



Age Friendly Strategy

2024 - 2027

Improving lives through our homes, care and support.



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Everyone has a place

Foreword

by John McLean, CEO

For over 45 years we have been innovating and working with communities to enhance the lives of older people while promoting their rights and interests.

Through our housing, care and support our older people remain active, productive, independent and socially connected across generations for as long as possible.

We are proud to have introduced sheltered housing, telecare, housing-with-care and floating support across Northern Ireland in response to the needs and preferences of older people, their families and carers.

Through a rich vein of talented and professional staff and partners we have jointly managed to 'shift the dial' in terms of the quality of life-fulfilment that our valued older citizens can come to expect and be entitled to.

More are thriving as they are able to embrace the added benefits of social support, work, learning and an overall more active lifestyle.

We aspire to deliver the highest quality, person-centred and professional services that we can. Our values driven staff and award winning schemes have been recognised for the commitment, diligence and creativity that our older people experience.

Working together with our partners we want all our customers to see Radius as their preferred partner with whom they want to grow old.

We are acutely aware that our customer needs and expectations do not stand still and just as they evolve so we too must continue to seek new 'firsts' and expand our offering.

We are operating in very challenging economic times with the outlook for government capital and revenue funding, a cause for concern.

Despite these challenges we believe through quality engagement with our older people, collaboration with our partners and the hardwork and innovation of our people, we can continue to add more life to years and give our older people the positive future they deserve. We have set out our vision together with our latest plans in this our latest Age Friendly Strategy (2024-2027).

We commend Radius's strategy to you for your consideration. We would welcome your feedback and if you would like to share your thoughts or comments please feel free to share with our Senior Head of Housing, Martin Meek martin.meek@radiushousing.org.

Yours sincerely

John McLean OBE, Chief Executive

Bobby McConnell

Tenant Board Member

As a Radius tenant living at a housing development for people over the age of 55, I became a member of the Radius Tenants Executive Committee and was elected Tenant Board Member in April 2024.

As the Tenant Board Member I am pleased to share the many reasons why I not only enjoy living here but also take great pride in my work as a representative of our community.

Our housing scheme is more than just a place to live; it's a thriving community where neighbours look out for one another, and where we all share a sense of belonging. The diverse backgrounds of our residents bring a unique richness to Radius housing schemes, fostering a warm and inclusive environment where everyone feels at home. It's this sense of community spirit that makes living here such a rewarding experience.

In my role as Tenant Board Member, I have the privilege of working closely with Radius, acting as a bridge between residents and management. This partnership allows me to advocate for the needs and concerns of our tenants, ensuring that their voices are heard and their ideas considered in the decision-making process. Whether it's improving communal spaces, addressing maintenance issues, or organizing community events, I find great satisfaction in knowing that my efforts contribute to enhancing the quality of life for all who live here.

What I enjoy most about this role is the opportunity to further positive change and build strong relationships within our community. Radius has been incredibly supportive, valuing the input from tenants and working collaboratively with us to help create a better living environment. Together, we have been able to implement initiatives that not only address immediate concerns but also set the stage for long-term improvements.

It's really fulfilling to see the actual impact of our collective efforts and to witness the growing sense of pride that residents have in their homes and surroundings.

This was really evident recently when I worked with staff in helping Radius achieve acknowledgement for the great work that takes place daily between tenants and the organisation and I am pleased to announce that Radius are the first Housing Association in Northern Ireland to receive 'Gold' status for their efforts in tenant participation!

Living in this housing scheme and serving as a Tenant Board Member has deepened my appreciation for the importance of community involvement. It's not just about having a roof over our heads; it's about creating a space where people feel safe, valued, and connected.

This Age Friendly Strategy shows Radius' commitment to older tenants and as the Tenant Board Member, I strongly believe that implementing an Age Friendly Strategy is not just a worthwhile cause, but an essential step toward creating a more inclusive and supportive community. Our aging population deserves to live with dignity, safety, and access to resources that promote well-being.

This approach not only benefits our seniors but also strengthens the community as a whole by promoting intergenerational connections and ensuring that our neighborhood remains vibrant, resilient, and accommodating for everyone.

I am proud to be part of a community that actively participates in shaping its future, and I look forward to continuing to work with Radius and my fellow tenants to ensure that our housing scheme remains a wonderful place to live for everyone.



“Our over 55 housing scheme is a thriving community where we all share a sense of belonging.”

Bobby McConnell - Tenant Board Member

Introduction

Radius Housing is a large social enterprise and Housing Association, managing over 13,500 homes and supporting close to 33,000 households.

Following the merger of Helm and Fold Housing Associations, Radius Housing was constituted in 2017 bringing together two organisations with over 80 years of combined experience and expertise in the delivery of high-quality older people services throughout Northern Ireland.

Since the 1970s, Radius has been at the forefront of championing sheltered housing for independent living and have become synonymous with this innovative model promoting independent living, security and positive well-being empowering older people to thrive.

Having pioneered the sheltered housing concept in Northern Ireland, Radius is the largest provider of independent living housing managing 4,100 properties.

Over the years we have continued to develop our older people offering to provide housing with care. We are a leading provider, offering support for frail elderly residents, those with dementia and individuals with a learning disability.

In the late 1980's we introduced our Staying Put service which assists older and disabled private tenants by offering free practical advice and support to adapt their homes through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Grants Scheme.

Through making homes safer and more comfortable, thousands of people each year are avoiding the need for residential care or prolonged hospitalisation.

This support further expanded in 2011, with the introduction of a new Floating Support Team who provide support to over 1,300 older people each year within Radius Category 1 Housing Units and the wider community.

Over the last 30 years Radius has also developed and expanded our Connect 24 service providing personal alarms and sensors which are connected 24/7 to our call advisor team in Holywood, County Down.

The service now extends to over 30,000 households across Ireland providing support to anyone concerned about personal well-being, home safety or anyone who is anxious about managing on their own.

