

Newry, Mourne and
Down Community
Planning Partnership



**LIVING
WELL
TOGETHER**

STATEMENT OF PROGRESS 2024-25





**LIVING
WELL
TOGETHER**

CONTENTS

Our Vision	_____	3
Community Planning	_____	3
Thematic Activity	_____	3
1. Lifelong Health and Wellbeing	_____	4
2. Prosperous Communities	_____	10
3. Sustainable Environment	_____	14
4. Safe and Vibrant Communities	_____	17
Appendix 1	_____	26
Appendix 2	_____	33
Appendix 3	_____	38
Appendix 4	_____	41

OUR VISION

Newry, Mourne and Down is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high-quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.

COMMUNITY PLANNING: FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES

Newry, Mourne and Down's Community Planning process brings partner organisations, regional government agencies and local communities together to work in collaboration to deliver our vision. Community planning is built on the understanding that organisations and communities working alone cannot do what can be achieved in partnership. Our focus is on what we can do together to achieve our goals. Our vision defines the outcomes we want to achieve by 2030. Introduced in 2015 as a new statutory requirement in Northern Ireland, Community Planning is new way of working for organisations in the region, and these are still early days for our collective journey. This Statement of Progress charts our progress throughout 2024 and 2025 towards realising these high-level overarching positive outcomes.

All people in Newry, Mourne and Down:

- ▶ get a good start in life and fulfil their lifelong potential.
- ▶ enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- ▶ benefit from prosperous communities.
- ▶ benefit from a clean, quality and sustainable environment.
- ▶ live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities.

THEMATIC ACTIVITY

This section of the Statement highlights the activity undertaken within each of the 4 themes of the Community Plan, Living well together:

- 1 Lifelong Health and Wellbeing
- 2 Prosperous Communities
- 3 Sustainable Environment
- 4 Safe and Vibrant Communities

Priority activity is overseen by thematic groups, working groups, and aligned Partnerships, and reported back to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

LIFELONG HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1



HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE COMMUNITY, THEMATIC SUMMIT 2024

Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership held a follow up Living Well Together: Health and Wellbeing Thematic Summit on Thursday 7 November 2024 at Millbrook Lodge, Ballynahinch. This event followed on from the 2023 thematic summit on Health and wellbeing.

The Summit brought together key stakeholders from across the Council's Community Planning Partnership, Statutory bodies, members of the Community and Voluntary Sector Strategic Stakeholder Forum and local elected representatives. In total over 130 delegates attended. Feedback was provided through workshops at the event and an online event feedback form. The themes of the summit included:

Health and Wellbeing in a Changing Environment

This highlighted the role of the Regional Live Better Initiative and the Role of Local ICS in addressing health inequalities and delivering improved health outcomes. This section also included an update on the Encompass system and how this will impact on individual patient care.

Partnership Working in Practice

This highlighted the role of existing Partnerships within the district, particularly:

- Protect Life Implementation Groups
- Children's and Young People Strategic Partnership
- Age Friendly Alliance

Collaborative Working Examples

This gave an overview of the priority workstreams proceeding from the previous Health and Wellbeing Conference including;

- Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Together. This initiative aims to develop a shared understanding of, and coordinated response to, isolation and loneliness across the district.
- The Physical Activity and Shared Assets Task and Finish Group aims to explore ways of increasing physical activity of young people with a secondary focus on the sharing of public sector assets to address resource and facilities barriers to physical activity.
- Place Based Approach to Health and Wellbeing, seeks to identify place based approaches that can be taken forward in conjunction with the DfC people and place review.



The place based approach to the health and wellbeing section also included an update on the work of the Strategic Stakeholder Forum, including the work of the Social Supermarket.

The summit concluded with group workshops; organised under the themes of:

- Health Literacy
- Poverty
- Access to Services
- Language Barriers
- Housing and Employment

Following review of the 2024 summit feedback, the partnership agreed that:

- i The three priority areas identified under community planning are still relevant, and their work should continue. More clarity is required around the opportunities that may be available under both Live Better and People and Place to bring forward placed-based health and wellbeing pilots.
- ii The work of existing Partnerships (eg CYPSP, AFA and PLIGs) should be presented to the Partnership Board regularly. Other networks and initiatives, such as the Verve Network, could also benefit from presenting at the Community Planning Partnership Board.
- iii The Community Planning team should ensure that there are improved communication and coordination between Integrated Care Systems and the Community Planning Partnership with ICS updates provided regularly to the Partnership Board.
- iv The Partnership identifies how they can best add value to projects that are already being delivered under Health Literacy and other themes.
- v Participatory Budgeting is used as a vehicle to promote good health and wellbeing throughout the district.

PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS

An update of each of the three priority workstreams which were a result of the summit are below:

TACKLING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS TOGETHER (TILT)

The Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership has developed this initiative to help address loneliness and isolation across our district. This initiative aims to develop a shared understanding of and coordinated response to isolation and loneliness across the district. Isolation and loneliness harm population health by reducing overall wellbeing and resilience which in turn contributes to emotional distress, lower quality of life, and decreased engagement in healthy behaviours. The TILT working group focuses on five priorities:

1 Putting Loneliness on the Agenda

TILT aims to raise the profile of loneliness as a core wellbeing issue across all local networks and sectors. This involves ensuring loneliness is included as a standing agenda item at meetings of local organisations and existing partnerships. By embedding loneliness into routine discussions, TILT helps normalise conversations about social isolation and encourages stakeholders to identify links to their own work. In turn, these organisations can feedback ideas and information to the TILT steering group.

2 Training and Support

TILT aims to equip members of public with the knowledge and tools necessary to recognise and respond to loneliness. The working group has created a TILT web page, which acts as a central hub for information, resources, and updates. This has been co-designed by the organisations within the working group and contains information and resources that relate to the issues of loneliness and social isolation, relevant training and support material, signposting to key services and an interactive survey.

3 Collaboration

Tackling loneliness demands partnership, and TILT aims to strengthen collaboration between statutory bodies, community organisations and local partners. A key element is the development of the TILT Steering Group, which brings together representatives to coordinate strategy, share best practice and avoid duplication.

4 Increasing Awareness

TILT aims to shift public understanding of loneliness and reduce stigma by increasing awareness across the wider community. This includes a structured publicity campaign featuring billboards, posters, banners and pop-up stands to ensure visibility throughout the district. Alongside this broader campaign, the workstream also supports the development and delivery of bespoke workshops, which offer deeper exploration of loneliness, its impacts and ways to build connection. Raising awareness helps individuals recognise loneliness in themselves or others and encourages help-seeking and community engagement.

5 Targeted Approach

TILT aims to ensure that efforts are focused where they will have the greatest impact. Specific groups have been identified as priorities, including workplaces, unpaid carers, students and young people, bereaved individuals, older people and sports clubs. By tailoring actions and messaging to these groups, TILT can address unique barriers and experiences related to loneliness. This targeted approach helps ensure that interventions are relevant, inclusive and capable of reaching those most at risk.

Events have included a workplace workshop delivered in partnership with Newry BID and Newry Chamber of Commerce. A further workshop was delivered for unpaid carers within the district.

TILT has also facilitated community-based events in collaboration with the District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. Scorecards relating to these events can be found in Appendix 1.

PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO YOUNG PEOPLE

This priority aims to explore ways of working collaboratively and coordinate activity to increase the physical activity of young people in the district. This group has a secondary focus on the sharing of public sector assets to address resource and facilities barriers to physical activity. Group membership includes representatives from the Council, Health Trusts, Sport NI, and the education sector as well as those from the Community Voluntary Sector.

Established in 2024, this group has focused on sharing information on facilities that are available for use, as well as programmes that each member organisation offers. One example of collaboration is the promotion of The Daily Mile. This is a free and simple initiative that encourages children to run, jog, walk or wheel for 15 minutes each day during school hours. Taking place outdoors and alongside friends, The Daily Mile supports the physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of our children, regardless of age, ability or personal circumstances.

Members of the Group have agreed to work collaboratively to support each individual organisation's initiatives with the hope that this collaborative approach will allow for greater impact and enhance the opportunities for young people to undertake physical activity.

PLACE BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Following the Health and Wellbeing Summits the Partnership agreed to explore a pilot place-based approach to improving community health and wellbeing. It was agreed that this priority workstream would be led by the Strategic Stakeholder Forum (SSF).

Following engagement with its members, the SSF developed a project proposal which highlighted two urgent priorities for communities in Newry Mourne and Down: better health and better employability. This proposed project will identify how collaborative structures can deliver real improvements for local communities in the district and will utilise the Department for Communities 'Test and Learn' approach which provides a framework to trial new models of collaboration in practice. This project would allow the SSF to act as an Anchor Institution, developing an accountable governance structure alongside a costed two-year action plan, fully aligned to the district's Community plan.

In December 2025 the stakeholder forum, alongside the Council and Department for Communities, hosted a workshop for Forum members to consider the pilot project proposal and discuss the governance and delivery arrangements involved.

The stakeholder forum continues to engage all its members in the development of a finalised proposal and will work closely with the Council and Department for Communities to identify funding to bring the Test and Learn Pilot forward.

ALIGNED HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTIVITY

In addition to their priority areas, the Partnership have also undertaken to support and align themselves to a number of existing partnerships within the district that deliver against the Health and Wellbeing outcomes of the Community Plan which include the following:



Age Friendly Alliance

The Age Friendly Strategic Alliance plays a central role in delivering Newry, Mourne and Down's Age Friendly Strategy. The Alliance brings together key organisations and partners to coordinate a unified approach to improving outcomes for older people, ensuring that services and planning reflect the needs of an ageing population. Its work supports the district's ambition to create a place where people can live healthy, active and engaged lives as they grow older, with partners collaborating across areas such as planning, health, housing, transport, safety and public space management.

