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# HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK ANNUAL REPORT

**Housing**  
Executive



Supporting™  
Communities  
Empowering Society



CENTRAL  
housing forum

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# Housing Executive Chief Executive Foreword



**I'm sure you will agree that the report shows just how much great work there is going on in our neighbourhoods. I would like to extend a word of thanks to every member of the Housing Community Network who are working tirelessly to make community involvement a reality, for their invaluable contributions and continued support, and in the production of this report which illustrates the level of work and efforts of our communities.**

A thriving community is the cornerstone of a successful housing organisation. By fostering strong relationships, we not only improve their quality of life but also create a more vibrant and sustainable environment for everyone.

This report highlights how much support has been invested across all areas of Northern Ireland with case studies that demonstrate the many ways in which we have engaged, enabled and empowered our communities by listening to their needs, and acted upon their feedback.

By working together, we can create even stronger, more resilient, and inclusive communities.

**GRAINIA LONG**  
**Chief Executive**

# Housing Executive Chair Foreword



**As Chair, it gives me great pleasure to showcase this year's Housing Community Network report which demonstrates the hard work that is taking place in partnership with voluntary and community organisations across Northern Ireland.**

Over the past year I have witnessed the invaluable work that is happening locally to build stronger, more cohesive communities.

Engagement in our communities remains a priority for us as we continue to work closely with the HCN and other statutory and voluntary organisations to foster a community led approach in promoting positive relations within and between communities.

Building and maintaining relationships is more important than ever and I would like to offer my gratitude to members of the Housing Community Network, Central Housing Forum, Disability Forum, Youth Forum and Rural Forum for their commitment over the past year. I am also grateful to the support given by our partners to this work, and I look forward to seeing what lies ahead.

**NICOLE LAPPIN**  
**Chair**

# Central Housing Forum Chair Foreword



**It has been another busy year for members of the Central Housing Forum where we continued with our recognised and meaningful role to help the Housing Executive co-design and/or co-produce policies, procedures and services, where appropriate and where these affect tenants and communities across Northern Ireland. It should also be remembered that much of the work and interests of the Central Housing Forum continues to be impacted by the uncertainties following the ongoing cost of living crisis and the apparent lack of progress on the Social Housing Reform Programme. Ongoing work alongside the Housing Executive ensures positive development of their business/services for the benefit of local communities.**

Our involvement with the Housing Executive has led to influencing vital matters such as welfare reform and the Community Involvement Strategy review as well changes to policies and services. During the past year we reviewed the various subgroups to address important thematic areas such as digital inclusion, sustainable development and social value. sub-groups have also been created to focus on important areas of work including maintenance; quality, diversity and inclusion; fundamental review of allocations; cost of living; community investment.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our colleagues on the Central Housing Forum for their time and commitment over the past year and thank those who have stepped down recently. This included Janine Freeman, Valerie Reynolds, Marian Maguire. By the same token, we welcome new members who have come on board including, Jan Roscoe and Keith McCann.

Following on from the previous residential to update Central Housing Forum Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct to reflect the co-design and co-production work we are involved in, all Regional/Area/Local Housing Community Network Meeting's Terms of References & Code of Conducts are agreed and in place. This 'working with' and 'not on to' approach was previously solidified when the Terms of Reference was signed by the Chief Executive of the Housing Executive on behalf of the whole organisation.

Community representatives continue to occupy the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Central Housing Forum; "we are both extremely honoured to have held these positions during the past year and we thank our fellow representatives for their support and their contributions over the year. We also acknowledge the support and guidance of Supporting Communities as well as the continuing role played by Housing Executive members of staff and especially Caroline Connor, Deirdre Crawford, Jill Smyth, Gus Moore, Naoimh McArdle-McFall, Kirsty McCauley, Paddy McConnell and Tony Clarke who attended and serviced our meetings.

Over the forthcoming year we aim to strengthen all tiers of the Housing Community Network by building on the agreed Terms of Reference signed at all levels and aim towards consistency of the network in all areas, helping towards our goal of creating sustainable, vibrant and inclusive communities along with Supporting Communities and the Housing Executive."

**LINDA WATSON**  
Chair

# Central Housing Forum Report

## Central Housing Forum Members

<b>Mid &amp; East Antrim</b>	Jan Roscoe	<b>Mid Ulster</b>	Karina Murray
<b>South</b>	Keith McCann	<b>Rural Residents Forum</b>	Patricia McQuillan
<b>West</b>	Linda Watson	<b>Disability Forum</b>	Patricia Bray
<b>South Antrim</b>	Alan Johnston	<b>NI Youth Forum</b>	Paul Dynes Blair Anderson
<b>North Belfast</b>	Liam Wiggans	<b>Housing Executive</b>	Caroline Connor Jill Smyth Deirdre Crawford Gus Moore Naoimh McArdle-McFall Anthony Clarke Kirsty McCauley Paddy McConnell
<b>South &amp; East Belfast</b>	Bernie McConnell		
<b>West Belfast &amp; Shankill</b>	Renee Crawford Ian McLaughlin		
<b>South-West</b>	Siobhan McDermott		
<b>Causeway</b>	Sheila McWilliams		
<b>Ards &amp; North Down</b>	Stephen Mills	<b>Supporting Communities</b>	Colm McDaid Conor Flanagan Darragh O'Neill
<b>South Down</b>	Valerie Rooney		

**The Central Housing Forum was involved in many pieces of work throughout the last year. Noted below are a selection of key points:**

### **Review of the Housing Executive's Community Involvement & Cohesion Strategy (outgoing and incoming):**

The Central Housing Forum has been actively involved in the implementation of this crucial strategy and will continue to review it on an ongoing basis. As well as reviewing the outgoing strategy, the Central Housing Forum members play an instrumental role in helping to co-design the Community Involvement & Cohesion Strategy for the next 5 years. Engagement on this important piece of work is across the Housing Community Network structure and regions.

## **Community Conference:**

The Working Group made up of Central Members, Housing Executive and Supporting Communities staff meet on a regular basis to plan the annual conference. Building on the previous theme 'HELPP: Heat Eat Light People Power' focussing on help available to local communities through cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty, this conference focussed on community wealth building and The Community Involvement & Cohesion Strategy.

## **Review sub-groups:**

In 2023 Central Members reviewed the current sub-groups as well as recommending others that should be in place. Members continued to make a real positive impact on the various sub-groups regarding; Disability, Rural, Youth, Welfare Reform, Community Conference (Events), Digital Inclusion, CSE Benchmarking, Sustainable Development, Fundamental Review of Allocations, Community Involvement Strategy and Adaptations.

## **Engagement Session with the Housing Executive Board, Tenant & Customer Services Committee, Chief Executive and Directors:**

The Central Housing Forum has continued to engage with the Chair and Board of the Housing Executive as well as the Tenant & Customer Services Committee, Chief Executive and Directors. Members updated on the wide range of sub-groups they are involved in and discussed the achievements/benefits for local communities and where improvements could be made.

