achievements

- The refurbishment works were completed in November 2018.
- The project is a great success, bringing new life to existing houses. The impact has extended further than just the bricks and mortar, having a positive impact on the surrounding neighbourhood and community
- Prior to the project, the existing houses had a BER "G" rating, the worst value available. Following completion of the works, however, all houses are now a minimum of A3.
- Where residents previously worried about heating bills, they now have energy-efficient homes which cost a fraction of the price to heat
- Where residents' health was impacted by mould, condensation and poor ventilation, they now live in homes with excellent internal air quality
- Where residents used to live in dark, cramped spaces, they now enjoy bright, open plan homes with sun-filled, secure outdoor spaces
- By upgrading these homes, unoccupied social housing has been given a second life, homes-for-life have been given to returning & new residents, and an eye-sore in the local community has been replaced by a modern, vibrant housing scheme with a contemporary appearance.

Rosetta Cottages

Clanmil Housing Association

Statement of support

Rosetta Cottages were recently restored by Clanmil Housing Association - its first restoration project under Clanmil's new 'Hearth Heritage Division', following its merger with Hearth Housing Association.



This simple row of vernacular early 18th century cottages, thought to be amongst the oldest in the city, is located on a main arterial route into Belfast at the junction of the Ormeau and Ravenhill Roads. Situated in an area of outstanding townscape character, these grade B2 listed cottages are of enormous local importance, and considered to be a great example of a period or style, even in its derelict state at the time of listing in 1992.

The cottages were once known as Saddlers' Row, reflecting the trade of making and mending harnesses and saddlery for farmers, bringing their produce and livestock into market in Belfast from south County Down. In the 20th century, they became known as Rosetta Cottages even though they were mostly in commercial use at this time.

By 1992, the buildings had fallen into a state of disrepair and were acquired by Roads Service for demolition as part of a road widening scheme

that would have meant the loss of these beautiful buildings. However, restorations of this nature are often quite costly and so require a creative approach - along with a range of funding packages - were required to make this feasible.

Prior to its merger with Clanmil, Hearth secured funding from The Architectural Heritage Fund to purchase the buildings and ensure an end-use as social housing. Clanmil continued progress by securing funding from DfC to carry out the restoration, and a collaboration with NIHE and HED - designed to ensure social, statutory and conservation needs were met - ensued..

The concept of providing beautifully restored buildings of a heritage nature, -accessible as social housing - is a progressive one which means a wider variety of house types are made available to meet high housing need.

The attractive nature of heritage properties when restored tends to increase the value of properties in the area, making them desirable places to live but also more expensive to purchase. Historic buildings are often unattainable for those in lower income brackets who are in need of housing. Thus, social housing, using historic buildings, becomes a transformational concept, not just architecturally but socially as well.

The contractor paid enormous attention to detail in restoring and reinstating historic features such as the chimney roof structure, windows, and doors - and all whilst amalgamating new elements to create two new dwellings.

Inside, the new homes include underfloor heating and secondary glazing, while the reinstatement of original features including architraves, skirtings, picture rails and sash windows ensure the buildings' history is still present.

Traditional materials including internal lime plaster and putty skim, in lieu of lath and plaster, the re-use of original quarry tiling discovered underneath a more modern tiled floor, and the retention and reconstruction of the rare original double arched chimney structure and staircase balustrading - that had been hidden behind partitioning for many years - were all critical elements of the design and restoration.

Outcomes and achievements

The project has been a useful educational tool for the contractors who recognised the importance of the skill, effort and attention to detail required to restore the cottages.

These cottages are in a prominent position and have made a positive impact by making economic investment more attractive in the area and engendering a sense of pride amongst the local community. The Cottages have attracted media

through coverage on TV and radio, which has reported on the significant positive impact that this restoration has had and highlighted its historic importance, particularly in the wake of the Primark building fire.

Not only has this regeneration project delivered two attractive, comfortable homes of great character to meet housing need; it is sustainable; it retains an important local landmark and its historic value remains for future generations to enjoy.

St Agatha's Court regeneration

Peter McVerry Trust

Statement of support

In June 2017, St Agatha's Court was launched by the Peter McVerry Trust. This social housing project delivered 11 high-quality apartments in Dublin; 10 one-bedroom, and 1 two-bedroom units.



St Agatha's Court, originally built in the 1960s, is situated in the heart of Dublin 1, immediately beside St Agatha's Parish Church, the Swan Youth Centre, a small public library, two primary schools, and a local HSE health centre and drugs clinic - all of which are dispersed among the local residential schemes.

When identified as having reuse potential by the Peter McVerry Trust, the site consisted of a long-term, derelict, two-storey block of bedsits. This block was itself situated on a larger derelict site in the heart of the local community, so anyone accessing schools, youth club, church or library had to walk past the derelict site to get to those services.

- Peter McVerry Trust's project sought to regenerate the existing structure, integrate new-build elements and, in the process, provide larger, high quality modern apartments. The project would also significantly improve the street scape of the area, reduce anti-social behaviour and illegal dumping on the site and in the general area.

- The local community were also fully briefed by the Peter McVerry Trust team, who organised regular consultations with residents, councillors and TDs to keep them informed at all stages of the project. St Agatha's Court regeneration project took a derelict property, consisting of small bedsit style units, and reused it to create larger, more modern apartments to meet the need of single-person households.
- The apartments are well proportioned, bright, modern and fully furnished and equipped for each new resident upon arrival. There are three different style units in the complex, with a number of disability access units which also benefit from the installation of new access points, and installation of lift shaft and lift.
- Landscaped garden and courtyard with benches are provided for residents in a large private south-facing area to the rear of the development; this provides a safe space for residents to read, enjoy visits from friends and family etc.
- The development is also desirable given its proximity to two high-frequency bus routes into the city centre, local health services, and other key amenities. The site is also situated near a HSE methadone clinic which would be of benefit to some residents in the scheme.
- Damien English, T.D. Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal stated that the development was "a small but significant example of how Rebuilding Ireland can and will provide homes for very vulnerable people". <http://rebuildingireland.ie/news/minister-damien-english-launches-st-agathas-court/>
- A fundamental element of Peter McVerry Trust's housing development plan is to reuse existing structures because it is sustainable use of resources, tackles urban blight, and allows new supply to be delivered to faster.
- Peter McVerry Trust also worked with the project architects to increase the amount of light that the units in the existing structure would receive by adding bay windows, which also offered rear doors into the garden for ground floor units.

Outcomes and achievements

- With 10 one-bedroom apartments and one two-bedroom apartment, four women and 10 men currently live in St Agatha's Court. Six of these people were homeless and residing in homeless accommodation, two came from state care backgrounds, and two other residents came from the 'Housing First' programme and were previously sleeping rough. Over a year on from launch, all have remained in their tenancies with help from our Housing with Supports team which includes frequent visits.
- In an update on year on from the launch, a resident called Joe, who was homeless, explains the difference it has made to his life and explains how the staff have supported him through the year: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGJYayJWbCY&t=14s>
- The project demonstrated how empty homes can be brought back to life and has strengthened our campaign to get them back to use.
- The capital and fit out costs totalling €1.55 million euro. This development brought to 50 the number of units Peter McVerry Trust has brought into use through the regeneration of empty homes.

Upper new lodge - redevelopment

Apex Housing Association

Statement of support

Evidence of how the needs of the local market and people were met by the development.



This development has been the subject of a NIHE Economic Appraisal and early consultation process with the community, via meetings with tenants / owner occupiers, politicians and community groups.

The conclusion of the formal appraisal was that new homes were required and that this would inevitably mean demolition of over 160 existing properties, with widespread disruption to the area and a wholesale decant of NIHE tenants and compulsory purchase of owner-occupied homes.

Inevitably this level of change was always going to be challenging in terms of getting agreement on

the way forward via a second round of community consultations. However, Apex HA - in association with Newington HA - undertook the second round of intensive community consultations, after securing a design team via a mini competition using Apex's procurement model where quality of design and delivery were the most important evaluation criteria.

The competition design brief outlined, in detail, the complexities of the area, its location on a peace line, and its isolation from routes to employment centres. The organisation chose the architect who most embodied the aspiration to get this right, understood the needs of the community, and demonstrated knowledge of how 'difficult to address' urban planning issues can be overcome by careful intervention, consultation, and repair,

How the development achieved a sense of place and cohesion with the surrounding area:

During the second round of community consultations, the voice of the people was heard as they described their loyalties to their area, including what they liked and didn't like about their present homes.

Possible design solutions were presented in 3 dimensional 'fly through' computer models, allowing the surrounding areas and potential design solutions to come to life. Different design solutions were discussed in principle and, surprisingly, the suburban option was discounted by the community (much to the architect's relief) as people wanted to maintain a tight urban fabric with the inclusion of defensible spaces to living rooms / front doors, easy access to car parking spaces and private rear gardens.

Too much open space was discounted as providing too many opportunities for anti-social behaviour, and the decision to create a small open-space right beside an existing community building was endorsed as being the right solution for this development.

To keep the density in line with the funding targets, the inclusion of some apartments was subject to discussions and agreement with the community. The

inclusion of apartments for people over 55 years also allowed Apex and Newington to highlight that existing family groups could be rehoused back into the development using the variety of new homes on offer - something that was greatly appreciated by potential tenants.

Innovation and imagination in design and construction:

The architect on the project is an award-winning firm and by marrying the look and feel of the Victorian style with modern best practices, they delivered an incredible end result.

Outcomes and achievements

The best outcome of this development was that the Upper New Lodge has been completely revitalised by two Housing Associations working in conjunction with each other and with the wider community.

In addition to the provision of 88 new homes, the existing road infrastructure has been reworked to open up new connections which will also help to the area.

The achievement of overcoming some very difficult issues re decanting and buying-out owner occupiers cannot be underestimated, and this was delivered by NIHE working in conjunction with stakeholders.

The achievement of getting an agreement on the proposed layout was down to a tenacious, talented and patient architect who knew how to engage with people and tease out particular issues leading to the best possible outcome for the area.

Best housing story

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This award celebrates contributions that have made a positive difference to the lives of tenants/ residents or communities.

Aughrim Court, amazing spaces

Choice Housing Ireland

Statement of support:

Friendships, feelings of belonging and improved mental health; these are just some of the outcomes from Choice's Amazing Spaces project at Aughrim Court, Killeel.



This simple garden project has had a huge impact on the lives of the residents; with their involvement – as well as the involvement of local community groups and staff volunteers – this overgrown and unused space has been transformed.

Aughrim Court now boasts a wildflower garden, peace garden, river rockery and most importantly, has given the residents an enormous sense of achievement, and personal satisfaction.

A total of 8 agencies and 56 people, aged from 11 to 87, contributed to the successful delivery of this project. As a result, it is an outstanding example of how housing can positively impact on the lives of individuals

One resident, Joan Maginn, said: "Being part of the garden group has helped my mental health; taking a lead role in the front garden and planning and

designing our new gardens has given me a whole new sense of purpose."

The residents at Aughrim Court were the catalyst for this project. Through feedback, Choice understood their need for a safe, calm outdoor space. The biggest obstacle to the project was funding, but residents got the ball rolling by contributing personally and raising over £600. Inspired by their commitment to the project, Choice were proud to give £250 through its Charitable Giving Fund.

Scheme coordinator, Desanne Coleman, applied for a 'LiveHere, LoveHere' Small Grant and received £600. Desanne ensured value for money and even persuaded local businesses and the local council to donate resources.

Achieved change through personal dedication and a positive attitude – showing commitment to supporting others.

Desanne garnered support for the project from local community groups and volunteers. Killeel Mens' Shed were first on board, bringing a wealth of practical knowledge and willingness. Desanne invited local support group for people with learning disabilities, Mourne Stimulus Nurseries, and tenants from other schemes: everyone was delighted to get involved. The final group to get their hands dirty were Choice staff, who volunteered their own time to participate.

Steve Camillare tenant at Aughrim Court:

"The garden project helps everyone here. My doctor said it is a great idea and very therapeutic. It is not just the flowers that grow in the garden; it is the friendships and feeling of belonging. There is a sense of pride and self-worth for everyone who is involved. It is great to see everyone doing their bit and every day someone will bring visitors to the garden to have a look. We are all grateful for the chance to have a garden that helps make this our home".

Acted beyond the requirements of their role:

Desanne's efforts in motivating tenants, drawing down finance, and managing this project cannot be understated; she deserves the fullest appreciation and recognition for her dedication. Her commitment has inspired her colleagues at Choice, with 7 members of staff from across the organisation getting involved with a sheltered living scheme on a personal level.

All staff who contributed their time attested to the importance of supporting others and the feeling of satisfaction from volunteering:

"I really enjoyed getting out of the office and doing something so practical for our tenants. I will be looking forward to more opportunities to repeat this experience." Chris Wear, Admin Assistant.

Outcomes and achievements

The Amazing Spaces project has transformed Aughrim Court physically, in terms of the garden itself. However, there has been another transformation; the tenants are connected through their experience of creating and working together. Working together has created a bond that the tenants are keen to nurture, alongside their flourishing creative skills. Since the completion of the garden, an art group has been established and all

participants have been encouraged to use these skills as an ongoing form of self-expression. The tenants have added slate paintings and bespoke decorations to the outside space as well internally displayed art work. The momentum that the original Amazing Spaces project created has been maintained and the tenants are now planning an art exhibition.

Knock Eden

Radius Housing

Statement of support:

Knock Eden is a supported-living scheme for 16 people with severe learning and physical disabilities, which opened its door 14 years ago.



The tenants who originally came to live in Knock Eden had previously lived in institutional care and were known as "non-identity" because they had no means of proving their identity. They had no birth certificates, utility bills, passports, bank accounts, access to money and had incorrect hospital ID numbers. Their 'home' was completely clinical, without windows and they had minimal communication with other humans and no tactile contact at all. Their previous home had no soft furnishings, curtains, or items that gave any sense of homeliness. Residents did not have their own individual bedrooms and had no personal belongings.

Living in Knock Eden has transformed the lives of all the people who live there. Each tenant now has their own individual and personalised flat, their own clothes, and beautiful homely surroundings. Their visitors come and go as they please, they hold regular birthday and anniversary celebrations and parties, and also provide holidays abroad - as well as regular local outings which aim to make every resident feel part of a community.

Their work with residents has become highly specialised. To ensure tenants had their benefits paid we had to meet with several banks. Unfortunately, with no means of identification this was no easy task. With the support of management all tenants were able to get birth certificates issued, have rent accounts created for them, and all hospital identification was corrected to allow for ease of access to medical records. Through all of this work, tenants were able to get their own passports, which not only allowed travel, but also put each in a better position to liaise with benefit agencies to seek rights to claim their entitled benefits.

The importance of the move to supported living at Knock Eden cannot be over-stated. Each tenant was reunited with their human rights. They were given the right to their identity, choice, fairness, respect, equality, dignity, ability to live, protection from harm and be part of an advocacy group. These are the things we take for granted.

Their previous institutional care arrangements meant they were isolated from family and community life; prone to self harm out of boredom; susceptible to incidents of challenging behaviour; had no love for life; had their human rights ignored and disrespected; had no quality of life; had limited connections with local community and had no social life.

Outcomes and achievements

The support staff in Knock Eden have introduced the tenants to:

- community life
- choice
- improved mental health
- holidays
- outings and parties

The tenants are involved in their own healthcare needs. They now have an identity - a passport, bank account, proof of identity and can prove to everyone that they do exist.

They now have the opportunity to be involved in what happens in their own lives, including the design of their surroundings. They have a social life, they go on holidays enjoy going out for dinner, coffee and treats, the cinema, and even formal events.

Knock Eden has now become the place they know as home and, most importantly to all the tenants, they have their dignity and human rights back and are also aware of their human rights.

Longstone street

Radius Housing

Statement of support

MACS identified a need for a supported living scheme in the Lisburn area, after ongoing consultation with the young people's services in the South Eastern Trust.



Longstone Street was developed in partnership with Radius Housing and the South Eastern Trust and opened its doors to 9 young people, in July 2016.

There are 7 self-contained flats for young people who are leaving care, or have been homeless and aged 16 - 21 years old. The young people that move into the 7 self-contained flats can stay up to two years.

There are also 2 flats for short-term emergency accommodation for 16-17 year olds presenting to the NIHE as homeless. This emergency accommodation is provided to allow the South Eastern Trust time to complete a UNOCINI assessment.

The staff from MACS and Radius met with representatives from the local community on many occasions to get the community onboard; a result of

the stigma that can come with young people who are facing homelessness or leaving care.

All the hard work, community involvement, and engagement have meant that Longstone street has successfully entered into its third year of being part of the Lisburn Community.

Longstone Street aims to support young people who for reasons such as:

- Facing homelessness
- History of Substance abuse
- Mental Health difficulties
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Leaving Care
- Marginalised and at risk
- Experiencing low mood
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of suicide
- Issues with confidence

The staff at Longstone Street are there 24/7 to provide the young people with support and guidance to name but a few:

- Make sure they are getting the right benefits
- Help with budgeting, shopping, paying bills
- Personalising their space
- Registering with GP and Dentist
- Keeping safe
- How to be a good neighbour and actively getting involved in their community in a positive way
- Support to access training, education and employment

Many of the young people that present to Longstone Street have become stuck and are engaged in negative patterns of thinking and behaving that prevent them from fulfilling their potential and leading the lives that they want to lead.

The staff and young people at Longstone Street have overcome the negative views and obstacles that they were continually presented with when they were preparing to open, and approximately 90% of young people have moved back into the community as a result of the help and resources of received from the centre.

Outcomes and achievements

The feedback from those who have been supported by this scheme has been overwhelmingly positive:

"I feel like I am finally getting the right help since moving into Longstone Street. Nobody seemed to know what they were doing before and since moving in here my CPN, Social Worker and Project Worker have all come together to support me."

"One of the best supports I have ever had."

"My time in Longstone Street was good - it helped me to manage my anger and money. The only bad bit was when I had to leave. I learned how to budget and be independent. It helped me so much and I will be forever thankful."

Social housing enterprise programme

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

The Housing Executive's Social Housing Enterprise Programme was launched in September 2015, with the primary objective to invest in new or existing social enterprises within Housing Executive communities.



Despite significant investments in social housing over many years, the profound issues of social and economic deprivation remain, leaving our communities the most likely to be socially disadvantaged and excluded from the wider community. NIHE acknowledges that 75% of Housing Executive tenants receive full or partial Housing Benefit so this strategy aims, in some way, to try and reverse this reliance on benefits.

NIHE are the only Social Housing provider delivering such an innovative social programme throughout the UK and Ireland. The Programme launched with a 3-year strategy, and with an annual investment of £500,000 a year.

As the project coordinator, NIHE ensure that all funds go directly into our communities and invest in existing social enterprises to create new services, jobs and training opportunities within Housing Executive communities. To date, they have invested £1.4 million directly into local communities, through this programme.

As an organisation, the NIHE aims not only to provide homes but build communities where tenants want to live, socialise and work. In other words, NIHE wants to create an environment "in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, and fair society.

Case Study: Artillery Youth Group 'Bosco Bakery' received £10,000 to establish a community cafe / bakery to employ young people.

What was the evidenced need? Artillery Youth Group runs a well-established youth facility in the heart of the New Lodge, a single identity community experiencing generational multiple deprivation in North Belfast. The programme works with young adults who experience extensive challenges and barriers to securing employment.

What support was provided through the NIHE Social Housing Enterprise Strategy?

The Social Housing Enterprise Team provided developmental support, liaised with the NIHE Commercial Lettings team, provided £10k capital support and introduced the service to potential users.

What was the change directly attributed to the intervention?

A previously vacant commercial-let, in an area of multiple deprivation, was renovated to provide a high quality, affordable deli where young marginalised adults are trained and provided with transferable skills which have enabled them to secure local employment.

What was the impact/legacy of the support provided?

Harry Murphy from Bosco Bakery said: 'The Executive were brave... they listened to us and despite having no previous experience in retail, they saw beyond that and realised we had a great idea but needed support to make it a reality. Because of their willingness to

support us both financially and developmentally, we have been able to create a Social Housing Enterprise run, managed, and used by local people. In the year we have been operational, we have created jobs for five local people who - for a variety of reasons - had not been able to secure permanent employment previously. We have also worked in partnership with Artillery Youth Club to develop a structured, supportive pathway-to-employment programme for 26 young adults with no previous experience of working. 13 of them are working in entry level jobs.