The Alliance is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the four strategic goals set out in the Age Friendly Strategy. These goals are:

- To be an exemplar of positive and effective partnership working.
- To optimise the district's physical environment as a key enabler of health, wellbeing and social interaction.
- To create a socially inclusive district in which older people feel safe, supported, involved, engaged, connected and respected.
- To empower individuals to live healthier and more active lives in connected communities.

The Alliance coordinates partner organisations and stakeholders to drive progress across all four goals, ensuring older people can live healthier, more active and more connected lives within the district.

Following the participation of the Alliance in the Health and Wellbeing Thematic Summit, the Community Planning Partnership agreed to support and promote the important work of the Age Friendly Strategic Alliance and to explore opportunities to further assist and strengthen the Alliance's activities.

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) bring together a range of agencies, including voluntary and community sector organisations, which aim to improve the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland. They are organised in line with health trust geographies.

Following on from their contribution to the Health and Wellbeing thematic summit they presented to the Partnership Board in September 2024, both Partnerships agreed to explore opportunities to better coordinate their work, add value, avoid duplication, and strengthen joint working. All parties agreed on the benefit of collaboration, the importance of linking with NMD Youth Voice, and the relevance of the TILT project currently supporting community planning.

A joint pilot on Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance, developed by the Southern Area Outcomes Group (SAOG) Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Task Group, is now being delivered with the Community Planning Partnership. It has been agreed that the Down Locality Planning Group (LPG) will join the pilot with the Newry and Mourne Locality Planning Group, making it a cross-district piece of work.

It was also acknowledged that the CYPSP already plays a key role in several Community Planning priority areas, including Youth Voice and the Department of Education's Raise programme in Newry City, Cloughreagh and Bessbrook.

Area Integrated Partnership Board (AIPB)

AIPBs were created as part of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI), a major shift toward more coordinated,

preventative, and population based planning. They operate within the geographical boundaries of the five Health and Social Care Trusts and bring together partners from health, local government, community and voluntary sectors, general practice, pharmacy, and service user groups. Their purpose is to assess local population needs, identify priorities, and oversee the development and delivery of integrated plans that focus on prevention, early intervention, and better connected services.

Across Northern Ireland, AIPBs remain in a "shadow" phase, concentrating on establishing relationships, developing shared evidence, and shaping initial priorities ahead of full implementation. They are meant to be fully operational by September 2026.

The South Eastern AIPB has identified cardiovascular health as its initial priority, based on its analysis of population needs and the scale of opportunity for improvement. A Task and Finish Group was convened in mid-2025 to begin shaping an action plan which will be agreed in March 2026.

The Southern AIPB has identified Frailty, Heart Failure, and Mental Health as its three priority areas, each progressed through dedicated Task & Finish Groups with a strong focus on early intervention and prevention. Immediate actions include implementing a structured medication review pathway with onward referral to a Frailty Hub, advancing pathway design and service planning for a community-based Heart Failure/Breathlessness Hub, and finalising governance, data review and priority-setting for Mental Health in 2026/27.

Both Southern and South Eastern AIPBs update the Community Planning Partnership regularly with their included within the Partnership's Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

2



Delivery against the Prosperous Communities theme is overseen by two aligned partnerships: the Local Economic Partnership and the Labour Market Partnership. Both partnerships report to the Community Planning Partnership Board, and their relationship with the Community Planning Partnership is set out within their respective Terms of Reference.

LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

The Local Economic Partnership (LEP) launched their Action Plan for the district in November 2025. Developed collaboratively with representatives from the business, voluntary and community sectors, education partners and statutory agencies, the Action Plan sets out a coordinated programme of interventions funded through the Regional Balance Fund. The overarching focus is on creating good jobs, increasing productivity, addressing regional imbalance and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy. This action plan is designed to deliver against the economic outcomes within the Community Plan, the LEP reports to the Partnership Board through a nominated representative.

The LEP convened for the first time on 27 January 2025. In April, the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) presented Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's economic outlook, highlighting sectoral strengths and opportunities for job creation. A thematic workshop was held in May to work with partners in identifying priority themes and potential project concepts.

A draft Action Plan was subsequently developed and presented in June, followed by an engagement period over the summer months to refine content in collaboration with partners. The revised Action Plan was brought back to the Partnership in September, approved, and then presented to Committee and full Council before being submitted to the Department for the Economy (DfE).

A Letter of Offer was issued on 3 November 2025, and the Action Plan was formally launched by Minister Archibald on 26 November 2025.

DELIVERY OF KEY ACTIONS

The eight major actions under the LEP Action Plan are:

1 Productivity Growth Mentoring and Grant

This programme provides structured support to up to 60 micro and small enterprises, including social enterprises. Participants receive mentoring in:

- enhancing productivity
- creating and sustaining employment
- market entry and exporting
- reducing energy costs
- strengthening sustainability
- leadership and management development.

Eligible participants may also apply for a productivity capital grant where clear need and impact can be demonstrated.

2 AI - Empowering Business Through Awareness

In partnership with the Artificial Intelligence Collaboration Centre (AICC), Council will deliver AI awareness roadshows in 2026. Up to 50 businesses and social enterprises will benefit from:

- AI readiness assessments
- tailored mentoring
- exploration of AI-driven productivity gains
- support to enhance operational efficiency, customer engagement and competitiveness.

3 Derelict and Vacant Commercial Property Mapping

The Partnership will undertake targeted research and mapping of derelict and long-term vacant buildings across priority areas. This evidence base will guide regeneration priorities and help inform future funding decisions.

4 Commercial Property Revive and Reimagine Grant

This grant scheme supports the restoration, reactivation or expansion of underutilised and derelict commercial buildings, including upper floors. The aim is to:

- create high-quality commercial space
- attract new businesses
- support existing enterprises to grow.

5 Property Facade Renewal - Feasibility and Grant Scheme

Delivered in partnership with DfC and DfE, this initiative will:

- commission feasibility studies
- deliver a facade improvement grant scheme for towns and villages
- stimulate wider regeneration and enhance the appearance of commercial areas.

6 Mourne, Gullion & Strangford Geopark - Sustainable Tourism Network

This action supports a network of tourism-related businesses committed to environmentally responsible practices, strengthening the district's position as a sustainable tourism destination. Participating businesses span:

- Food and Drink
- Outdoor Activities and Adventure (including wellbeing)
- Accommodation
- Culture and Heritage
- Transport

LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP

Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP) continues to deliver targeted initiatives that support local residents to secure employment, retrain or upskill, while actively engaging with employers to address current and future skills needed across the district.

In the 2024-2025 financial year, the Partnership supported 70 individuals into employment, helped 129 participants gain new qualifications, engaged with 566 employers, and welcomed over 3,000 attendees to employment pathway events.

Funded by the Department for Communities, Labour Market Partnerships has created a targeted employment action plans for the district, allowing for collaboration at local and regional level to support people towards and into work.



Examples of support provided include:

- 56 residents took part in the Get Work Ready Programme delivered by Clanrye Group, which provides personalised guidance into employment, education or training.
- The Enterprise Pathway Programme, delivered by Newry Mourne Enterprise Agency and Down Business Centre, offered up to three months of mentoring to 38 aspiring entrepreneurs.
- A number of sector-focused academies have also equipped participants with the skills needed to pursue careers in industries with strong employer demand. A total of 11 participants completed the Childminding Academy delivered by NICMA.
- The Hospitality Academy delivered by Southern Regional College gave candidates the opportunity to gain industry relevant qualifications, work experience and move a step closer towards a career as a chef.
- A total of 86 residents in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area completed LMP-sponsored upskilling courses delivered by Southern Regional College and South Eastern Regional College.
- More than 50 exhibitors participated in the fair including First Derivative, Viltra, Norbook, Wood Innovations, Collins Aerospace, NIE, NIHE, NI Bodyshop Alliance, Re-Gen, BT and CAFRE.
- Queen's University and Ulster University also provided information about higher education pathways. This event successfully connected over 1500 local students with potential employers and educational institutions.

SKILLS CONFERENCE 2025

The Newry, Mourne and Down Recruitment and Skills Conference was held on 8 October in the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle, bringing together more than 150 delegates from across the district. This event followed a previous conference delivered in Newry the year before and continued a programme of engagement aimed at addressing ongoing recruitment and skills shortages affecting local employers.

Organised by Newry Chamber of Commerce and Trade in partnership with the Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP), the conference forms part of wider efforts funded by the Department for Communities to support the development of targeted employment action plans at local level. Additional support was provided by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Southern Regional College, South Eastern Regional College, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University.

The conference focused on meeting long-term workforce challenges within the district. Delegates contributed through presentations, panel discussions and structured round table sessions designed to gather insights on current and emerging labour market needs. The findings from this and last year's event will be used to inform a Labour Market Strategy for the district, as well as other community planning activity.

Panel sessions addressed three priority themes: promoting economic inclusion and workforce diversity; improving career pathways and alignment with the Northern Ireland curriculum; and strengthening approaches to attracting, developing and retaining talent. Speakers included representatives from academia, government and industry, who provided analysis of labour market trends and practical considerations for employers.