## **Online Housing Community Network Member's Forum**

Central Housing Forum members have been involved in constantly reviewing the Online Housing Community Network Member's Forum to make it as user friendly as possible. A view from community reps is essential as it continues to be rolled out to other levels of the Housing Community Network.

## **Customer Service Excellence**

The Central House Forum and the other tiers of the Housing Community Network played a crucial role again this year in terms of supporting the Housing Executive to maintain and improve their CSE accreditation. The Housing Executive was assessed as compliance plus in 25 elements of the assessment, which matched the best result to date in 2022.

## **Categories of Work:**

The Central Housing Forum continued to meet monthly; a hybrid option is available for those who could not attend in person.

The Central Housing Forum came together 13 times over the year and received updates with presentations on the following:

**Information:**

- Fundamental Review of Allocations
- Tenancy Sustainment Funding
- Interim Report on Damp/Mould
- Community Involvement & Cohesion Strategy Consultation Update and Reports
- Asset Management / Contracts Update
- Housing Executive Revitalisation Project (HER) – projection of Housing Executive stock investment requirements
- Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (CTOS) findings
- Customer Service Excellence
- Race Relations Support
- Direct Labor Organisation (DLO) Evolve Project
- Equality Diversity Inclusion
- Entry Level Strategy
- Community Involvement Strategy Review
- Social Value
- Patch Manager Role Review
- The Housing Executive Rebranding
- Strategic Building Safety

Consultations took place on Housing Executive Community Involvement & Cohesion Strategy and members received training on the online Housing Community Network Member's Forum.

On behalf of the Central Housing Forum Members, Patricia and I very much look forward to another busy and interesting year for the Central Housing Forum. We especially look forward to helping shape, co-design and implement the Housing Executive's new Community Involvement & Cohesion Strategy.

**LINDA WATSON**  
**(Chairperson Central Housing Forum)**



**PATRICIA MCQUILLAN**  
**(Vice Chairperson Central Housing Forum)**





## Belfast Region

# North Belfast



Community Involvement Grants  
**£19,936.92**



Community Cohesion  
**£51,162.37**



Community Safety  
**£48,000**



Community Lets  
**4**



Social Enterprise  
**£19,791**



Housing Executive Good Relations Officer Sean Brennan (right) meets Senior Youth Worker Sean McMullan and some of the young people and youth professionals who are working together to create a better environment for all residents.

## New Lodge Youth Centre

A project to help grow new friendships took place in the New Lodge and Limestone areas during August, supported by the Housing Executive. Young people from both communities took part in a range of activities to divert them from the possibility of engaging in anti-social behaviour at a contentious time in north Belfast. Throughout the specified week of target between the 2 youth organisations, the aim was to provide a holistic approach which would engage young people from both communities diverting them from the possibility of anti-social behaviour. These areas included interfaces such as Limestone Road, North Queen Street, Duncairn and Alexandra Park.

As the two youth organisations worked together to build a multi-agency approach to tackling issues or potential issues between the two communities and other neighbouring areas. This in-turn increased community confidence and engagement with the two youth organisations Highfield Youth Centre and New Lodge Youth Centre.

The project engaged young people in positive activities which encouraged them to take part in various further developmental opportunities beyond the summer months which helped to raise aspirations and a safer environment for all.



*Photography organisation Belfast Exposed received a grant from the Housing Executive for a cross-community project, See Our Voice, to help people in north Belfast improve their wellbeing. Housing Executive Good Relations Officer Sean Brennan (back left) is photographed with some of the participants.*

## **Belfast Exposed**

The project used photography to engage with people across North Belfast in the areas of New Lodge, Duncairn, Cliftonville and Tigers Bay engaging with people through community partnerships, who lives have been impacted with poor mental health through social and environmental multi factors ranging from bereavement through suicide, to trauma impacting from experiences of historical conflict legacy issues. The project consisted of 20 x 2-hour therapeutic photography workshops bringing 40 people, 16+ yrs, together to share their lived experience with others.



*(L to R) Sean Brennan, North Belfast Good Relations Officer, Sam McCaw, Aoife Laverty and Stephen McAllister on Springboards Our Lives Our Legacy project.*

## Springboard

Our Lives Our Legacy project brought together people from different backgrounds, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, by exploring the legacy of the conflict through their lived experience. The project is cross community engaging with young people aged 18-26 years old who are residents within areas of socio-economic need across North Belfast.

## Belfast Region

# South and East Belfast



Community Involvement Grants

**£20,343.80**

Community Cohesion

**£43,314.04**

Community Safety

**£77,144**

Community Lets

**1**

Social Enterprise

**£47,000**

*Community members enjoying the day.*

## Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group

The festival aimed to engage host communities in the area, Black Asian Minority and Ethnic (BAME), people with disabilities, young people and families. The event was so popular the year before and is inclusive to all. There were various activities including areas for arts and culture and a young people's educational area. The project targeted 3000 Housing Executive homes across South and East Belfast, engaging with communities such as Titanic, Ballynaveigh, Donegall Pass, Short Strand, and the Market area.



*Children from the local community enjoying some afterschool fun!*

## **Sandy Row Residents Association**

Sandy Row Residents Association received a Community Involvement Grant to run an after-school's project with children from the area. The group understood that in the current economic climate it was becoming increasingly difficult to find childcare options that are within budget for families. With the cost-of-living crisis the group established a project within the Sandy Row area for parents. The group believed that an after-school's project was beneficial for children of all ages, whether they're making new friends and burning off energy or they are getting through some difficult homework, there is a place for every child in an after-school club. For young children, it was an opportunity to play with friends and socialise with children from the community.



*Jason Nicholson and participants from Island Street Residents Group in partnership with Belfast City Mission getting their training certificates alongside, Lisa Hull Good Relations Officer for South & East Belfast.*

## **Belfast City Mission (Island Street)/Island Street Area Residents Group**

This project delivered capacity building training for local volunteers who deliver projects and activities for the community as part of BCM Island Street/Island Street Area Residents Group. This project enabled volunteers, to deliver services and activities to a wide range of people across the generations.

## Belfast Region

## West Belfast



Community Involvement Grants  
**£20,591.72**



Community Cohesion  
**£86,851.41**



Community Safety  
**£85,550**



Community Lets  
**4**



Social Enterprise  
**£21,670**



Stuart Lavery (left), Housing Executive, with Stevie Corr, Falls Community Council, Tommy Holland, Community Development Worker, Councillor Micheal Donnelly and Cónall O'Corra, Upper Springfield Development Trust.

## Upper Springfield Development Trust & Falls Community Council

School children in West Belfast chose the word “Believe” decorated with flowers for a piece of eye-catching wall art outside their school, which replaces a historical mural, with funding from the Housing Executive. The replacement of murals had been discussed with in the wider community for some time, and working alongside

the local primary school, John Paul II on the Whiterock Road, the project aimed for a keynote positive word set in a backdrop of bright and colourful flowers. Artwork like this helped to transform the area and gave everyone some pride in their community.