Outcomes and achievements

To date the Programme has achieved:

- 160 awards equating to investment of £1.5 million into our Social Housing Enterprise Programme
- 35 new Social economies created
- 53 existing social enterprises developed
- 84 new-part time jobs created as a result of the intervention
- 25 new full-time jobs sustained as a result of the intervention
- 85 additional part time jobs created as a direct result of our investment across a number of social enterprises.
- An overall total of 194 NEW jobs created
- 105 existing part time jobs supported as a direct result of the intervention
- 78 existing full-time jobs supported as a direct result of the intervention

- 567 Volunteer opportunities created
- 1002 training opportunities created

In addition, they also we have achieved the following awards and recognitions:

- Hosted 80 best practice visits between social enterprises
- Trained 88 tenants in OCN L2 in social enterprise
- Carried out an independent external review of the programme
- Worked in partnership with University Ulster & Flax Trust to fund 13 tenants to complete the Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise
- Won the NI Housing Council Award for innovation
- Won Social Enterprise NI Stakeholder of the Year 2018

Tenant- Led transformation at Caffrey Hill

Clanmil Housing

Statement of support

Clanmil provides more than 600 family homes in West Belfast, including 165 at Caffrey Hill. West Belfast is Northern Ireland's most socially deprived area with historically high levels of ASB.



A West Belfast community hub was established in 2017, after tenants lobbied Clanmil for the development of a community space where they could play an active part in helping to address ongoing societal problems. After this extensive consultation and trust building process, Clanmil developed 'Hub West'.

From the Hub, Clanmil provides a range of services for local people including employability programmes, housing management, and community capacity building events. The space is also used by community and statutory partners to provide services to tenants. In this way, our staff are developing good local relationships and networks that help them effectively manage ASB.

With support from Clanmil's Community Fund, which helps fund community and voluntary work with a social purpose, tenants are now taking the lead and using this space to independently develop and run events and initiatives for neighbours that are improving local people's health and wellbeing and increasing the sense of community and neighbourliness in the area.

Two tenants, in particular, have quickly seized the opportunity to help address this disadvantaged area's societal issues, supported by a Clanmil Community Fund grant of £1,000.

Elisha was socially isolated and rarely left her home. Before the creation of Hub West, Elisha was disengaged from Clanmil and fairly disgruntled. Elisha's hobby, crochet, was her release. It helped her focus on something positive and creative that distracted her from the struggles of day-to-day life. She wanted to share the benefits of her hobby with her neighbours and now volunteers 8 hours every week running a crochet group at the Hub for over 40 participants.

Elisha says, "People with all kinds of stresses and worries come to enjoy some 'Creative Therapy'. They can unwind, have a chat and focus on something completely different. It's good for my mental health too. It's motivated me to get out, make friends and do something for myself."

Anne, a skilled artist, approached staff about using the space to run an art class for neighbours. 12 people currently attend her weekly class. Anne says the 4 hours she volunteers each week "take me out of my dark place" and give her respite from caring for her elderly mother who has dementia.

Watch Anne's story here - <http://www.clanmil.org/real-clanmil-lives-anne.php>

These groups are making a real difference within their community;

- For one lady - an alcoholic - the crochet classes provide her only social interaction. They give her week structure and she has developed a new circle of supportive friends which helps with her addiction.
- Another lady, who has Parkinson's Disease, is being supported by Anne to use her tremor to her advantage in her painting, and is regaining self-confidence as a result.

Enthused by the success of these groups, a number of active tenants are currently being supported by Clanmil to establish a west Belfast Tenant Forum based at The Hub. The Forum represents tenants from three different neighbourhoods, steers the work delivered by Clanmil in west Belfast and has increased community ownership of the Hub. The group are planning to access further funding streams and offer more tenant-led health and wellbeing initiatives. This will sustain the momentum created by Elisha and Anne's pioneering programmes.

Outcomes and achievements

Thanks largely to the partnership between Clanmil and our tenants, our West Belfast schemes are becoming more settled and sought-after places to live. Statistical evidence supports this because since 'Hub West' opened, the figures are as follows:

- Terminations of tenancy have fallen by 60% at Caffrey Hill
- ASB has decreased by 25% and continues to stay at a lower level
- Cost of managing ASB has reduced by £7k pa
- Security costs have dropped by £17k pa

Staff now have more time to focus on supporting tenants to grow their community and to build partnerships with a range of agencies that help us ensure tenants have access to meaningful

opportunities at Hub West. For example, activities delivered in partnership with Upper Andersonstown Community Forum include:

- A six-week summer programme for 40 children
- ICT Courses (7 people achieved Level 1 accreditation and 12 attained Level 2)
- Essential skills in literacy for 6 people
- Hair and beauty diplomas for 18 participants
- Driving theory course

Clanmil uses the Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) wellbeing valuation tool to measure the social impact of our work according to the impact on tenant wellbeing. In 2017, the HACT wellbeing value of the activities at Hub West was a whopping £300K.

Excellence in Communications

sponsored by **Housing Executive**

This new award recognises housing teams who go above and beyond to deliver truly outstanding customer service. This also includes organisations that have used an innovative approach to gain insight into their customer needs and experiences and have used this to transform service to customers.

126 Strand road campaign

Choice Housing Ireland

Statement of support

Choice works hard to ensure its high-quality, affordable homes are at the centre of thriving communities. 126 Strand Road, located in Derry/Londonderry, is one of the largest housing renovation and refurbishment projects to be undertaken in this vibrant city.



Reconfigured from a flourmill to student accommodation in the 1980s, over time the building required modernisation and was plagued by reports of anti-social behaviour. This project has completely changed the community's perception of this scheme into a highly desirable place to live.

Choice, working in conjunction with the Housing Executive and the Department of Communities (DFC), invested £3.6m in this project.

Choice identified the need to rebrand this historic building to ensure the unprecedented expenditure on refurbishment of social housing in this city was successful.

Planning, strategy and campaign tactics

Choice's interdepartmental Void Working Group brings together the skills and knowledge needed to minimise voids, and a two-strand approach was adopted for the campaign:

the first part was an 'Improvement Strategy' for the building and surrounding area, and the second part was a comprehensive 'Communications Plan'.

The scale of the refurbishment at 126 Strand Road, required early guidance from Choice's Marketing team, to ensure that all staff, partners, community representatives and of course tenants, understood the key objectives and were able to contribute.

Communication aims:

- Transform the scheme's reputation
- Raise awareness of the major changes at 126 Strand Road
- Encourage potential tenants to register their interest in the homes

Communications Objectives:

- Promote the scheme as a safe, modern and desirable location
- Promote the distinctive features, benefits and opportunities of life at 126 Strand Road
- Offer useful information to prospective tenants - brochure, banner and dedicated web page, radio and press adverts
- Deliver an agreed target of proactive, positive engagement, until the scheme is fully-subscribed

Communications Channels:

- Publications: Choice News (Distributed to over 11, stakeholders)
- Property Leaflet
- Derry Journal advert in place for 10 weeks, (readership, 28,000 weekly)
- Q Radio advert and accompanying interview with Allocations Manager (Q Regional stations reach 150,000 listeners each week* Source, Rajar Quarter 3 2015)

- Website: dedicated 126 Strand Road web page
- Social Media: Twitter and Facebook campaign sharing images and links to the webpage
- Dedicated front line staff: Choice staff and service providers who endorse and promote the scheme
- Show apartment: a compelling and convincing space
- Gable wall banner: bright and engaging visual along a busy thoroughfare and designed to prompt interest
- Renaming the scheme: The tenant engagement process undertaken, made it clear that a new identity for the scheme would create a clear distinction between the previous accommodation and the modern refurbishment.
- Evidence of impact of communications - e.g media coverage, more supporters

The marketing team underpinned the refurbishment project with an ambitious and highly successful communications plan. They gained extensive support from external stakeholders including the local chamber, general public, Derry City Council, Department for Communities, Private sector partners, Choice staff and media.

The refurbishment, which lasted 18 months, was punctuated by continuous positive media coverage, including Irish News (weekly readership 84,117),

Construction Ireland (monthly readership 22,500), Derry Journal (weekly readership 28,075), Derry News (weekly readership 10,970).

As the refurbishment progressed, Choice was able to offer a new Prospective Tenant Viewing Strategy: their first show apartment was launched ahead of completion, giving prospective tenants a chance to experience the finished product in advance of accepting their tenancy.

Charlie Temple, Allocations Manager, Choice Housing
"Effective marketing meant we were able to present our vision for the scheme to potential tenants from day one of the project. The campaign was successful in creating a positive buzz locally about the newly remodelled apartments and consequently meant we had plenty of demand for the apartments when it came to allocation."

Lee Thomas, Resettlement Team Leader, North West Methodist Mission, Hostel for Homeless Men

"Unfortunately, this scheme had a poor reputation and was somewhere we preferred our men to not be housed. The changes made are second to none. Choice should be applauded for their commitment to this project. The look of the scheme has completely changed and more importantly our men feel safe and secure in the community once again. We have rehoused approximately 10 men at 126 Strand Road."

Outcomes and achievements

- At the beginning of this campaign, the former Rockmills site reflected high voids, high turnover and high maintenance costs. The reputation of the scheme was unfortunately low and is in stark contrast to its current clear desirability.
- Choice are delighted that the scheme is now contributing so much to the local community in so many ways.
- On-time delivery of the £3.6m investment
- 94 newly refurbished and occupied homes
- Enhanced the local community - investing in an historic building
- A significant contribution to Northern Ireland's Social Housing Development programme, with £570k of the project's capital funding comprising DfC Housing Association Grant
- Provided homes to a number of those originally registered as homeless, including families

Extreme weather communications response

Peter McVerry Trust

Statement of support

In late February / early March 2018, Ireland was impacted by the severe weather from Storm Emma, and the Beast from the East. These weather systems brought with them near record levels of snowfall and very low temperatures across Ireland with the east coast particularly badly hit. The weather conditions presented a clear and immediate threat to life for people sleeping rough and those accessing one-night-only homeless services.



Peter McVerry Trust has a well-developed extreme weather protocol for such scenarios; these protocols are activated when weather alerts are issued by Met Eireann.

When Met Eireann issued the red alert in the run up to Storm Emma and Beast from the East, the head of communications, who is charged with monitoring such alerts, informed the CEO of Peter McVerry Trust, who then activated the extreme weather protocols through the senior management team.

During this particular weather event, the communications team, was charged with informing the public that the charity needed immediate help to identify the locations of people sleeping rough, warn them about the severity of the extreme weather event, and assertively engage them so they could access the extreme weather accommodation provision. In essence, the communications team's role was to aid the operations work of the charity, by offering them new information which would help prevent the loss of life.

In the minutes after the Red Alert was issued, Peter McVerry Trust - through its social media channels - began to ask members of the public to log the locations of rough sleepers. The communications team collated the relevant information, shared online links and telephone numbers for people to report sightings of rough sleepers, and used graphics / storm related hashtags to get the message out. This message was repeated and shared repeatedly during the lead up and in the hours during the worst of the storm conditions, leading to a huge level of online interaction and engagement with people responding in real time to report a recent sighting of a rough sleeper.

Peter McVerry Trust strategically targeted Newstalk and RTE and, through these broadcast platforms, appeared on over 100 news bulletins per day from the issuing of the Red Alert to the culmination of the storm and also featured on news ticker updates on rolling news coverage from RTE and TV3.

The communications team also provided real-time updates to the media and public to ensure that the public was aware that we were responding to reports of rough sleepers in certain areas, which avoided duplicate reports.

Outcomes and achievements

The primary objective was to aid the operations work and get people into shelter. To that end, the communications team made an enormous contribution to the overall response, which saw 185 people off the street and into our cold weather provision. Of these, over 30 people had never before engaged with homeless services.

Media reach exceeded 2.5 million people across Ireland when all broadcast, publications and social media channels are taken into account; coverage culminated in the CEO appearing on a special edition of the Late Late Show, which had an audience of 545,000 (43.9% TV audience share).

On social media our tweets earned 508,600 impressions from 26 February to 5 March, on Facebook it was 240,448 people. Traffic to our website was also up 46.74%. A total of 40,807 people engaged with a Facebook post of our CEO Pat Doyle calling out for the public's assistance. It received 657 likes, comments and shares.

In all, we received 445 mentions on social media, 426 broadcast mentions and 160 mentions in online articles and donations to the charity online went up by over 600%, despite never asking for any donations just help in finding people in need of shelter.

Russell Court support team

Radius Housing

Statement of support

Following a destructive and intrusive Fire Risk Assessment, it was agreed, in June 2018, that Block B of Russell Court should be vacated.



A significant amount of planning went into how the message of the decision to vacate the building should be communicated, and our priority was the management of the communication with the tenants.

It was determined, at the outset, that our objective was for staff to speak to every tenant affected, and to do so within as short a period of time so that as many as possible heard the message first and directly from us.

On the 12th of June 2018 a team of Radius staff began to call with individual residents to inform them of the decision which we knew would be difficult for some to take in.

We had established a clinic in the bottom floor offices at Russell Court which all residents were encouraged to attend; this operated on the bottom floor of the Russell Court building from 9am to 9pm weekdays, and 9-3:30pm on a Saturday, for a number of weeks. The clinic was manned by:

- Radius Housing Staff carried out full Housing Assessments in line with the Housing selection scheme, ensuring that all housing points were maximised and immediately keyed onto the Housing Waiting list;
- Representatives from NIHE carried out the homeless assessment;

- Housing Rights Service provided an independent housing advice to many tenants;
- Advice NI provided independent benefit advice;
- Interpreters for foreign national tenants;
- A sign language facilitator for hearing impaired tenants;
- NI Fire and Rescue Service reassured tenants on fire safety measures;
- Radius Welfare & Benefits advice officer provided benefit advice and successfully increased benefit entitlement for a few tenants.

We established a Crisis Team that would be dedicated to the clearance of the Russell Court Block B building. The staff appointed to the team were removed from their normal duties, to concentrate on finding alternative suitable accommodation for the tenants, and providing support to each one, throughout the relocation process.

Each tenant was allocated a dedicated Radius case worker to assist with the entire process of moving. These case workers provided their work mobile number for direct access to them for the tenants.

The team began to pull together a list of available properties across Radius stock. They also liaised with Radius colleagues from the NIHE and other Housing Associations, to establish available properties. Each case worker discussed availability with every resident, where an interest was expressed in any property the team member arranged a viewing for them.

Once a tenant had accepted a property, the team liaised with the NIHE to arrange furniture removal, and even offered cardboard boxes for packing to all residents. When a tenant was re-housed, Radius provided them with a small hamper of essential goods to help them settle in to their new home.

Where Radius were in a position to make an offer, they provided a turnkey finish to all new properties tenants were moving to. Furthermore, throughout the process Radius staff had continued to meet with their colleagues in the Housing Executive for weekly update meetings, and were extremely helpful in securing temporary accommodation for those who needed it.

One tenant, Mr Mackey, said: "I was a tenant at Russell Court for 15 years and was settled and happy to call it my home. When there was an issue with the property and we were told to move, I wasn't sure where I was going to go. However, my Housing Officer looked after my interests and suggested I look at Forthriver, I loved it straight away, I have really settled in and I am very happy in my new home".

Outcomes and achievements

The decision to vacate Block B of Russell Court, and the implementation of that process was one of the most challenging issues that Radius Housing has faced. However, from the outset, it was clear they had no other option, as the health and safety of

tenants was of paramount importance. The strategic and coordinated approach to this project ultimately ensured that suitable, alternative accommodation has been secured for every single tenant in Russell Court Block B.

Visteon regeneration project communications

Radius Housing

Statement of support

Radius Housing's Visteon Regeneration Project will see the transformation of a 21.5 acre former brownfield site, located at one of the city's key gateways.



Redevelopment plans for the former Visteon car manufacturing site incorporates ambitious plans to develop an exemplar mixed-use, mixed tenure development incorporating 244 social and affordable residential units, which will be pepper potted throughout the site, 60,000sqft of B1 commercial space, a purpose-built community centre, three communal recreational and amenity spaces and a park.

The vision for the site's development was, from the outset, a challenge given the complexity of issues facing it. This was clearly illustrated during the lengthy journey to achieving planning approval. One of the greatest challenges was overcoming negative public perception associated with the project, as well as the adverse public opinion regarding social housing; to successfully counter this issue, a robust project communication strategy was developed, which incorporated a variety of campaign specific tactics.

Initially Radius' development proposals for the site were welcomed, however this quickly changed when a detailed planning application was lodged for the site. Widespread objection to the project followed based almost exclusively on the grounds that the project would introduce new social housing provision into the locality. As a consequence, a genuine and sustained engagement strategy was carefully crafted, which ultimately became a fundamental component of achieving planning for the site.

Community consultation commenced in July 2013 prior to the planning application being submitted, to afford time for emerging proposals to be discussed, challenged, and improved. A series of resident and elected representative meetings were facilitated over this period, with the aim of building understanding of the project.

Initial consultation meetings with local residents were fraught and often highly charged, with those attending the events raising concerns around emotive issues such as the impact on the value of their homes, increased traffic locally and public safety, the social housing allocation process and the impact on existing school and preschool provisions.

During this period, to improve the level of dialogue with people raising concerns or asking questions, Radius began to organise smaller drop in style events, whilst also facilitating a large number of one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders. This bespoke approach afforded Radius the ability to find solutions to the wide-ranging concerns raised by the local community.

The Radius team also took on board feedback to revisit, amend, and improve the scheme design, and planning permission was granted. However, consultation and engagement with the local community has continued.

Ongoing consultation and communication tools include the development of a purpose-built website, providing an array of up-to-date information relating to the project. All queries forwarded through a dedicated Visteon enquiries email address are logged and responded to within 48 hours.

A construction charter was also developed through this project, in consultation with the contractor and key stakeholder representative group, comprising of statutory agencies, Councillors, schools and tenants' representatives.

The Charter, in question, sets out the group's commitments to being 'good neighbours' for the duration of the construction process. Protocols around communications, site work disruption and

public safety were also established, while social media platforms were effectively used as a means of sharing information.

Outcomes and achievements

The group's unwavering commitment to excellence in communication remains of paramount importance as the project now moves into delivery stage following its successful navigation through a very challenging planning process.

The effectiveness of the communications strategy is highlighted by a new positive narrative surrounding the Visteon Regeneration Project and the achievement of key outcomes to include:

- securing of planning approval for NI's largest and most ambitious social housing led, mixed use development project
- development and ongoing maintenance of the Visteon Regeneration Project's dedicated website
- development and implementation of the Visteon Construction Charter which has been informed by feedback gained by two independently facilitated half day stakeholder workshops
- facilitation of the first of three planned "Meet the Contractor" events on 21st August 2018 and follow up home visits to local residents
- timely response to 89 website enquires to date (all of which were positive in content) within a 48-hour window
- circulation of regular update letters from the Radius Chief Executive during the planning application process and the subsequent distribution of 2no. quarterly community newsletters to 525 properties within a 100-metre radius of the site red line boundary
- increased participation of the local community in activities and events associated with the Visteon Regeneration Project (renaming process, community sponsorship, and educational outreach)

Welfare Reform 'let's talk money'

Connswater Homes

Statement of support

The Association employed a Welfare Advisor, Max Petrushkin, in May 2017 to assist customers with the welfare reform.



Part of Max' role focused on raising the profile of Universal Credit and changes to the welfare system. During the course of this initiative, Max completed a number of pop-up sessions around geographical areas in which Connswater operates, to reach out to as many customers and stakeholders as possible.

In addition to these pop-up events, Max also worked collaboratively with local representatives and community groups, to establish evening surgeries and information events. Each event had approximately 20/30 local residents and stakeholder in attendance.

Detailed below are a number of initiatives and examples of communication which have helped to inform stakeholders about Universal Credit and welfare changes.