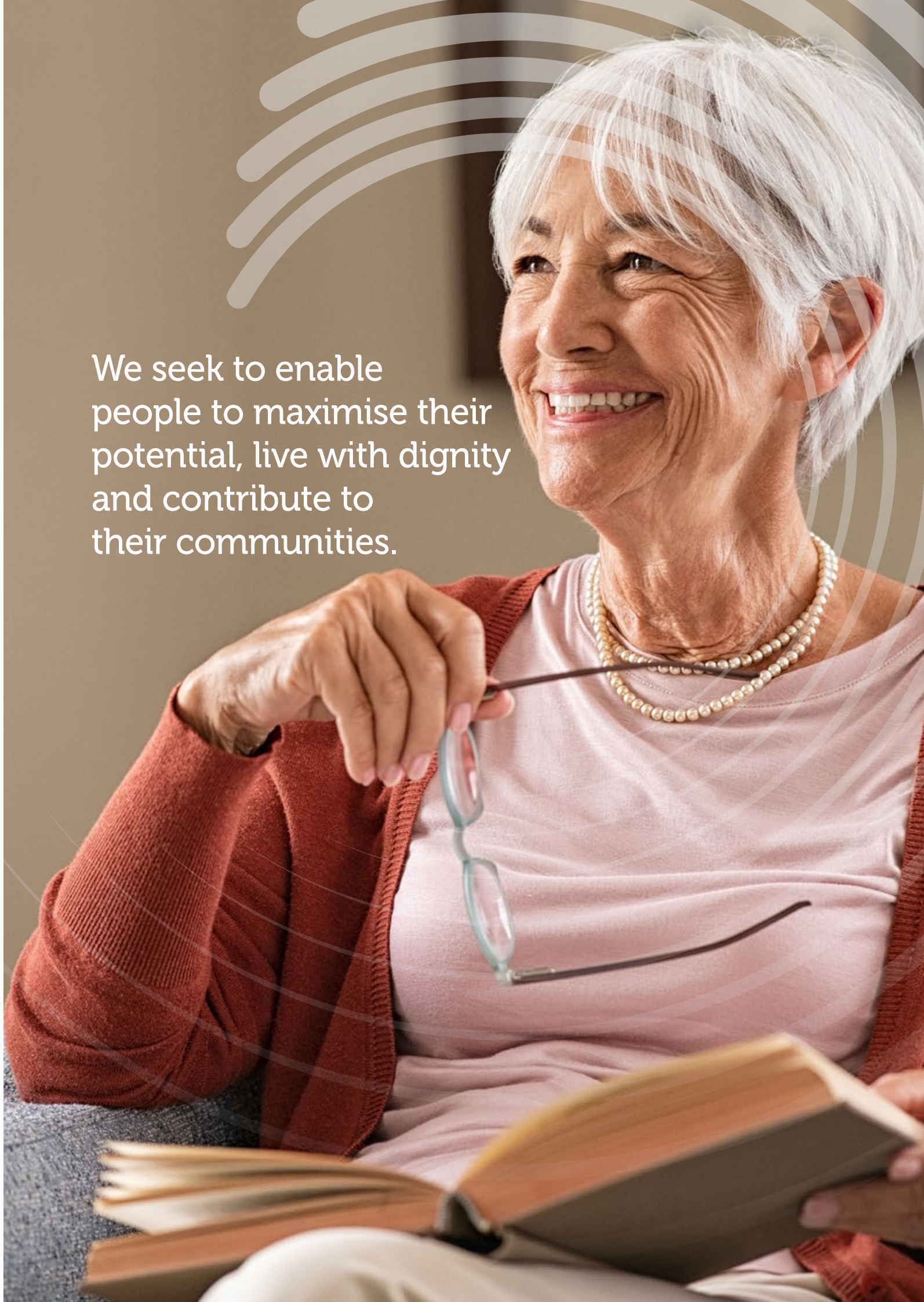
Ultimately through our work we seek to enable people to maximise their potential, live with dignity and contribute to their communities.

We believe that everyone is entitled to a place they can call home that is safe, secure and affordable.

From this firm foundation, their health and quality-of-life prospects will be greatly enhanced, enabling communities to thrive.

As our population continues to age, Radius will continue to innovate our offering to improve the lives of our older tenants and residents through hard work, creativity, and collaboration.

Radius is the largest provider of Independent Living housing, managing 4,100 properties.



We seek to enable people to maximise their potential, live with dignity and contribute to their communities.

Purpose

Our purpose is to improve the lives and communities of our older tenants and residents through our homes, care and support.

Our strategy is dedicated to addressing the unique needs and preferences of older individuals by promoting independence, community integration, safe housing & health services, social inclusion, personalised support, whilst providing mechanisms for continuous feedback and improvement.

Our commitment is to create an environment where older persons can thrive, feel secure and actively participate in their community.

The Radius Age Friendly Strategy provides an overview of how older person services have developed and expanded across the organisation.

It outlines our current position and details how we intend to implement and monitor these before concluding with a detailed action plan with our specific commitments and targets for completion.

Our action plan outlines our specific response to this strategy purpose and is underpinned by our core values of great places, customer first, empowering people and assured business.

People age at different paces and may remain active and engaged well into their 60s and beyond.

While official definitions, like the one in the Commissioner for Older People Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which sets “older persons” at 60+ provides a framework, Radius embraces a future-focused approach.

We acknowledge the vibrant “active ageing” population aged 55 and over and aim to be proactive in addressing their needs to ensure a thriving future for everyone.

To reflect this vision, and better serve both our current and future needs, our strategy focuses on people aged 55 and over, aligning with our Independent Living services.

However, we also recognise that there may be a vast range of abilities between the age of 55 and some older tenant groups, therefore within our action plan certain objectives will be more specific to those within a different age grouping.

Our Age Friendly Strategy will be delivered based on the below objectives, in line with our over-arching strategic themes:

CUSTOMER FIRST

Well-Being & Independence focus through quality housing, support services and technology.

GREAT PLACES

Quality Housing that can be tailored to individual needs in a safe and inclusive environment.

EMPOWERED PEOPLE

Empowering Customers to “age in place” with familiar surroundings and tailored assistance from effectively trained and resourced staff.

ASSURED BUSINESS

Long-Term Sustainability through partnerships, financial stability, and environmental responsibility.

Everyone has a place



Our purpose is to improve the lives of our older tenants and residents through our homes, care and support.

OUR CURRENT SERVICES

Radius offers a range of tailored accommodation and support packages for older tenants and customers based on their needs.

Everyone has a place

What does accommodation for older people look like at Radius?

Radius is built on a strong foundation of successful initiatives that empower us to continually improve the lives of the 6,600 older people we serve across Northern Ireland.

Radius offers a very wide range of accommodation options and support packages for our older tenants based on their needs:

Age in Place Accommodation

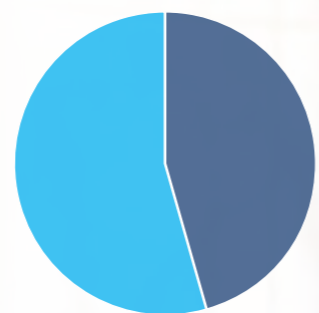
- Independent Living
- Category 1
- General Needs

Housing with Care

- Supported Housing
- Dementia Accommodation
- Frail Elderly

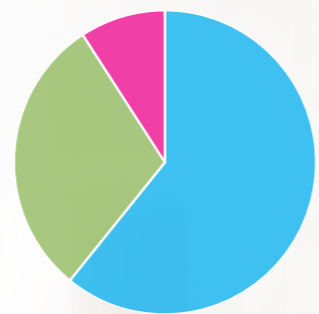
Wider Community

- Day Care Centres
- Floating Support
- Radius Connect24
- Staying Put

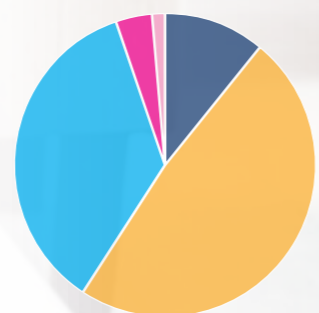


Age Range	People
Under 55	5612
Over 55	6655

Across all tenancies in Communities & HWC



Property Type	Stock Profile
General Needs	8346
Independent living	4138
HWC & Supported Housing	1229



Property Type	No. of over 55s
Category 1	734
Category 2	3193
General Needs	2358
Housing With Care	261
Supported housing	81

We offer a wide range of accommodation options for older people

Independent Living

Also known to many in Northern Ireland as Sheltered Housing, Category 2 Housing or 'Folds'

These schemes, mainly built in the 1970s/1980s, are still seen as a very popular option for older people.