*Residents enjoying a festive evening.*

## **Action for Community Transformation (ACT) Initiative**

Residents got together to enjoy the annual Christmas festival which includes the Christmas tree switch on, with a special guest, UTV's Paul Clarke, and a Christmas parade led by Shankill's famous Raving Santa on his funky float. The project supported the celebration of local culture and traditions in a community-led event that brought together different artists and performers from the local community and included a petting farm, funfair, a charming Christmas market, brass band, and a live choir.





*Participants Catherine McCormick, Alec McCormick, Máire Scott, Daire Owens pictured with Pearse Tohill (nutritionist).*

## Lagmore Community Forum

The Forum ran two 6-week workshops with 10 participants on each group. The programme gave participants the skills and knowledge to make healthy nutritional choices to help improve their wellbeing. Each week there was a live cookery demonstration and nutritional information workshop. Participants received a pack with basic store ingredients to include spices, Public Health Agency 5 ways to Wellbeing leaflet and an apron. They also received a recipe book and access to a WhatsApp support group, and the participants learnt how to cook healthy on a budget. The project taught participants valuable skills.

## Belfast Region

# Lisburn Castlereagh



Community Involvement Grants

**£18,168.85**



Community Cohesion

**£50,562.46**



Community Safety

**£13,000**



Community Lets

**10**



Social Enterprise

**£18,255**



*Volunteers Poppy Brown and Keeley Walker help out at the Belgian stand at the Foods of the World Festival.*

## Resurgam Community Development Trust

Chilly winter weather made the delicious dishes on offer at the aromatic project in Lisburn very tempting.

Hundreds of visitors eagerly sampled recipes from many different countries at the event, which was organised by the Resurgam Community Development Trust and received funding from the Housing Executive.

Volunteers helped to serve out the tasty treats at the Highway Inn Bar and Kitchen at Hillhall Road, a community based social enterprise in Lisburn.

Foods of the World is one of a few projects that were held in the city to encourage good relations and helped ethnic minorities integrate with the local community. A range of nationalities were showcased including Germany, Belgium, Arabia, Poland, India and Fiji.



*The new shrubs are an addition to an existing wooded area popular with local people.*

## Live Life Well-Being Centre

A group of 18 young Lisburn people with additional needs have planted new hedges to create a pocket forest for the local community, lending a helping hand to the Housing Executive. Pocket forests are small areas of native plants grown near urban spaces, created by communities to improve biodiversity, soil, climate resilience and natural habitats.

Sporting trowels and spades, the enthusiastic 19- to 30-year-olds, from Live Life Well-Being Centre and Social Enterprises, got stuck into their task close to Ballymacash Sports Academy at Rushmore Drive.

An educational and environmental health and wellbeing project, these new shrubs are an addition to an existing wooded area, planted by the Housing Executive, where local people take walks and enjoy nature and fresh air.



*Spreading Christmas cheer amongst the community at their community funday.*

## **Killynure Community Association**

A Community Cohesion Grant from the Housing Executive led the way to Killynure Community Association holding a Christmas Festival. The attendance of diverse ethnicities and cultures to join in the fun and festivities, helped to break down barriers and strengthen cohesion between neighbours within the communities.

## South Region

# Ards and North Down



Community Involvement Grants

**£14,146.18**



Community Cohesion

**£64,177.58**



Community Safety

**£19,000**



Community Lets

**11**



Social Enterprise

**£20,000**



(L-R) Gus Moore, Assistant Involvement and Cohesion Manager at the Housing Executive with Billy Sproule, Chair of West Winds Development Association.

## West Winds Development Association

A community garden project in West Winds, Newtownards, helped residents of all ages get to grips with gardening. Locals had the chance to develop their green fingers at the community office thanks to a community grant from the Housing Executive. This funding was used for a project which brought the whole community together. Work started to transform the courtyard area of the community office into a space where people can gather and socialise, with the addition of a new seating area and a shelter. West Winds Development Association have made a real commitment to creating a garden which can be enjoyed by everyone. This has been achieved with things like raised planters, creating a space which is accessible and welcoming for all.



*Teams taking part in the tournament with Gus Moore, Assistant Involvement & Cohesion Manager at the Housing Executive.*

## Glen Men's Walking Football

Teams from across Northern Ireland have gathered in Newtownards for a Walking Football tournament aimed at increasing physical fitness and improving mental wellbeing. Now in its second year, the tournament organised by Glen Men's Walking Football have benefitted from a Community Involvement Grant from the Housing Executive. By getting men out together and engaged in sport, whilst also helping with their mental health, was the main goal of this project. Teams were welcomed from Bangor, Ballymena, Ligoniel, Lisburn and Newtownards for the tournament. With a range of teams from different areas it has really helped promote good cross-community engagement and cohesion. Alongside the tournament an information day was held with input from Ards Suicide Awareness, PSNI and Inspire Mental Health. A stall providing vital information about prostate cancer was also included. Bringing all these organisations together helped create an event promoting good physical and mental health for the players involved.



*Children from the local community enjoying trying out the new apple press machine.*

## **Portaferry Community Collective**

This project brought several community groups together to work in partnership to explore and celebrate the nutritional, health and wellbeing benefits of homegrown apples. The funding provided from the Housing Executive was used to purchase an apple press, crusher machine and straining bags to produce fresh apple juice. The project also featured a series of practical hands-on workshops in partnership with Portaferry in Bloom, Portaferry Men's Shed, local primary and secondary schools as well as local residents.

## South Region

# South Down



Community Involvement Grants

**£20,001.24**



Community Cohesion

**£25,372**



Community Safety

**£13,800**



Community Lets

**3**



Social Enterprise

**£20,000**



Members from Life Change Changes Lives on a daytrip to Montalto Estate

## Life Change Changes Lives

Members from Life Change, Changes Lives went on a day trip from Downpatrick using Down Community Transport for those without access to transport and those with mobility impairment. The group visited Montalto Estate in Ballynahinch, taking in Montalto House for a guided tour telling the history of the house, estate and involvement in the battle of Ballynahinch and the families who have inhabited it, followed by afternoon tea.

The group were intergenerational, non-religious, non-political organisation who sought to introduce our participants to new experiences to help them explore our shared history and build a better understanding of differing communities. The trip was designed to bring all together from differing backgrounds to an enjoyable experience they wouldn't otherwise be able to access due to finances, mental health or not having anyone to go with.





*Newry Street Unite brought the community together in a series of workshops to support community development.*

## Newry Street Unite

The project featured several events including Crafter Group facilitator for a Trash Fashion Project and material for the group to develop ideas to encourage and support upcycling and increase awareness on the relationship between fashion with emphasis, in particular fast fashion and the environment. A Health and wellbeing training programme with drum-based exercises was introduced and new uniforms for group volunteers who provide the backbone of our activities here in Newry Street Unite. Volunteers provide support across all community involvement and community engagement in the centre.