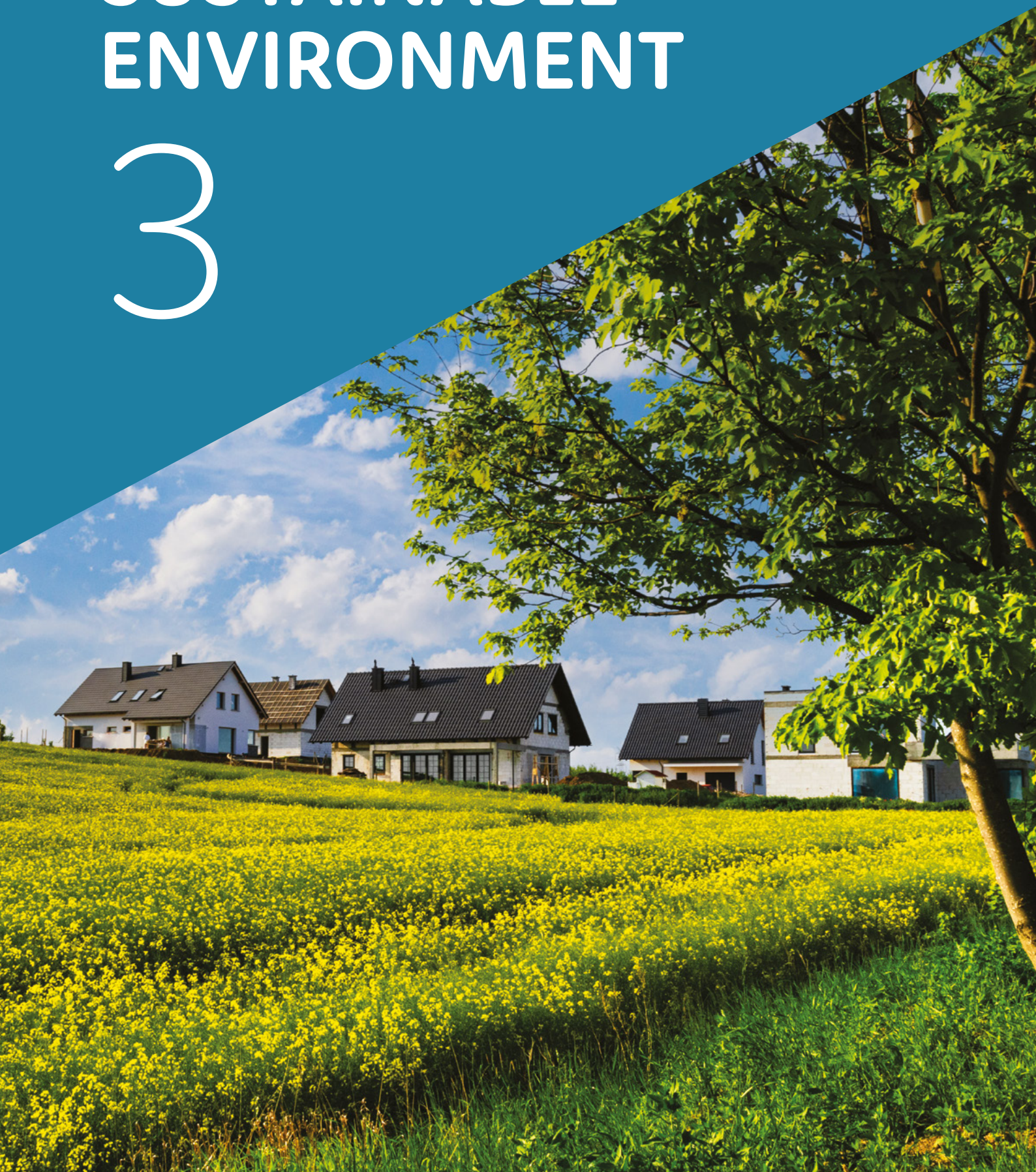
The event reinforced the importance of collaboration among employers, education providers and policymakers. Evidence gathered will support the LMP, Community Planning Partnership and Council in shaping future initiatives aimed at improving employability, strengthening workforce resilience and supporting business recruitment needs across the district.

2025/26 ACTION PLAN

Delivery of the 2025/26 NMD Labour Market Partnership Action Plan is ongoing, supported by an increased budget from the Department for Communities to expand initiatives this financial year. The plan includes a wide range of actions across employability, skills development, employer engagement, disability inclusion and labour market promotion, with several initiatives already delivered and most others progressing. These activities are strengthening pathways into work, supporting employers to address skills gaps and improving access to training and upskilling opportunities across the district.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

3



NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN HOUSING NEEDS ACTION PLAN 2024

In October 2024 the Partnership launched their updated Housing Needs Action Plan. The updated Newry, Mourne and Down Housing Needs Action Plan 2024 reflects the progress made since the original 2019 Action Plan and sets out renewed priorities for delivering affordable, high quality and sustainable homes across the district.

The Plan identifies a projected social housing requirement of 2,234 units between 2023 and 2028, with the highest levels of unmet need concentrated in Newry, The Mournes and Crotlieve DEAs. Since 2019, 422 social homes have been completed, 528 are currently on site, and a further 415 are programmed through 2026/27, demonstrating sustained progress in increasing housing supply.

While many existing action areas remain relevant, the working group has introduced new activity to address developing challenges across rural settlements. A new action: “Engage with housing associations to encourage the provision of affordable housing in rural settlements across NMD” has been added in response to continued rural housing pressures. This action involves assessing rural housing need, identifying suitable sites, and strengthening engagement with housing associations, community groups, and elected representatives at DEA level.

This work will be delivered by the Access to Quality Housing Working Group and will also incorporate the work of the South Down Homelessness Local Area Group, which delivers a multi-agency action plan to find solutions and improve services in order to prevent households from becoming homeless where possible and to seek to ensure that any household that experiences homelessness is supported through that journey to a sustainable solution as quickly as possible.



HOUSING IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA WORKSHOPS

Aligned to the new action on rural settlements, during 2025/26 the Housing Needs Working Group engaged with representatives from the seven District Electoral Areas to highlight rural housing need and encourage a partnership approach to identifying development opportunities. This engagement took the form of DEA workshops delivered by the Working Group.

The DEA workshops included contributions from NIHE Place Shaping, the NIHE Rural and Regeneration Unit, Council Planning Staff, the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations, and local Housing Associations.

The workshops provided an overview of the housing stock, levels of housing need, and key housing challenges across each District Electoral Area. They highlighted pressures on social housing, the scale of unmet need, and the limited availability of suitable land for development in several rural and coastal settlements.

An update was also provided on how these challenges may be addressed through the NIHE Rural Housing Strategy, which outlines measures to better assess rural housing need, overcome delivery barriers, identify land, and support the development of affordable rural homes. Alongside this, the workshops summarised the role of the Local Development Plan in shaping future housing delivery, including policies that support affordable housing within settlements and in the countryside.

The important role of Housing Associations in providing new social housing was outlined, along with an explanation of the processes involved in bringing forward new schemes, such as a needs assessment, land identification, planning, funding, and engagement with statutory partners. The workshops concluded with a call for land or development opportunities to help meet the significant unmet housing need, and a reaffirmed commitment to continued joint working between the Housing Needs Working Group and local representatives to progress solutions across the district.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

In 2019 the Partnership Board adopted “Sustainable Travel / Traffic and Congestion” as a priority area of the Community Planning Partnership. A working group was established to address this priority, with the group assisting Council and DFI in producing an Active Travel Masterplan for the district. The masterplan was launched in November 2021. Further information on the active travel plan can be found at newrymournedown.org/active-travel

In order to achieve the ambitious aims of the Masterplan the need for a multi-agency working group was identified. Given the close alignment of the Active Travel Masterplan to the objectives of Community Plan, the Partnership agreed that this working group should sit within the Community Planning structures, and

- Oversee the implementation of the plan,
- Ensure synergies with other walking and cycling infrastructure project (eg. Community Trials, Greenways)
- Co-ordinate the consultation and co-design projects brought forward under the Masterplan.
- Help to promote the use of walking and cycling infrastructure.

The group will seek to enable more residents to benefit from the physical and mental health benefits of walking and cycling, promote access to outdoor activity and reduce the negative environmental impacts from motor vehicles. Council Officers will work with Department of Infrastructure Officials to establish this working group during 2026.

SAFE AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

4



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

In September 2024 Shared Future CIC was commissioned by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC), on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership, to undertake a review and refresh of the Partnership's approach and strategy to Participatory Budgeting (PB).

It was recommended that future approaches to PB align closely to existing Community Planning structures and incorporate more mainstream approaches to PB.

Recommendations included:

- The key role of local leadership: long term and ongoing commitment.
- Using PB to promote culture shift and more open government.
- Moving away from understanding PB solely as a grant making programme towards community led commissioning.
- PB as a tool for strategic alignment of services and investment.
- Exploring thematic and cross cutting arenas for PB activity.
- Evidence based decision making.

COMMUNITIES LEADING CHANGE: RESIDENTS LEAD THE WAY IN ALLOCATING £98,000 TO COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Residents in Newry, Mourne and Down have voted for 98 projects promoting good health and wellbeing to receive public funding. The awards of up to £1,000 per group were made through the Communities Leading Change Participatory Budgeting campaign. The initiative allows residents to decide how a portion of public funds is spent by voting for the projects they believe will have the greatest benefit and impact on their community.

Out of over 140 applications a total of 98 projects were funded through Market Stall events across the seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs), with an unprecedented number of people attending to vote. Applicants set up stalls to showcase their projects, with attendees required to visit all stalls and then vote for their top five favourite projects. These Participatory Budgeting events were also chaired by the Chair and Vice chair of each DEA.

After the votes were counted and verified, 70% of the groups were awarded funding. The other 30% who did not receive funding on the night have been given support from Council partners to apply for different sources of funding or have been signposted to free resources to help deliver their project. Each group will now have until 31 March 2026 to spend their funding. The Council will be hosting events in May 2026 for the public to attend to hear how these projects have benefited the area in which they live.

A list of the successful projects can be found at:

newrymournedown.org/communities-leading-change

The PB steering group partners and funders are listed below:

- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- PHA
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Shared Housing Programme - Radius/Clanmil/Ark/Arbour Housing Associations
- The Executive Office
- PSNI
- Department For Communities
- County Down Rural Community Network and
- Confederation of Community Groups.

A full Participatory budgeting scorecard is provided in Appendix 2.

NMD YOUTH VOICE

The Youth Voice initiative was established in 2021 to strengthen youth participation in civic and democratic processes across Newry, Mourne and Down. It replaces the former Down Youth Council and Newry and Mourne Youth Council, creating a district wide structure that enables young people to influence decisions that affect their lives. In 2024 and 2025, the Youth Voice delegation attended two Community Planning Partnership meetings to meet Board members, outline their work, and ask questions to Partners, helping strengthen dialogue between young people and decision makers. The group have also attended Council Committee meetings, participated in an Online Safety Engagement Event at Stormont Buildings, provided responses to a range of consultations. Youth Voice is overseen by a project board made up of Community Planning Partnership representatives.