Independent Living Schemes provide tenants with their own self-contained apartment/ bungalow with access to onsite communal facilities such as a laundry, hairdresser room and lounges for social activities with their neighbours.

Our services have been developed to meet the housing and support needs of older people.

They are designed to promote quality of life and to help older people maintain an independent lifestyle in an environment that breaks down barriers of social isolation and promotes overall well-being.

A key objective of this service is to actively encourage residents to maintain their independence.

Each of our schemes has a Scheme Coordinator. The Scheme Coordinator's primary role is to provide person-centred housing support to each resident in a way that respects their dignity and confidentiality whilst promoting independent living.

To achieve our objective of providing a safe environment for independent living, each property is fitted with an emergency 24-hour Connect 24 call system. When triggered, this alerts either scheme-based staff or Connect 24 call advisors who will respond and provide assistance.

Tenants are encouraged to participate in the broad range of social activities within their scheme and also in the wider community through organised events and activities.

Overall, Independent Living can offer a balanced lifestyle with the right mix of independence and support, contributing positively to the residents' physical, emotional and social wellbeing.



90%
Satisfaction

90% of tenants aged 55+ are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live



89%
Helpful Staff

89% of tenants surveyed told us we have friendly and approachable staff.



90%
Recommend

90% of tenants aged 55+ are likely to recommend Radius to family and friends



88%
Safe & Secure

88% told us that Radius provides a home that is safe and secure.

We encourage our residents to maintain their independence



Category 1

Our accommodation for over 55s offers independent living with additional support for those who need it.

Traditionally, these schemes are either self-contained apartments or bungalows with less support than Independent Living Schemes as there are no onsite staff member to assist tenants. The additional 24/7 access to our Connect24 service ensures peace of mind.

However, Radius Category 1 tenants do still receive housing support through regular contact with their Floating Support Co-ordinator who will visit tenants within their own homes.

In recent years, there has not been the need to develop further independent living schemes, however, we have continued to develop Category 1

schemes and where possible we try to build these within larger mixed housing developments to assist with creating more cohesive communities.

We were pleased to be part of a pilot for a new modern style of Category 1 accommodation in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI).

The 'HAPPI' principles design at our Moylinney Scheme incorporates items not included within traditional Category 1 properties such as the provision of communal facilities, increased natural light levels, ventilation, circulation space and storage.

“One word to describe Moylinney Court is peaceful, my home is so quiet, it feels private. I am now getting excited about becoming involved in the tenants group and joining in with the events.” - Resident, Moylinney Court

General Needs

This type of accommodation is not specifically tailored to older people and can be family homes, apartments, or bungalows.

Nevertheless, at Radius we also recognise that there are many older people aged 55 and over living in this type of accommodation and therefore this strategy also relates to this group.

The above chart shows that over half of tenants living in Radius properties are over the age

of 55 when you also consider all types of accommodation.

Our aim would be to support older people to remain independent in their homes, offering assistance with adaptations to promote independence and offering access to our welfare advice service to maximise their income.



Over 55s Housing - Award winning Moylinney Court, Belfast

Housing with Care

Radius Housing with Care service provides 24 hour person centered care and support for older people living with dementia helping them to remain as independent as possible.

Our Housing with Care Services provide accommodation for people who require care and support with all daily living needs. The small flatlets offer individual living space along with additional communal facilities.

“Great place, great staff, make you feel very welcome, can’t praise them enough.”

- Relative, Spelga Mews

A trained and highly skilled team of staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide care and support. This includes support with medication management, personal care, full meals provision to meet individual dietary requirements as well as a range of activities to provide opportunities for social interaction, friendship and engagement with others.

Our Housing with Care Team use a holistic approach when providing services for people with dementia, or older people who can no longer live independently.

Together we agree a programme of personalised care and support with residents, taking into account their individual needs and personal preferences.



Families and/or next of kin are encouraged to be involved as we all strive to support the person to maintain interests and engagement with the local community.

Radius Housing with Care services are regulated by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority.

I want to say from the bottom of my heart that I really appreciate the care and dedication of all the staff. I feel it gives me a connection to the outside world.

- Resident Barn Halt Cottages

Persons eligible for Housing with Care may be entitled to funding support by their local Health and Social Care Trust, which is assessed prior to placement.



100% of tenants and residents are happy with the care and support received.



91% are happy with the general environment and daily activities.

Floating Support Service

For people aged 55+ who wish to continue living independently in their own homes.

Radius Floating Support is a service to help improve the overall quality of life for people aged 55 and over and is funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Supporting People Programme. The service provides tenants within Radius and the wider community with assistance and support to remain at home for longer.

Our Floating Support staff are trained to provide a person-centred approach in the delivery of practical support and advice to meet identified housing support needs.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my day to the Opera House, and meeting such friendly people. The whole event was so well organised.”

- Floating Support Service User

Currently our team supports over 1,300 older people with these numbers increasing each year.

Our team provide services to our Category 1 tenants. We also work very closely with other partners such local Health and Social Care Trusts to provide a valuable service to residents who they identify as needing housing related support.

Radius also offer a private pay option for those living in the community who feel they would benefit from some support within their own home. This is a very worthwhile service that we hope to grow over the next number of years.



100% feel their quality of life and well-being has benefitted by receiving this service.



In May 2022 our Floating Support Team were tasked with an exciting new Hub and Spoke pilot involving a cluster of Radius independent living schemes and private service users within the Newcastle area.

This service provides floating support to 12 service users in the South Down community and 8 tenants from our Lawnfield Court scheme, using our facilities at both Glen Fold and Donard Fold in Newcastle as hubs to provide older people with social opportunities to improve their general well-being.

The pilot scheme has been a success, operating at full capacity and achieving positive housing related outcomes for our service users.

Where housing support needs are identified, we will continue to consider options for expansion within all areas of the floating support services.

Supported Housing

Radius provides Supported Living services for adults with dementia, complex needs and adults with learning disability.

Supported Living provides a housing solution for people, with the assurance of a trained and highly skilled staff team, to provide support and care to meet the tenant's individual needs.

Each tenant will have their own dwelling, Radius currently provide bungalows, cottages, flatlets each with a range of additional communal living, garden space.

In addition to their dwelling, those living within supported living have access to additional support services, including, catering, domestic, laundry, support and care.

Radius have two levels of supported living, one which has support and care staff available 24 hours a day 7 days a week and others which have this support available from 8am to 10pm after which, Radius Connect 24 helpline service will respond to any tenant alerts.