Newry Street Unite have developed a reputation of working with the local community to provide services for all including - parents and tots, children and young people, families, and older residents. The project provided resources to support their 10-year celebrations and support activities with the whole community, this helped the development of good community relations across the area, encouraged pride in the local community and built upon the work to provide services which counter sectarianism, racism and encourage outreach to all.



*(L to R) Doreen McArdle and Donna McEvoy from Knocknashinna Residents Association) with Deborah Finlay from Downpatrick Community Collective.*

## **Downpatrick Community Collective**

Downpatrick Community Collective received funding to host a family orientated outdoor event in conjunction with Knocknashinna Residents Association (KRA). The project offered multiple activities aimed at getting children, neighbours and friends together in one location whilst also using a shared space. The project helped improve community relationships and strengthen neighbourhood bonds within the general area.

## South Region

# South West



Community Involvement Grants

**£18,137.95**



Community Cohesion

**£9,657**



Community Safety

**£5,800**



Community Lets

**8**



Residents share their photographs with Housing Executive Good Relations Officer Christopher Spence (back, left).

## Gallows Hill Residents' Association

Christmas came early to Gallows Hill in Omagh this year with a festive feast to celebrate the photography skills of the area's older residents.

Residents showcased their work at the dinner after brushing up on their photography skills this year at classes provided by Gallows Hill Residents' Association and funded with a community grant from the Housing Executive.



*Assistant Area Manager, Annette McCarney and Good Relations Officer Christopher Spence with Sally Mulholland and Lorraine McPhilomey from Fox Park Residents' Association.*

## **Fox Park Residents' Association**

A Community Involvement Grant from the Housing Executive helped buy the digital equipment needed for Fox Park Residents' Association to kick-start the quarterly publication. The group purchased a laptop and printer to help with the design and production of the information, to be shared with all the residents.



*Halloween Extravaganza organised by Shandon Park Residents, a fun day full of activities and games that went on into the night, this followed the successful summer day only weeks before.*

## Shandon Park Residents

These projects were created as the community group saw a lack of participation in their community among ethnic minorities in the park. The project aimed to bring all communities together, working as one for the betterment of the area. These projects brought young and old together through a fun and activity day in the Summer and a Halloween Extravaganza in October. The older generations got to meet other residents and the younger generation got to mix and play games with kids from various nationalities. The groups vision was to ensure trust is formed by residents who have never met and will form a mutual respect for each other's traditions.

## South Region

# South



Community Involvement Grants

**£20,000.10**



Community Cohesion

**£124,379**



Community Safety

**£95,590**



Community Lets

**18**



Social Enterprise

**£10,000**



*The Housing Executive's Good Relations Officer Michelle Hazlett (centre) with Drumgor Detached Youth Project committee members Jackie McAlernon, Barry McCrory, Donal O'Hagan and Sorcha O'Hanlon.*

## Drumgor Detached Youth Work

Residents of all ages gathered to enjoy an afternoon of free activities and food at a community fun day in North Lurgan organised by Drumgor Detached Youth Work Project, with the help of a community grant from the Housing Executive. Young people from the area helped organise this wonderful fun day for the whole community to enjoy. They even received a big turnout and people of all ages gathering to enjoy the fun.



*(From left-right) Vikki Singer Marketing PWC, Alan McDowell Portadown Wellness, Linda Robinson, Business Development Manager PWC, Mark Ingram Housing Executive Area Manager Jordan Russell Edgarstown Residents Association and Connor Smith Social Enterprise Manager.*

## Portadown Wellness Centre

Portadown wellness Centre operate an educational Garden Centre called Empower Gardening & Educational Centre, they are now able to trade fully with the public offering a large selection of gardening products including trees, shrubs, seasonal plants, houseplants, composts, decorative stones etc. With a Social Enterprise Grant from the Housing Executive the group have been able to avail of 50 x 1 hour Business tuition fees to help their volunteers learn about business from a professional, along with administration and stationary costs to provide for their volunteers.

Portadown Wellness Centre offer the following services to the Housing Executive community. professional counselling, psychotherapy, solution focused hypnotherapy, reflexology, children's and young people's counselling, practical therapeutic activities including classes in Arts & Crafts, woodwork, cookery, baking, pottery & ceramics, Yoga, gardening & horticulture, sewing & fashion, as well as motivational and inspirational talks and workshops.



*(L-R) Area Manager Mark Ingham with Keith McCann and Maintenance Supervisor Colin Baker.*

## **Killicomaine Residents' Group**

A former fly-tipping site, described by residents in Portadown as an “eyesore”, has been transformed into a thriving community allotment. The Housing Executive-owned land is now home to a range of vegetable patches, thanks to their partnership with Killicomaine Residents' Group. This piece of Housing Executive-owned land has been completely transformed thanks to the hard work of Killicomaine Residents' Group and Housing Executive maintenance staff. The land had previously been used for fly-tipping and needed regular clearing. As a result, the piece of land was regarded by residents as an eyesore and was very difficult for Grounds Maintenance to maintain.



## South Region

# Mid Ulster



Community Involvement Grants

**£18,889.45**



Community Cohesion

**£33,689.40**



Community Safety

**£27,000**



Community Lets

**1**



*Housing Executive's Anne Marie Convery and Catherine Devlin with Shea McPeake*

## Bann Valley Community Group

A summer scheme in Clady, County Derry/Londonderry, is helping bring communities together with three weeks of fun-filled activities for young people.

Bann Valley Youth Scheme's programme at Bann Valley Community Hall has benefitted from Cohesion Grant funding. Children from Ukrainian and Syrian communities, who attended this summer scheme, have had the chance to form friendships with young people from the local area, this has greatly helped these children feel more settled and part of the community.



*(L-R) Declan Callen, Elaine Simpson and Declan Coyle from Parkview Community Group with Good Relations Officer Anne Marie Convery, Cathal Coyle and Siobhan Callen.*

## **Parkview Community Group**

A community garden in Pomeroy is gave residents the chance to brush up on their skills with a range of gardening and craft workshops last autumn and winter. Parkview Community Group offered the workshops after receiving a community grant from the Housing Executive. The project had been expanded further to include gardening and craft workshops for the wider community. This garden has become a focal point for the local community on the Parkview Estate and this project will help bring more people together whilst learning new skills.



*(Back L-R) Clare McCrystal, Anne Marie Convery, Gino Lupari and Malachi Cush with pupils Gabija, Jervika, Nikodem and Roholla.*

## St Patrick's Primary School

Children at a primary school in Dungannon have been busy exploring the diverse cultural heritage of their peers through a series of music, dance and art workshops.

St Patrick's Primary School is immersing pupils in Irish culture and cultures from countries around the world with the help of a Community Cohesion Grant from the Housing Executive. Celebrating the school's diversity is so important to them and they wanted to teach the pupils to respect the culture and heritage of others. The funding allowed the school to run this project which fosters better connections and meaningful relations between all the communities in Dungannon. Through song, dance and music the pupils enjoyed sharing their own culture and learning more about others. Some of the workshops were facilitated by talented musicians who have travelled the world.