YOUTH VOICE CONFERENCE 2025

Young people from across Newry, Mourne and Down gathered on 25 February 2025 for the district's Youth Voice Conference, held at the Burrendale Hotel in Newcastle. Planned, organised, and delivered by Youth Voice members, the event created a meaningful space for young people to engage with key issues affecting their lives and communities. The conference brought together 192 participants, including 24 Youth Voice members who designed the conference and hosted the event on the night.

The conference focused on three key themes aligned with the Community Plan, Safety, Health, and Education. Workshops and interactive sessions helped young people explore these priorities while gaining new skills and building confidence.

A wide range of partners, including theatre groups, PSNI, health trusts, regional colleges and youth support services delivered engaging interactive breakout session relating to each of the conference themes. Feedback highlighted that the conference increased awareness of local issues, provided opportunities for creative expression, and strengthened young people's sense of achievement.

The event successfully deepened youth engagement, strengthened cross-sector collaboration, and reinforced the important role of young people in shaping the district's strategic future.

YOUTH AND FUTURE TALENT AWARDS 2024

The Youth and Future Talent Awards (YAFTAs) is a youth-led initiative developed and delivered by Youth Voice members with support from the Community Planning Partnership. It celebrates and amplifies the achievements of young people (aged 25 and under) who demonstrate leadership, creativity, resilience, and positive community impact across Newry, Mourne and Down. Delivered between January and March 2024, the programme engaged 227 participants, facilitated 20 planning sessions, hosted two major events, and connected with 82 community groups and schools. Young people were central at every stage. Youth Voice members co-designed the awards, managed outreach, and led the shortlisting process using anonymised applications to ensure fairness. They also curated and hosted the awards night, building practical skills in event management, public speaking, teamwork, and collective decision-making. The programme's launch introduced new categories; Mental Health and Wellbeing and Social Enterprise/Action and reinforced a platform that values innovation, inclusion, and civic contribution. All categories were selected by a youth voice member, to mirror the district's Community Planning outcomes and celebrate the important role young people play and achieving the goals within the community plan.

The flagship ceremony on 28 March 2024 at the Canal Court Hotel showcased nominees and winners across areas such as Good Relations, Community Safety, Environmental Action, Inclusion, Voice of Young People, and Inspirational Young Person. Testimonials from youth leaders and civic partners highlighted the event's role in recognising "unsung heroes" and in strengthening confidence, agency, and a sense of value among participants. Evaluation findings noted strong collaboration, high-quality delivery, and clear learning for future iterations. Overall, the YAFTAs is both a celebration and a development programme, recognising talent while empowering young people to shape their communities now and in the future.





COMMUNITY SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

Newry, Mourne and Down Community Support Partnership is a multi-agency partnership which aims to support vulnerable adults who are known to a range of partner agencies including the PSNI, NIHE, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. The Partnership is chaired by Council's Safer Communities & Good Relations Manager and other partners include the Southern and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trusts, the Education Authority, Probation Board and three voluntary sector partners - Bolster Community, County Down Rural Community Network and Community Advice Newry, Mourne & Down.

Since its formation in late 2019 the Partnership has provided dedicated support to 36 individuals. This support has included help to access a range of services (including mental health, addiction and general health services), assistance with housing issues and return to education, employment and volunteering opportunities. Mental health and addiction issues were identified as being amongst the main challenges faced by clients. Additionally, domestic violence is a common issue faced by those referred to the Partnership.

The vast majority of the cohorts have now been discharged due to the positive impact this support has had on their circumstances. The CSP is updating its referral forms and will be promoting the partnership to enable more people to avail of assistance.

SPEAK NMD

Speak NMD was developed as a new model of community engagement for the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership (CPP), designed to strengthen citizen participation and support more collaborative decision making across the district. Delivered by Development Trusts NI (DTNI) in partnership with the Council, the Strategic Stakeholder Forum and local colleges, the project aligned closely with CPP priorities relating to inclusion, wellbeing, community voice, and shared policy development. Through a digital first approach and a proposed Citizens' Panel, the initiative aimed to create a more continuous, accessible form of civic dialogue rather than traditional one off consultations.

The digital engagement platform successfully attracted more than 7,000 visitors and generated almost 1,500 survey responses. It supported a wide range of engagements relevant to community planning, including participatory budgeting, thematic consultations on environmental protection and inclusive planning, and public input into the setting up of a Social Supermarket. Additional projects, such as engagement exercises for Downpatrick FC, Mourne Mountain Rescue and Crossfire Hub, generated substantial community based evidence to support funding bids and service planning. Collectively, these engagements helped identify key community priorities, including improved community facilities, strengthened local ownership, enhanced wellbeing services and the protection of green spaces.

While the project encountered delivery challenges—such as uneven digital access, the need for partner familiarisation with digital tools and constraints around achieving full geographic representation—these were secondary to its overall impact. The initiative demonstrated how digital engagement can complement CPP structures by widening participation, generating timely evidence and increasing transparency in decision making.

Following the project's completion in 2025, DTNI presented a full evaluation report to the Partnership Board, outlining key learnings from the project, including:

- the value of sustained digital infrastructure for community planning
- the importance of early data sharing agreements
- the need for hybrid engagement to address digital inequality
- the benefit of stronger partner commitments to maximise collective impact.

NEWRY, MOURNE, DOWN AND SOUTH ARMAGH STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER FORUM

The Strategic Stakeholder Forum (SSF) continue to work collaboratively with Community/ Voluntary sector representatives and Statutory Partners to address ongoing and emerging needs across the district. Currently the SSF are represented on 14 Working Groups and Forums. The members also have their own examples of good practice, but this update will focus on collaborative community planning projects; highlighted below:

SOCIAL SUPERMARKET

Led by the Strategic Stakeholder Forum (SSF), Clanrye Group received funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) to facilitate the Social Supermarket Model (SSM) from March 2024 to March 2025. This funding supported the establishment of a physical shop in Newry, providing a welcoming shopping environment. At the same time, the programme continued to deliver services across the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, with a particular focus on four key hubs, including the expansion to Downpatrick, where a pilot SSM began to meet growing demand in that locality.

The launch of the pilot Social Supermarket in Downpatrick was a strategic step to test the model's adaptability outside Newry and to address barriers faced by residents in the southern part of the district. Its purpose was to reduce travel constraints for rural households and extend wraparound support to an underserved community. The pilot demonstrated strong local uptake, with 50 participants supported during the evaluation period (including families, doubles, and singles).

To date, the SSM has supported 256 total participants which is broken down as follows:

- Newry 150 Participants
- Downpatrick – 50 participants
- South Armagh 46 participants
- Kilkeel 10 participants

73 of these participants have availed of the wrap around service and attended employment and support services.

Funding is provided by Department of Communities, The Quays and relies on donations from local businesses.

A former service user who is now employed by the SSM, illustrates the full circle power of the model, from crisis to contribution.

ASYLUM SEEKERS FUNDING

Asylum Seekers funding lead by County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN) has allocated £3750 in Lidl (food) Vouchers to 32 Households.

Feedback Received

From a Beneficiary

- “The support will really help to reduce the pressure for the family by providing additional food.”
- “Family have very little English and use Google Translate and have reached out for help. The children are hungry when attending play sessions and struggle financially as they are not affording to live. Vouchers would go a long way to help mum’s wellbeing as cooking is a vital part of their culture and providing for the family is another and shame is a very debilitating emotion within their culture.”
- “These Food Vouchers will really help. I will now be able to buy my children coats and shoes they need to help them feel normal like the other children who do not have to buy items from the charity shop. I would like to buy them proper fitting shoes and clothes. I would also like to buy fresh fruit and vegetables to keep them healthy and growing.”

From Trusted Partners

- “The family are immensely grateful for the funding that has been provided to them during this challenging time. It has made a significant difference in their ability to buy food.”
- “This funding will directly address the family’s immediate needs by helping to cover the costs of food and electricity. It will ensure the family can access nutritious meals, significantly reduce financial stress and improving their overall wellbeing during this challenging time.”

NORBROOK 'WE CARE AT CHRISTMAS' PROGRAMME

Confederation of Community Groups helped coordinate the We Care at Christmas programme and distributed weekly dinners, Christmas food hampers, and toys via our Trusted Partners (SSF) and also provided names of attendees at the 2 senior citizen meals.

Outcomes

- Ready cooked meals:
250 per week x5 weeks
= 1,250 meals
- Christmas Food Hampers:
500 hampers
- Toys for Christmas: 525 toys
- Senior Citizen meals:
70 meals x2 weeks
= 140 meals

EMPLOY ME

Employ Me is an employability programme providing training, employability and wraparound support for economically inactive people aged 16+. It aims to reduce barriers, develop skills, achieve qualifications and enhance employability to enable progression to employment or self-employment. Clanrye Group, Community Advice Newry Mourn and Down, Women's Aid Armagh Down and Southern Regional College are working together to deliver Employ Me.

To date Employ me has recruited 2338 participants of which 1065 were employed, 1316 gained a qualification, 512 sustained employment for 6 months, 835 are in education/training following support. There was a massive return on investment from 3.6m to 20.9m.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Community Transport were able to buy two new buses this enabled them to assist a Total of 10,798 passenger on 3389 trips across NMD. The case study below outlines how this has benefitted their service users.



The funding we received has had an exceptionally positive impact, not only for Newry and Mourn Community Transport but also for individuals and community groups across the Council area. The support has been utilised across all our services, including group hire and Dial-a-Lift (DAL), benefiting a wide range of client groups such as older people, individuals with disabilities, those with special educational needs (SEN), and community organisations. This assistance has enabled us to deliver affordable and accessible transport, thereby reducing social isolation and allowing more people with mobility needs to participate in social, recreational and community activities. Since the introduction of the new vehicle, we have completed a further 1,362 journeys, transported 4,358 passengers and met the growing demand for our services across the area.