- Joint working relations with Ballymac Community Centre and DUP Councillor George Dorrian: a monthly surgery/outreach service has been

established and runs between 6pm and 8pm. Max attends this surgery and provides help and assistance to the local community - not just exclusively to Connswater Homes tenants.

- Developed strong working relationships with other providers within the community and has completed a number of information sessions for stakeholders at their request.
- Planned a number of events to introduce local residents to their local services; at these information sessions, people have the opportunity to ask questions and receive advice.
- Established a welfare advisor forum to share good practice and ideas in respect to operational queries for Universal Credit claims. This forum includes welfare advisors from other housing associations and has assisted with the sharing of ideas and practices within the welfare field.
- Promotion of Universal Credit to tenants via letters, newsletter and increase use of social media: Max added a section on welfare reform on the Association's website which makes it accessible for all stakeholders.

Councillor George Dorrian provided the following testimonial:

"Max attended a number of surgeries and dealt with a large number of cases, both Connswater Homes tenants and others, providing them with advice and reassuring them that no matter the difficulties there was assistance at hand should they get into difficulties".

Max understands the importance of promoting the message, not only to those individuals directly affected, but also to those stakeholders and advocacy workers who assist claimants. Strong working relationship have developed through this interagency working, which in turn has a positive impact on the end user.

Finally, he recognises the importance of early intervention, in terms of ensuring that a tenant is equipped with the most relevant and up to date information in respect to Universal Credit. To deliver on this, he ensures that he is present at all sign-ups, completes the welfare check with each tenant, and provides them with support and information they need when completing the claim.

Outcomes and achievements

Assisting tenants with welfare queries and Universal Credit is part of Max's daily role. However, he has gone above and beyond in regards to communicating with tenants; this approach has ensured that good practice is shared amongst Associations, which in turn benefits all stakeholders.

Max has visited and engaged with all tenants within Connswater Homes that are currently enrolled on Universal Credit; this has meant he has been able to provide one-to-one support to tenants and troubleshoot problems with Universal Credit claims.

Finally, through the promotion of the Universal Credit and welfare services, the Association has seen an increased engagement with the welfare advisor. Max provides a welfare assessment and budgeting advice. He also assists tenants with challenging benefit decisions with many successful outcomes. To date Max has assisted over 200 people with the following financial gains for tenants and the Association from May 2017 to October 2018.

Excellence in customer service

sponsored by **CLANMIL**
HOUSING GROUP

This award recognises organisations who can demonstrate customer service excellence in the areas of practice and innovation.

Ronan Campbell - Ballysillan voids

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

Ronan Campbell was appointed as a Patch Manager to the Ballysillan/Silverstream area, with effect from February of this year. At the time of his appointment, Ballysillan was experiencing a significant long-standing voids problem for a range of reasons:



- a campaign of Paramilitary intimidation in one part of the estate.
- issues relating to the structural problems of some dwellings
- various anti-social behaviour cases within the estate had caused an adverse impact in

Ballysillan and were a source of reluctance to new tenants taking up occupation.

The difficulty in letting these 13 dwellings was resulting in a significant loss of revenue for the Housing Executive, as well as causing blight in the estate. The unattractiveness of the vacant dwellings to waiting list applicants was adding further pressures to an already congested waiting list.

Ronan therefore initiated a plan to address this issue which entailed the following measures:-

- working with maintenance colleagues and contractors to enhance the appearance of the vacant homes: works carried out included enhanced weather-proofing of dwellings and paint-outs of all houses to provide a more welcoming appearance for prospective tenants
- a range of measures were started by Ronan to address the long-standing community safety issues in the estate including mediation and voluntary transfer of some tenants. This resulted in tensions within the area reducing significantly
- supporting our colleagues in Housing Solutions with the relocation of victims of intimidation

Outcomes and achievements

The current position is that all vacant dwellings in Ballysillan have now been let and full occupancy has been achieved; this is the first occasion in many years that the Housing Executive has enjoyed a full uptake of all housing units in this area.

The waiting list for the area is also healthy, as a consequence of the removal of blight - and because community safety issues have now been effectively addressed by Ronan.

Ronan has also built up a very good rapport with community representatives, statutory colleagues and elected representatives which further enhances the relationships within the estate and our ability to quickly address issues as they arise.

Customer services digital transformation

Co-Ownership

Statement of support

Co-Ownership has been transformed into a customer-centred organisation which is easy to work with. Previously, applications involved completing a 40-page form which nine out of ten customers needed the help of a qualified financial advisor to complete - and even after completion, were required to wait four weeks for an answer, as our team sifted through the paper.



Customer research carried out highlighted the stress that this process placed on both customers and other stakeholders: the time it took to make a decision put the Co-Ownership customer at a distinct disadvantage when bidding for a home. It also highlighted the need to transform to remain relevant or risk alienating them.

Co-ownership's vision was to put its customers on the same footing as any other mortgage customers - i.e. to give them the information and tools they need to complete their application and purchase their dream home as quickly and easily as possible.

To achieve this objective, Co-ownership wanted to transform delivery time to give its customers an offer in principle within 2 working days (rather than 20). In addition, however, Co-ownership also wanted to transform the roles of its customer service teams, making them more challenging and engaging.

To achieve this, the approach involved using insights and feedback to shape the customer journey. The result was the creation of brand-new roles for everyone in the customer services team, with customer service excellence at the heart of everything they do.

In addition, Co-ownership also changed its brand to make it more relevant to its customer base, and built an entirely new website, with interactive tools and information to support customers, whatever their question.

For example, the new application portal was built leveraging the latest digital technologies, with a credit reference agency fully integrated to streamline the journey for the customer and our team.

As a result of this new online resource, Co-ownership customers can now check out whether Co-Ownership is suitable for them, before they even begin to go through the application process.

Despite receiving record application volumes since they introduced all of these changes, they are now giving customers an answer within two working days (previously 20). So, once a customer advises a member of the customer service team that they know the house they want to buy, a survey is conducted speedily, and a final offer provided within 2 weeks.

Initial feedback has been very positive:

"Such an easy process and incredibly friendly and helpful staff. We wouldn't have been able to buy our first home without you"

"Our delivery has been a huge success! It was led by a cross-functional internal team with key people upskilling and stepping up to take the lead to deliver the change. The customer facing teams collaborated with the IT specialists and UX designers to ensure that our solution worked for customers and our people. The Co-Ownership team delivered this change whilst exceeding their BAU delivery targets for customers".

Outcomes and achievements

Co-ownership's customer experience has been transformed:

- From 20 days to a decision within 2 days
- From 4 hours to complete an application to just 20 mins
- From 40 pages of application forms and 120 pages of brochures to a digital journey requiring 80% less information
- End-to-end journey of 11 working days
- 45% of customers applying themselves and increasing (previously 90% needed help)
- In one month, we have been able to process double the volume of applications we could previously
- 24% of customers taking a higher share of their home

Service excellence, satisfied customers

Ark Housing Association

Statement of support

Over the past 2 years, Ark Housing Association has developed innovative approaches to ensure that effective customer service, tenant satisfaction and meaningful tenant engagement have been embedded into the culture and DNA of the organisation at an operational, as well as at a strategic level.



When developing its outcomes-focused 5-year Corporate Strategy (2017-2022), the staff and Board of Ark identified two key strategic themes that allows them to reinforce the importance of providing excellent Customer Service.: these 2 themes focus on 'Engaged Communities, Greater Impact' and 'Service Excellence, Satisfied Customers'.

Within these two themes, they developed positive indicators, including increased tenant engagement, increased social impact, increased community and social events, and higher tenant and resident satisfaction.

In implementing these key themes they undertook a review of the organisation's structure in Year 1, and developed a Housing and Customer Services Team. This team is an all-encompassing first-point of contact for tenants, and their focus is not only to provide good housing management, but excellent customer service across the board.

All staff have also now been fully trained in customer service and have achieved CIH Level 3 in Housing Practice; this has been met with a very positive response, showing higher levels of satisfaction and lower levels of formal complaints, with only 8 being received throughout the year and 88% of these being dealt with at stage 1 and 12% dealt with satisfactorily at stage 2.

To fully understand the needs/experience of service users, the Association developed a Tenant Participation Strategy, which was launched in consultation with our tenants, staff and stakeholders in 2017. This Strategy outlines their commitment to effective and meaningful tenant involvement.

Along with this strategy, they also developed an action plan which is updated and monitored on a regular basis by staff, senior management, and the Board. Finally, they created a menu of options to enable their tenants to engage with them at a level that engages them; this menu of options describes the level of involvement and outlines the time commitment required so that they can make an informed decision on how they can get involved.

Over the past year, Ark has carried out 251 engagements with its tenants and service users, as well as 8 roadshows and several engagement sessions.

In moving forward with this Strategy, its aim is to increase engagement within its schemes by working alongside 'Empowering Communities' to develop Community Champions, Resident Associations and a Tenant Forum.

Evidence of the high standards achieved can be seen from a recent tenant satisfaction survey conducted: by Ark:

- 91% satisfaction with the overall services provided
- 97% satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided
- 91% satisfaction with the ability of staff to deal with their query quickly and efficiently
- 94% satisfaction with keeping them informed about things that may affect their home
- 96% satisfaction with listening to their views and acting upon them
- 93% satisfaction in general with the response maintenance services provided by Ark Housing

Outcomes and achievements

The following are the key outcomes and achievements delivered to date:

Higher levels of tenant satisfaction:

- 91% of tenants stated that they are overall satisfied with the service provided by Ark
- 91% satisfaction with the ability of staff to deal with their query quickly and efficiently
- 94% satisfaction with keeping them informed about things that may affect their home
- 96% satisfaction with listening to their views and acting upon them.

Increased tenant engagement:

251 engagement activities throughout the year. A significant number of Ark tenants, residents and service users come from a wide range of different countries (e.g Iran, Iraq, Syria).

The organisation assisted 58 families to integrate into local communities:

- We have supported 72 into education and training
- We carried out 7 tenant roadshows
- We offered work experience in housing to 4 secondary school students

Increased customer service- New Customer Services Team, higher satisfaction levels and a reduction on complaints received. Staff have also received training on Customer Services.

TDS Northern Ireland

Statement of support

TDS Northern Ireland (TDSNI) is the country's leading deposit protection scheme with over 80% of the market, and is the only scheme based in Northern Ireland. It has a commitment to providing the highest quality customer service, and delivers a vital service for the private rented sector.



TDSNI is the leading deposit protection scheme in Northern Ireland.

Through traditional media engagement, social media planning, and an office in Belfast to give face-to-face and over the phone advice, TDS aims to raise awareness of deposit protection amongst letting agents, landlords and tenants, providing vital guidance and raising standards in the private rented sector.

By publishing 36 blogs and 6 publications since December 2017, it has shown a commitment to providing customers with regular, detailed and interesting material to inform them about work being undertaken, give real-life examples of adjudication decisions and keep them up to date with the latest legislation and news in the private rented sector.

The organisation's customer service is multi-award-winning, and the team's commitment to delivering the highest quality is responsible, in no small part, for the success of the company, which commands 81% market share in Northern Ireland.

In each year since its inception, TDS has met its business KPIs of answering calls in 30 seconds or less, responding to emails within 24 hours, and always looking to provide added value service to customers, including face-to-face contact.

TDSNI offers out-of-hours services, operates an open-door policy at their Belfast office, and regularly engages with other partners, such as the Landlord Association of Northern Ireland and 'Property mark', to ensure as broad an engagement strategy as possible.

Furthermore, with extra help being available for tenants not familiar with the private rented sector - or those who cannot speak English - TDSNI ensures it is available to offer assistance to anyone who might need it.

TDSNI regularly engages with its members to gather feedback on performance and how we can better serve everyone in the private rented sector. TDSNI has a highly active member forum with landlords, letting agents, and tenant groups all represented; this provides an opportunity for dialogue with members and keeps them up to date with the latest work of TDSNI, as well as allowing members to ask and have answered any questions they may have.

TDSNI is also proactive in engaging with its audience, utilising social media in a way which seeks to educate and inform. As well as regularly posting relevant facts, links to resources, and updates of TDSNI activity and projects, it also responds in real time to those queries generated through a live chat system, as well as through messaging social media accounts. With over 48,000 impressions this year, TDSNI's Twitter activity has been of particular importance to customers.

Feedback and testimonials:

Some TDS customers have already provided excellent feedback and reported that they value the knowledge, approach and advice that the team provides:

"Excellent and professional company, Eamonn and Sean in particular are a pleasure to deal with and only a phone call away".

"Extremely happy with the level of service all round with TDS. They are the best deposit company that we have ever worked alongside".

"Fantastic organisation with staff willing to develop business relationships and go the extra mile to achieve desired outcomes"

"A first-class service and professional team who are always willing and able to resolve our issues with Landlords and Tenants".

Outcomes and achievements

Launched in 2012, the TDSNI Academy this year carried out 4 half-day workshops across Northern Ireland, as well as a number of individual training courses with 50 letting agents.

TDS also works with a variety of partners in Northern Ireland, from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, to Housing Rights and NUS-USI. Furthermore, they have attended over 80 different industry events in the past 5 years.

Between March 2017 and March 2018, the organisation experienced growth of 13.85%, which - given that the total number of tenancy deposits in

Northern Ireland grew by 8.98% in the same time period, shows they are growing at a quicker rate than the market as a whole.

Additional evidence that the customer service provided is having a positive impact for the private rented community is that, between March 2017 and March 2018, the percentage of tenancy deposits ending in a dispute fell, proving that the number of those disagreeing with the scheme is falling steadily and is a great reflection on the dispute resolution team at TDSNI.

West area temporary accommodation team

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

We wish to nominate Theresa Ferguson, Housing Adviser, and Greta Rafferty, Clerical officer, for the award of customer service.



WHSST is the second largest Housing Solution team in the Housing Executive outside Belfast with as a result the second largest temporary accommodation portfolio. On average, WHSST has 180 monthly homeless presenters with around 60-65% accepted as a Full Duty Applicant.

We have 321 units of hostel temporary accommodation divided between the Housing Executive and the voluntary sector. Finding appropriate vacancies has presented difficulties for all the advisors as traditionally, all Housing Advisors have to source limited temporary accommodation on a daily basis, meaning crossover and duplication when chasing limited vacancies.

Outcomes and achievements

Testimony has been received from all our providers and they have consistently highlighted the benefits of this approach by Theresa and her team, especially with regards to removing negative work and duplication.

The open day was a great success, with providers stressing the benefits of talking to one dedicated team, while also commenting on Theresa's commitment and professionalism. The relationship that Theresa has established with our hostel providers has seen more "move on" and a "better fit" process in terms of our referrals into different types of hostels and this can only benefit our customers.

Theresa identified this as an issue in terms of supply, access and management; as a result, she set up a dedicated temporary accommodation team, with assistance from Greta Rafferty.

This team deal with all aspects of sourcing, managing, and reporting on temporary accommodation throughout the West Area. This has, without doubt, eased the pressure on the other Housing Advisors who have always cited the sourcing of limited temporary accommodation as one of the main stressors within the workplace.

Theresa has also set up 'move-on clinics' within the larger voluntary hostels where, working in conjunction with hostel staff, she meets placements and looks at move on options/housing prospects, to free up space others. Within 2 weeks of this team forming, they have reduced waiting lists by 50%.

This new approach has also proven very successful in terms of establishing meaningful links with hostel staff, and has vastly improved working relationships. As a result, Theresa is intending to establish and develop these clinics in the smaller hostels going forward.

She also held an open day for all our Housing Executive Hostels, Voluntary Hostels, and Floating Support Providers to not only meet each other, but to meet the staff within this unit. During this open day meeting, all staff and providers were provided with information regarding our homeless duties and referral process. This was a very successful day and all attendees stressed the importance of the work that Theresa and Greta were doing; instead of talking to 16 Housing Advisors, they now talk to a small dedicated temporary accommodation team who have up to date information regarding current vacancies.

As Team leaders, we recently attended a 'Western Accommodation Forum' with the Western Health Board and this new approach developed by Theresa was mentioned as a very positive development in terms of how the Care teams (LACT, 16plus) access temporary accommodation.

The Temporary Accommodation Team set up and managed daily by Theresa has streamlined the assessment process by delivering a more personal service to our providers and greater efficiency to our customers through a better use of resources.

Excellence in health and wellbeing

This award will focus on excellence in the areas of fit for purpose housing, adaptations and services.

Assisted living technology

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

The Housing Executive has undertaken an innovative pilot project to install a range of assistive smart technology equipment into a number of its tenant's homes in the North West area, to support tenants with disabilities or mobility issues.



This project has been delivered in partnership with the Western Health and Social Care Trust & Hive Studios - a Digital Community Social Enterprise, based within a Housing Executive community.

The core focus of this initiative was to determine how the use of technology can help tenants live more independently, improve their quality of life in their homes, and enhance their health and well being.

An extensive consultation took place between the Occupational Health Team and Housing Executive Complex Needs Officers and NIHE tenants, to identify suitable technologies and how these could ultimately improve their health and well-being.

This pioneering project has resulted in tailored devices being installed to suit the particular needs of the tenants and their immediate families.

A sample group of 18 tenants with disabilities were identified (existing home broadband was a prerequisite) across a range of ages groups and disabilities. These include:

- 7 y/o, spina bifida sufferer, wheelchair bound
- 6 y/o, with pacemaker and spinal brace
- 30 y/o wheelchair bound quadriplegic
- 36 y/o visually impaired
- 60 y/o bedbound, lives alone
- 68 y/o arthritis in spine, partially bedbound

This pilot has provided an opportunity to deploy some of the newer technologies for the benefit of tenants with disabilities with a view to:

- Sustaining tenancies
- Addressing mobility challenges
- Home security & social isolation
- Improved quality of life
- Promoting social interaction (through voice messaging etc.)
- Providing an opportunity to share insights gained with other parties (health visitors, Occupational Therapists etc.)

Quote from project participant Mark Gamble:

"When I first heard about this project from the Housing Executive I couldn't wait to get involved. When you have mobility issues - the ability to simply ask Alexa to do a range of tasks for you like turning the heating off and on, seeing who's at your front door and being able to let them in, turning your lights off and on - even simple stuff like reminding you at the right time to take your medication - is a godsend. And the ability to add remote monitoring and call my buddy features etc. in the case of an emergency is a major life-line for some people, living on their own. Even in terms of reducing isolation - there's so many opportunities for stuff like that now. In terms of increasing my independence - this project has been invaluable".

Quote from Karen Telford, Head Occupational Health Nurse, Western Health and Social Care Team:

"The 'Assisted Living Pilot' is an exciting opportunity to explore how service users could realise their potential through the latest innovative technology to control their home environment thereby maximising their full participation in day to day activities.

A full collaborative approach was adopted, involving staff from Housing Executive, Occupational Therapy, Hive Studio and input from the tenants. This was essential to ensure that the right technology was matched to the right environment and most importantly to the needs and preferences of the individual.

Previously unreachable tasks such as turning on/off the lights, changing TV channels, controlling heating, answering the door are now controlled with simple commands. Thanks to the provision of this technology, creating a truly accessible home has become a reality".

Kevin Hipsley from Hive Studios added:

"Tenants are finding out for themselves new ways to use the technology and, in the process, greatly improving their living and life conditions".

Outcomes and achievements

The project has had some very positive impacts on the tenants who have partaken. Given the wide range of health conditions and disabilities we were keen to ensure that the equipment was tailored to make a difference. The Housing Executive, Hive Studios and the Occupational Health have been working closely with all participants in the installation, training and support of the equipment. As part of the project they undertook a mid-term evaluation, this found that;

- 75% of those participating reported significant improvements in their well-being
- 50% report that they now feel more independent and more able to manage their environment
- 75% report feelings of reduced isolation
- 50% report being more connected to the outside world and their immediate family
- 75% report increased feelings of personal safety and security
- 50% report that their day-to-day mechanics of their home live has been improved
- 50% report that they have a growing acceptance and understanding of the technology

Health and homelessness

Ark Housing

Statement of support

Back in 2008, Ark Housing's Homeless Services recognised that the families it works with, in its homeless schemes, often suffer with health conditions that are related to areas which contributed to them being homeless: these included relationship breakdown, poverty and lack of essential needs such as housing, jobs, money, social support and mental health.