## North Region

# South Antrim



Community Involvement Grants  
**£24,407.45**



Community Cohesion  
**£69,693.39**



Community Safety  
**£82,905**



Community Lets  
**7**



*Housing Executive's South Antrim Good Relations Officer Stephen Gamble and Joint Managing Directors of Bridge Association in Antrim, Jacqueline Barnes (far left, back row) and David Edmont (second from the right, back row)*

## Bridge Association

Participating in the George Best Community Cup, a soccer competition catering for players with learning disabilities, the five-a-side squad from the organisation are newly crowned champions.

The organisation provides vocational, work-based, educational training for adults with a learning disability and participating in the George Best Community Cup gave them a fantastic opportunity to showcase skills on the football field.



*Back row (L-R): Tyler Letson, Ryan Gallagher, Stephen Gamble, Housing Executive Good Relations Officer, Paul Johnston, Project Manager, Daryl Clarke, Project Coordinator, Iryna Lykshosherst, volunteer, Macauley Judson, young leader and Kailey Francey, young leader. Front row (L-R): Billy Snoddy, Chairperson, Jayden Mullan, Councillor Mark Cooper, Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. David McCrea, chair of Monkstown Jubilee Centre, Eva Bennet, and Anna Stitt, young women's ambassador.*

## Monkstown Boxing Club

Monkstown Boxing Club hosted the event, supported by a Community Involvement Grant from the Housing Executive, which aimed to foster positive local change. The project provides young people with a social outlet during school holidays, supporting wellbeing and providing opportunities to experience new activities without the financial strain on parents.



*Mutual respect all round...Students from St Benedict's College Caitlin McNeilly and Eva Mulvenna reflect on the work they completed as part of the Respect Programme funded by the Housing Executive.*

## **Children's Safety Education Foundation**

Thanks to the Housing Executive's Community Safety Fund, these schools were able to get new textbooks, E-books, worksheets and student surveys, which were adapted during lockdown. Developed by the Children's Safety Education Foundation, the project teaches teenagers about the consequences of anti-social behaviour and crime - including hate crime - on communities. Issues of health and wellbeing and the safety of young people were also tackled. The project aimed to encourage young people to challenge stereotypes, think about citizenship issues and consider opposing viewpoints. The Housing Executive has supported the delivery of the Respect Programme in a dozen schools across Northern Ireland in recent years, with thousands of students taking part.



*Members of Toome Men's Shed at the unveiling of their Train project funded by a Housing Executive community involvement grant are, Stephen Gamble, Housing Executive Good Relations Officer, South Antrim, Breige Mullaghan, Housing Executive Area Manager, South Antrim, Poppy Buchanan, Housing Executive Assistant Area Manager, South Antrim and (far left back row) John Duffin, Engineering Manager, D Engineering Ltd.*

## **Toome Men's Shed**

Toome Men's Shed applied to Housing Executive Community Involvement Grant Scheme for assistance in helping to complete the restoration of the Toome train, a feature outside their building in the main street in Toome. This project allowed them to expand and develop their capacity within the Toome area by bringing everyone together. Toome Men's Shed regularly has men attending their facility however, they are not limited to men and are open to women and young people who want to learn new skills. One of the aims of the project was to enhance participant's physical health through increased regular exercise and their mental health & wellbeing through increased social interaction. There were 40 participants both male and female from the local area.

## North Region

## Mid &amp; East Antrim



Community Involvement Grants

**£22,060.10**

Community Cohesion

**£34,628.67**

Community Safety

**£65,000**

Community Lets

**12**

Social Enterprise

**£1,457**

At the launch of the Doury Road mural in Ballymena are John Read and Roy McClean, Housing Executive, mural artists Carly Wright and Sam McAleese, Jan Roscoe and Roni Browne, Doury Road Development Group.

## Doury Road Development Group

A mural painted in Ballymena depicts the journey of the Doury Road estate from one with tough, longstanding issues to the vibrant, attractive, tree-lined housing area it is today.

Since it was targeted as an area for support through the Department for Communities' Areas at Risk Programme and Building Successful Communities Pilot Project,

it is now bringing even more light and colour to the estate as well as improving community relations. The artwork was designed by renowned artists, Carly Wright and Sam McAleese who have been heavily involved in transforming murals across Ballymena over the last 10 years. A Community Cohesion Grant has brought the stunning artwork to life at Alexander Park.





*L-R Carolyn Crawford Area Manager MEA-John Read GRO-Rosie McCrory Ballykeel 1 Moving Forward -Andrew Barlow Patch Manager- Seanan McToal Patch Manager -Chris Boyer Chair Ballykeel 1 Moving Forward and Geof Watters Ballykeel Moving Forward.*

## **Ballykeel Moving Forward**

The project allowed the group to get a new Christmas Mural for the Community. The group have displayed a Christmas mural for many years; however, the previous Mural was no longer fit for purpose. The artwork has always been a focal point in the community and provides an area where the group have their Christmas Light Switch on, enjoyed by people of all ages in the community. The project encouraged community engagement with people of all ages and aimed to build good relations within the area.



*Teamwork across the divide: Pictured with young footballers at the D3Mac cross-community football sessions held at Ballymena North Business Centre and supported by the Housing Executive Cohesion Grant.*

## D3Mac

This cross-community football project provided an opportunity for local children and young people to meet and to play football regardless of their religion, race or gender. The group were particularly keen to break the divide that stands between the north and south side of two predominant communities in Ballymena, from the catholic and protestant traditions. The sports programme enabled the group to further develop good relations as they provide additional projects as the young people continue to work together.

## North Region

# Causeway



Community Involvement Grants

**£19,755.12**



Community Cohesion

**£32,100.64**



Community Lets

**13**



*Joe McVeigh, Kelly Harbinson, Housing Executive Patch Manager, Raymond Brady, Dungiven Men's Shed Project Manager, Dessie Irwin and Gareth Doran, Housing Executive Good Relations Officer, Causeway.*

## Dungiven Men's Shed

New machinery, provided by the Housing Executive, is set to provide local school children with the perfect place to store their wellies this winter. Dungiven Men's Shed received a Housing Executive Community Involvement Grant to purchase machinery for their workshop in the County Derry/Londonderry town. Fittingly, one of the first projects these men crafted with their new 27-piece toolkit was a storage shed for

Drumsurn Primary School.

Many of the older tools weren't fit for purpose so the group were able to replace these and purchase a selection of tools which the participants had new experiences in building and learning new processes to create projects. The project was a huge success in helping participants to develop new skills.