This has led to enhanced comfort and safety for service users, improved reliability, reduced maintenance and fuel costs, and the creation of a new local employment opportunity. With a dependable vehicle and additional driver in place, we have been able to extend our services, respond more flexibly to community needs, and support increased volunteering and partnership working.

The value of this investment extends well beyond the vehicle itself; it enables us to connect people, remove barriers, and enhance overall community wellbeing.

We continue to work closely with Volunteer Now, whose support through training and the promotion of good practice underscores the importance and value of investing in volunteers. Volunteer Now's values and intended outcomes underpin every aspect of our charitable work and continue to strengthen our organisation.

Stephen Yeomans
CEO Newry and Mourn
Community Transport



DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA FORUMS

DEA Forums form part of the Community Planning structure, bringing together elected Members and independent representatives to address emerging local needs. They work closely with Community Planning Partners in the delivery of their programmes. Some example projects include:

Multiply Programme

The Multiply programme was delivered across all District Electoral Areas (DEAs) within the Council area, coordinated by the DEA Coordinators. The initiative focused on improving adult numeracy skills through innovative, community-based learning approaches. Rather than relying on traditional classroom settings, the programme embedded maths education into everyday subject matters, making learning accessible, relevant, and engaging.

Workshops and sessions were designed around practical themes such as DIY projects, family budgeting activities, household planning, and accounting procedures used within community and voluntary groups. This programme of familiar activities enables participants to build confidence while developing functional numeracy skills applicable to daily life, employment, and community leadership roles.

Over 2,000 participants engaged in Multiply activities throughout the year 2024/25, reflecting significant uptake. Delivery included both open-access sessions and bespoke projects tailored to the specific needs of each DEA. This localised approach ensured that provision was responsive to community priorities, whether supporting parents in managing household finances, assisting volunteers in understanding group accounts, or helping individuals gain the confidence required to pursue further training or employment.

Good Relations Programmes

The DEA team delivered an extensive Good Relations programme across the district over the last two years. These initiatives aimed to promote inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect among diverse communities.

Programmes were tailored to meet the needs of specific groups and included historical workshops, educational trips, and cultural festivals designed to explore shared heritage and diverse traditions. Schools' programmes played a central role, providing structured opportunities for young people to engage with themes of identity, diversity, and cultural awareness in safe and facilitated environments.

Ethnic minority development projects were also a key component of the Good Relations work. These initiatives supported integration, community participation, and cultural expression, ensuring that minority voices were represented and celebrated. Partnership working was central to delivery, with collaboration between museums, arts coordinators, community organisations, and other local stakeholders enhancing reach and level of participation.

Cultural events and festivals created platforms for intercultural expression, while heritage-focused workshops encouraged participants to explore local historical connections. These activities contributed to reduced social isolation and improved cross-community relationships.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OLDER PEOPLE

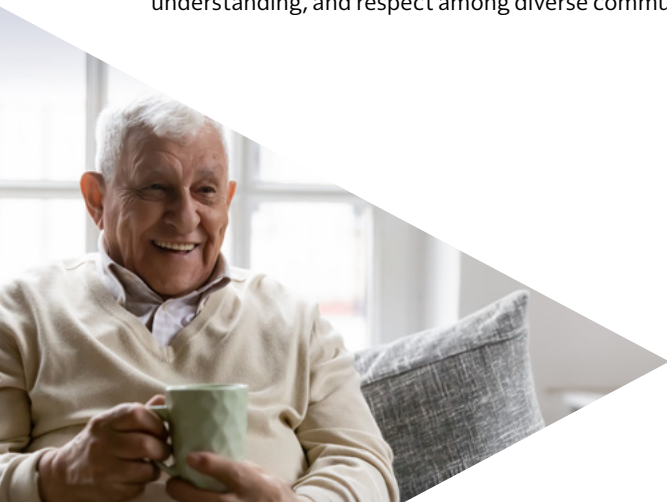
A further key strand of delivery focused on supporting older people across the district to create meaningful opportunities for social connection, improved access to services, and the development of positive relationships. Activities were delivered consistently across the period within each DEA, ensuring sustained engagement rather than one-off interventions.

In Newry, the Senior Programme provided structured opportunities for older residents to participate in workshops, information sessions, and social activities designed to reduce isolation and promote wellbeing.

In Downpatrick, the Dementia Friendly Network continued to strengthen awareness, inclusion, and practical support for individuals living with dementia and their families.

Rowallane hosted dancing and keep-active projects aimed at promoting physical health and confidence, while Positive Ageing events in the Mournes celebrated later life and connected participants with local service providers and community supports. Across these initiatives, hundreds of older people were engaged, many learning new skills, building friendships, and gaining greater awareness of the services available to them.

Collectively, this work has played an important role in enhancing wellbeing, strengthening community ties, and ensuring older residents feel valued, informed, and connected.



APPENDICES

A



BASELINE EVIDENCE REPORT

An initial Baseline Evidence Report was produced following the introduction of Community Planning to local government. It brings together a wide range of demographic, social, economic and environmental information, which is updated every two years alongside the Statement of Progress.

Throughout the Community Planning process, further evidence is gathered to assess the issues most relevant to the people of Newry, Mourne and Down. This analysis focuses on the 21 indicators that support the five key outcomes of the Community Plan. It is updated in line with the Statement of Progress and the report is available to download from the Council website:

newrymouredown.org/community-planning

Scorecards based on the baseline data, along with feedback collected at events and from participants, are included in this section.

APPENDIX 1

TILT PROGRAMME: TACKLING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS TOGETHER SCORECARDS

Since the beginning of 2025, the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership has continued to strengthen its commitment to reducing loneliness and social isolation through the TILT (Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Together) programme. The initiative recognises that while social isolation relates to having limited social contact, loneliness is the personal and emotional experience of feeling disconnected—both of which can affect individuals at any stage of life and in a range of circumstances.

Since the launch of the TILT programme, three key engagement events have been delivered: The Cost of Loneliness in the Workplace, TILT for Carers, and Laugh Your Blues Away at Cloughreagh. Each event targeted different groups within the community, creating opportunities to raise awareness, encourage open discussion, and promote practical support.

Throughout the year, the programme focused on raising awareness, offering practical support, and strengthening community connections across the district. This included a series of engagement events, public awareness campaigns, and the launch of a dedicated TILT website. The programme aims to support people experiencing isolation due to work pressures, caring responsibilities, health issues, major life changes, or other barriers that make connecting with others more difficult.

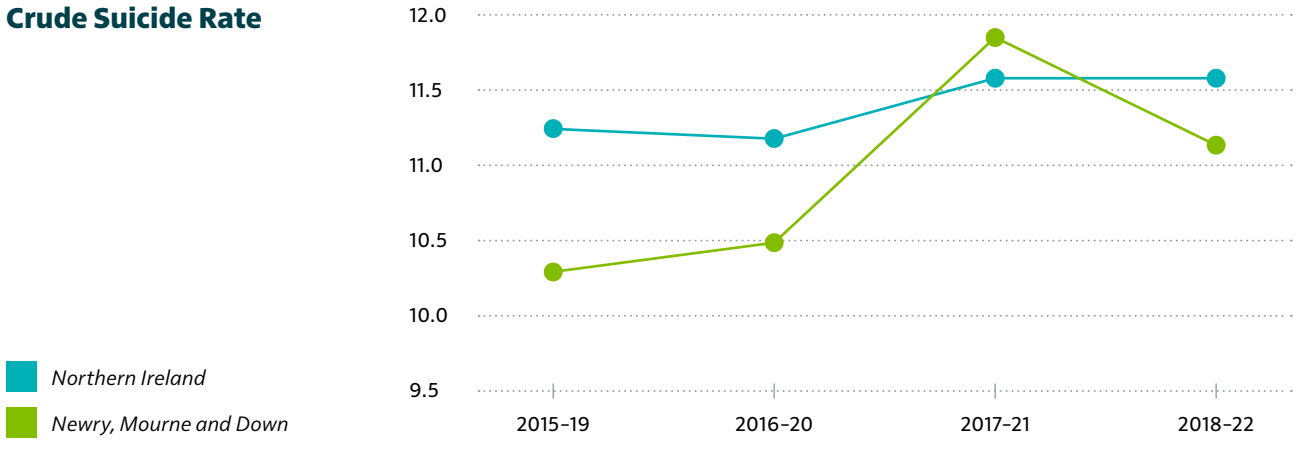
TILT works alongside a range of local services, such as the Good Morning Call Service, mental health support programmes, and partnerships with community organisations, helping to create a stronger support network for residents. Together, these efforts mark an important step towards building a more connected, resilient, and supportive community across Newry, Mourne and Down.