Each tenant will have a separate individualised support and care plan which will reflect the areas that they require help with to continue living independently.

This may include help with paying bills, reporting repairs, shopping, cooking, personal care, medication, and engaging in activities within the local community.

Radius Supported Living services are regulated by Supporting People and those which provide care are also regulated by the Regulation and Improvement Authority.

Tenants may be entitled to housing benefit and supporting people payments to help fund the accommodation and support. Support can be provided to apply for these benefits prior to any move.



Day Care Centres

Radius has two Day Care Centres for adults with dementia.

These services provide a safe, welcoming and engaging hub for those with a dementia diagnosis to meet with others providing an opportunity to make new friends, enjoy social interaction and a varied programme of activities.

A trained team of staff are available to welcome the service users, ensuring they are supported and cared for during the day.

A hot main meal, tea coffee and snacks are provided throughout the day to meet the persons dietary needs.

A person-centred plan of care and support is agreed with the person/next of kin which takes into account their interests and preferences.

During the day the persons carer can avail of a period of respite from their caring role, knowing that their loved one is in a safe environment and enjoying the company of others.

Radius day centres are regulated by the Regulation and Improvement Authority and are funded by the person's local Health and Social Care Trust.

 **100%**
Satisfaction

100% of residents and relatives are satisfied with the care, support, staff, meals and activities.

“The family are very happy with the Day Care Centre. We know that Mum is well looked after and she looks forward to going each week.” - Relative, Seven Oaks



Radius Connect24

Radius Connect24 provides a range of technology enabled support services to both corporate customers across the housing and health and social care sectors and to individual clients throughout the island of Ireland.

Our focus is on maintaining independent living. In our view, staying safe and well at home with easy access to support when needed is key in enabling people to age in place both when at home but also whenever out and about in the community.



Established in 1993, Radius Connect24 currently provides services to over 20,000 households throughout the island of Ireland and has a sector-wide reputation for leadership, innovation, and quality, evidenced through its involvement in the TEC Services Association (www.tsa-voice.org.uk)

Radius Connect24 handles over 1,000 calls per day from its base in Holywood, County Down and the service is available 24/7, every day of the year.



99% of customers were impressed with our call response time.

Radius Connect24 supports anyone of any age who is concerned about personal well-being or home-safety, or who may simply feel anxious about managing on their own.

A personal alarm is a quick way of getting help when needed at the press of a button.

Once an alarm is activated the caller is connected directly to the Radius Connect24 Response Centre where one of our specially trained call advisors will offer immediate reassurance and support.

The call advisor will assess the situation and arrange an appropriate response. This could mean contacting family members or neighbours or in the event of an accident or injury contact emergency services.

Additional sensors can be added to the alarm system which help support people with a wide range of conditions – support for anyone at risk of falls; support for person living with dementia or epilepsy; These sensors will automatically trigger a call in the event of a critical incident.

As an additional support, Radius Connect24's outbound health and wellbeing check call service enables calls to be made to clients mobile or landline at the same time every day via an automated call.

If the client needs help or doesn't pick up the phone, the Radius Connect 24 advisor follows up with a call.



Our Connect24 team provide 24/7 support, 365 days a year.



Staying Put

Supporting homeowners and private tenants adapt their homes to maintain their independence.

We believe that adapting or improving a home makes a major difference to someone's home life.

We see the comfort and suitability of your home as essential and not a luxury.

Our vision is to help people to live independently in safe and accessible homes, so they can continue to live with dignity in their own homes for as long as they wish.

Our Staying Put service offers free (Government Funded) support and advice, helping those wishing to access Northern Ireland Housing Executive Grant Assistance, to complete a disabled adaptation or improvement to the home.

Our experienced case workers can guide you through your disabled facilities grant application, providing practical support throughout your home adaptation.

Even a minor adaptation can make a major difference to someone's life.

Each year Staying Put:

- Completes over 800 visits to new clients
- Submits over 400 grant applications ready for NIHE approval
- Assists in the satisfactory completion of over 350 disabled grant adaptations
- Engages in Customer Satisfaction Services inviting feedback to help us improve the service



81% would have found the grant process difficult if Staying Put had not been available.

Adaptations can make a major difference to someone's life



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Our Age Friendly Strategy aims to address the growing need for adequate housing solutions specifically designed to meet the evolving needs of our ageing population.

Everyone has a place



Strategic Context

Population ageing is an irreversible global trend (United Nations, 2023) and it is predicted that by mid-2028 the proportion of the Northern Ireland population aged 65 and over will be 20% overtaking that of children under 15 (19.6%) for the first time ever.

It is also projected that the population of Northern Ireland will age at a faster rate than the rest of the UK.

The Northern Ireland Cohort of Longitudinal Aging (NICOLA) study carried out by Queens University estimated that by 2048 almost half of the Northern Ireland population will be over the age of 50, with 1 in 4 children born here today predicted to celebrate their 100th birthday.

For society, policy makers and housing providers such as Radius, this presents immediate challenges now and into the future. Consequently, societies and providers of older person services must adapt their policies to cater to these needs.

Our Age Friendly Strategy aims to address the growing need for adequate housing solutions specifically designed to meet the evolving needs of our ageing population.

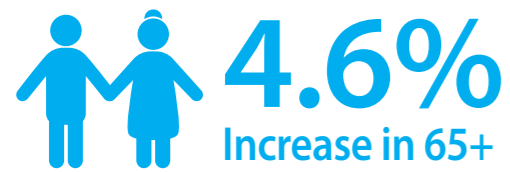
We cannot do this on our own, therefore, through collaboration we will work to create supportive environments that empower older people to age comfortably, independently, free from isolation, financial hardship and with dignity.

Recent research by Age NI, has shown that 1 in 3 older people in Northern Ireland said that they 'sometimes or always' experience loneliness.

Likewise, the Loneliness in NI, 19/20 (NISRA) research found that loneliness is more pronounced for renters (58.4% lonely), those without internet (52.9% lonely) and those who have lived at their address for less than a year (46% lonely).

The Radius' Social Index Survey (2023) results has found that our independent living schemes can help foster connections and combat social isolation among older adults as well as offering flexibility, choice on the services they receive in an environment that helps reduce social isolation and promotes healthy lifestyle choices and general wellbeing.

Many of our housing developments incorporate communal spaces and amenities which foster opportunities for social interaction and through our Age Friendly Strategy we will aim to help further reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation among our older service users.



The proportion of the population aged 65+ has increased from 13% in 1997 to 17.6% in 2022.



The population aged 85+ has increased from 40,200 in 2021 to 41,100 in 2022.

1 in 4 children born today are predicted to live to 100 and beyond

Funding

Independent Living schemes are partly funded by the Housing Executive (NIHE) Supporting People fund and research commissioned by NICVA in 2015 found that for every £1 spent from the Supporting People program generates a saving of £1.90 for the public purse.

Furthermore, the program generates many other benefits which have been highlighted by the NIHE in their Supporting People Strategic Plan 2022-25.