*(left to right), Patricia McQuillan, Policing and Community Safety Partnership, Tori Calderwood, Manager of COAST, Sally McDonald, Treasurer Coleraine 50+ Forum, John McAuley, Northern Ireland Fire Service, Maud Anderson, Chairperson Coleraine 50+ Forum, Gareth Doran, Housing Executive Good Relations Officer Causeway and Rosemary McCaw, Secretary of Coleraine 50+ Forum. The Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens, Steven Callaghan of Coleraine 50+ Forum entertained an impressive crowd at their annual information day and tea dance funded by the Housing Executive.*

## Coleraine 50+ Forum

Groups from across the community enjoyed networking and exploring the services on offer for people over 50 at this community grant funded event held in the comfortable surroundings of the Lodge Hotel.

A broad range of agencies provided stalls at the event offering vital resources and information for all in attendance. After a delicious lunch an afternoon of dancing followed with everyone taking to the dance floor with music by Liam McLaughlin.



*Children from Ballysally meeting their namesake giraffe during a trip to Belfast Zoo funded by the Housing Executive through their Cohesion Grant.*

## Building Ballysally Together

The children from Ballysally had a great day out at Belfast Zoo, with the help of a cohesion grant from the Housing Executive. The tradition at the zoo of baby giraffes to have names of places with 'Bally' in the title continued when it was put to a vote and the name "Ballysally" as the clear winner. The day out was facilitated by the Building Ballysally Together group.



*Back row (from left) Joel Cromie, Gareth Doran, Housing Executive, Jenny Millar, Margaret Glendinning, Stella Boyd, Millburn Community Association, Billy Ellis, Millburn Community Outreach worker. Front row (from left) Karen Douglas and Marilyn Donaghy of Millburn Community Association.*

## Millburn Community Association

Millburn Community Association received a community involvement grant towards their intergenerational summer programme of activities, which included survival courses, beekeeping, arts and crafts and meeting goats for the first time. This funding enabled a two-week summer camp which ran for 40 young people, as well as trips away, drop-in activity sessions and a community excursion. All generations connected in the community and these ladies certainly achieved what they set out to by giving back in such a fun and creative way.

## North Region

# West



Community Involvement Grants

**£22,943.80**



Community Cohesion

**£145,931.22**



Community Safety

**£49,070**



Community Lets

**15**



Social Enterprise

**£58,000**



*Andy Mullan, Good Relations Officer for the West Area with Linda Watson CHF Chair at the Santa's Grotto in the Community Centre in Caw Estate, Derry/Londonderry.*

## Caw/Nelson Drive Action Group (CNDAG)

CNDAG transformed their community centre into a Santa's Grotto running for 2 days in December. Families from the local area were given their own slot to come and visit Santa's in his Grotto, receive a selection box and Christmas story book, have their photograph taken with Santa by a professional photographer and get a full colour photograph with a mount to take home.

The families were then able to visit Mrs Claus and friends in her kitchen to get refreshments and a gift bag. The project also provided some quiet slots at the end of each day for children with disabilities or special needs. 86 adults and 118 children attended the event and approximately 80% of these were Housing Executive tenants. The event brought the community together and created festive spirit.



*Know Thy Neighbour and Do Your Community A Favour programme participant Joanne Campbell shows off her angling skills to, (from left), Pauline McClenaghan, The Oaks Fishery, the Mayor of Derry/Londonderry and Strabane District Council, Patricia Logue and Andrew Mullan, Housing Executive Good Relations Officer.*

## The Oaks

Know Thy Neighbour, Do Your Community a Favour is an Oaks Fishery health and well-being project in Derry/Londonderry, which was awarded Housing Executive Community Grant.

The project created more cohesive local communities by providing safe, accessible angling facilities and group activities for everyone. Know Thy Neighbour, Do Your Community a Favour gave participants personal development skills which they could take back into the community and use to encourage others to be more cohesive, integrated, safer and together.



*From left to right: Conor Sharkey: Communication and Media Officer at NWMF, Al Albawab: Former Community Integration & Welfare Officer at NWMF, Beverly Simpson: Volunteer and Policy & Strategic Planning Advisor at NWMF, Lilian Seenoi Barr: Chief Executive Officer of NWMF, Idris Mohammed: Volunteer and former Committee member at NWMF*

## Northwest Migrants Forum

The project helped to advance race relations and good relations in NI. by engaging black, minority people & the wider community in meaningful discussions around race, racism and sectarianism, building knowledge and understanding of what it means to be an anti-racist and anti-sectarian. It increased racial literacy & helped people to identify specific manifestations of racism, and how it relates to sectarianism. The aim was to empower people & communities across NI to gain individual and collective knowledge so that they can recognise, understand and actively challenge racism & prejudice. They focused on developing relationships of trust, fostering respect for all ethnic minority groups and encouraging local groups to engage with them in capacity building around their histories, cultures and respect for their traditions.

# Northern Ireland Youth Forum

## Impact Report: Housing Executive Youth Forum Programme

### Overview

The Housing Executive Youth Forum successfully recruited 12 young people from across Northern Ireland, bringing together a diverse group, committed to making a positive impact on their communities. This report highlights the key achievements and outcomes of the programme, which focused on empowering participants through training, community engagement and social action.

### Key Achievements

#### 1. Housing Rights Training

- **Engagement in Training:** All 12 participants received comprehensive training in housing rights. This provided them with the knowledge and tools necessary to advocate for themselves and their communities effectively.
- **Outcomes:** Participants reported an increased understanding of their rights and responsibilities concerning housing, which empowered them to engage more confidently in discussions and initiatives related to housing policies and issues.

#### 2. Leadership and Community Development Training

- **Training Participation:** Each participant took part in training sessions facilitated by Supporting Communities. The focus was on leadership, community development, code of conduct, and committee structures.
- **Skill Development:** The training equipped the young people with essential skills to lead and participate in community initiatives. They learned how to organise, manage, and contribute to committees effectively.

#### 3. Social Action Project

- **Christmas Project:** The group successfully completed a social action project over the Christmas period, which supported over 50 young people and families in need.
- **Impact:** The project provided essential items such as food, clothes, toys, gas, electric, and hygiene products. This initiative not only supported those in immediate need but also raised awareness of community challenges and fostered a sense of solidarity and empathy among participants.





#### 4. Group Formation and Residential Experience

- **Residential Program:** The young people participated in a residential program to Sheep Island View, which played a crucial role in forming a cohesive group dynamic.
- **Benefits:** The residential experience allowed participants to build strong relationships, develop teamwork skills, and create a supportive network that benefited them moving forward on the project.

#### 5. Understanding of the Housing Executive

- **Educational Engagement:** Participants gained a deeper understanding of the Housing Executive and its structures.
- **Long-term Impact:** This knowledge equips them to engage more effectively with housing policies and advocacy efforts in their communities and community forums/working groups.

#### 6. Accompaniment and Community Interaction

- **Local Group Engagement:** Participants accompanied Good Relations Officers and Community Development Officers to local group meetings.
- **Outcome:** This experience provided insights into community operations and the practical aspects of community development work.

## 7. Participation in Housing Community Networks (HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORKS)

- **Networking Opportunities:** Attending HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK meetings allowed participants to connect with a broader network of community leaders and stakeholders.
- **Development of Professional Skills:** Exposure to these networks helped participants understand the importance of collaboration and communication in addressing community issues.