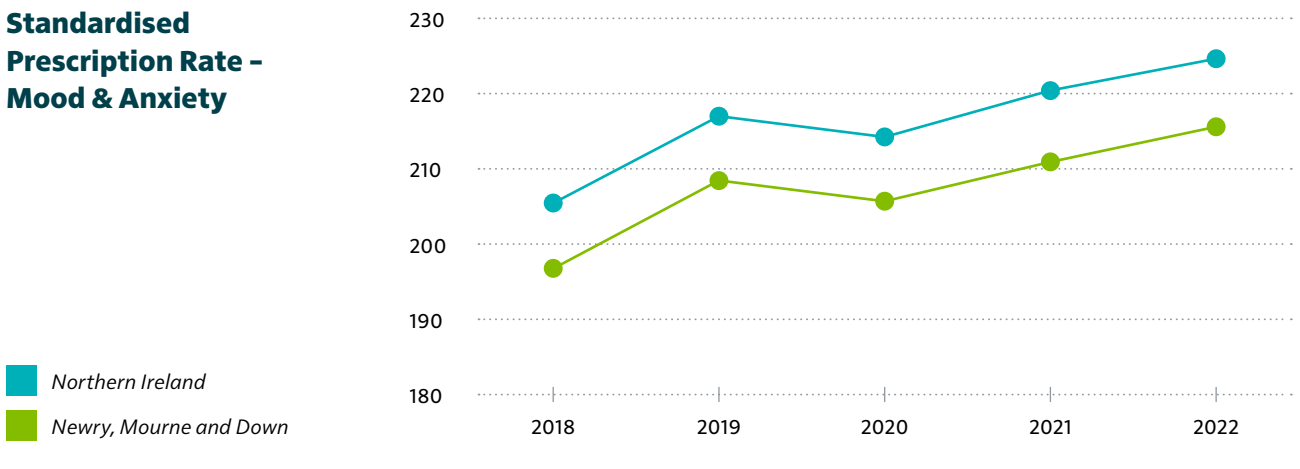
Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

BASELINE DATA

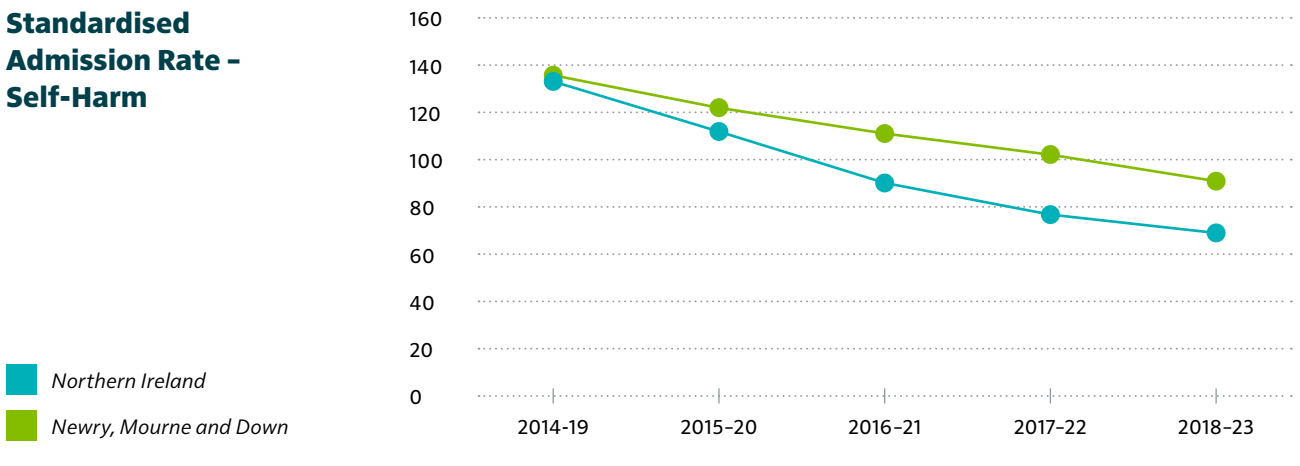
Crude Suicide Rate



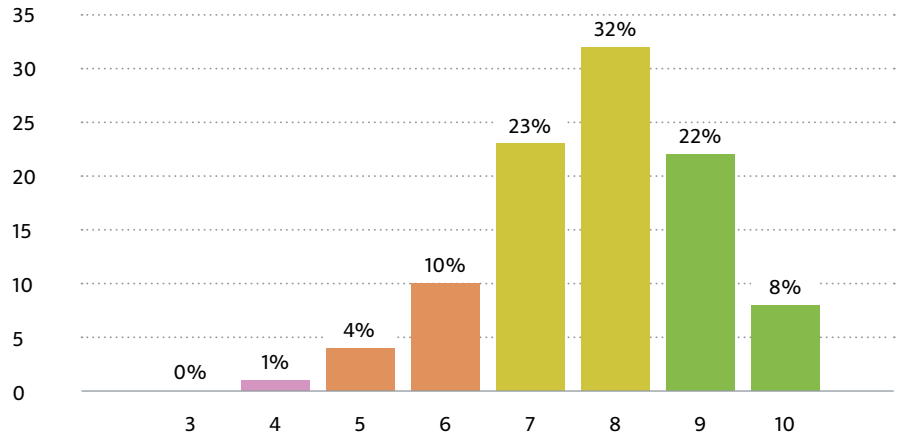
Standardised Prescription Rate - Mood & Anxiety



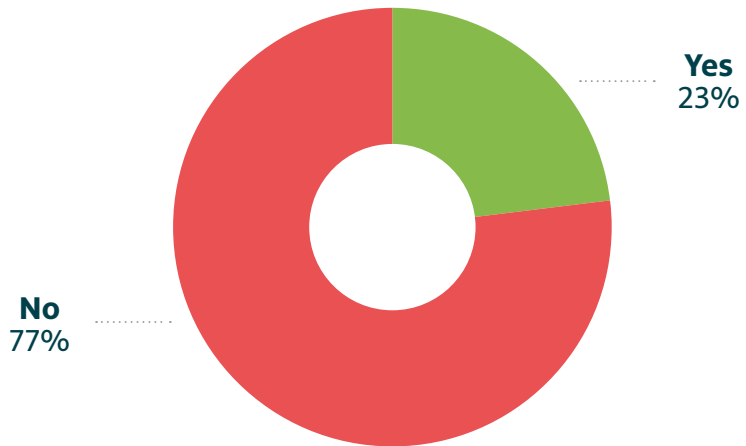
Standardised Admission Rate - Self-Harm



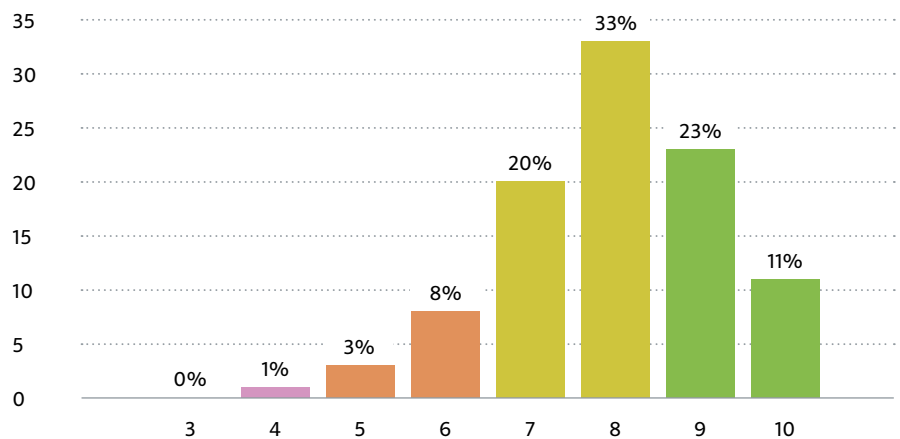
How satisfied are you with your mental/emotional health? (1-10)



Do you regularly take part in any local groups or community activities?



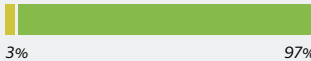
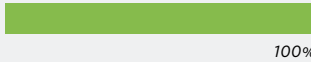
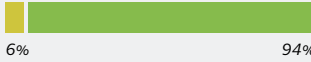
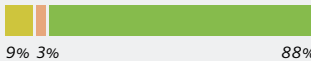
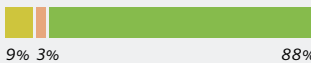
How satisfied are you with your physical health? (1-10)



COST OF LONELINESS IN THE WORKPLACE EVENT

FEBRUARY 2025

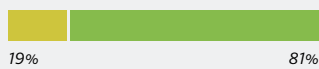
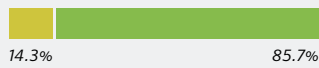
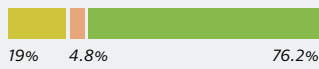
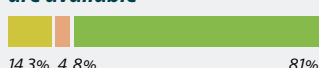
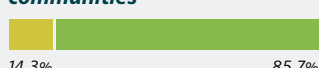
In February 2025, the Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership launched the TILT programme at the Canal Court Hotel, Newry, with 32 attendees. The event explored the impact of loneliness and social isolation in the workplace, highlighting how reduced social connection can affect employee wellbeing, morale, productivity and attendance. Discussions focused on how life transitions, remote working, health challenges and workplace culture can contribute to isolation and loneliness, and how these experiences often extend into professional environments. The launch also introduced the dedicated TILT website, providing access to guidance, resources and local support services.

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT	RESULTS
<p>How much did we do?</p>	<p>The launch event took place in February 2025 at the Canal Court Hotel, Newry, attended by 32 individuals. The focus was addressing loneliness and social isolation in the workplace. Participants provided extensive feedback across five key themes: embedding the issue, resource access, education, communication, and direct support.</p>	
<p>How well did we do it?</p>	<p>Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of attendees rating it 5 out of 5 and the remaining 3% rating it 4. Participants praised the session as engaging, well structured, and informative. They particularly valued the chance to network, learn about the new TILT programme and website, and hear from high quality speakers. Highlights included the focus on self compassion, the relevance of the content to workplace wellbeing, and the usefulness of resources for future signposting.</p> <p>Representative comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Excellent event with excellent speakers.” “Brilliant initiative and delighted this are on the agenda.” “Excellent morning — TILT and Ed’s work will be really important to SHSCT.” “The information on self compassion was especially relevant to our workplace.” “Looking forward to signposting staff to your website and training.” 	<p><i>I found the event useful and worthwhile</i></p>  <p><i>The chosen speakers were appropriate</i></p>  <p><i>The event information provided was useful and appropriate</i></p> 
<p>Is anyone better off?</p>	<p>The event increased awareness of loneliness and social isolation, especially in workplace settings. Attendees reported feeling better equipped to recognise and respond to these challenges. Many planned to use the TILT website and resources in their roles, share training opportunities with staff, and build stronger local connections. There was a clear appetite for continued collaboration, workplace culture change, and practical next steps that extend the impact beyond the event.</p>	<p><i>The event improved my awareness of the work of other agencies</i></p>  <p><i>Loneliness and isolation affect both our workplaces and wider communities</i></p> 

SUPPORTING CARERS: TILT SPOTLIGHT EVENT MAY 2025

In May 2025, the Community Planning Partnership hosted a TILT spotlight event at the Canal Court Hotel, Newry, attended by 32 carers. The session focused on the heightened risk of isolation and loneliness experienced by carers due to demanding routines, limited social interaction and reduced opportunities for engagement.