Whilst the ongoing funding is welcome it must be noted that the lack of inflationary uplifts from 2007/08 has placed significant financial pressures on Housing Associations who have had to bolster this shortfall to ensure the continued delivery of this service.

There are some difficult to let schemes with many others which are between 30 - 40 years old and require major investment and planned works to comply with changing building and health & safety regulations all of which places additional and growing pressures on the delivery of this valuable housing model moving into the future.

The higher levels of care and support provided by Radius at our Housing with Care schemes, continue to be an integral part of the overall Housing, Health and Social Care solution for older people.



Reliance on these community-based services, with 24-hour staff available to respond to tenant/residents care and support needs, have been essential to support hospital discharge, respond to bed blocking and meet the housing and care needs of those identified as living at risk in the community.

Five of our Housing with Care Schemes receive special needs management allowance (SNMA) grant funding with the care element of housing with care, day care and the care element of supported living all being funded by the local Health and Social Care Trust budget for older person's care.

Every £1 spent from the NIHE Supporting People Program generates a saving of £1.90 for the public purse.

The Trusts receive their funding from the Department of Health, who also set the regional tariff/ weekly charge for Housing with Care.

Whilst a health care uplift has been applied year on year, Radius as part of the Independent sector forum, IHCP, continue to engage with the Department of Health, requesting a more realistic regional rate which is reflective of the true cost of provision of Housing with Care.

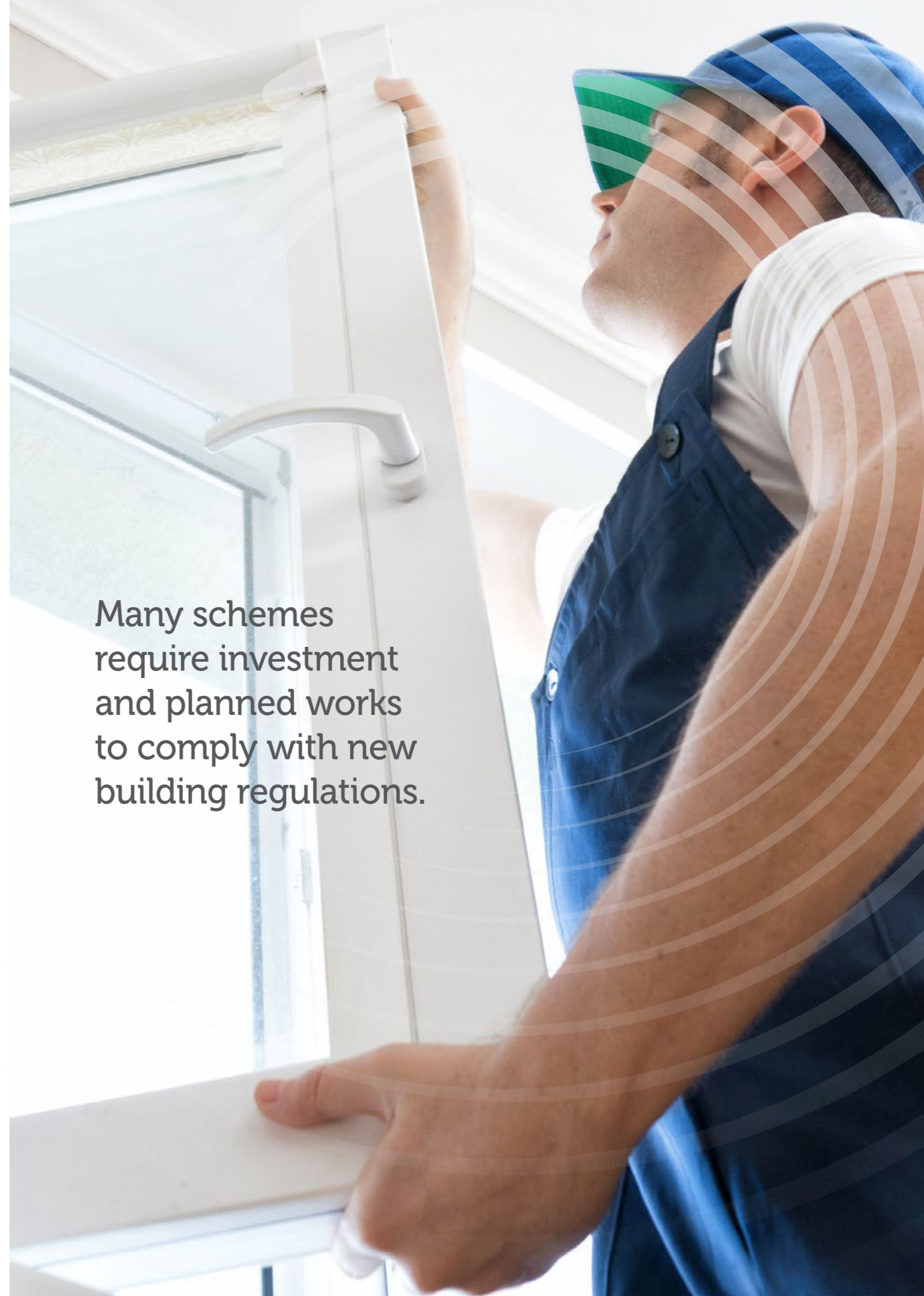
Although recent Health and Social Care uplifts are welcomed, they continue to fall short of what it costs to run modern day services.

There also is no differential in rate to reflect the uniqueness of delivering care and support services to those in a dementia setting.

The majority of the services' operating costs are associated with staffing, which are driven by national living wage increases.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact remaining costs, with food, energy, servicing, insurance etc. rising significantly above the uplift's applied by the Department of Health and Local Health and Social Care Trust's.

Many schemes require investment and planned works to comply with new building regulations.



Our Independent Living Schemes are effective in combatting loneliness and social isolation.

Community Environment with communal spaces and activities to encourage resident engagement.

Organised Activities such as lunch clubs, hobby groups etc, which provide regular opportunities for social interaction.

Safe & Secure environment allowing tenants to feel safe to socialise.

Reduced Barriers to activities and facilities which are close at hand to promote easy socialisation.

Proximity to Peers usually of a similar age where you can share experiences, fostering connection and reducing isolation.

On-site Support access to on-site support via a Scheme Coordinator during working hours to provide a sense of security, reduce isolation and support planning.

Independence with Support where tenants can maintain their independence with access to support and community.

Independent Living Schemes

Over recent years the tenant profile within our Independent Living Schemes has been changing with residents covering a wider age demographic as well as presenting more complex care and health needs.

To highlight these changes within the sector, Radius jointly commissioned research with Supporting People using the Provider Investment Fund (PIF).

The report by Fiona Boyle Associates in 2021 identified concerns recognised by front line staff and made recommendations for measures that could be implemented to assist with tackling the complexities and challenges faced within schemes.

Furthermore, the research highlighted the complex nature of some schemes and emphasised the need for a more joined up approach between Housing Professionals and Health and Social Care to address the needs of tenants more effectively.