Ark took the decision to look at organisations that it could work in partnership with, after consulting with service users, many of whom expressed an interest in learning wellbeing techniques and cited stress and poor sleep as key areas of concern.

Based on this client feedback, Ark contacted the 'Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association' and advised of its concerns about the connection

Outcomes and achievements

The aim was to raise awareness of healthy living for all its service users and, by working in partnership with the 'Chest Heart and Stroke Association', they have been successful in achieving this outcomes.

Feedback from Service Users below outlines the benefits to them:

"The pampering sessions have assisted me to relax and the information on sleep has made a real difference to me and my ability to cope with the stress of being homeless"

between health and homelessness. This course of action resulted in a long running partnership that has been growing and developing in its schemes for 10 years.

In partnership with Chest Heart and Stroke the following programmes have already been delivered to service users:

- Health Checks
- 'Choose Healthy Stuff' Talks
- Stop Smoking sessions
- Healthy Eating and 'Cook It' events
- De-stress and pampering sessions
- Staff information sessions

These programs have contributed to the positive health and well-being of Ark's service users, by helping to engage them in healthier life choices; for example, they have signposted service users to their GP practice for follow-up appointments on high-cholesterol blood pressure, to pharmacists for support in stopping smoking, and to other agencies who specialise in areas of mental health.

In addition, Ark's service users and staff have also assisted 'Chest, Heart and Stroke' to develop three recipe books to suit different skills, needs, and budgets:

- Cook Healthy Stuff - for those wanting to cook healthily for a healthy lifestyle
- Store Cupboard Recipes - for those who want to cook healthily on a budget
- Mediterranean Diet - for those who want to create heart healthy meals
- Feed your family the healthy way - recipes designed to help you eat more fruit and veg

"The 'cook-it' program gave me great handy tips for cooking healthy delicious meals for my family on a budget".

"I stopped smoking 5 weeks ago after listening to Sarah on 'stop smoking day' and I am starting to feel so much healthier and saving a fortune"

"After a health check at Roseville I was advised to visit my GP and was diagnosed with diabetes. As a result, I am now on the correct medication and attending a dietitian; if I had not got this checked, I would have got progressively worse and been on injections instead of tablets"

Remote telemonitoring service for oncology dietetics services

Radius Housing

Statement of support

In early 2016 the 'Belfast Health and Social Care Trust' began to use telemonitoring service - in conjunction with dietetic management - to support patients with cancers of the head, neck and upper gastrointestinal cancers. During this time, the Trust recognised strong clinical evidence to show that remote telehealth monitoring is a highly effective intervention, in terms of supporting improved patient outcomes within this group of oncology patients.



Malnutrition is a common problem in patients with these cancers and is recognised as a contributory factor to outcomes such as increased side effects to treatment, morbidity, mortality and quality of life.

A summary of key drivers for success in initiative are as follows:

- Optimise patient's nutrition with 'real time' reporting- a key component in cancer care
- Maximise clinical time to re-align resources to relieve system pressure points
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery
- Promotion of patient centred self-care whilst harnessing technology
- Improved patient outcomes

The tele-health service is provided by Radius Housing (previously FOLD as part of TF3). This service sees Radius provide remote telemonitoring equipment (home health hub and weighing scales), delivery to patient's home, training delivered to the patient on use of equipment, and collection of equipment from patient's home at end of use (included recalibration, decontamination etc of equipment for next use). It also provides a web-based platform for Trust clinicians to remotely review and triage data.

In the six weeks after radiotherapy, for patients with head and neck cancer, or post operatively, for upper gastrointestinal cancer patients, Radius monitors progress with Telemonitoring: patients weighed themselves at home once a week on the weighing scales provided, with the readings then transmitted, via Bluetooth, to the 'my medic' home telemonitoring unit. Dieticians can review their readings at any time, accessing them remotely, to identify trends and any causes for concern. This service means that the progress of the patient can be carefully managed and monitored, providing a vital aid to the recovery process and supporting clinical staff.

Outcomes and achievements

Cheryl Mackin, Oncology Liaison Dietitian for NI Cancer Centre, Belfast City Hospital says:

"Telemonitoring enables us to continue to provide the service as we always have, but ultimately reducing the need for domiciliary reviews, significantly reducing both travel, time and cost. Patients' travelling is also reduced, and we are able to identify any deterioration at an early stage".

Patients said:

"It helped when I saw the weight increasing and it gave me a great confidence boost!"

"You had to eat as you couldn't get away with it; it was a case of eat or be crucified!!"

St Joseph's and Radharc na Cille square circles

Clúid Housing Association

Statement of support

In April 2018 St Joseph's Court & Radharc Na Cille residents were made aware of a charity called 'Bravery Blankets', where volunteers are asked to knit/crochet blankets for children/teenagers who are receiving chemotherapy treatment in Crumlin Childrens' Hospital.



A chemo day is a long day; first of all, the patient is assessed by a doctor to confirm that he/she is able to undergo the treatment. Fluids and anti-sickness medicine is then administered, followed by the chemotherapy treatment itself.

Throughout this process, the patient becomes cold from sitting or lying in the same place all day. Children also lie in hospital beds fasting for long hours waiting

Outcomes and achievements

To date, 42 beautiful blankets have been delivered to Crumlin Childrens' Hospital. The group continues to knit and crochet and now meets every Thursday to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

There is a great sense of camaraderie amongst the residents, as well as amongst their colleagues from the wider community. It is wonderful to see an inter-generational setting, where older, more experienced hands share their craft with younger people with such vigour and energy.

Residents who had not previously engaged in projects embraced this one and they benefit from the sense of wellbeing that comes from giving freely. Some of the

for theatre, while hospital bedding is functional, at best - there is no softness and no comfort for a little body recovering from receiving aggressive life saving treatment.

St Joseph's Court & Radharc Na Cille residents really embraced this charity and rose to the challenge. Tenants who had not knitted or crocheted for years suddenly took up needles and began to knit, and enlisted the help of other knitters in the area.

From this, a Crumlin Circle group developed; they knit and crochet during the week and meet every Thursday morning. There is an excitement about the project, which has developed into a learning circle where ladies share stitches and ideas for blankets. Needle-workers have joined the group to join the squares; even people who are not able to come in every Thursday knit or crochet at home and send their work in.

To date 42 beautiful blankets have been delivered to Crumlin Childrens' Hospital and these provide a source of comfort to families and their children who are fighting for life on a daily basis. The blankets are sent with love and compassion from older retired individuals to teenagers and children who are striving for health and wellbeing in their lives.

The project is a huge success, bringing two Age-Friendly Schemes together through a joint project, despite the geographic distance between them. It is a generous, healthy, social activity, initiated by senior residents, who all give of their time, skills and materials freely.

St Joseph's Court & Radharc na Cille residents benefit from this social inclusion activity in their communal area. They have new energy and increased wellbeing. They are linking with the wider community, young and old, who are welcomed into the circle to share ideas. And most importantly the young patients and their families benefit from these beautiful products which bring comfort and warmth in difficult times.

crafters from the wider community had experienced a sense of isolation and desolation and are now warmly welcomed into the knitting circle. They have changed visibly over the period of the project; they have more energy and engage with the group more freely. Their confidence has grown, they are accepted and welcome.

The recipients of the blankets have also benefited from these generous gifts. They bring them comfort and warmth in difficult times. The St Joseph's Square Circle group are in contact with Crumlin Children's Hospital and will continue to produce blankets for the young patients.

Street soccer NI Women's football project

East Belfast Mission

Statement of support

Street Soccer's women's project is an innovative project which uses football and support to contribute to the positive health and wellbeing of women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



By improving the health and well-being of players - and by supporting them to tackle the issues they face - the project aims to help people break out of homelessness and have a better life.

This project was developed to tackle the lack of participation from women in Street Soccer's other projects, thereby enabling women to enjoy the benefits in terms of better health and wellbeing.

This project involved the development of a new model, building on best practice from NI and other countries, which has successfully engaged women in the project; this is a significant achievement, given the difficulties of engaging people who are homeless -and in particular women, who often face additional barriers.

The project began in 2017 and is now a well-established and recurring project. It has involved weekly football activities, participation in local tournaments, and NI teams participating in 2 Homeless World Cups: Oslo 2017 and Mexico City 2018.

The World Cup projects involve intensive coaching and support for 4 months, a 10-day international tournament, and follow-up support for several months on return this is an exceptional, life-changing opportunity for the players, many of whom have never travelled abroad.

Due to the circumstances of their lives, participants usually have very unhealthy and inactive lifestyles. As a result, participation in football - and simply being part of a team - provides many benefits in terms of health and wellbeing: improved physical health, improved mental health, confidence and self-esteem, social networks, structure, motivation, hope and a lot more besides.

Alongside the football, the project provides one-to-one support to help players identify the health and wellbeing issues they face, and to then make a plan to tackle these issues. Achieving this involves motivating participants to make changes, providing advice and guidance, and working in partnership with services in health and social care to meet the needs of the participants.

Workshops related to health and wellbeing are also provided to the team, to help them to make positive changes in their lives. These workshops are provided by partners in health and social care, and cover areas such as mental health, nutrition, fitness, addictions, etc.

The project has been monitored and evaluated on several occasions (see below F for more details). This monitoring has included surveys, focus groups, and in-depth case studies.

For example: Oslo World Cup 2017 involved a team of 7 women who were homeless. 5 got a home of their own, 100% reported improvements in physical and mental health, 2 acquired employment, 6 acquired qualifications (coaching, health and social care, life guard, etc), 4 became volunteers, 5 remain active in sport. These are exceptional outcomes given the challenges the players face.

Oslo team Captain, Claire Masterson, said; "The atmosphere in Oslo was incredible! I made so many friendships, and simply being part of the team was like having a second family around me. I've struggled with mental health issues and the experience really helped me to have a positive outlook on life. Also, meeting people from other countries who have it much harder than I do makes me realise just how lucky I am. One year on, I now have my own home, I'm playing football regularly, I'm a coach helping others, and I've just been to the Mexico Homeless World Cup as a volunteer coach".

Michael Boyd, Director of Football at the IFA said:

"I have worked in sport for over a decade and this is one of the best projects I have seen. To see the changes in the players lives is truly inspiring. I am so proud to have been able to support the great work of Street Soccer".

Gerry Armstrong, Street Soccer NI ambassador, said:

"I am so pleased to be an ambassador for Street Soccer NI. What a great cause to be involved with and a wonderful opportunity to help people representing our country achieve their goals to compete in a World Cup competition, this can give them the confidence, belief and a chance to get jobs, and homes, and to improve their situation in life".

Outcomes and achievements

(1) development of an innovative new model which has successfully engaged women from a very excluded background in sport, and provided them with the associated health and wellbeing supports and benefits. This process involved identifying the barriers faced by women through speaking to potential players, stakeholders, and researching international best practice. The project then developed a model which tackled these barriers; women coaches, women only spaces, equipment provided free, transport and child care issues tackled, developed partnerships with specialist agencies etc. As a result, 10-20 women are participating each week in football while 14 women have participated in the Homeless World Cups in Oslo and Mexico.

(2) through the above method, the project has successfully engaged the participants in one-to-one support and in workshops related to health and well being. Approximately 40 women have engaged in

this support since the project's inception, and 14 have undergone intensive support which was regular and lasted over 4 months. Given the nature of the target groups, simply engaging people in support is a significant outcome.

(3) of the 14 who have undertaken intensive support; 100% have seen an improvement in health and well being, 10 have acquired a home, 4 acquired employment, 10 acquired qualifications, 8 have become volunteers, 12 are engaged in sport.

(4) case study: Ashleigh was homeless for 4 years, was inactive, isolated, and suffered from mental health issues. She now has a home, has qualifications in coaching/health and social care, has acquired employment, is a volunteer with Street Soccer, has carried out a sky-dive and abseil for charity, has a strong network, and is overall happy and healthier.

Excellence in housing innovation

sponsored by **Co%ownership**

This award is aimed at programmes or projects which can clearly demonstrate how they have developed an innovative approach which has made a real difference to the lives of tenants and customers.

Dementia Friendly Peninsula

Radius Housing

Statement of support

Dementia Friendly Peninsula started in September 2017 after it was identified that limited services were available for people living with dementia, in the surrounding and remote communities along the Ards Peninsula, while there was also a limited understanding of dementia and how it can isolate people.



The Project, the only dementia initiative available in the Ards Peninsula introduced:

- (1) weekly dementia friendly cafes for people living with dementia and their carers
- (2) a monthly newsletter which is circulated and made available free of charge to the community (This is being used as a model template for communication for people living with dementia in Northern Ireland).

'Dementia Friendly Peninsula' has delivered training to staff in Radius Housing schemes, as well as to carers groups, local businesses, National Trust staff, and local council staff in the North Down and Ards district.

The project has worked in partnership with 'Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership', to develop

working partnerships to develop as many dementia-friendly services - and have these publically available to people with dementia and their carers, to encourage and support people to live in their communities longer.

The project started issuing its monthly newsletter specifically for people with dementia. The content has been led by what supporters want to read about, and they especially love the calendar of events showing what's available to people living with dementia and their carers.

The project works closely with local residential care providers, younger peoples' charities, local schools, National Trust and businesses in the communities along the Peninsula.

The dementia-friendly cafes are held weekly in Kircubbin Community Centre, and at least once a month in Barr Hall Residential Home in Portaferry: both venues are easily accessible and discreet for our members. The organisers provide transport for members who need transfers to and from their homes, while at the café, all members get to enjoy a warm and relaxing atmosphere alongside unlimited tea, coffee, and treats. Followed by light exercise and interactive activities.

The project hosts events on key dates such as Halloween, Christmas, and Easter to enable our members and their carers enjoy celebrations that they may ordinarily not get the opportunity to do so because of the limited resources and initiatives within the remote areas where isolation is more prominent for people living with dementia.

Testimonials:

"I love coming to the coffee pot mornings every Monday. I cannot think of a better way to start my weeks by being with people I feel comfortable with and not stupid all the time."

"I was delighted to hear about the cafes starting for people with dementia and their families as I was struggling to find somewhere for my sister to go to where she wouldn't feel out of place and me feeling the need to explain why she would be repetitive. It has been a lifeline for her, and we have noticed how her mood has improved, and how she looks forward to the weekends being over to meet up with everyone again on a Monday."

Outcomes and achievements

The outcomes of the project in October 2017 were:

- To create and publish a monthly dementia friendly newsletter
- Introduce & develop a dementia friendly café weekly
- A carer support group monthly
- Facebook and Twitter accounts to get our message and information out to people who prefer social media
- Go out into the local community and provide dementia awareness to local businesses and organisations

- Introduce dementia friendly trips to local landmarks; dementia information events.

The impact on the peninsula community has helped to raise awareness of dementia and help people understand how people living with dementia need to be treated with dignity, respect, patience and understanding.

Dementia friendly project – South Down pilot

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

The aim of the pilot was to make a difference for people with dementia, enabling them to feel supported in their local community, encouraging independence, choice and control over their lives and helping them to sustain their tenancies.



The South Down team (covering 5500 NIHE properties) are trying something new and delivering positive outcomes for their customers. In a short period of time the team have:

- Been trained to become 'Dementia Friends to support tenants with Dementia';

- Raised awareness about dementia in the area;
- Set up a new referral process between the team and the Trust's Dementia Navigators in order to identify tenants living with dementia; and
- Provided tenants with personalised support and innovative dementia friendly packs to support them to remain living independently in their Housing Executive home. The pack includes a dementia friendly calendar clock, internal signage, front and back door key fobs, a white board and information at both a national and local level. The pack is being offered free of charge to Housing Executive tenants.

The team have also worked alongside the response maintenance contractor in order to introduce dementia friendly design under the current minor adaptations list. As a result, a number of dementia friendly adaptations are now available as part of the pilot programme, such as, a blue toilet seat and a blue grab rail.

The aim now is to roll the pilot out to the other NIHE Areas, covering almost 90,000 properties.

Feedback from partners:

'The provision of 'Packs' particularly the Day Clock and the key rings have been a great success with tenants and families. It would be great to see this Project available in other areas' (Stephanie McGrory, Dementia Navigator, Memory Service, Newry)

Feedback from users:

During the visit Housing Executive staff identified refurbishments that were required in my mother and father's home. For many years my mother refused to report these concerns. Now Housing Executive are involved, and plans are being drawn up to follow up. Great service.

Outcomes and achievements

In Newry Mourne and Down Council and the Health Trust, the South Down Dementia Pilot has resulted in a joined-up approach, which brings services together with the aim of enhancing the quality of life for people living with dementia.

Following the training, 95% of attendees reported that their knowledge of dementia improved and 87% reported that their confidence and skills to communicate with and support someone with dementia have also improved.

Referrals have led to personalised visits where Dementia Friendly packs have been given to tenants and 1/3 of visits have led to dementia friendly adaptations.

"As Age Friendly Co-ordinator, this initiative is excellent best practice for other organisations to follow. From your pilot, I have submitted a paper to full Council proposing all council buildings, front line staff and officers become both dementia friendly which will also include champions"- Lorraine O'Reilly.

"As chairperson of the locality dementia steering group I have used the pilot scheme as a model of good practice for others to use. It is anticipated that a pilot scheme will happen in the N&M locality in the new financial year' (Deirdre Magill, Community Development worker SHSCT N&M locality & Chairperson Dementia Steering Group N&M).

Retrofit energy improvement scheme, Newry

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

The delivery of this research project, from its early inception through to completion, has been an enlightening journey of perseverance and learning for the Housing Executive and its partners.



From the outset, the objectives were to provide an exemplar of social housing retrofit that would demonstrate the NIHE's commitment to reducing fuel poverty, establishing itself as a leader in innovation and sustainable construction, and informing its approach to improving energy efficiency in the future.

The project was developed through collaboration between NIHE, Building Research Establishment, Bryson Energy, MosArt Architects and BlueBuild Developments. The scheme centres round a row of five terraced houses in Newry, four of which are owned

by the NIHE and one which is privately owned. It was funded mainly from the NIHE capital budget, with Bryson Energy contributing to the privately-owned dwelling.

The houses are situated on an exposed site at the edge of the Barcroft Estate and were described, by the occupants, as being difficult and costly to heat - putting them under enormous financial stress. This posed the question: how do we retrofit social housing to achieve the best value for money and substantially improve the comfort of the occupants to reduce the risk of fuel poverty?

The decision was taken to use an innovative approach in addressing this problem, by designing each house to a different level of energy performance and comparing these, in terms of cost and benefit.

This approach included a 'fabric first' approach, where we looked at the performance of the materials used and the detailing of how they were put together at critical points such as openings and floor/wall junctions: for example, installers used varying thicknesses of external wall insulation, and used double and triple glazing to achieve increasing levels of air-tightness.

A number of innovative 'fabric first' products were also installed to improve the thermal efficiency of the houses, including insulated external window sills, insulated structural supports to allow windows and doors to sit within the external insulation layer and insulated aluminium plinths below DPC level.

To complement the performance of the fabric, NIHE integrated the 'technology' approach that involved the installation of renewable energy (PV panels and solar hot water panels), as well as innovative whole-house ventilation systems that require less space for ducting and prove more practical for installation and operation in our typical house types.

Further technology-led innovation included a smart meter that was installed in each of the NIHE houses; this replaces the standard heating time-clock and

learns the occupant's routine over a period of a few weeks. The unit also controls the central heating and hot water and records temperature and humidity.

All of the collected data can be viewed via an on-line dashboard that rates the houses based on various criteria: this then alerts the landlord as to whether the houses are likely to suffer from mould, if the occupants are at risk of fuel poverty, or if the houses are likely to overheat.

Through utilising these innovative methods of retrofit we have significantly improved the comfort levels of the occupants. This is reinforced not only by the

positive feedback received from the, but can also be seen on the smart-meter dashboard that shows how temperature within the houses have rarely dipped below 20° since installation.

Project testimonial:

Ewan Melvin, Director, BlueBuild Developments

"The project has shown how the NIHE is committed to making an improvement in their housing stock and tenants by investing in new technologies. The benefits of the project are dramatic for the tenants involved. They will all have a cut in their energy costs and an increase in their comfort and well-being levels."