The event created a supportive space for carers to share experiences, access information and explore available services. Three attendees received tailored advice from Community Advice NM&D, strengthening their connection to practical assistance. The session reinforced the importance of recognising carers’ needs and promoting accessible tools, including the TILT website, to support their wellbeing and inclusion within the wider community.

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT	RESULTS
<p>How much did we do?</p>	<p>The carers-focused TILT event took place in May 2025 at the Canal Court Hotel, Newry, welcoming 32 attendees. The session centred on the isolation and loneliness often experienced by carers due to demanding responsibilities and limited support. By highlighting these issues, the event aimed to recognise carers’ unique challenges, promote access to resources like the TILT website, and strengthen their connection to wider community support.</p>	
<p>How well did we do it?</p>	<p>95% of attendees rated the carers-focused TILT event 5 out of 5, with the remaining 5% giving it a 4. The session was described as warm, informative, and thoughtfully delivered. Carers appreciated the chance to connect with others in similar roles, hear from knowledgeable speakers, and explore resources designed specifically for their needs. The supportive environment and practical takeaways were especially praised, highlighting the importance of recognising carers within community wellbeing efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A truly great event — well-organised and deeply meaningful.” “This event reminded me I’m not alone, both in caring and in life. Heartfelt thanks.” “Thank you for a thoughtful and informative morning. The speakers were engaging and clearly passionate about their work.” 	<p><i>I found the event useful and worthwhile</i></p>  <p><i>The chosen speakers were appropriate</i></p>  <p><i>The event information provided was useful and appropriate</i></p> 
<p>Is anyone better off?</p>	<p>The event helped shine a light on the emotional and social isolation often experienced by carers, encouraging reflection and dialogue around the pressures of supporting others while managing personal wellbeing. Attendees left feeling more informed and encouraged, with many expressing a clearer understanding of how to access local support and resources, including the TILT website. Several participants noted plans to share information with peers and explore further involvement in community initiatives. There was a strong sense of momentum, with carers welcoming the opportunity for connection, peer support, and continued recognition of their vital role.</p>	<p><i>The event improved my awareness of resources that are available</i></p>  <p><i>Loneliness and isolation affect both workplaces and communities</i></p> 

LAUGH YOUR BLUES AWAY: COMMUNITY WELLBEING EVENT JANUARY 2025

In January 2026, 140 residents from the Newry, Slieve Gullion and Crotlieve District Electoral Areas attended the Laugh Your Blues Away community wellbeing event at Cloughreagh Community Centre. Supported by the TILT (Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Together) programme, the event aimed to address social isolation and promote positive mental health during the winter period.

The afternoon featured live comedy, music, afternoon tea and a range of interactive activities designed to create a relaxed and welcoming environment that encouraged conversation and social connection. Information stalls from local support organisations also provided attendees with access to advice and wellbeing services.

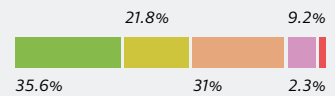
The strong turnout demonstrated the value of accessible, community-based initiatives in bringing people together, fostering inclusion and reinforcing the importance of connection in supporting overall health and wellbeing across the district.

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT	RESULTS
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How much did we do?

Engagement with residents has reinforced that loneliness and social isolation continue to impact a significant number of people across the district. Through direct feedback, many individuals have acknowledged experiencing these challenges themselves. In response, we have delivered targeted community wellbeing events designed to provide support, create meaningful opportunities for social connection, and ensure that those who may be vulnerable feel included, valued and supported within their local community.

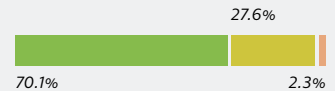
I sometimes experience the impacts of loneliness and social isolation myself



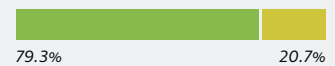
How well did we do it?

95% of attendees rated the event 5 out of 5, with a further 4% awarding it 4 out of 5 and 1% giving it 3 out of 5, demonstrating an overwhelmingly positive response. The event was particularly praised for its strong organisation, engaging speakers and entertainment, and the smooth flow of the programme. Attendees highlighted the welcoming and sociable atmosphere, valuing the opportunity to reconnect with others, enjoy shared activities, and spend time outside of their usual routines. The refreshments and overall coordination were also commended, reflecting the significant time and effort invested in delivering a high-quality experience.

I found the event useful and worthwhile



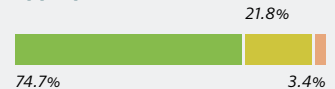
I found the event enjoyable

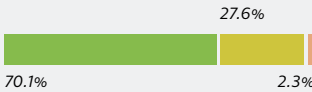
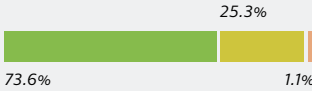


Participant feedback included:

- "Seeing old friends I haven't seen in a while... plus the speakers and the exercises."
- "Very well organised and the social end of it was very good."
- "I enjoyed going to this event with my friends, as it got me out of the house and enjoying other company."
- "I appreciate the time and effort put into organising this wonderful event. It was lovely to see so many people coming together and socialising."

The chosen speakers were appropriate



CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT	RESULTS								
<p>Is anyone better off?</p>	<p>Feedback indicates that those who attended were better off as a result of participating in the event. Attendees were exposed to a range of information and support through the various advice stalls present, including health, wellbeing and community organisations, helping to raise awareness of services available locally. In addition to accessing practical information, the event created a welcoming and inclusive space that encouraged social interaction. Many participants benefited from the opportunity to reconnect with others, meet new people and enjoy time outside of their usual routines. By combining access to support services with a relaxed, sociable atmosphere, the event helped to reduce feelings of isolation and promote positive mental wellbeing within the community.</p>	<p>The event information provided was useful and appropriate</p>  <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>70.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>2.3%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Loneliness and social isolation are a challenge in our communities</p>  <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>73.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>1.1%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	70.1%	Agree	2.3%	Strongly Agree	73.6%	Agree	1.1%
Strongly Agree	70.1%									
Agree	2.3%									
Strongly Agree	73.6%									
Agree	1.1%									



■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (PB) – COMMUNITIES LEADING CHANGE INITIATIVE NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL (SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2025)

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process that empowers local residents to directly influence how public funding is allocated in their community. Rather than decisions being made solely by council officers or elected representatives, PB gives people a voice in choosing which projects and initiatives receive financial support — fostering greater community ownership, transparency, and civic engagement.

Between 13 September and 15 October 2025, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, as part of the Communities Leading Change initiative, delivered a series of PB events across all seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs): Crotlieve, Downpatrick, Newry, Rowallane, Slieve Croob, Slieve Gullion, and The Mournes.

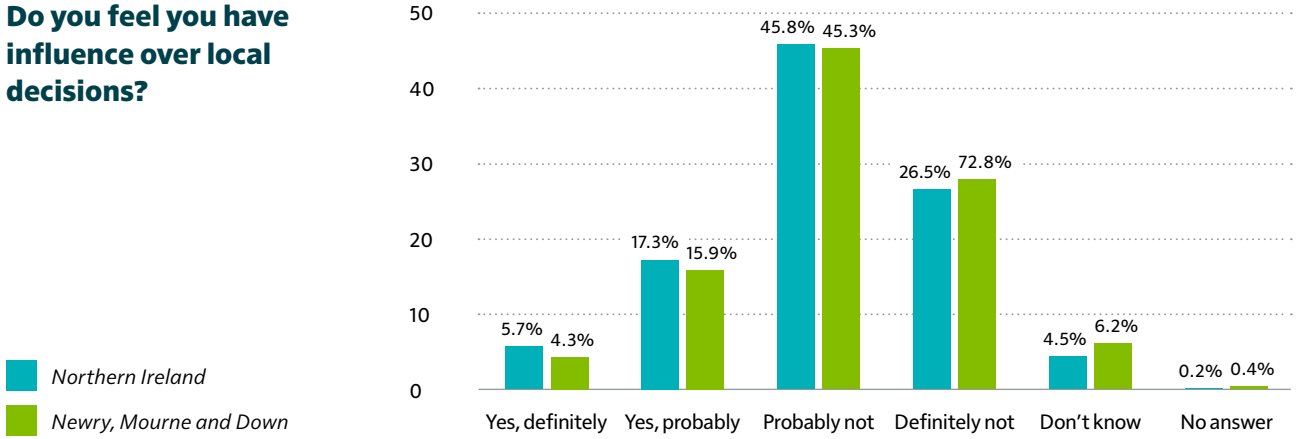
Local residents were invited to attend their local event, hear proposals from a wide range of voluntary groups and charitable organisations, and cast their vote on funding bids aimed at promoting good health and wellbeing in area.

The initiative achieved significant community reach, with over 4,400 voters participating across the seven DEAs. As a result of the public vote, 98 groups were successful in securing funding, sharing a total of £98,000 to deliver projects that will directly benefit their local communities.