The outcome of this study intended to augment the strategic evidence base that underpins Supporting People's ongoing strategic needs assessment.

It also provides practical advice and guidance for housing managers on the ground to more accurately measure the levels and range of support currently being provided and identify gaps in service provision.

Importantly, the learnings and recommendations continue to assist Radius in the development of innovative and transformational plans to respond and make a difference to older people's lives and their experience of living in independent Living accommodation.

The report informed our decision to restructure the Communities Department to establish a dedicated Independent Living Team from April 2024.



Organised activities provide regular opportunities for social interaction.

Housing Demand

Demand for housing with care, day care and supported living remains consistent, with Health Trust keyworkers, next of kin and Housing Executive complex needs officers being the primary referrers.

Void losses within the service can occur for many reasons, at the end of the person's life, or if their needs change, necessitating a change to their care and support provision,

The weekly cost and impact of any void loss, of housing with care and supported living services necessitates that assessments and allocations are efficiently and effectively managed.

The management team continue to promote and raise awareness of the care and support services Radius provide to the referring agents and local communities to ensure these are utilised to meet and support older people and their carers.

Demand for independent living reflects broader societal changes and evolving preferences among older adults.

With advances in healthcare and an increased emphasis on independent living, many seniors now prefer to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, aided by in-home care services and modern assistive technologies.

Additionally, the stigma sometimes associated with independent living schemes can be perceived as a step towards loss of autonomy, when in fact these schemes are very diverse and provide many with a chance to downsize, have additional support if desired whilst having the freedom to live full independent lives.



Our older tenants are a very diverse group



Our strategy will ensure our accommodation is modern, fit for purpose and remain a safe option for older tenants

55+ Accommodation - Knock Road, Belfast

Defining an Older Person

The Housing Executive's Older Persons Strategy highlights the difficulties in defining an older person. It states, 'Older people are not a homogeneous group and there is no stereotypical older person.'

At Radius we recognise that our older tenants are a diverse group and range greatly in age and as such our strategy endeavors to address these varying needs and challenges whilst maximising the opportunities available to this age range.

Whilst Our Age Friendly Strategy is the next stage in Radius ensuring our accommodation and services are modern, fit for purpose and remain a safe option for older tenants.

The action plan included within this strategy outlines our specific response to the current strategic climate, aligns with the Radius "golden thread" and is underpinned by our core values of great places, customer first, empowering people and assured business.

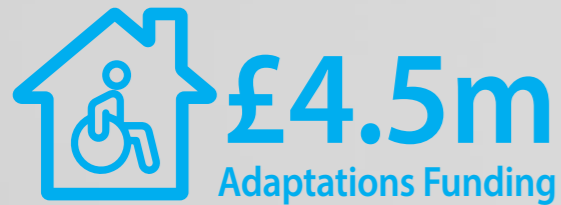
It aims to grow partnerships between the range of existing activities already available while also developing new opportunities for older people living within Radius accommodation.

In conclusion, an Age Friendly Strategy is essential for responding to demographic changes, promoting financial stability, ensuring healthcare and social support, and fostering an inclusive environment that values and empowers older individuals.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS

Customer First

Empowering Independence



Empowered over 250 homeowners and private tenants to access over £4.5 million in DFG funding for adaptations.



Connect 200+ users monthly to our personal alarm service, providing peace of mind and security.



Secured £1.3 million through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to deliver 482 Occupational Therapist recommendations for Radius tenants.



Completed 183,237 automated well-being calls in 2023/24.

Combatting Social Isolation

Our Floating Support Team support **570** older people annually in the Northern Trust and South Down Communities.

The team also provide floating support to **730 Radius CAT1 (55+) properties** across the whole of Northern Ireland.


Provide **weekly social activities** in our Independent Living and HWC schemes.

Great Places

Building Connections



Supported 1,309 older people through T:buc projects and events across 14 areas.

 Communal Wi-Fi throughout our Independent Living Schemes.

Tackling Fuel Poverty



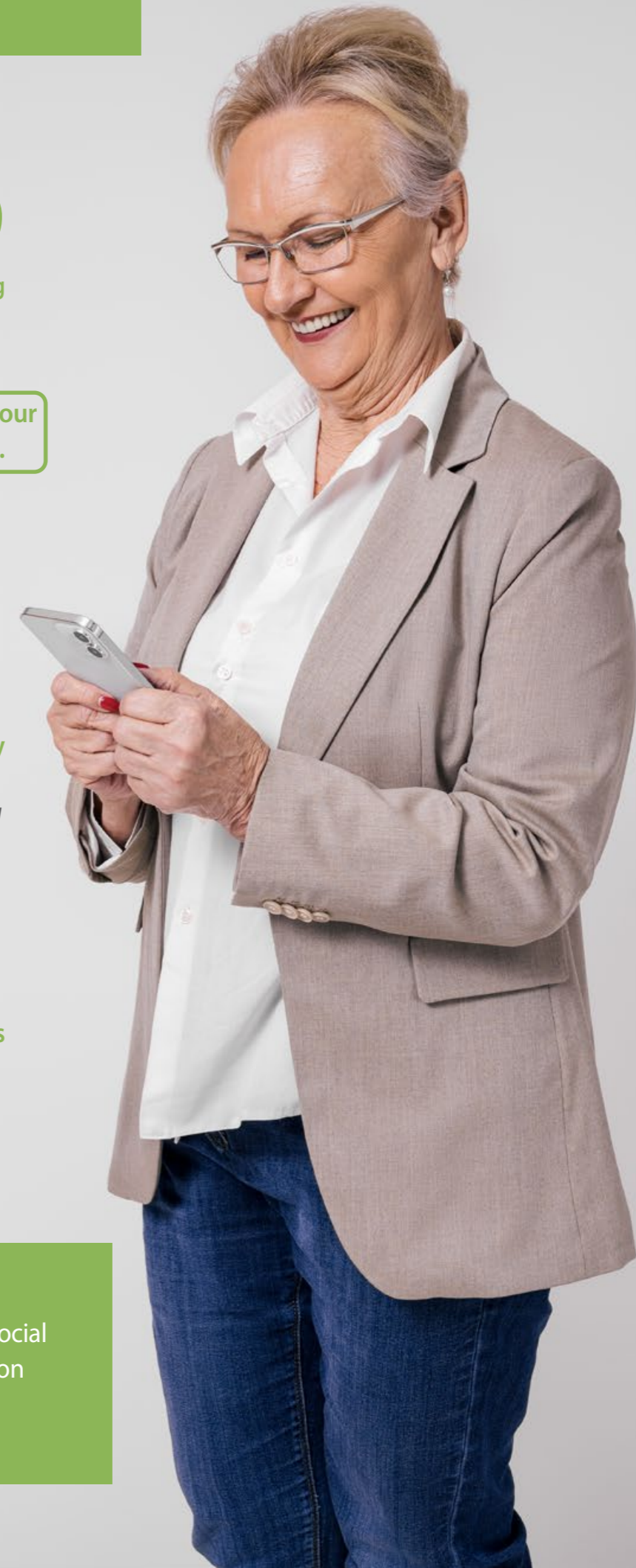
Invested £11.5m in 23/24 through Multi Element Improvements to provide increased thermal efficiency and reduce utility costs.