Outcomes and achievements

The outcomes will be monitored in terms of cost, customer satisfaction, and energy consumption, with temperature and humidity already being captured over Winter 2018/19. This will be independently analysed by BRE, and the findings published and disseminated to stakeholders.

Evidence to date shows that these houses have a much-improved ability to maintain heat, with temperatures remaining consistently above 19/20°, having previously averaged around 16.9°. Occupant comfort levels have greatly improved, with all tenants commenting on the warmth of the houses.

Relative humidity remains within the safe parameters of 40-60%, resulting in a lower risk of mould and condensation.

SAP scores have increased from SAP F to SAP B/C and air permeability has decreased from 17 m³/hr/m² to an average of 6.75 m³/hr/m², with the lowest recorded value being 2.66 m³/hr/m².

The local area is uplifted through the aesthetic transformation of the houses. The project has instilled a sense of pride in the occupants, made evident by their own efforts in decorating and maintaining their newly refurbished homes.

Excellence in the private rented sector

sponsored by



This award recognises organisations or individuals who provide a quality service within the private rented sector.

Smartmove housing project

Smartmove Housing

Statement of support

Government has seen the PRS as an ideal solution due to the growth in the PRS market, decreasing availability of social housing and a static housing waiting list at around 40,000. With issues of affordability, competition and Welfare Reform, there is an overt acknowledgement that many people who are homeless need help to access and sustain a tenancy in the current housing market.



This Project works by focusing on helping low-income individuals, and families' with low prospect of securing social accommodation, access good quality, affordable and sustainable housing within the private rented sector.

The aim of Smartmove, in the context of this project, is to make accessing the private rented sector affordable to all, by removing common obstacles such as the

need for excessive deposits or high levels of rent in advance. This goal is achieved by administering a bond guarantee scheme for each tenancy for a 12-month period; through this scheme, the deposit is guaranteed with the landlord, while the tenant agrees to make small, 0% interest repayments over the course of the 12-month period.

This service isn't just limited to Smartmove's own housing stock, with the guaranteed bond offered to any registered estate agent and landlord across Northern Ireland, giving the clients a wider base of choice.

Smartmove's specialised staff offer free, independent housing advice - including carrying out in-depth affordability and benefit entitlement checks before any tenancy begins - ensuring that all tenancies are sustainable. This one-to-one guidance for Smartmove's clients ensures that any transition to the recently introduced 'Universal Credit' is as stress-free as possible.

No Tenant of the project faces having to pay a month's rent in advance, or having to fear that their Universal Credit is still under review while the second month's payment is due: the reason for this is that Smartmove understands the system and the timescale a tenant faces - which is why they only ever ask their tenant to pay the projected shortfall upfront, with the understanding that the housing element will be backdated once the benefit claim is successfully up and running.

Respondents to the evaluation of Smartmove, referring agencies, landlords, and tenants, all recognise the value of targeted tenancy assistance and on-going support both to landlord and tenant:

'Everything was perfect!' - tenant, (L)Derry

'It's a quality service' - Referring Agency, Statutory

'Always on hand when needed' - Landlord, Belfast

Outcomes and achievements

Smartmove provides a responsive, professional access scheme for the PRS which is valued by all stakeholders. The organisation fills a very particular niche for those prospective tenants who are vulnerable, due to financial or personal difficulties in other words, those who would find it particularly hard to navigate the complexities and requirements of accessing what is an increasingly competitive market.

There are currently over 450 active Smartmove tenancies', 70% of which are in receipt of housing benefit/Universal Credit.

Tenant evaluation of these services found that:

- Approximately 90% of service users were pleased with the service provided
- Service Users found staff to be informative and helpful

- The capacity to facilitate with deposits, locate properties and help complete required paperwork and deal with landlords were highlighted as benefits

Landlord evaluation of our services found that:

- Almost 80% of landlords rated the service as good or better
- A broad range of benefits were highlighted by landlords as follows: collecting rent, arranging for repairs to be carried out, advertising property, dealing with paperwork such as references
- 86% of landlords felt there was no disadvantages of using the service
- 89% of landlords said they would use the service again

TDS Northern Ireland

Statement of support

TDS Northern Ireland is dedicated to improving the private rented sector and has contributed by providing an award-winning service in protecting tenancy deposits. The legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2013 and TDS Northern Ireland has been at the forefront in promoting tenancy deposit protection for tenants. As the only scheme based in Northern Ireland providing support the Belfast team has achieved over 81% market share (DFC Sept 2018 fig) and is seen as the go to scheme for tenants, landlords and agents.



TDS Northern Ireland works closely with industry partners including 'Property mark', RICS, Housing Rights, University bodies, Office of Fair Trading, CIH NI and landlords' associations to promote good practise and provide education to individual landlords on their legal obligations to protect tenants and their deposits. To do this, they run education roadshows providing

advice and guidance to tenants, agents and landlords; this is key to improving standards within the industry and making transactions among tenants and landlords more transparent and open.

To date, TDS have received positive responses from tenants who are pleased with the introduction of deposit protection scheme and availability of free mechanism in recovery of deposit funds.

Tenant testimonial:

- 'Thank you for your assistance in recovering my deposit'.
- 'I write on behalf of the tenants in the above dispute, with regard to the recent adjudication. Notwithstanding the below, we wish to thank the TDS NI for their cooperation'

TDS Northern Ireland has a strong focus on education and promoting good practice within the private rented sector, to help raise standards and provide a professional service among landlords and tenants.

This proactive approach has included delivering individual training, training in conjunction with organisations within private rented sector, and attendance at over 80 events within the industry aimed at promoting good practise and delivery of education to the sector.

Experiences to date have shown that providing transparency and correct documentation reduces the need for tenants and landlords to enter dispute. TDS Northern Ireland dispute level has reduced from highest level 1.14% in 2016 to 0.86% in 2018 (DC 2018). This shows that parties who engage with tenants generally find a resolution and common agreement. This decline is also in numbers and not percentage which is encouraging and welcome as deposit protection figures increase.

TDS Northern Ireland continuously strives to improve the private rented sector, and has contributed to work with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and University of Ulster in delivering a comprehensive tenant survey on tenants' experiences of the private rented sector.

www.nihe.gov.uk/tenant_deposit_scheme_survey.pdf

TDS are committed to engaging with tenants and landlords, providing valuable educational resources which are shared through online resources: they are the only scheme to publish a comprehensive book on tenancy deposit protection 'A Guide to the Tenancy Deposit Scheme Regulation'

www.tdsnorthernireland.com/public/support/1tds0097-tds-ni-booklet-v04.pdf

The TDS website provides extensive educational material for tenants, landlords and agents to help

deliver a comprehensive tenancy and smooth transition of deposit refund at end of tenancy. Documents include online processes, tips and hints at end of tenancy, dispute processes and guidance on how to deal with a dispute.

www.tdsnorthernireland.com/tools-and-guides/

Finally, TDS actively engages with its audience via social media platforms, providing further guidance and advise on issues within private rented sector and publish monthly newsletter and blogs.

- www.tdsnorthernireland.com/news/blog/
- <https://twitter.com/TDSNI>
- <https://plus.google.com/u/0/+Tdsnorthernireland>
- www.facebook.com/TdsNorthernIreland
- www.linkedin.com/company/tds-northern-ireland/

Outcomes and achievements

Since the introduction of tenancy deposit protection scheme in Northern Ireland in April 2013, TDS Northern Ireland has embarked on a process of providing training and education with a view to raising standards within the private rented sector.

The efforts of the organisation to date have delivered a more professional service to tenants, offering greater transparency and reassurance for tenants. TDSNI

has been successful in delivering these changes and promoting tenancy deposit protection and their achievements have been recognised regionally (CIH NI awards) and nationally as leading deposit protection scheme in UK. (ESTA awards)

Housing team of the year

sponsored by  Ulster Bank

This award is for teams that had made an outstanding contribution to their organisation and the delivery of its objectives.

'Future is US' team

Radius Housing

Statement of support

The foundation of Radius, which followed the merger of Fold and Helm, created Ireland's largest housing association - and third largest social enterprise - and was one of the biggest ever mergers to take place in the social housing and sheltered care sectors. A critical part of this work was ensuring full integration of the two organisations.



Radius Housing's Corporate Services Team designed and delivered the 'Future is Us' programme, which delivered cultural and organisational integration; this enhanced service excellence, staff commitment and performance, while also ensuring that tenants continued to receive best-in-class customer service.

The 'Future is Us' was an ambitious 12-month programme which delivered full integration between the two newly-merged organisations. The programme included:

- A leadership development programme which supported 15 board members, a 7-strong senior management team, and over 50 managers in delivering integration and cultural changes across the business. The conclusion of this programme was the first ever Radius Leadership Conference which attracted high-profile national and international speakers from a range of social housing, business, and other third-sector organisations

- The modernisation of terms and conditions for over 1000 employees, including new contracts of employment and the design and delivery of creative and innovative workplace toolkits for all employees and managers. This allowed the new organisation to align over 50 HR policies & associated protocols, as well as deliver competitive remuneration packages to the entire team
- New and innovative employee engagement initiatives including staff conferences, the creation of staff awards called the 'Putting People First Awards of Excellence', and the introduction of a well-being events such as pilates, jive classes and fundraising lunches in aid of our corporate charity partner. The rebranding of internal communications including introduction of a bespoke Employee mobile phone App, called <Insert name>, weekly 'In the Loop' updates, bi-monthly core brief meetings, as well as a review of monthly management meetings.

The team delivering these initiatives was itself newly-created and worked, through strong leadership, to deliver the cultural alignment of the workforce to overcome legacy barriers; these included employees of the newly formed organisation who were on differing contractual and non-contractual benefits.

Following a review and benchmarking of salaries, benefits and job descriptions, consultation road shows were held with the trade union, as well as colleagues, from across the province. As part of this initiative, each of the organisation's 1000 employees received personalised correspondence, comparing their existing and proposed new contractual terms, to ensure that all available information was presented in a user-friendly fashion.

Given the number of variations of Ts & Cs, and the sheer labour size, this was a considerable achievement and was completed in a matter of months. Through effective communication, both written and oral, nearly 80% (79% in total) of colleagues voluntarily switched to modernised terms. The attached testimonials from employees demonstrate the professionalism which the team brought to this project.

The team's success was achieved through the fostering of a "one team" ethos. Each team member contributed to project deliverables, whilst ensuring normal service delivery was maintained in a professional and timely fashion.

Shared goals and a clear passion for their work enabled the team to integrate organisational culture so that the overall vision could be delivered. Alongside delivering the 'Future is Us' programme the same team also delivered 177 recruitment exercises which represented a 6% increase on the previous year. They also exceeded their exemplary standards on core

KPIs: this was demonstrated through a reduction - on the previous year - in the percentage of working time lost, due to sickness, to 3.21% against a target of 3.5%, whilst at the same time maintaining mandatory training compliance rates above 96%.

Outcomes and achievements

An impressive 79% of employees voluntarily moved to modernized terms which is a strong indicator of project success. The success of this approach is recognised through testimonials from members of the Radius team. Radius relies very much on its people to deliver its services to the highest standards and with this in mind, it recognised just how much a motivated workforce could positively impact productivity levels, and service delivery. Thus, this issue was addressed through the alignment of contractual terms and conditions, as well as through employee surveys. Finally, Radius also provides a market tested remuneration package which is competitive and will assist in both the retaining of existing internal talent, as well as the recruitment of new staff members.

A further indication of the success of this initiative is the introduction of Rapid Action Teams. The outstanding levels of cross-departmental relationships resulted in the creation of these groups, where small groups of managers are tasked with tackling cross cutting business issues, such as the introduction of a customer contact centre.

Testimonial from a Radius team member:

"It was very straightforward, smooth and material received was clear and easy to understand. From one email to HR to request paperwork, everything else just fell into place. For me personally the T's & C's of employment were a massive improvement and greatly appreciated."

Housing agency acquisition under Acorn Housing

Oaklee Housing

Statement of support

2017/2018 was an exciting time for Oaklee Housing. Acorn Housing is the first 'Special Purpose Vehicle' created by an Approved Housing Body (AHB), using a project financing structure. A subsidiary of Oaklee, Acorn Housing provides Oaklee with access to committed, limited recourse, long-term fixed rate debt, secured from a private funder.

IMAGE REQUIRED

Project Acorn has a number of elements which involve an innovative finance structure to fund acquisitions under the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.

The Housing Agency received funding to acquire suitable properties for social housing directly from financial institutions and investors, known as the Vacant Housing Purchase Initiative (VHPI). The investment of €70 million has created a rotating fund which is intended to allow the Agency to acquire 1,600 vacant properties over four years, from 2016 - 2020. The Housing Agency selects AHBs to refurbish vacant homes, and to make these available in order to help address the homeless crisis; once the properties have been refurbished and let, they are then acquired by the AHB.

Oaklee's financial advisors, Centrus, ran a competition involving 20+ financial institutions. In December 2017, they reached financial close on a €50M debt facility, with German-based Norddeutsche Landesbank (NORD/LB). The debt facility is based on a project financing structure through Acorn Housing, a wholly owned subsidiary and charity - or Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) - of Oaklee. Oaklee is the first AHB to establish a financing structure of this type, and to secure an attractive fixed rate of borrowing over the term of the loan.

The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) loan structure provides Oaklee with access to committed, non-recourse, long-term fixed rate debt from a private funder utilising the existing Capital Advance Leasing Facility ("CALF") and Payment and Availability ("P&A") funding support structures available to AHBs from

the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government through local authorities.

Through Project Acorn, Oaklee plans to acquire

up to 8 tranches of VHPI properties over a 2-year period, delivering 250 homes for households who are homeless or who are on the social housing waiting list.

Outcomes and achievements

In Dec 2017 Oaklee reached financial close on a €50M debt facility with German-based Norddeutsche Landesbank. Through Project Acorn they plan to acquire up to 8 tranches of VHPI properties over a 2-year period, delivering 250 homes. To date, they have been Awarded 6 portfolios - 202 properties in total - under the Vacant Housing Purchase Initiative (VHPI).

Units come to Oaklee under a 'caretaker agreement', so that works can be completed and units tenanted quickly. Acorn acquires units in Tranches, with the first tranche of 33 properties closed in March '18, with the second following swiftly in July.

As at the end of November 2018, Oaklee was selected, by the Housing Agency, to deliver 202 properties; at the time of writing, work has already been completed on 120 of these and more than 100 have been tenanted by persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Oaklee are proud of the delivery achieved through Project Acorn to date. They will continue to work in partnership with the Housing Agency and their funders, with the goal of housing up to 200 more families by the end of 2019.

Property services team

Ark Housing

Statement of support

The Property Services Team is a small, progressive, and dynamic team with three members of staff: Director of Property Services, Maintenance & Property Services Officer, and Development Officer. The team is focused on achieving its desired strategic outcomes to deliver 'Better Homes, Greater Diversity'.



The team is responsible for increased growth and diversification, through delivery of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) and the association's ambitious growth strategy.

The diverse range of services covered by the team include:

- SDHP management & delivery
- Stock Investment Programme management & delivery

- Contract Management - Stock Investment, Service Contracts, MTC Contracts, Grounds Maintenance
- Financial Scrutiny & Control across all the department
- Disability Adaptation Services
- Response/Change of Tenancy Maintenance Inspections
- Health & Safety Compliance Monitor
- Fire Risk Management & Assessments
- Procurement

The team has achieved significant results over the past year and has demonstrated a commitment to growth and service excellence, to maximise its contribution to social housing provision and the impact it has on tenants and communities.

Ark Housing Association has adopted a 5-Year Business Plan to reach 1,000 homes within 5 years - setting down the challenge to the Property Services department to deliver the numbers, maintain the stock and ensure compliance.

With greater service delivery and portfolio diversity comes the necessity to focus on business transformation; with this in mind, the team have created more streamlined, efficient, and cost-effective operating processes across the department, with the implementation of the new 'Growth Strategy and Scheme Investment Appraisal Policy'.

The improved performance of the team is noted below:

Oversight and Management of a Development Budget of £7.7m

18/19 Private Finance of £3m secured Board Approved Growth Strategy, Development Policy, Scheme Investment Policy & Appraisal Model.

Social Housing Development Programme On site Target:
 As published April 18 - 21 homes
 Current Programme - 79 homes
 Representing a 36% increase
 Social Housing Development Programme Completion Target:
 As published April 18 - zero
 Current Programme - 25 homes
 6% increase in stock
 Site identification over a 12-month period (in addition to the above) includes 226 homes that are classed as low -medium risk of delivery on site between now and March 2019:
 Stock Investment Budget £1,249,000

Planned & Component Replacement £365,000
 Cyclical replacement & Servicing £809,000
 Stock Investment upgrades delivered to 50 homes (bathrooms, kitchens, ventilation)
 Stock Investment upgrades on site and on programme to complete in year 61 (heating installations, external redecoration.)
 Introduction of a Contract Register, a valuable register used to monitor contracts, ensure GDPR compliance and plan procurements. The register was introduced in Property Services and now incorporates contracts through all departments.
 100% Fire Risk Assessments implemented across stock
 99% Boiler Servicing, across stock, the missing 1% attributable to access issues.

Outcomes and achievements

Through their dedication and commitment, in the last twelve months, the Property Services Team has achieved the following outcomes;

- growth in stock number
- transparent data on performance KPIs and compliance; reports provided to the Senior Management Team, Investment Committee and Board
- a pro-active approach to regulation and compliance
- successful management and procurement of multiple contracts for response & planned maintenance, adaptations, servicing and development contracts
- value for money - through robust Board approved scheme appraisals, affordable rents
- partnership working with others building positive relationships; through collective procurement through the HA5 with other housing associations, contractors, consultants, and active engagement with tenants and the wider community
- enthusiastic team focused on outcomes
- resilience; working in development and property investment presents many a challenge, the team come together in tackling and overcoming these and bounce back with energy and focus
- collaboration across departments, enhancing productivity and maximising income
- balance between commercial and social thinking - financial accounting and budgeting is crucial and managed within the department in close collaboration with finance, the team also demonstrate a great awareness of the needs of our tenants and go the extra mile in providing excellent customer services
- improved homes; above average home energy ratings, 100% decent homes compliance

'The journey of 1000 houses begins with one home'

Connswater Homes

Statement of support

Connswater Homes has experienced a period of sustained growth both in housing stock and staff levels in recent years: the Association has doubled in size in the last 7 years having reached a major milestone of owning our 1,000th home in April 2018.



Reaching this milestone so quickly would never have been possible had it not been for the excellent inter-departmental team work, drive, and passion for success.

Staff from all departments have worked together, not only to increase the Association's housing stock in recent years, but to also maintain the quality existing stock and ensure that high levels of customer satisfaction are maintained throughout this period of growth

In June 2018, the Association held a community celebration at its newest scheme in Seymour Hill, to mark the unveiling of our 1,000th home.

The level of inter-departmental work involved in planning this momentous day, and thereby ensuring it was such a great success, encapsulates the level of teamwork that results from working together as one, over a period of many years.

The team held six inter-departmental meetings in the months preceding the celebration, agreeing between themselves the format and events for the day, as well as preparing a draft budget for the celebration; these ideas and plans were then presented to SMT for approval at a special meeting.

Over 200 people attended on the day, with tenants, stakeholders, representatives from our suppliers and partners, as well as politicians from Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council all in attendance.

One of the main focal points of the day was the cutting of the cake by Chairman, Professor Paddy Gray, and Chief Executive Jacqueline Locke.

There was a range of activities for everyone to participate in, including gardening, complementary therapies, a petting farm, face painting, football, darts, and of course plenty of food in the form of a barbeque and ice cream van!

A ceramic panel was commissioned by Connswater Homes to mark the celebration of our 1,000th home: incorporating over 200 tiles, all designed and created by tenants, young and old, during fun days and events held during the summer.

In order to ensure that everything went according to plan, it was very much a case of 'all-hands-on-deck', with a task being allocated to each and every staff member, regardless of their position within the organisation!

Testimonials from partners:

James McCully, Managing Director, JMC Mechanical & Construction Ltd

"Delighted to have worked with Connswater Homes in helping them reach their 1,000th Home. Connswater Homes work hard to provide their tenants with very good standard of housing as well as an invaluable social interaction with community groups. We wish them all the best for the next 1,000 homes!"

