

Our Impact 2023-2024

Housing Rights

Steven's story

Steven was the eldest child in the family. He was a student, and he lived with his mum and younger siblings in their social home. Steven's mum moved out of the home for a while. Steven took on responsibility of caring for his younger siblings and paying the rent. He also became responsible for paying back rent arrears that had built up.

Steven was struggling with the situation. Because he was a student he was not entitled to benefits to help with rent. The family were at risk of losing their home.

Housing Rights for Young People service took on Steven's case. We successfully advocated for a Universal Credit claim to be approved on the basis that he was responsible for the other children in the home. We also applied for a Rate Rebate to cover the rates until his mum is able to return back to the family. This meant they could stay in the home, and eased some of the extra responsibility that Steven had to take on at such a young age.



Supporting the public

People faced mounting pressures due to a shortage of housing, rising mortgage interest rates, and a worsening cost of living crisis. Our frontline services continued to support those struggling with homelessness and housing issues.

How we helped:

1,307
households were prevented from becoming homeless



We provided advice, advocacy and representation services to **12,006** households on **50,244** housing issues

We supported **94** households facing repossession action from their mortgage lender through our Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

We secured **17** successful outcomes in strategic cases



949
households (casework) received advice, advocacy and representation



90
PRS disputes resolved through mediation



303
referrals to Housing Mediation Service



1684
landlords helped by landlord helpline



Supporting the public

Housing circumstances improved for:

82%

helpline clients



90%

casework clients



100%

Housing Rights for
Young People
clients

79%

helpline clients were
better informed to make
appropriate housing
choices

71%

of helpline clients
reported their
wellbeing had
improved

We secured funding from The National Lottery to expand and continue our service for Young People.

We worked with young people to develop a Young Peoples' Reference Group to shape our young people service and to provide a route for young people to access training and placements with Housing Rights.

Continued excellence in digital



provided digital advice to

3,973
contacts

We delivered online advice
for the public via our website
to 247,034 users

We began a digital project to
improve our use of software
so that things are easier for
our team and the people who
use our services

**Housing
Rights**
for young people

Supporting frontline practitioners'

With increased pressure on those frontline advisers who help people with housing problems, we supported them by providing advice, legal information and training.



100%
practitioners' felt
better equipped to
provide housing advice
to their clients

2012
practitioners'
supported via our
helpline

103
practitioners' attended
our practitioners'
forum

1105
learners attended
our training

Supported agencies
to deliver advice to
2736
households

94%
of trainees had
improved skills and
knowledge

Celebrating
— 20 YEARS —

of the Community Housing
Advice Partnership

**Housing
Rights**

We marked two decades of collaborative working at an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Community Housing Advice Partnership at which we built support for a Housing Advice Quality Standard.

**Our CHAP project
supported 51 frontline
agencies across NI**

Influencing policy and legislation

We actively sought opportunities to influence decision makers and secure positive changes to policy and legislation

Secured 5 positive changes to legislation, policy or practice including:

- change of the rules on access to help through Support for Mortgage Interest which widened access to people on Universal Credit
- increase in funding for new social housing following policy advocacy with our sector partners
- Local Housing Allowance was realigned to the 30th percentile of affordability

Involving experts by experience

With support from CFNI, we worked with women who had experience of domestic abuse and homelessness and with our partners North Down and Ards Women's Aid to develop an immersive training course on housing and domestic abuse.

We held sessions with experts by experience to involve them in the research stage of shaping our new strategic plan.

"Home is the foundation of everything"

Informing through research

We commissioned research into vulnerability in the mortgage market and held a policy roundtable with key officials from relevant government departments, agencies, and UK Finance to inform policy recommendations.

We worked with an expert stakeholder group to design a research project which will provide insights into how the focus on combating climate change can assist low income private renters and home owners. The research will be published in early 2025.

Private
Rented
Sector

2023

We hosted our 10th
Private Rented Sector
Conference

Renters' Voice!



Continued their engagement with tenants across NI focusing on groups of private renters who are at greatest risk of homelessness in the private rented sector



Surveyed other private renters to shape a policy paper on 'Protecting private renters in the cost of living crisis'



Conducted an NI wide 'mystery shopper' exercise into illegal letting fees

Housing Rights

We help people with their housing and homelessness problems through our helplines and advice work.

We use their experiences to bring change and improvements with our policy work.

We educate and inform others working in the housing and advice sectors to help their clients.

All our work helps us to achieve our vision **when everyone has a home**



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