On average invest £9.2 million on improvements to our accommodation for over 55s with over 90% of tenants satisfied with the improvements made

Housing With Care

Provide Day Care Services to tackle social isolation x 3 day centres supporting on average 670 older people annually.





Empowered People

Maximising Financial Security



£672k

Recovered for Older Tenants

Our Welfare Advice Team recovers an average of £672k+ for 400 older tenants each year.

Empowering Tenants



£14k

Community Funding

Award an average of £14k annually in Community Chest Grant funding for tenant projects in independent living schemes.

Building Digital Skills

Launched our Digital Inclusion Strategy in 2022, empowering older adults to stay connected.

Delivered digital training to 89 tenants aged 55+ in 23/24, bridging the digital divide and promoting independence.

11 tenants in Independent Living Schemes gained access to the internet thanks to donated digital devices from Ability Net.

Delivered digital training in 7 Independent Living Schemes in partnership with Ability Net & OFCOM.

Assured Business

Award Winning Communities for over 55s



10

Award Winning Schemes

Green Flag awarded to 4 Independent Living Schemes, with the involvement of tenants, demonstrating commitment to creating beautiful green spaces.

Prioritising Tenant Feedback



74%

Aged 55+

74% of our interested tenants are aged 55+, actively shaping our services through regular communication and engagement.



INFORMED

AUDIENCE OF +55s

"Radius Mail," our monthly tenant newsletter for over-55s, keeps everyone informed and promotes participation.

Delivering Quality Care

Together with all five Health & Social Care Trusts to provide dedicated care for frail elderly and those living with dementia.



GOLD

AWARD ACCREDITED

Achieved a Gold Award for Tenant Participation Accreditation, demonstrating our commitment to resident involvement.

Everyone has a place

ACTION PLAN

At Radius we are committed to keeping our tenants, residents and customers at the heart of all we do.

This strategy is to be delivered based on the below objectives:

Well-Being & Independence focus through quality housing, support services and technology. *(Customer First)*

Empowering Customers to “age in place” with familiar surroundings and tailored assistance with staff who have the right resources and training. *(Empowered People)*

Quality Housing that can be tailored to individual needs in a safe and inclusive environment. *(Great Places)*

Long-Term Sustainability through partnerships, financial stability, and environmental responsibility. *(Assured Business)*



Everyone has a place

Wellbeing & Independence

Radius Understands the challenges of social isolation, we actively address them by fostering connection and developing solutions that meet the evolving needs of our tenants, residents and customers. This is achieved through a combination of high-quality housing, comprehensive support services, and innovative technology.

We prioritise customer feedback to ensure our solutions are effective and cater to their specific needs.

CUSTOMER FIRST

What we already do...

- ✓ Provide and support services enabling people to live safely and independently within their own homes, building on our Support Directory as we increase relationships with supporting agencies.
- ✓ We are a leader in offering and developing Assistive Technology to promote independence and wellbeing.
- ✓ We champion the voice of older people and use their experiences to develop innovative support solutions to address their needs.
- ✓ Our Welfare Advice Service supports customers facing fuel poverty with relevant advice, guidance and support.
- ✓ Deliver initiatives that will support the health and wellbeing our customers partnering with relevant partners as appropriate.
- ✓ Develop opportunities to address digital exclusion and build digital skills for those who wish to engage.
- ✓ Provide opportunities to carry out meaningful tenant engagement on older people issues in line with our Tenant Engagement Strategy.
- ✓ Provide adaptations in our accommodation for older people to maintain their independence.
- ✓ Support customers through the Disabled Facilities Grant process to adapt their private home.
- ✓ Collaborate with our tenants through our Tenant Panels etc to ensure they are at the forefront of service improvement.

What's next...

- We will review our support plan process to ensure it is as user friendly and effective as possible.
- We wish to facilitate access to counselling, addiction services, money advice or other forms of emotional and practical support.
- Where issues are identified we will increase access to affordable and healthy food.
- We are committed to create more opportunities for intergenerational activities in our Independent Living & Housing with Care schemes to enrich the lives of both older people and younger participants.
- We will look for new opportunities to apply for funding to have more digital technology initiatives, such as RITA- Reminiscence/rehabilitation and Interactive Therapy Activities.
- We plan to ask older people/relatives/ carers within our accommodation what is important to them by completing a 'living well in later life' survey.
- Our staff will provide more opportunities for older people to be listened to and be involved in decision making.
- Our teams will liaise with Health Care dementia navigators to create dementia friendly living packs for those who will benefit from this most.
- In partnership with our tenants, we will create a menu of involvement & best practice for social activities.
- We aim to provide opportunities for tenants from Independent Living schemes from either different religious, cultural or geographical areas to come together to make new friendships and learn together.
- We will promote the use of JAM (Just A Minute) card at schemes for our tenants/ residents with dementia and/or complex housing needs.
- We will identify ways to assist tenants with physical health and fitness.
- We will aspire for excellence in tenant participation by aiming to achieve 'gold status' in TP accreditation.

Quality Housing & Services

Radius is committed to providing and maintaining high-quality accommodation for older people. Our goal is to future proof properties ensuring they remain warm, safe and secure. This means not only comfortable and accessible spaces but also minimises emergency consumption and maintenance needs. By prioritising both resident well-being and resource efficiency, we can create a safe, comfortable and sustainable living environment where older people can thrive.

GREAT PLACES

What we already do...

- ✓ We work with our customers throughout the process, actively incorporating their views and ideas into planned maintenance works and overall design decisions.
- ✓ We promote and maximise the use of specialist technology to aid tenants to live at home for longer, support good health, mobility and independence.
- ✓ We continually offer aids and adaptations to homes to support good health, mobility and independence.
- ✓ We regularly ask older tenants about what we could do better and use this feedback to improve services.
- ✓ We already develop and promote targeting information such as maintenance booklets and energy efficiency advice.
- ✓ We endeavour to create balanced communities by regularly seeking opportunities to combine older people accommodation in larger general needs family developments.
- ✓ Our staff support tenants to keep their homes and spaces attractive and well maintained.
- ✓ We continue to develop and facilitate our TBUC / Housing for All Shared Schemes.
- ✓ Our teams organise and facilitate projects and activities designed to reduce antisocial behaviour in our older persons communities.
- ✓ Our Housing with Care schemes working closely with neighbouring schemes and groups to promote maximum socialisation, for example, our Community Connections Cafe Project.
- ✓ We encourage and promote engagement in the Green Flag award for our accommodation for over 55s.
- ✓ We regularly recognise the great people in our communities through our annual Tenant Awards.

What's next...