Connaire McGreevy CTS Projects Ltd

"What made the event even more special was the clay bricks carved with words and drawings by absolutely everyone. A real treasure in the future and living time capsule of the hard work of a winning team."

Outcomes and achievements

Due to their excellent teamwork, Connswater Homes staff ensured that the Association fulfilled its long-term strategic plan of reaching 1,000 units.

In addition to the '1000' homes milestone being achieved, Connswater Homes were also delighted to find out, in July 2018, that it had been placed 37th on the '24 Housing Top 50 Landlords in the UK'.

Finally, average sickness levels remain low in the Association, with each staff member taking on average just 4 sick days per annum - a great indicator of overall

staff satisfaction. This is further evidenced by the results of Connswater's annual 'Tenant Satisfaction Survey' : in this, 91% of respondents stated that Connswater staff are helpful, whilst 92% were satisfied that staff were able to deal with their problem. The Association continues to perform above NIHA benchmarks in these areas.

Wakehurst Court

EHA Group

Statement of support

Wakehurst Court, Harryville, Ballymena is a social housing scheme that EHA Group delivered in association with Mainline Contracts on behalf of Clanmil Housing Association. It is situated on a sensitive site, which has now been regenerated into 48 high-quality social homes, to service the surrounding local community.



The commitment, hard work, and excellent management on-site resulted in Wakehurst Court being delivered a mammoth 5 months ahead of schedule, with As a result, handovers completed in September 2018, instead of February 2019.

As stated on its website, EHA Group prides itself on the great working relationships it builds with its partners and clients - all of whom appreciate the ability for easy, direct contact with the right people, whenever required. As a result of this customer-first approach, the company has developed lasting, multi-project relationships.

The team at Wakehurst Court developed excellent working relationships with their neighbours, with their client Clanmil, and, crucially, with the labour and

materials supply chain. In relation to the latter, the team's management used its strong relationship with suppliers and sub-contractors to achieve the early completion date.

Mark Gilmore, EHA Group Construction Director Ireland said:

"We have been at the forefront of social housing construction in recent years, and pride ourselves on delivering high-quality schemes on time, on budget, and on spec. The team at Wakehurst Court completed their scheme in a timeframe that is virtually unheard of in the construction industry, and this is a testament to each member of the team working collaboratively for the greater good."

Throughout the scheme, EHA also developed working relationships with local community groups and schools, including Harryville Primary School. For example, EHA undertook the Considerate Constructors Scheme's (CCS) Ivor Goodsite hoarding competition with the school in June 2017. This UK-wide competition enables children to unleash their artistic skills on site hoardings, while also highlighting the importance of safety around building sites. Not only did this initiative help to brighten up the construction site for the local community for the duration of the project, it also helped to build closer links and working relationships between EHA, Clanmil Housing, and the wider community.

As an added bonus, all parties were delighted when Harryville PS were announced as 'Runner-Up' in the competition; this was extremely well received by the local community and ENA were thrilled to return to the school for the prize-giving ceremony.

Lesley Meikle, Principal at Harryville Primary School commented:

"We were thrilled to have been invited to be part of such a creative project by EHA Group. The pupils here at Harryville really enjoyed planning, designing, and creating their pieces of art which combine to make such attractive hoarding for around the building site, and which benefit our entire community. Such creativity also promotes good learning and raises awareness with children on how important safety is around the building site."

Mark Gilmore, EHA Group added:

"This was the first time EHA had entered the CCS hoarding competition and we found it to be a great way to integrate further with the local community

around our build. We are very keen to do this on all of our projects and had already collaborated with the local innovation centre in Ballymena prior to the competition. This is another testament to the team."

Outcomes and achievements

The outcomes of this collaboration surpassed the initial objective, delivering the project some 20 weeks ahead of programme. This had a cascading affect, allowing local families to be housed sooner, alleviating social housing demand in the area, and ensuring that 48 families could be well settled into their new homes before Christmas.

The high level of neighbourliness created a positive advertisement in the local area, not just for EHA, but for all parties involved. In addition, hiring a

UUJ Placement Student, employing local General Labourers, and utilising local suppliers wherever as possible, assisted greatly in terms of enhancing community relations. The team successfully represented EHA as a responsible contractor, illustrating their unwavering commitment to safety, community relations, and construction appearance. All of these things combined enabled the site to achieve 'Performance Beyond Compliance' in their end of project CCS Site Inspection.

More than bricks and mortar

sponsored by



This award recognises organisations or projects that have demonstrated commitment to tenant involvement, to help improve services or neighbourhoods.

Changing Harbourview through youth engagement

Clanmil Housing

Statement of support

Harbourview comprises 53 apartments and 15 houses in Sailortown, an area isolated from the wider North Belfast community due to major road developments in the 1960s.



In 2009/10, Clanmil worked with Sailortown Regeneration to redevelop a former mill site, to help address high housing stress in North Belfast and begin re-establishing a sustainable community that could kick-start the area's regeneration.

Whilst there has been further development in the area - offices as well as private apartments - there remains a serious lack of community infrastructure. As a result of this, Harbourview has been unsettled, with high levels of ASB.

Fortunately, however, focused community cohesion work over the past three years - aimed at improving the lives of people living at Harbourview - has initiated a turn-around.

48 young people currently live at Harbourview, each of them impacted by the area's lack of green space, play facilities, and youth engagement programmes. Clanmil

has worked, with a range of partners, to fill this void and bring youth services to Harbourview.

Examples of innovative youth programmes delivered by Clanmil and its partners at Harbourview:

'Mind Craft'

A series of computer-based workshops, sponsored by Belfast Harbour Commissioners, encouraged these young residents to design their 'perfect neighbourhood'. Thinking about their area, past and present, helped create a sense of belonging and civic pride, whilst also helping develop IT and social skills.

Sailortown Festival

For the past three years, the young people have been supported to stage an annual community festival. This year, the two-day festival included a street market, music trail, Basque dance troupe and a celebration of Sailortown's Italian heritage. This event has grown dramatically, attracting involvement by others from outside the area, and is fundamental to forging connections with the wider North Belfast community.

Film Project

In 2017, through a series of film workshops at the scheme, the young residents at Harbourview created a short movie, which premiered at a community screening in Belfast Harbour Office; this allowed them to showcase their talents and give an insight into their thoughts on living in Sailortown.

This activity really captured the young people's interest and imagination and gave them the desire to explore film further. As a result of this, in 2018, they worked with Household Belfast over several months, and created a story line and script that they performed, filmed and edited themselves. This film was screened at the Sailortown Festival.

Finally, this exposure to film and the arts led the young people to create an interactive Halloween experience for the public, in a former church adjacent to Harborview. Working with Household, they learned theatrical make-up from a professional from the Game of Thrones production, made costumes and created scary props. The event raised money for a trip to the pantomime this Christmas.

Community Arts

As part of the 'Hit the North' initiative, Community Arts Partnership worked with the young residents of Harbourview to design and create street art that reflects what their area means to them. This initiative helped to build a sense of ownership, and their art has become a landmark within the area - and a source of immense pride for them and their families.

Sports

Community Sports Development Network regularly run 8-week multi-sports programmes for the young people with activities chosen by the young people themselves. Youth workers from New Lodge Youth Club help the young people develop their social skills as part of this project.

Shaping the future

Building on the connection with their area, developed through these youth engagement programmes, Clanmil has sought to ensure that the young people of Harbourview are involved in locality planning for their area.

Clanmil have now brought the young people together, with Belfast City Council, to discuss local planning issues and explore ways in which Sailortown can be integrated into the council's consultation processes. In addition, Clanmil has involved them in workshops for residents, where the impact of the York Street Interchange and other major developments were discussed, with 'Belfast Healthy Cities' and 'Community Places'.

Outcomes and achievements

Harbourview was isolated from the wider community and lacked cohesiveness. Through Clanmil's ground-breaking initiatives, the young people have developed a strong sense of civic pride.

Also, by helping young people to feel valued - and by giving them a voice within their community - Clanmil's engagement with their parents has also markedly improved.

As a result of these various youth programmes, the scheme is now more settled, with a dramatic 72% reduction in serious ASB reports over the three years and furthermore, there are no longer serious incidents involving young people in the area.

As a result of these initiatives, Sailortown is now formally recognised by Belfast City Council as part of the Greater New Lodge area and is included in community/locality planning processes, ensuring Harbourview residents' voices will continue to be heard.

Finally - and perhaps most importantly of all - the young people are benefitting from life experiences that are broadening their outlook, leading to increased self-confidence and self-worth. In short, they have also gained the social skills to interact positively and respect others.

EPIC

Connswater Homes

Statement of support:

Connswater Home's strategic plan embraces the social impact agenda that extends beyond housing and into other aspects of community life.



The three themes of the 2018 -2021 strategy are:

1. Listen, put meaningful engagement with tenants and stakeholders at the heart of what we do
 2. Learn, develop, support and empower people
 3. Deliver, continually improve, embrace new ideas and deliver beyond expectations, to enhance communities and ensure sustainable tenancies and settled neighbourhoods:
- to listen and gain the views of tenants, a number of community consultation workshops were held, looking at how best to engage with tenants. A number of documents were also reviewed including the group's Strategic Plan, Customer Charter and Tenant Engagement Strategy.
 - published Engaging People in Communities (EPIC) Strategy. The 'menu of involvement', within the strategy, was designed following tenant recommendations; this ensures that all tenants, regardless of their circumstances or difficulties, have access to the same opportunities of engagement and consultation.
 - a reader's panel also contributed to the design and contents of the Winter edition of the Connswater Chronicle.
 - quarterly estate inspections gave tenants the opportunity to meet with housing, maintenance, and communities' teams, to walk around their schemes and identify issues or concerns they may have had in relation to general repair, maintenance, and health and safety.

- A number of tenants attended, and participated in, the 'CIH Review of Social Housing', where they shared their views and recommendations during roundtable discussions at Girdwood Community Hub.

Connswater Homes recognise that within the communities they operate there are, tenants of other landlords and owner-occupiers. As a result, they are wholeheartedly committed to working in partnership with these other residents - in all of the ways outlined below -to help improve the quality of life in communities where their tenants live alongside other tenants and residents:

- Have taken an active role in improving the health and wellbeing of local people via delivery of "My Health Your Health" Healthy Lifestyle programme, in partnership with EBCDA. The course has led to weekly exercise classes delivered by WISPA
- 'Mersey Street, Mind, Body and Soil' continues to grow and attract new participants, and a successful stock rotation system has been developed, with all produce harvested from the allotments donated to the local food bank
- Working in partnership with Groundwork NI to deliver a range of community initiatives: the latest initiative was the 'GrowBus', a community gardening project based on making science fun. The bus visited two local primary schools, with 60 young people participating
- Portaferry Community Health and Wellbeing day in partnership with Ark Housing: This brings together a variety of service providers to offer advice and support to residents in Portaferry
- Attend a number of interagency forums in several areas of operation
- Welfare Advisor facilitating a number of 'Community Drop-in events' in Community Centres/churches
- Collaboration with other Housing Associations, such as Clanmil, Ark and Radius, to deliver community events that bring all tenants together.
- Provide training to tenants aimed at developing their capacity and confidence to participate in community life: tenants and residents have completed training in first aid and CIEH accredited Foundation food safety, this training has enabled tenants to volunteer at a number of community events. Communities officer supporting residents groups across a number of areas of operation: by adopting a flexible approach to the delivery of engagement activities, Connswater can tailor service delivery according to community needs and priorities.

Comment from Tenant Satisfaction survey 2018:

"Tammy is brilliant at engaging with the community and with the Mersey Street Allotments and latest Healthy Living programme. Great work."

Outcomes and achievements

- Appointment of communities officer and welfare advice officer.
- In the past eighteen months, over 2000 people have participated in community engagement activities, including: community information sessions in relation to crime prevention and welfare reform, community fun days, estate inspections, reader's panel, community clean up, gardening projects, residents groups, women's groups, craft clubs, health and wellbeing courses, genealogy courses, and physical activity sessions. All of these activities are providing tenants - and the wider community - with opportunities to meet their neighbours and create new friendships.
- 50 tenants are currently on the Tenant Participation Register.
- A key achievement beyond housing related services was the publication of the new tenant approved EPIC strategy that offers a menu of involvement and a tenant engagement action plan for the next three years.
- Connswater Homes are delighted that new housing at Abbeyville Place, Whiteabbey has been accepted to the 2018/19 'Housing for All' shared neighbourhood programme. Connswater Homes look forward to playing a part in the journey towards a more shared society, through the design and implementation of a 5-year Good Relations Plan.

Extern homes

Extern Northern Ireland

Statement of support

The Extern Homes project was established in 2016, as a response to the five individuals who sadly lost their lives while sleeping on the streets of Belfast.



This innovative project addresses the needs of people who are homeless, by providing affordable two-year tenancies, with appropriate wrap around services to enable them to live independently within the community, while creating sound tenancy histories to support them when they move on to more permanent accommodation.

Extern created 'Extern Homes' to help people break out of the 'homelessness cycle'. Extern NI has, to date, purchased ten homes for some of the most vulnerable people in our society and their plan is to extend this provision out across the island of Ireland, in the near future.

Extern Northern Ireland is the first project of its kind in Northern Ireland and is a tenancy project that

asks 'how can we make this affordable to the most vulnerable people, while providing the necessary supports to empower our tenants'?

Extern Homes provides furnished homes, at rental rates, based on entitlements, taking nominations from a range of partners. Following an assessment process, successful applicants (now tenants), are:

- Offered a two-year supported tenancy
- Not required to pay a deposit (to ensure no financial burden for the transition process)
- Given incentives to save for future long-term tenancies and provided with local welfare advice services
- Provided with support in securing housing benefit (if eligible).

Commitment to involving tenants

Extern is committed to ensuring the tenant's voice is heard; it does this by hosting tenancy group meetings, with a view to establishing a tenancy forum (if desired by tenants). Extern Homes developed a tenancy handbook based on iterative feedback from tenants on content and design.

Evidence of working with other partners:

Extern has extensive links with a range of partners that includes various support agencies, referrals agencies, and managing agents. The ethos is very much around partnership-working, and Extern connects existing services to Extern Homes tenants. For example:

- Charity Bank (the project is being jointly financed by Extern and Charity Bank)
- REA Estates (maintenance support and tenancy sign-up)
- North Belfast Advice Partnership (provides welfare advice coupled with move-in food parcels to help the initial costs of setting up their tenancy)
- Newington Housing Association (finances Extern Homes 'Matched Savings Scheme' - this assists

tenants to save for the necessary deposit on departure from their two-year tenancy)

- Tesco Community Champions (home starter packs and decorating)
- Habitat for Humanity (painting and decorating)

Action to develop skills of tenants

Extern's tenants are:

- Given access to volunteering opportunities within Extern to improve their longer-term employment prospects
- Empowered and this is illustrated by one tenant who has been active in speaking at community events including - the Extern Gala Ball 2017 and the QFT Homeless Awareness Week 2018 screening of 'Rosie'

Extern Homes delivers real change to people who are homeless:

- By providing 'more than just bricks and mortar' -i.e Extern provides wrap-around support services which help create the right environment, so that individuals can build on their strengths and live fuller lives
- By empowering tenants who want, and are ready, to move on with their lives, through the provision of effective support services during their two-year tenancy.

The ultimate goal is to ensure that during or after their tenancy, tenants move successfully into a tenancy of their own - and have a sound tenancy history behind them to ensure that repeat homelessness is prevented.

Outcomes and achievements

Extern Homes currently has a portfolio of ten properties in Belfast. The achievement of this project lies in the fact that Extern has accommodated ten individuals, from homelessness, into a tenancy of their own, with each one successfully sustaining their tenancy. This might seem a small achievement, but when you consider the vulnerability and complexities these individuals were facing - tenancy sustainment is a huge achievement.

'Since my move from a hostel to Extern Homes my life has changed for the better... I feel worry free and

more independent. Extern Homes has worked and has been a really positive experience for me.' Gerard, Extern Homes tenant, 2017

'Extern treats their clients with dignity and respect... when you become homeless the world as you know it falls apart. Support from Extern Homes helped me back on the right path. A new home is the top step on that path and the first step on the next.'

Sheila, Extern Homes tenant, 2017

Listen, share, change

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

Listen, share, change is a 3-year cross-community, inter-generational programme, delivered by the Housing Executive in partnership with Verbal.



The aim of this project is to promote positive relations among 52 estates, celebrate cultural diversity, and promote community cohesion, by supporting tenants to live, learn and socialise together in a society that is free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

LISTEN, SHARE, CHANGE utilises the Reading Rooms model developed by Verbal to engage local groups of 12 participants to explore and reflect on issues relevant to their own lives, by purposefully discussing selected literary works. The sessions are facilitated by a trained volunteer practitioner (Neighbourhood Champion) sourced from the participating community. Neighbourhood Champions are trained to OCN level 2 in Facilitation Skills for Shared Reading.

Topics explored through the project include diversity, symbols, identity, heritage, culture, shared history and conflict.

The project started in 2018 and will run until 2021, engaging 30 groups per year in cross- community conversations. Each group will be involved in 36 sessions during the year, of which 31 will comprise direct cross-community engagement.

The Housing Executive identified 52 target communities from across its estates, to participate in this project. Groups were selected to ensure a clear geographical and demographic spread across all 13 Housing Executive Areas. A particular focus was given to areas that traditionally had very low levels of engagement and capacity, both on a cross- community as well as a single identify basis.

Two decades after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, more than 82% of social housing in

Northern Ireland remains segregated on grounds of religious background.

Listen, share, change aims to tackle and address the following needs;

- Increase the opportunities for residents and young people within the social housing sector to meet, engage and form relationships with others of a different religious or cultural background
- Build the positive mental health and confidence of young people living within the social housing sector, combating lack of educational attainment and raising hopes and aspirations for the future
- Engage young people in community structures in order to facilitate community cohesion in the future

Key to this project's success is the innovative partnership between the statutory sector (the Housing Executive) and the community/voluntary sector (Verbal), which has a proven track record, over a period of 26 years, in developing and delivering participatory, cultural interventions designed to increase mutual understanding and create a more cohesive society.

Listen, share, change has been developed through a co-design process which prioritises the individual. The Housing Executive has employed three Regional 'Good Relations Officers' who directly liaise with NIHE Good Relations team, to proactively work with the NIHE's network of community organisations to ensure

a community-led approach in terms of identifying participation of a multiple and varied communities on the programme; it does this by engaging individual beneficiaries, on an inter-generational basis, with a particular focus on encouraging youth participation.

These beneficiaries represent tenants, residents and leaseholders from the communities selected for participation. From these engaged beneficiaries Neighbourhood Champions are identified to assist in the delivery of programme activities.

This project will deliver facilitated cross-community engagement and dialogue with 1560 resident in in some of the most divided and segregated Housing estates within Northern Ireland.

This contact will result in an increase in the number of people who think:

- relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were 5 years ago and
- those who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years' time

Quote from NC IN Bovalley Limavady:

"People have the opportunity to share their feelings in a safe non-judgemental environment. They have an opportunity to have time out from their own environments and relax and enjoy the stories and poems."

Outcomes and achievements

In year 1 of Listen, Share, Change, 446 beneficiaries have taken part in a 36-week long cross-community engagement programme designed to build new community wide relationships across traditional community backgrounds.

15 individual housing communities across the NIHE estate have participated in cross-community engagement: most of these estates are over 90% segregated, with residents representing a single identity religious background and where the opportunity for cross- community engagement is not available and may not be acceptable to the wider community;

1,234 programmed sessions using the Reading Rooms model have been delivered, developing structured conversations around identity, diversity, commonality, personal choice, freedom, conflict resolution and hopes for their future.

Of these 1061 engagements were direct 'meaningful, purposeful and sustained' cross-community contact with groups and individuals from different community, cultural and religious backgrounds;

30 Neighbourhood Champions have been trained in OCN Level 2 in Facilitation Skills for Shared Reading to implement to deliver the Reading Rooms model within and across communities beyond the period of the initial funding.