## Conclusion

The Housing Executive Youth Forum programme made a significant impact on its participants and the wider community. Through training, hands-on projects, and engagement with community networks, the young people developed critical skills and knowledge that will enable them to continue advocating for and supporting their communities. The programme not only empowered the participants but also made a tangible difference in the lives of those they supported. Moving forward, the Housing Executive Youth Forum is well-positioned to continue its mission of fostering youth leadership and community development across Northern Ireland, with the intent of integrating more young people in Central Housing Forum structure.



# Rural Residents Forum

This year the work of the forum has been considerable. The Rural Residents Forum (RRF) is made up of residents and tenants of rural housing areas from across Rural Northern Ireland. The forum is facilitated by Rural Community Network and Chaired by Mrs Patricia Mc Quillan (MBE).

The forum meets monthly and over the past few years it has been working hard to address the barriers to development of new social and affordable housing in rural areas. The future of many rural areas will be determined by their ability to provide suitable homes for the people who want to live there. If we are serious about balanced regional development, we have to ensure that rural areas have a ready supply of affordable and social homes so that people of all ages, abilities and income levels can live and thrive there.

They continue to meet with many Council Officials across Northern Ireland to support them in their work to deliver social homes in rural regions. We are currently working with two councils on their Local Area Development Plans.

In light of this, the RRF has also been working with the Rural Unit in the Housing Executive to identify the barriers to new build social housing in rural regions. Working with Department for Communities researchers from the University of Liverpool and University College London conducted a 9-month study into the delivery of social and affordable housing in rural parts of Northern Ireland. Funded by the Housing Executive the project involved in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including housing associations, developers and key policy facilitators. It culminated in roundtables with a broad range of housing groups. Social and affordable housing targets have consistently been missed in Northern Ireland during recent years and the purpose of the research was better understand delivery constraints and potential planning and capacity barriers.

We continue to support Housing Needs Test's in many rural areas across Northern Ireland. Working with local community leaders we have supported the Housing Executive to promote the tests and to hear directly from local communities about the needs of their areas for both affordable and social homes.

This year the RRF had a site visit to Carrickfergus to look at a social housing development which has piloted a modular build system to deliver homes at a faster rate, which are energy efficient and very highly insulated, meaning a lowering of running costs for those living there.

We are very grateful to the team at Positive Carrickfergus who also supported the learning for the RRF on the way in which they are transforming their community through community wealth building, using a strong community development approach to deliver change in their area.

As the cost-of-living crisis continues through last year and particularly through the winter, members of the RRF were involved in their own communities in promoting the uptake of benefits within their areas, supporting people to access hardship funds and emergency support. The RRF became a vital source of shared information and experience from which

learning, and knowledge exchange took place. The RRF are keeping an eye to levels of rent arrears in Housing Executive's rural dwellers to ensure we are informed of any changes in the arrears levels as a result of policy change or the cost-of-living crisis.

We have worked hard to connect with advice service providers to not only support greater benefit uptake in rural regions but also to gather the experiences of rural dwellers to feed into policy makers/ service providers to ensure their work is rural proofed.



*(L-R) Orla McCann, Supporting Communities, Eoin McKinney Rural Unit, Naoimh McFall, Community Involvement Officer, Kelly Donaghy Rural Community Network, Rural Residents Forum members Mary, Patricia and Clifford alongside Aidan Campbell, Rural Community Network out on a best practice visit to a social supermarket.*

As the Housing Executive sets about working on its new Community Involvement and Cohesion Strategy the forum and its members have been at the forefront of advising the Housing Executive on how it could improve its processes for better tenant participation.

Post-Covid there are huge challenges in securing and sustaining volunteers right across the community and voluntary sector. The RRF has put out a number of calls to address gaps in our representation and we are keen to support new faces to come and join us in our work.

The RRF also supported the articulation of the rural voice on consultations such as ‘Fundamental review of Allocations – Domestic violence and intimidation points’ and the Equality Impact Assessments on the Stormont budget allocations, as well as supporting local communities on issues of hospital closures, hospital service changes and GP service cuts. The RRF was very vocal on the proposed cuts to rural transport provision as well as responding to requests for presentations to the groups on the Co-ownership fund, the Housing Executive’s Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, issues of community wealth building and community led local housing development opportunities.

With the return of Stormont in February we found ourselves working hard to get our issues on their agendas. In this coming year we recognize that those on the lowest incomes are likely to be the worst affected by climate change and are the least likely to be able to afford to make the transition to green energy and transportation sources. We will continue to lobby Stormont on issues of a Just Transition for rural dwellers and we will continue to seek support from government investments to support the transition to green energy options for those living in rural regions.

# Disability Forum

## Disability Housing Forum Reshapes Housing Policy in Northern Ireland

The Disability Forum consists of disabled people from social housing areas who work in partnership with the Housing Executive. The Forum meets regularly and is a unique example of co-design and co-production. The Forum has made significant strides in ensuring that disabled people co-design housing policy and are directly involved in decision-making processes about housing and housing development. Over the course of 2023-24, the Forum has made remarkable progress, driving significant changes in partnership with Housing Executive in housing policy and advocating for the rights of disabled individuals. This report highlights the Forum's key achievements in policy influence, strategic collaboration, and advocacy, underscoring its impact on housing in Northern Ireland. 2023-24 was an excellent year for the forum who secured the following achievements:

### Shaping Policy

Disabled people actively contributed to the UK Disability Action Plan, highlighting the critical need for accessible housing and the adverse effects of budget cuts on housing provisions.

Forum members gave evidence to the UN Committee of Disabled People Special Inquiry, providing evidence of the extent of the housing emergency in Northern Ireland and the impact on disabled people and advocating for greater investment in accessible housing.



Members of the Housing Forum have engaged with Ministers, Departmental Permanent Secretaries, Senior Officials and MLAs on the need to invest in Housing.

Members of the Housing Forum travelled to Westminster to meet with MPs, advocating for housing rights and pressing for increased investment in accessible housing.

The Forum assisted the Housing Executive to design the Community Involvement and Cohesion Strategy.

The Forum assisted the Housing Executive to develop and implement the Disability Action Plan.

The Forum has informed a new approach to Housing Adaptations.

Members of the Forum informed the Executive Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

Members of the Forum engaged with GREVIO and provided evidence on the importance of ending violence against disabled women and girls and the lack of accessible emergency accommodation.

Members of the Forum are represented on the DFC fuel poverty and the just transition reference group.

## Collaboration

The Forum has established connections with the All-Island Women's Forum, focusing on the urgent need for accessible emergency accommodation for disabled people in an All-Ireland Bases.

In partnership with Belfast City Council, the Forum co-designed and delivered a social supermarket to support disabled people during the cost-of-living crisis.

Members of the Forum participate in the Hate Crime Stakeholders Forum to address the displacement of disabled people from housing estates due to hate crimes.