- We are committed to expanding our adaptations service to include aids for people living with dementia and plan to launch a pilot by Year 2 of our strategy.
- Moving forward we want to ensure our accommodation for older people remains modern, well-maintained and a desirable place to live.
- We aim to promote local 'handyperson' services in all areas and pilot an inhouse person in year 2 of our strategy.
- Where there is housing need, we will identify opportunities to deliver new homes for older people in line with the Housing our Aging Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles of design.
- We plan to complete a comprehensive review of the Floating Support Service to explore service expansion and increase service users benefiting from the service. In particular, we would love to review and grow our popular 'Hub & Spoke' model.
- We are committed to improve energy efficiency in our accommodation to reduce fuel poverty.
- In partnership with our Community Investment Team, our Independent Living Team staff will organise initiatives to support the better use of outdoor spaces.
- We will investigate and provide innovate solutions for difficult to let older persons accommodation.
- We plan to pilot 'repairs days' at independent living schemes to enhance the communal areas and build on satisfaction levels.
- Our Assets Team will endeavour to provide bespoke innovative solutions for grounds maintenance/gardening contracts to ensure tenants receive value for money.
- We will continue to be a leading provider of homes for older people and in partnership with Belfast H&SCT we aim to open a new supported housing facility in Belfast called Fairholme.
- Our Connect 24 team plan to launch a proactive Health & Well-being check call service available to older people throughout the island of Ireland.

Empowering Customers

Empowering Customers to “age in place” with familiar surroundings and tailored assistance with the right resources, leveraging the right resources and ensuring our staff have the right tools and training. We understand the importance of familiar surroundings and social connection. That’s why we aim to go above and beyond by fostering opportunities for older people to build relationships and combat social isolation.

EMPOWERED PEOPLE

What we already do...

-  We ensure staff who work with older tenants/residents are well trained and appropriately qualified for their roles.
-  Promote digital training and inclusion programmes to help our staff and tenants/residents use new technology to build digital skills and increase connectivity.
-  Facilitate access to counselling, addiction services, money advice or other forms of emotional and practical support.
-  We empower and support our staff so that they feel effective at providing high quality services.
-  Radius undertake regular surveys and discussions to gather customer feedback on what is working well and what can be improved in our services for older people.
-  We have separate Independent Living & Care Teams distinct from the General Needs Housing Team to offer greater focus and support for staff and our older residents.

What’s next...

-  We aim to fully review the Scheme Coordinators Manual over the next 3 years to ensure it provides the right guidance and support for staff in our independent living schemes.
-  We plan to explore ways to provide opportunities for social interaction for those who are lonely or at risk of isolation.
-  We will ensure that independent living schemes have efficient WiFi connectivity in common areas.
-  Radius will continually review the communication needs and preferences of older people and put this into practice.
-  We will endeavour to embed age friendly principles into human resource policies and working practices by adopting the three ‘R’s (Retain, Retrain and Recruit).
-  Radius will ensure office accommodation adheres to age friendly principles.
-  As a leading organisation working with older people, we will embrace career development rather than retirement planning.
-  There will be a lot more shared learning between Housing with Care staff and our independent living Scheme Coordinators.
-  We are committed to reviewing Terms & Conditions / JD / salaries for scheme staff in Independent Living.
-  We will create Dementia Friendly Champions with Radius to help oversee the future direction of services.
-  We are committed to safeguarding vulnerable residents and will establish the ‘Radius Foundation’ during year 1 of our strategy to support those in need of financial hardship, ill health, disability or disadvantage.
-  Our Connect 24 team aim to raise awareness about the potential for technology to support independent living by providing regular professional talks and demonstrations to housing and healthcare professionals through an autumn/ winter television and radio advertising campaign targeted directly at older people and their carers.

Long Term Sustainability

Radius prioritises long-term sustainability, fostering lasting value for residents, customers, and the environment. Through strong partnerships, we share expertise to address complex issues. Responsible financial management allows us to deliver high-quality housing and services. Furthermore, sustainable practices like energy efficiency and eco-friendly materials minimize our environmental footprint, creating a healthier living environment for all. This commitment ensures we continue to provide exceptional value while building a thriving and responsible organisation for the future.

ASSURED BUSINESS

What we already do...

-  Lobby with NIFHA and other Housing Associations to highlight the benefits of Supporting People funding for services in Northern Ireland.
-  We work with NIHE / Advisory Groups / Key Stakeholders to initiate and deliver projects that strengthen good relations.
-  Maximise future funding opportunities to improve services and accommodation for older people.
-  Develop links between housing providers and agencies that provide advice to older residents to ensure that older people can access the full range of information and advice on housing choices and support services and to ensure information is consistent.
-  We offer a wide selection of personal alarm products via our Connect 24 telecare service with a goal to increase new clients by 200 each month.
-  We have created support clusters for independent living staff to share best practice and continuous improvement.
-  We will continue to be involved in campaigns and the work of CRISPP (Committee Representing Independent Supporting People Providers) regarding issues affecting older people.

What's next...

-  We will renew our Dementia Friendly Accreditation.
-  We aim to be a leader in the sector by establishing a forum with like-minded providers of older persons accommodation/services to collectively address issues facing older people. For example, national consortiums such as EROSH.
-  Our aim is to actively participate in Positive Aging Week/International Day of Older Persons and any other international awareness days to champion the rights and provide a platform for older tenants.
-  Dementia awareness training available to all staff within the Organisation and not just those in front line services.
-  We will seek opportunities to share learning and collaborate with similar Housing Associations in the south of Ireland and the UK. For example, the European Federation for Living (EFL), Age Friendly Working Group.
-  We are committed to establishing and promoting age friendly roadshows across the 11 Council areas.
-  Our staff will implement educational campaigns and community initiatives to challenge ageist attitudes and stereotypes, promoting respect, dignity, and social inclusion for older adults within the housing context and broader society.
-  Radius will help re-establish or create new working groups that have a sole focus on addressing issues facing older people in accommodation/services on the island of Ireland.
-  We are committed to working closely with NIHE regarding the fundamental review of allocations in particular the proposal to review specialised accommodation allocations.
-  We will work in partnership with our partners to protect funding for both our independent living and housing with care schemes. For example, protecting essential funding streams such as Special Needs Management Allowance (SNMA).

Implementation & Monitoring

Implementation of the Action Plan will commence from autumn 2024 and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to account for new and emerging pressures as well as data driven insights.

It is proposed that an update will be provided to the Customer Experience Committee for monitoring and review.

Each year we will set a more detailed operational plan on how we plan to deliver our annual goals and who is responsible.

To gain valuable insights from our tenants and residents, Radius conducts regular surveys.

These surveys help us identify areas where we are doing well, pinpoint opportunities for improvement, and understand the current social circumstances impacting the well-being of our customers and tenants.

Associated Strategies

The Age Friendly Strategy should be read in conjunction with the following strategies:

Financial Well-Being Strategy

Digital Inclusion Strategy

Tenant Engagement Strategy

Tenancy Sustainment Strategy

Community Investment Strategy

ESG Strategy



Everyone has a place



Radius
HOUSING



Central Office: 3-7 Redburn Square, Holywood BT18 9HZ

t: 0330 123 0888

e: info@radiushousing.org

w: radiushousing.org

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