24 Future Youth Leaders have been developed with the aim of incorporating these young people into NIHE community networks and structures, providing a new voice for the resolution of community tensions at local level.

Radius tenant engagement team

Radius Housing

Statement of support

Radius Housing's 'Tenant Engagement Team' is committed to ensuring that our tenants are always at the heart of our work. This ethos supports the Radius Mission - "to make a positive difference by providing homes, support and care for people, building neighbourhoods, and empowering communities."



The Tenant Engagement Team has developed Radius' 'Tenant Engagement Strategy' to ensure that all policies and services meet the needs and aspirations of Radius' tenants.

The key goal is to provide genuine opportunities for tenants to influence decisions and shape the service they receive; to achieve this, Radius continually strives to improve, promote, develop, consult, support, communicate, and demonstrate the benefits of tenant engagement, both with tenants and across the wider Radius organisation.

Radius' 'Tenant Engagement Strategy' was shaped and led by Radius tenants, using the following methodology:

- Tenant consultation to create our tenant engagement structure and find out what matters to our tenants most.
- Tenant feedback from our Area Panels and Tenant Executive Committee
- Tenant feedback from events and conferences

The agreed Tenant Engagement Structure developed the group's 'menu of involvement', which has resulted in 302 tenants being on Radius Housing's 'Register of Interest'. This allows tenants to declare the level at which they would like to be involved in Radius, and by extension, the areas that matter most to them. This is also available online so that all tenants can access it at their convenience.

The 'menu of involvement' aims to enable tenants to be involved at all levels, right through to the Boardroom, to ensure that two-way communication is always practiced throughout the organisation.

The team managed and held successful events to promote tenant engagement through the Tenant Forums and Tenant Conference, which was attended by over 700 delegates.

The Tenant Forums welcomed over 700 delegates over 4 days, and also includes the 'Scheme Awards', which celebrate the success of Radius' sheltered housing, through the Community Pride, Best Kept Garden, Good Neighbours and Outstanding Scheme Awards. Judging for these awards was carried out by the Radius Board, which provided a great opportunity to maintain connectivity and understanding from Board through to tenants.

The first Radius Tenant Conference took place in October 2018 and 85.7% of delegates felt the event gave them a genuine and meaningful opportunity to engage with staff. This event also included interactive workshops: 'Understanding Diversity', 'Money Advice', 'Feel Good with Food' & 'Staying Safe Online'.

The priorities received from our tenants at this conference will shape the service improvement areas to be focused upon in 2019 Radius 'Community Chest', a scheme which creates links with new groups, and helps build rapport between Radius communities and key stakeholders such as schools and community groups, was also launched in 2018.

The Tenant Engagement Team also developed the 'Digital Interconnected Project', alongside their partners, 'Business in the Community'. This project led to a joint working pilot, in which Business in the Community volunteers from leading businesses across Northern Ireland, provide digital skill training to tenants from sheltered and general needs schemes to help tackle social isolation.

The Team has linked with the 'Northern Ireland Digital Assist Steering Group' to deliver 'Spring Online Week' events and 'Get Online' sessions for our sheltered schemes, with private sector companies joining Radius to deliver sessions.

Outcomes and achievements

In 2018 the Radius Tenant Engagement team successfully delivered a number of projects and initiatives, as follows:

- Launch of the Radius Tenant Engagement Strategy, along with Menu of Involvement & Engagement Structure
- 24 estate walkabouts held with over 1500 households invited to have their say - improving health and wellbeing & increasing community cohesion
- 20 Area Panel meetings held with elected office bearers in place
- Elected Tenant Executive Committee established
- Tenant Representative on Board
- 4 Radius Sheltered Housing Tenant Forums attended by over 700 delegates in total
- 97.62% said the event overall was Good/Very Good
- 77.3% felt the event provided opportunity to meaningfully engage with Radius A Lot or A Great Deal.
- 40 nominations received for Scheme Awards, across categories including: Community Pride, Healthy Living & Learning, Best Kept Garden, Good Neighbours and Outstanding Scheme
- Tenant Engagement Conference held October 2018, attended by almost 100 delegates and a satisfaction rating of 96.6.%
- 7 Community Chest applications approved and projects underway or completed

Promoting equality

This award recognises housing related initiatives that encourage the integration of people and communities from different backgrounds.

Ark Housing's homeless services inclusive communities

Ark Housing

Statement of support

Ark Housing Association has been providing temporary accommodation and support services to homeless families since 2003.



The model of service offered across Ark's Homeless Family Centres consists of residential based accommodation & support provided by their CIH accredited team of Homeless Support Officers and based on their multi-needs assessment model. Each service is funded through the Supporting People Programme.

To date, Ark have successfully helped over 750 families and 2,500 children in crisis and while their schemes are described as 'temporary', in practice, homeless households may be forced to spend a long time in such living arrangements, due to the current shortage of settled housing.

Homeless families suffer high levels of stress from their lack of control over their housing situation and can often feel alone and isolated. In addition, these homeless families may also carry with them the distressing experiences which led to their homelessness, such as domestic violence, relationship breakdown, fleeing persecution from another country, drug and alcohol misuse, and mental health problems.

In recent years, the nationality of families arriving on their doorstep has radically changed: where previously, most of their clients came from the indigenous population, many families are now presenting from Somalia, Sudan, Poland, China, Nigeria, Eritrea, Bangladesh, Iran and several other Eastern European and other non EU nations.

Ark are committed to improving people's lives and helping them to fulfil their potential so they can take full advantage of opportunity.

Ark have recently completed projects in partnership with other local community organisations and Ark residents which resulted in the re-development of the common rooms, as well as the creation of a garden of reflection and hope.

Community cohesion - which is all about inclusion - lies at the centre of these projects; it's about making the effort to find out about others, treating each other with respect, and building good relations between different parts of the community.

Outcomes and achievements

Creating warm, welcoming spaces for all has promoted integration & cohesion within Ark's schemes, bringing families together with a common goal. Throughout the year (2018) they hosted numerous events, all of which celebrated and promoted diversity and inclusion:

- Annual Neighbours day,
- An Eid Festival following Ramadan
- International Food Days
- 77 children's Activities
- Employability programs
- Learning for Life
- English Classes
- Homework Clubs
- Youth Programs
- Child development Programs

Below are some testimonials which indicate the success of this project:

"When I arrived at Roseville, I knew no one and I felt alone. However, the staff encouraged me to come to the common room and join in the events and I have now made friends with other mums and have also improved my English."

"I have enjoyed meeting other people from all over the world and hearing their experiences and sharing my experiences growing up in Northern Ireland, coming together as a community - especially for the children - shows we are all the same and laugh and have fun together and the food is amazing I have never eaten so many different things."

"Being part of the activities here has given me a sense of belonging; coming here from Somalia was frightening but being here I now feel settled and at home in Belfast."

BME Housing champions project

Housing Rights

Statement of support

Social integration and community cohesion are difficult to achieve when people are living in unsustainable or unsuitable housing.



BME communities have the same housing problems and concerns as all low-income households; however, research indicates that these are further compounded by problems accessing benefits, language barriers, cultural sensitivities, and uncertainty about rights and responsibilities.

Housing Rights believe a targeted approach is required to ensure BME communities receive good

quality advice to ensure they have access to safe, affordable, high-quality housing. Through their 'BME Housing Champion' project, they have developed an innovative way in which to deliver housing advice with the following benefits:

- empowering individual members of BME communities (Housing Champions) to deliver advice to their communities, and at the same time, improve their own employability prospects, increase their wellbeing, and improve housing conditions within their respective communities
- allowing members of the BME community to better integrate and make meaningful contributions to community life
- ensuring equality of access to good quality housing advice in order to improve integration and engagement with services, strengthen communities, and improve the housing circumstances and wellbeing of the wider BME communities.

The project details:

- recruits bi-lingual individuals from BME communities and provides them with professional interpreting and housing advice qualifications
- sources and facilitates voluntary placements within the housing advice sector for these Housing Champions
- organises clinics within BME communities for them to deliver housing advice
- increases the numbers of people from BME communities who are aware of and who access housing advice services

Feedback and testimonials:

Many users attending peer-led housing clinics confirmed assumptions about barriers to accessing traditional advice service - and here are some of the testimonials provided:

"... a lot of people feel more comfortable talking to a member of their own community about a personal issue than with someone outside the community, especially if a third person has to be present as well (interpreter)"

"... they are more confident when they have someone available who is trained in housing rights and also speaks their language without these 2 things there would be a communication barrier making it difficult for them to access high quality housing rights information"

Feedback from BME's 'Housing Champions' demonstrates how this service can help to bridge the gap between BME communities and traditional advice services.

One of the Housing Champions reflected on the importance of providing housing advice to BME communities:

"I think that I am confident enough to help my community and to encourage them to seek for help when they need it most. When clients know and understand housing rules and rights in Northern Ireland, they are able to secure a suitable accommodation and to feel integrated and accepted into the general society"

In addition, five of the Peer Housing Champions have returned as peer mentors for the new cohort of peer advisers. Placements providers gave positive feedback, with a number asking to be considered for placements in the next phase. Additionally, placement partners reported that the presence of a Housing Champion meant that the organisation was better able to engage with the BME communities in its catchment.

Outcomes and achievements

Due to bespoke training and work placement, all peers reported that they felt better able to offer housing advice to clients, and more employable.

One peer adviser perfectly illustrated this point:

"I had no advising skills or any housing knowledge before my chances would have been null to get a job on Housing Sector compare with now, so yes, I do feel more employable due to improved housing knowledge and interpreting skills I gained as part of the placement and as part of the project."

The results to date:

- 14 peers have completed the pilot project, 5 peers retained as peer mentors and are helping the recruits for the current year

- 10 of the 14 peers found employment, 8 are in an advice and/or interpreting roles
- 100% of feedback from project clients reported the advice they received helped them understand their housing rights, and that they had the information they needed to confidently make good housing decisions.
- Housing Rights has seen a 3% increase in calls from BME communities demonstrating increased trust and accessibility
- New partnerships established such as South Belfast Foodbank and The Green Party. Together providing interpreter services for distribution of food vouchers and housing advice clinics to the Roma community

Delivering welcoming neighbourhoods for all

Clanmil Housing

Statement of support

Whilst 78% of people would prefer to live in a mixed religion neighbourhood, 90% of social housing is still 'Single Identity' here in Northern Ireland. Clanmil is committed to creating opportunities for people who wish to live in neighbourhoods that are safe, accessible, and welcoming to all.



Experience shows that Shared Neighbourhoods need community buy-in, and Clanmil's ground-breaking programme of Promoting Integration initiatives helps to develop relationships within communities that create conditions for shared neighbourhoods to be possible.

Over the past year, Clanmil has been promoting four new Shared Neighbourhoods - in Dundrum, Belfast, Banbridge and Crossgar.

Clanmil works with political, community and statutory representatives to create specific 'Shared Neighbourhood Charters' for each new neighbourhood; this process is unique to Clanmil, and fundamental to achieving the following goals:

- Bringing people together for a shared purpose and creating positive discussion around sharing
- Creating a space to consider and address difficult topics
- Ensuring risks to the new neighbourhood are considered and addressed
- Creating a network of people and organisations who help welcome new people into the community

'The Charters' reflect the area and priorities of the local community: for example, in Dundrum, the Residents Association sought to recognise the importance of respecting the local environment.

Promoting sharing in Dundrum, Clanmil worked with four local schools on a fun, educational arts programme that brought together Sacred Heart Primary School, Cumran Primary School, Dundrum Cross Community Playgroup, and Knockevin Special Needs Early Years Centre for the first time. The diversity of community background, across the educational spectrum, created a particularly significant experience.

Also, through this project, the children considered what the concept of sharing means to them. For the older children, debate around the reality of segregation stimulated important discussions about how they see the future. A piece of art created through these workshops - signifying what sharing means in the local community - is now on public display in the new development.

At the Embankment, South Belfast, the workshop-initiated engagement between Bredagh GAA Chairman, Malcolm MacFarlane and Stephen Biggerstaff, Chairman of Ballynafeigh Cultural and Heritage Society. Clanmil worked with these groups to develop trust and a relationship that resulted in what is believed to be the first visit by a GAA club to an Orange Hall in Belfast - an event that significantly raised the profile of the 'shared neighbourhoods' initiative.

In Banbridge, workshops commenced with Banbridge High School, St Patrick's Banbridge and New-Bridge Integrated College that will engage children from the three schools in the challenges of integration and the concept of shared neighbourhoods during their 5 years in secondary school.

In Crossgar, working in conjunction with Crossgar Area Community Association, an inter-generational arts project focusing on the themes of 'sharing and integration', has been completed and is being erected on the site hoarding. This is helping with local community buy-in around the concept of sharing.

Finally, Clanmil also developed new programmes to promote integration within existing Shared Neighbourhoods. This included work to develop a community within Felden, where several highly significant programmes have been delivered this year:

- Cultural Cook It: cross-community cookery projects that create a stimulating environment for people from different community backgrounds to discuss culture and difference. Food is cooked from different cultures, including Asian, African, European and Travellers
- Community Garden and Art Project: Development of a community garden steered by the resident association who worked with Groundwork to consult with the entire community about the project. An art project shadowed this initiative with public art now displayed in the Community Garden
- Bawnmore Reimaging Project: Clanmil worked with local community partners, as well as with Felden resident group, on a street-art project to re-image a wall that had been painted with highly contentious sectarian graffiti

Outcomes and achievements

- Significant progress was made in promoting four new Shared Neighbourhoods, with two of these successfully delivered as Shared Neighbourhoods
- Shared Neighbourhoods promotion programme were delivered 13 schools to over 500 young people.
- 45 political representatives, community representatives and statutory agencies were involved in developing Community Charters.
- Three pieces of public art that reflect Shared Neighbourhoods were created and are now on public display in Dundrum, Felden and Crossgar.
- 52 people from Felden, White City and Longlands engaged in Cultural Cook It Programmes.
- A symbolic event that resonated across the community when members of the GAA visited the Orange Hall on the Ormeau Road. This resulted in 30 pieces of positive publicity about shared neighbourhoods.
- At Felden 15 residents took the lead in designing and developing a Community Garden and 50 people were involved in Art Workshops.
- A cross-community celebration event in Rathcoole brought together people from Rathcools, Bawnmore, Felden, White City and New Lodge.

The Boroughs, Douglas, Cork

Tuath Housing Association

Statement of support

The Boroughs, Douglas, was a significant eyesore in the middle of upmarket Douglas just outside Cork City.



Fortunately, NAMA stepped in and worked with receivers to complete substantial works to the unfinished estate to provide 65 2,3, and 4-bedroom homes to Túath Housing, under a 20-year NARPS.

The vision for the Boroughs by Cork County Council was to create a high-quality residential development that promotes sustainability. With 91 homes in the development in the total, Tuath worked with the Council, NAMA & the receivers to ensure that 40 new homes were available for residents eligible for social housing, in this sought-after area, with the remaining 25 offered on affordable rents, to create a sustainable community.

The Boroughs is an excellent example of accommodation for low-income families. It is home to families from diverse cultural backgrounds, who enjoy living together within a well-designed development, where the community is at the heart of its success.

This project goes beyond just housing, as it enhances and enriches the people who live there by encouraging them to participate in the community, to achieve a better place to live.

Tuath's staff have engaged, encouraged, and empowered families living here to create the community they now have. They continue to work in partnership with the Red Cross, Cork Mental Health, and Simon, to ensure that additional supports are provided for residents who need some extra help, but while still giving them the independence they need to enjoy their new surroundings.

Tuath Housing, Cork County Council, and the Red Cross have all worked tirelessly to ensure that the three Syrian families, who were allocated homes in The Boroughs, have integrated seamlessly into their new community, and their new homes.

This development promotes equality by ensuring that all tenants have access to support services and that those in difficulty are offered an extra support system. To this end, Tuath has assisted these families in desperate need of assistance, by catering not just for their accommodation needs, but for their everyday needs, to enable them to settle and integrate in Ireland whilst still dealing with the traumatic effects being displaced from their home county.

Tuath have also provided accommodation in The Boroughs for 2 homeless families, as well as residents supported by Cork Mental Health. This has worked very well, and the tenants have integrated really well into this diverse community.

Outcomes and achievements

It was imperative for Túath Housing to work closely with Cork County Council to ensure that the mix of residents and the support services to be provided, were suitable for the sustainability and integration of the development. With this in mind, Túath Housing worked diligently with the key stakeholders, to acquire 40 homes for social housing, as well as 25 for affordable rent.

NAMA worked alongside the association to ensure that practical items and issues were addressed in a timely fashion, to ensure a smooth transition for all families moving to The Boroughs. As a result, this once unfinished development is now a fully let and functioning, multi-tenure residential scheme, with active residents empowered to assist in the future delivery of facilities and management standards to this development.

Tenant statements:

Nicole Fitzsimmons and Leon Desmond
– The Boroughs

Nicole and Leon started out privately renting a house in Ballincollig Co Cork with their son Jayden. Unfortunately, the landlord put the house up for sale. Given the significant rise in rents on the private market they were faced with the real possibility of being homeless. At this time, they discovered they were expecting their second child Noah. Unable to source alternative accommodation and not wanting to go to homeless centres they moved back to their individual family homes. Nicole and Noah moved to Mitchelstown with Leon and Jayden living in Ballincollig. This family were forced to live separately for two years only being able to meet at the weekends.

NARPS leases are delivered in turnkey condition and fully furnished. Nicole and Leon were allocated a three-bedroom house in October 2017. Their lives have been transformed as they can finally live together

as a family. Leon told Jennifer the Associations Housing Manager, at least now our two boys can live like other brothers."

Thelma Kiely - The Boroughs

Thelma has endured a very difficult few years. She was privately renting in Crosshaven, Co Cork only to be informed by a letter from a bank that the house was being repossessed from the landlord. She very luckily sourced another house nearby; however, she was informed a year later by her new landlord that her lease would not be renewed. The landlord wanted the property for a family member. Going to her local authority advice centre, she was given a list of homeless centres. She was told that her son, aged 18, would not be allowed stay with her and her daughter in the women's refuge, thereby splitting up her family. This was mentally the most stressful time of Thelma's life.

Since moving into her three-bedroom duplex, Thelma is like a new person due to the peace of mind that her security of tenure has given her. Prior to her Túath Housing tenancy, all of Thelma's money went towards making sure the rent was paid. No luxuries or extra-curricular activities were permitted as it would cost too much money. Now all that has changed and this family love The Boroughs, with its central location and proximity to Cork City. As the duplex was delivered through NAMA on a NARPS lease, the units were in a turnkey condition and fully furnished when they were handed over to Thelma., As Thelma said, *"this is my little piece of Heaven."*

Mediation and Community Support (MACS) hate crime project

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

In response to issues of hate crime and community conflict within South and East Belfast, the Housing Executive's 'Community Safety Team' agreed to jointly fund an extension of the Mediation and Community Support project, delivered by Alternatives, focusing specifically in South Belfast and East Belfast.



This innovative anti race-hate project seeks to relieve tension in these specific communities - particularly around levels of change and diversity - and to challenge the misunderstanding and myths about how housing is allocated in Northern Ireland.

The ultimate objective of the project is to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity of local communities around issues of perceived difference, thus helping them to articulate their frustrations in a non-violent way. The development of an ethos of mutual understanding helps to lessen the scope for friction arising from a poor understanding of new residents arriving in established "closed" communities that were traditionally resistant to change, through insecurity and a suspicion resulting from a lack of confidence and education.

This project aims to create safer, more confident, and more cohesive communities, through the delivery of restorative practices, victim support and - most importantly - community education with regards to tolerance, understanding diversity, and acceptance.

It is hoped that this project will help create more inclusive communities, where non-indigenous residents feel welcome and are easily integrated into community life. The exceptional aspect of this Project is that it helps people put 'themselves in the shoes of the others' and change their behaviours accordingly.

Working directly with local communities, this project actively works to decrease levels of hate crime attacks and build community confidence by providing education and support around hate crime including:

- Community Support and anti-racism training programmes in a community setting, as well as delivery to children and young people, through primary and secondary schools in order to help dispel myths and promote community tolerance.