The Forum contributed to UK Wide policy to end Food Poverty.

The achievements of the Disability Forum in 2023-24 demonstrate the power of co-design and partnership in creating meaningful change. By working closely with the NI Housing Executive and other key stakeholders, the Forum has ensured that the voices of disabled people are not only heard but are central to the development and implementation of housing policies. The Forum's dedication to shaping policy, driving collaboration, and advocating for the rights of disabled people has set a strong foundation for continued progress in the coming years. As the Forum looks to the future, it remains committed to building on these successes, further enhancing the role of disabled people in decision-making processes and ensuring that housing in Northern Ireland becomes truly inclusive and accessible for all.

# Supporting Communities

## Impact 2023-2024 Our work with the Housing Community Network

### Supporting Groups

- 557** HCN groups supported
- 29** new groups established
- 1939** instances of CDO group support

### Facilitating Partnerships

- 108** Inter-Agency Panels/ Housing Forums
- 125** Estate Inspections across all 13 Areas
- 197** meetings across Central, Regional, and Area levels

### Keeping the Record

- 228** sets of meeting minutes sent
- 350** members using the online forums
- 45** groups supported to register with Charity Commission NI

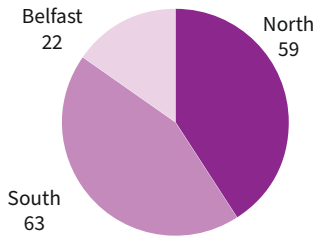
### Central Housing Forum

- 12** CHF Meetings
  - 30** Working Group Meetings
  - 98** instances of support to members
- 

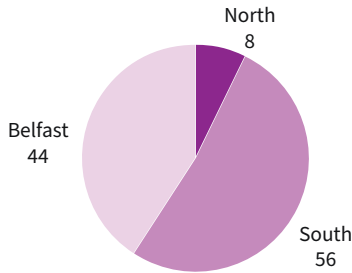


## Regional Breakdown

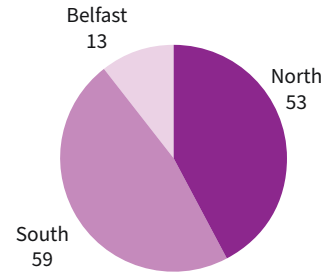
**144** Area, local HCN & local IA meetings



**108** local estate-based IA meetings



**125** Estate Inspections



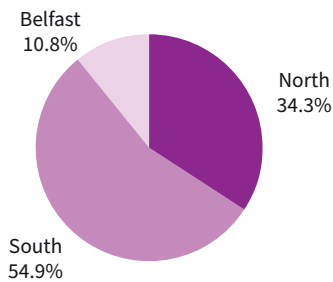
## Funding Support

A total of **£1 million** secured in funding

**142** funding applications supported of which **130** were successful. **That a 92% success rate!**

**10** funding fairs held/attended

### Regional Breakdown of funding secured



### Additional Funding Support Provided:

**719** funding support phone calls

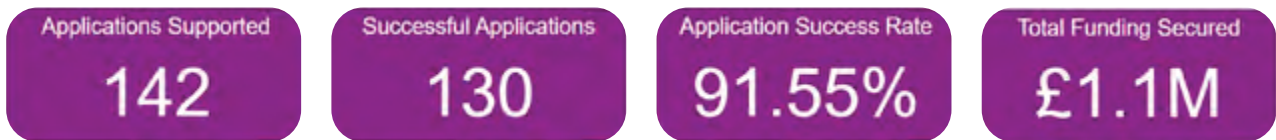
**623** funding support meetings

**92** Grant Finder searches

**12** Funding Bulletins produced

**12** NIHE Assessment Panels for Community Involvement Grants

## Funding Social Value



## All About Us

### SROI analysis in the North Region

All About Us provides support to help young people aged 8-18 make friends and learn new skills. The group caters for those with a diagnosis of autism and/or associated conditions and those going through the diagnosis process, their siblings and their families.

The ASD Support group received £4000 to provide a Family Fun Day for 2000 people in their community thereby reducing social isolation, increasing participation, improving health and preventing discrimination.

**For every £1 invested, this project returned £3.55 in social value**

## Killicomaine RG

### SROI analysis in the South Region

Killicomaine Residents Group received £4,950 to run a summer scheme for 60 young people in Portadown. They catered for all ages and offered a wide range of programmes such as Hype Learning, a community fridge, Hype Tots, a community garden, training and much more.

Outcomes included more people participating in community life, improved mental health, young people supported to do well in education, and increased volunteering and community participation.

**For every £1 invested, this project returned £3.86 in social value**

## Markets DA

### SROI analysis in the Belfast Region

The Markets Development Association received £4,299 to purchase a shed and outdoor equipment benefitting 2500 residents.

The equipment facilitates community clean-up days, the upkeep of the group's community garden, and is available for use by residents through a lending out scheme. Outcomes include improved community health, increased volunteering and participation, and more efficient use of resources.

**For every £1 invested, this project returned £3.93 in social value**

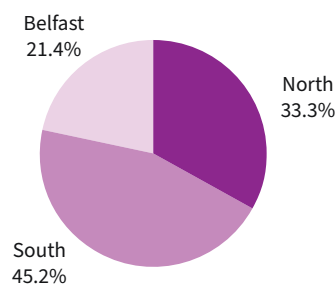
## Capacity Building

### Training delivered to HCN members

We held **47** training sessions for **484** HCN members covering important governance, funding, impact and other topics.

**42** participants gained an OCN NI accreditation.

### Accreditation by area



## Digital Inclusion

Our work with the Housing Community Network

### Getting the HCN Online with Members Forums

We held **34** training sessions for **249** HCN members helping them to register and get started using the Online Members Forums.

**350** HCN members are now registered to use the online forums.

## Spreading the Word

Our work with the Housing Community Network

We produced **25** editions of our popular Ezine which circulated to **1604** people on average and **2** online editions of SCENE Magazine.

We have continued to grow our social media presence organically with no paid advertising by posting **1605** times across our channels.



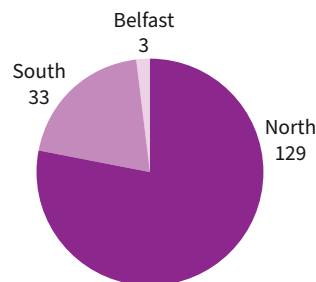
\*These figures show the total number of followers and the per cent increase for 2023-24 from the previous year. The last figure is the average number of monthly web users and the growth in website users since last year.

## PAYE Support

Our work with the Housing Community Network

Our Admin team provided **16** groups with PAYE support for **165** employees this year.

Groups in the North Region are the biggest users of this service with **10** groups and **129** employees on the payroll.



## **What groups are saying about us:**


**“Our group wouldn’t be here without Supporting Communities.”**

**“Someone is always at the other end of the phone to help.”**

**“Supporting Communities doesn’t get the praise it deserves and sometimes goes under the radar in terms of the support they provide.”**

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