A specific workshop event, which focused on the experiential insight into the journey of a refugee, is also delivered to a group of younger people. This workshop entitled "Into the Unknown - the Journey of a Refugee" proved a powerful tool in showing residents what it would be like to arrive as a refugee in a new country, and in doing so, helped them understand how difficult and challenging it must be, even without the underlying currents of racism and intolerance.

- Another distinctive aspect of the programme is the mediatory and brokering role provided by Alternatives, who work with members of the local community, as well as with prospective tenants from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are willing to accept an offer of local housing.

This role is extremely important as it actively supports the integration of those from minority groups into the fabric of the local community. It also provides a programme of mentoring for vulnerable non-indigenous residents, working in collaboration with other organisations such as the PSNI and Health Trust, as well as through community programmes which deliver a holistic response to meet the needs of residents, whilst at the same time increasing positive interactions with communities.

- There is also ongoing work to underpin the importance of, tolerance and respect regarding everyone's culture and beliefs with the indigenous population. This will hopefully result in encouraging effective change around diversity and difference, and promote acceptance of families from different cultural backgrounds.

Outcomes and achievements

Alternatives have confirmed that without funding through this partnership arrangement with the Housing Executive this unique project would not be able to continue to operate or would be limited in terms of impact:

- The 'Race Hate' project has a real impact on the ground, delivering cultural education and providing reassurance to residents, potential residents, and key stakeholders. The work is complemented by ongoing education for the indigenous community, to provide a solid foundation on which to promote their areas as shared spaces that are welcoming and open to all

- Recent PSNI statistics have reported a decrease in reported incidents of rate hate crime in South East and North Belfast. This indicates a level of community change and maturing which is to be welcomed.

This programme has been in operation for 2 ½ years and to date has delivered:

- 404 training programmes with 3747 participants
- Work has been completed in 181 cases with significantly more beneficiaries
- 473 victims have been supported by home visits, telephone contact, 1-2-1 sessions, referral to specialist support agencies and / or support hubs.

Working in partnership

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This award commends collaboration between organisations or groups that achieves the best possible outcomes.

Assisted living technology

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

The Housing Executive has undertaken an innovative pilot project to install a range of assistive smart technology equipment into a number of their tenant's homes, in the North West area, to support tenants with disabilities or mobility issues.



This project has been delivered in partnership with the Western Health and Social Care Trust & Hive Studios- a Digital Community Social Enterprise based within a Housing Executive community.

One core focus of this project is to determine how the use of technology can help NIHE tenants to live more independently, and improve quality of life for tenants in their homes, as well as enhance their health and wellbeing.

An extensive consultation took place between the Occupational Health Team and Housing Executive Complex Needs Officers and the tenants themselves, to identify suitable technologies and how these would ultimately improve their health and well-being. Resulting from this, the project has tailored the devices installed to suit the specific needs of individual tenants, and their immediate families.

A sample group of 18 tenants with disabilities was identified (existing home broadband was a prerequisite), across a range of ages groups and disabilities. These include:

- 7 y/o, spina bifida sufferer, wheelchair bound
- 6 y/o, with pacemaker and spinal brace
- 30 y/o wheelchair bound quadriplegic
- 36 y/o visually impaired
- 60 y/o bedbound, lives alone
- 68 y/o arthritis in spine, partially bedbound

This pilot has provided an opportunity to deploy some of the newer technologies for the benefit of tenants with disabilities with a view to:

- Sustaining tenancies
- Addressing mobility challenges
- Home security & social isolation
- Improved quality of life
- Promoting social interaction (through voice messaging etc.)
- Providing an opportunity to share insights gained with other parties (health visitors, Occupational Therapists etc.)

Project Testimonials:

Mark Gamble, Project Participant:

“When I first heard about this project from the Housing Executive, I couldn't wait to get involved. When you have mobility issues - the ability to simply ask Alexa to do a range of tasks for you like turning the heating off and on, seeing who's at your front door and being able to let them in, turning your lights off and on, or even simple stuff like reminding you to take your medication at the right time - is a godsend. Even in terms of reducing isolation - there's so many opportunities for stuff like that now. In terms of increasing my independence - this project has been invaluable.

Karen Telford, Head Occupational Health Nurse, Western Health and Social Care Team:

“The Assisted Living pilot is an exciting opportunity to explore how service users could realise their potential - through the latest innovative technology-to control their home environment in order to maximise their

full participation in day to day activities.

A full collaborative approach was adopted, involving staff from Housing Executive, Occupational Therapy, Hive Studio, and input from the tenants. This was essential to ensure that the right technology was matched to the right environment and, most importantly, to the needs and preferences of the individual.

Previously unreachable tasks such as turning on/off the lights, changing TV channels, controlling heating, answering the door are now controlled with simple commands. Thanks to the provision of this technology, creating a truly accessible home has become a reality!”

Kevin Hipsley, Hive Studios:

“Tenants are finding out for themselves new ways to use the technology, and improving their conditions”

Outcomes and achievements

The project has had some very positive impacts on the tenants who have partaken. Given the wide range of health conditions and disabilities, the project partners, working together, were keen to ensure that the equipment was tailored in order to make a real difference. The Housing Executive, Hive Studios and the Occupational Health have been working closely with all participants in the installation, training and support of the equipment.

As part of the project they undertook a mid-term evaluation, this found that:

- 75% of those participating reported significant improvements in their well-being

- 50% report that they now feel more independent and more able to manage their environment
- 75% report feelings of reduced isolation
- 50% report being more connected to the outside world and their immediate family
- 75% report increased feelings of personal safety & security
- 50% report that their day-to-day mechanics of their home live has been improved
- 50% report that they have a growing acceptance & understanding of the technology

Greater monkstown place shaping pilot

NI Housing Executive

Statement of support

The ‘Greater Monkstown Place-shaping Pilot’ was commissioned by The Housing Executive and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in April 2016. The project sought to examine how the assets of these two organisations can be developed and maximised in the future, as part of a place-shaping/ community planning process.



Importantly, this project offered an opportunity for forward planning based on a partnership approach that’s rooted within a local community. This represents a fresh, people-focused approach to planning as it prepares both the Community Plan and a Development Plan for the area, simultaneously.

The Pilot was delivered by PLACE, Northern Ireland’s Built Environment Centre, in partnership with The Paul Hogarth Company Urban Design Consultancy and Ulster University. The team implemented a highly collaborative methodology, centred around a series of workshops and events.

A major emphasis was placed on fostering a collaborative relationship with the local community within the Monkstown area. This was achieved through consultation during the engagement process, as well as throughout the project, to ensure that the needs of all local residents and stakeholders in the area, were catered for.

The structured engagement process explored the aspirations of stakeholders and local residents, and specifically helped to determine how such aspirations could positively contribute to the future development of the Greater Monkstown area. In addition to all of this, the challenges faced by both stakeholders and the local community were also raised.

A series of meetings, engagement workshops and events were held, to ensure widespread and effective involvement in the process. The open engagement events provided an opportunity for residents and

key stakeholders, to come together to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing Greater Monkstown, as well as provide their own input, suggestions, and aspirations. Engagement provided information, insight, and access to local knowledge and formed a significant part of the project in terms of helping to inform project outcomes.

This 'Place-shaping Pilot' will be used to inform future planning processes, as well as investment decisions relating to regeneration and development in Greater Monkstown.

An example of one such regeneration scheme is the 'Devenish Drive Social Housing Development' by Choice Housing Association' which is expected to be completed by Autumn 2019. This site existed as an open space when Planning Policy & Open Space applied, with community support for the scheme critical in terms of allowing a case to be made to planners: this was garnered during the pilot place shaping exercise, which allowed the planning application a relatively straight forward passage through the Council planning process.

The Devenish Drive scheme will provide 20 much-needed new homes comprising a mix of apartments,

houses and bungalows - each incorporating the very latest in energy saving, design, and security features. Almost half of the homes are designed to meet challenges that face older people or those with complex needs. The scheme was made possible by the transfer of the land from the Housing Executive. The construction of these new homes is great news for people in Monkstown and those on the housing waiting list and we look forward to the completion of the scheme next year - and to welcoming families and individuals who can contribute to the wider economy and fabric of the local community.

Project Testimonial:

Elma Newberry, Assistant Director of Land & Regenerations Services, from the Housing Executive, said (in an article in Northern Builder on 10/09/18):

"We are pleased that the construction of the Devenish Drive housing scheme has begun in Monkstown. This has particular significance to the Housing Executive as this was part of our first pilot 'Place Shaping Regeneration Plan', done in collaboration with Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, through the Community Planning process."

Outcomes and achievements

This place-shaping pilot has delivered deep-rooted, community-led regeneration that, it is hoped, will allow for the continued sustainable growth of the estate. It has triggered wider physical and social regeneration in the area, providing a focus for other initiatives concerning environmental improvements, community development, community cohesion and safety. This project perfectly demonstrates what can be achieved by creative thinking and leadership, when it comes to housing-led regeneration.

In addition to the 'Devenish Drive scheme referred to above, the initial consultation exercise also pointed to the derelict 'Moylinney House' site which negatively impacts on the area in its current state. The site became available through the Surplus Public Sector Trawl and NIHE registered an interest in the site for the provision of further social housing to meet housing need. Radius HA have recently accepted the nomination for this surplus site, and we look forward to the redevelopment of this prominent dilapidated site.

HOPE

Connswater Homes

Statement of support

Philip McTaggart, Mindskills Training & Coaching, has been working in the area of mental health and suicide prevention since 2003. His aim is to highlight issues surrounding mental health and promote positive mental wellbeing, by encouraging people in the local community to break down the barriers and stigma which stop people seeking help. Philip is dedicated to creating awareness about the causes and repercussions of suicide and mental health.



Connswater Homes recognises that suicidal feelings can affect anyone and that it is everyone's responsibility to find ways to help make suicide-safer communities.

Having identified the requirement for increased resources for mental health awareness in Northern Ireland, Connswater Homes formed a partnership with Mindskills Training & Coaching to assist in the promotion of positive mental health.

Connswater Homes has worked alongside Mindskills, in promoting of positive mental health, by producing materials which have proven to be beneficial in highlighting the support available for individuals and families affected.

Philip organised a "March for Life" on Saturday 7th October 2017, people walked from the Albert Clock, High Street, Belfast to Belfast City Hall. to promote the need for a dedicated centre in Northern Ireland to help those with mental health issues. Through collaborative working between Mindskills & Connswater Homes, the tagline HOPE (Helping Ourselves Progress Everyday) was created. The purpose of this tagline is to highlight, to individuals suffering from mental health, the need to take one day at a time with the aim of improving.

A banner, leaflets and bookmarks were produced to promote this message, and these are distributed to those attending awareness sessions and courses. Positivity bands were also created; the idea is to turn your negative thinking into a conscious, physical act by moving the bracelet from one wrist to the other and back again throughout the day as you recognise negative thoughts and replace them with something open and neutral.

Together, Connswater Homes & Mindskills reviewed the way in which Mindskills Training was being promoted and working in partnership, have been innovative in the promotion of the training, and in terms of always seeking out new methods of enhancing service delivery.

Certificates are awarded to all who participate in the training, and a process for feedback from attendees comes directly to Connswater Homes, where it is recorded, analysed and sent to Mindskills: this gives opportunities to monitor the training and identify needs from those individuals attending the training, people suffering with mental health issues, or those supporting individuals with mental health issues.

As part of Connswater Homes Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Mindskills provided a mindfulness training session for all staff, in relation to managing stress and recognising tell-tale signs of mental health. The comments received were overwhelmingly positive and highlighted new areas for staff on a professional as well as a personal level.

Some of the comments received from staff, thus far, include:

"Excellent course that made me look again at the issue of mental health"

"Excellent training on importance of monitoring our own health & wellbeing and awareness of mind-set of others"

"Really good examples used and the trainer spoke openly on his own personal experience."

Mindskills and Connswater Homes partnered with Olympus Gym in organising a fitness programme, 'Round 12'; the aim of this programme is to give a free six-week programme to individuals suffering from mental health, to demonstrate how physical activity has a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

This programme is promoted to all Connswater Homes tenants and it was agreed that if they wished to continue with the gym membership after the initial six-week taster, a discounted rate would be offered.

Outcomes and achievements

Mental Health is an issue receiving a lot of attention in the media, especially with NI showing the highest rates of suicide in the UK; according to NISRA there were 305 suicides in Northern Ireland (235 male and 70 female) in 2017 alone.

The aim of this partnership programme is to provide an awareness of mental health, and to educate individuals with the correct skills and confidence to reach out and help someone who is suffering.

Mindskills has been able to deliver training in a broad range of arenas, including schools, businesses, and local communities. Irrespective of the arena, however, the focus is always on highlighting the issues of depression, suicide, self-harm, promoting positive mental health, and signposting to the range & sources of help available.

Working with Mindskills and Olympus Gym, Connswater Homes have been able to offer a supportive environment to develop a change in culture whereby individuals are encouraged to discuss their feelings, and friends and family are able to develop a form of understanding of various issues.

Connswater Homes employees have been able to put their training into practice when dealing with tenants: as a result of this initiative, they now have increased knowledge & awareness and are able to recognise signs of mental health – and, most importantly, signpost those in need in the right direction to receive professional help.

Housing association integration project

NIFHA lead partner with Radius Housing, Apex, Clanmil, Choice Housing, Irish Council for Social Housing and TIDES Training

Statement of support

The Housing Association Integration Project (HAIP) is a unique Peace IV funded initiative aimed at promoting good relations, facilitating sharing of experience, and embracing diversity across housing association stock in NI and the border regions of ROI. HAIP is nominated under "Working in Partnership" as it reflects the key qualities and attributes of this category. It represents a project underpinned by collaborative practice, focused on innovation to challenge the status quo, and motivated by achieving outcomes which will leave a positive and lasting legacy, through the promotion of diversity, respect, and mutual understanding.



HAIP epitomises a new and innovative way of collaborative working, by involving four of NI's largest Housing Associations (Apex, Clanmil, Choice and Radius) with NIFHA and Tides Training. It marks a new level of intensive interaction between partners, to ensure the social housing sector benefits from what could be the last allocation of Peace monies by the EU, in light of the circumstances surrounding Brexit.

Development of the project has been motivated by a desire to improve service delivery by participating housing associations for their tenants. This is in recognition of the fact that associations have a vital role to play in "housing plus" interventions which contribute to improved social cohesion and help nurture a sense of community in areas which face challenges because of complex socio-economic issues.

The project is a model of best practice as it demonstrates the value of organisations coming together to pool their resources, knowledge, and expertise in order to find solutions to challenges affecting them all. Equally.

HAIP will undoubtedly impact positively on communities and individuals participating in the diverse range of activities and events, offered through the project. The outcomes and learning from the project will complement the TBUC Strategy, and the consortium hopes that their proactivity in looking for additional ways to affect positive change within good relations and community cohesion work, will inform future government policy.

In creating HAIP the consortium, partners recognised the lack of resources channelled towards established housing association neighbourhoods, to help tackle deep-seated issues associated with segregation.

In November 2017, the partners signed SEUPB'S funding letter of offer for just under £1million, marking the culmination of 18 months of partnership working

which involved a lengthy stage 1 and 2 application process, intensive liaison with SEUPB, and the commencement of project mobilisation work.

The HAIP will facilitate the participation of forty neighbourhoods across NI and the border regions of ROI through meaningful, purposeful, and sustained contact between persons from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

The key drivers influencing improved integration and understanding, during the lifetime of this project, will be the facilitation of information sharing and engagement, and the encouragement of participants to share their unique experiences, background, and culture.

This will be achieved through five individual, interlinked areas of activity and a coordinated 3-year programme, linking social housing projects

from Protestant, Catholic and mixed social housing communities in NI and cross border communities, to address common issues.

This approach will build coalitions of interest, joint working practices, capacity, and understanding between people who currently have little or no interaction with the other's respective communities..'

Project Testimonial:

Eamon Melaugh, Alexander House:

"I really enjoyed the visit to the prison. I found it fascinating, interesting, and enjoyable. It was very educational for the younger people. I enjoyed speaking to them about this. I reminded them that - no-one is born hating; it is the community into which they are born that influences this."

Outcomes and achievements

Challenging project targets have been set, by the partners, to maximise the opportunities and benefits of the project, in terms of reinforcing peace and stability.

Ongoing monitoring and assessment of the project is provided by a project Board and Steering Group made up of representatives from all 6 partners, with regular meetings held to ensure continued progress.

To date, just one year in to the project, the partnership has successfully delivered:

- 32 Community Audits with reports being presented
- 32 innovative interactive community workshops
- 11 community events held creating awareness and interest in the target areas
- 4 skills workshops have been held including committee skills training delivered to a group consisting of participants from diverse communities brought together by the project who have declared their desire to continue working and learning together.

- OCN accredited training to one group
- Study visit to a group consisting intergenerational and cross community participants.

Not only is this project delivering for communities on the ground, but the many different housing organisations involved have also forged a genuine and highly successful model of partnership-working, built on mutual respect. This has led to scoping further innovative ideas in the area of community empowerment, which will deliver meaningful benefits to those living in our communities over the coming years.

Milltown Meadows, Ashbourne, Co Meath

Clúid Housing Association

Statement of support

Clúid Housing, in partnership with Glenveagh PLC and Meath County Council, delivered a brand-new housing estate and community in Ashbourne, County Meath, providing much needed affordable housing to an area where little or no social housing had been built for over 15 years.



The surrounding area is predominantly privately-owned, residential housing; this has left significant demand for good quality affordable housing., particularly since there are currently 2,453 households on the Meath County Council housing waiting list.

At a recent launch of the scheme Minister English said:

“The provision of high-quality housing supports, to help individuals and families meet their housing need across all tenures, is one of the key objectives of ‘Rebuilding Ireland - an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness’.

The delivery of these much-needed homes in Milltown Meadows, Ashbourne is a tangible example of the importance of partnerships between Approved

Housing Bodies (such as Clúid Housing Association), the local authority (in this case, Meath County Council), and a developer in terms of getting homes built; furthermore, the delivery of these homes demonstrates this Government’s commitment to that objective. Developments such as Milltown Meadows will anchor strong communities, a performing economy and an environment of quality.

Milltown Meadows is a mix of two, three and four bed houses, with a very high spec finish, energy efficient heating and an A3 Building Energy Rating. The location is excellent and gives easy access to the city as well as a range of local services.”

Clúid has a very strong presence in Co Meath, with a total of 236 homes in management, and a further 100 homes in the development pipeline to be delivered in 2019. Without the working-in-partnership approach in place, none of this would be possible to deliver on.

Clúid funded this scheme using a government loan to leverage a larger bank loan from the Housing Finance Agency (HFA); these loans will be repaid using the rent paid by tenants (which is always affordable), and an availability payment from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHLG).

Glenveagh is one of Ireland’s leading property developers, which, in October 2017, floated Glenveagh Properties PLC on the Irish and London Stock Exchanges. Clúid have had a strong partnership with Glenveagh (formally Bridgedale Homes, backed by TIO/Oaktree) since 2015, having very successfully completed a number of social housing projects together.

Glenveagh and Clúid Housing have worked in partnership to source and develop projects specifically targeting social housing needs in Ireland. Both organisations have collaborated by entering into a Memorandum of Understanding, which shows a strong partnership commitment for the delivery of social and affordable housing. This is borne out by the fact that both Clúid and Glenveagh are exploring a future pipeline in the Leinster area - and by the fact that Clúid have also completed the acquisition of a further 39 social rented homes in North County Dublin in partnership with Glenveagh, with further projects in the pipeline.

Outcomes and achievements

Milltown Meadows has provided homes to 67 families who have been on Meath County Council’s Housing waiting list for, on average, 7 to 10 years.

Clúid’s housing staff worked in partnership with the Council to integrate the estate into the local community. Clúid has also worked in partnership with EXTERN for the resettlement and integration of 8

Syrian families from Ballaghderreen, Co. Roscommon, who recently moved into Milltown Meadows.

It is still early days for the new residents of Milltown Meadows but with the support and collaboration of all the various stakeholders involved, the positives of this innovative and inspiring housing project are already very much in evidence.



Thanks for attending, we hope to see you again next year.



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