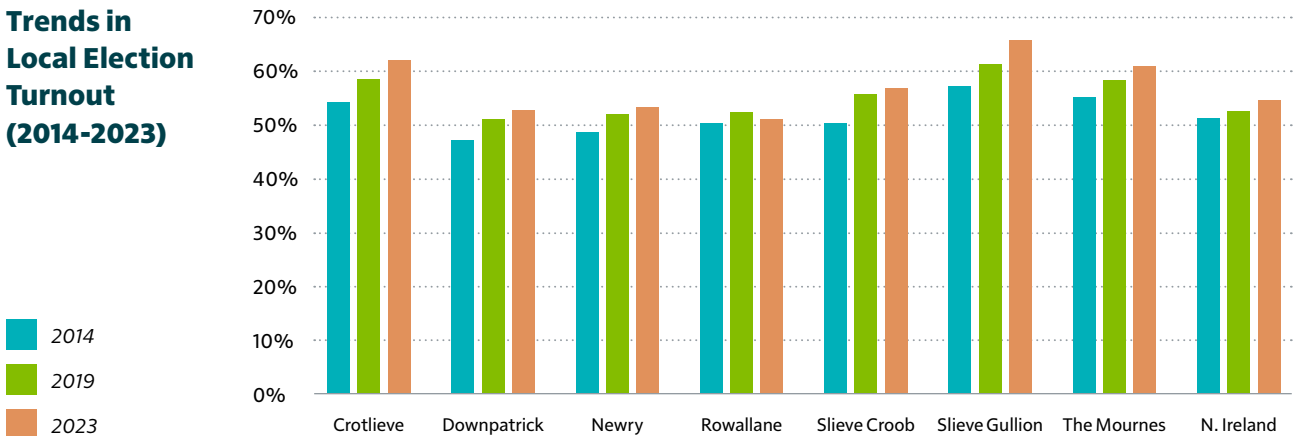


BASELINE DATA

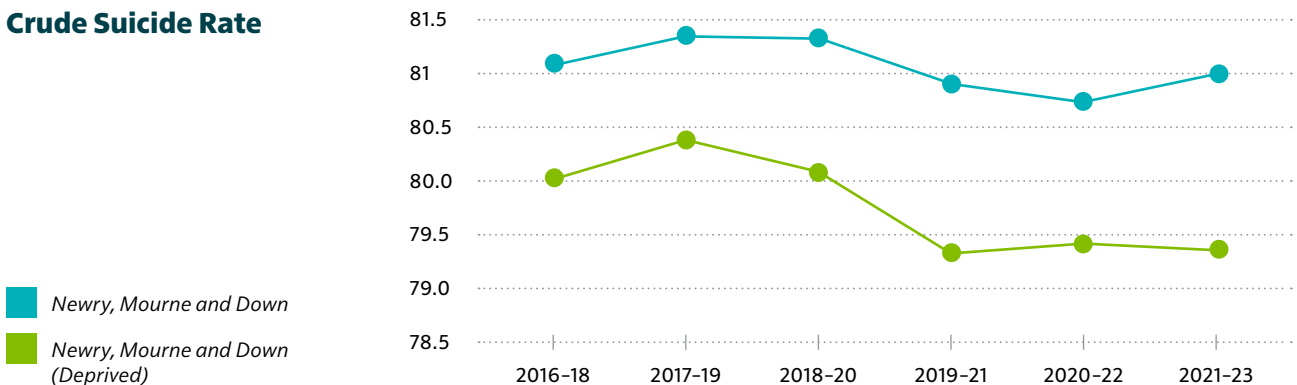
Do you feel you have influence over local decisions?



Trends in Local Election Turnout (2014-2023)



Crude Suicide Rate



Our baseline data for the Participatory Budget scorecard is drawn from three key indicators that reflect community voice, wellbeing and civic engagement. Survey results to the question 'Do you feel you have a say in local decisions?' provide a direct measure of perceived influence and public confidence in local decision-making. Local election turnout over recent years provides a measurable indicator of

democratic participation and engagement. Life expectancy at birth offers a long-term indicator of overall health and wellbeing across the area, helping to contextualise wider social outcomes. Together, these indicators establish a clear starting point against which the impact of participatory budgeting on involvement, empowerment and community wellbeing can be assessed over time.

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?



7

Events



168

Participating Groups



4,400⁺

Event Attendance



21,655

Votes Cast



12

Partnership Organisations



£98,000

Awarded to 98
Successful Groups



District Electoral Areas

- Crotlieve
- Downpatrick
- Newry
- Rowallane
- Slieve Croob
- Slieve Gullion
- The Mournes



Key Outcomes

- Community-identified priorities funded in all DEAs.
- Voluntary and community sector supported.
- Strengthened democratic engagement across the district.



Continued Support

- Alternative funding secured for groups not successful in the PB voting process.
- Ensuring good ideas and community initiatives can still be realised.

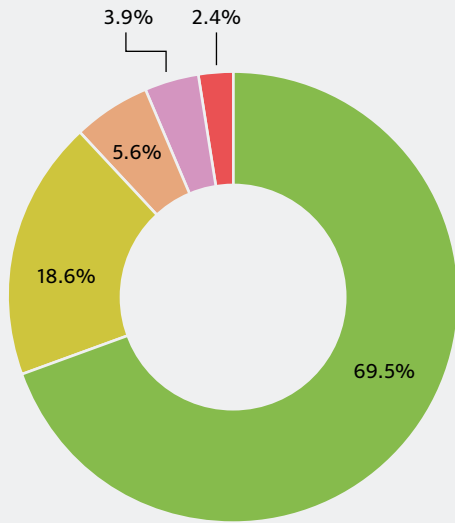


Community Impact

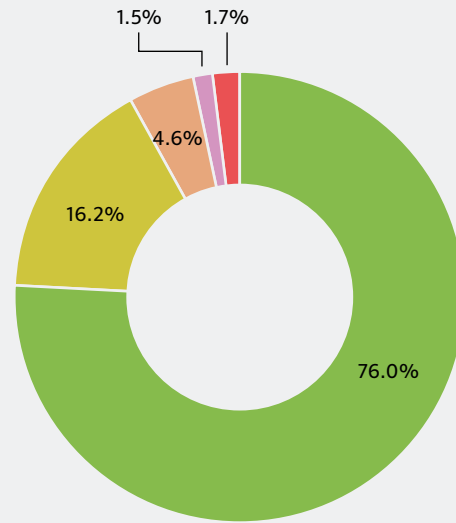
Communities Leading Change gave residents a direct say in how local funding was spent. Groups from across all seven District Electoral Areas put forward their priorities, attended events, and voted on what mattered most to them. £98,000 was awarded to 98 successful groups as a result. Where groups were unsuccessful in the vote, alternative funding was found to keep good ideas moving forward.

HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

I found the event enjoyable and easy to participate in



This experience felt worthwhile, and I would be happy to take part again

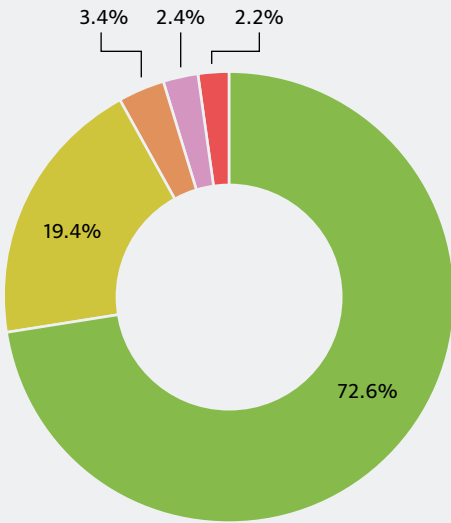


■ *Definitely Agree*
 ■ *Tend to Agree*
 ■ *Neutral*
 ■ *Tend to Disagree*
 ■ *Definitely Disagree*

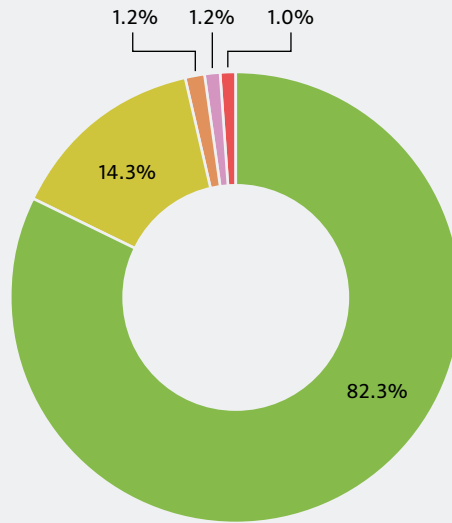
Our PB events were a resounding success across all seven DEAs. Residents left better informed about initiatives available in their local area, with the accessible and engaging format fostering a genuine sense of inclusion and community. Attendees described it as "a lovely atmosphere where you really felt part of something," a "genuinely inclusive way to make funding decisions," and praised the strong turnout and quality of projects on show. This was reflected strongly in the survey data: 88.1% of residents agreed the events delivered meaningful, inclusive participation, and 92.2% said their experience had motivated them to take part in future PB events — a clear sign that we not only met expectations on the day but created lasting appetite for civic engagement.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

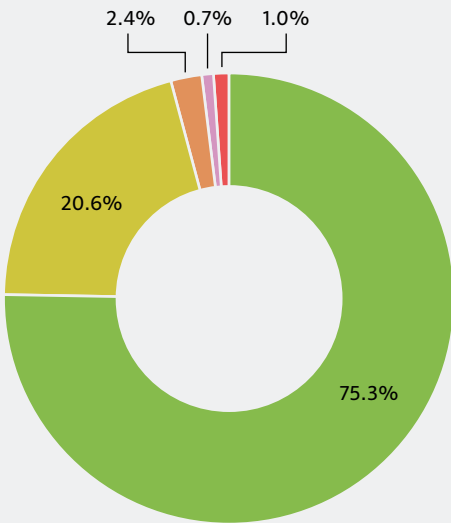
The process made me feel like I had a say in local decisions



The session made me more aware of groups and activities in the area



The projects I've seen today, will make a real impact on the health and wellbeing of people in this area



■ *Definitely Agree*
 ■ *Tend to Agree*
 ■ *Neutral*
■ *Tend to Disagree*
 ■ *Definitely Disagree*

The PB events made a real and meaningful difference to people across the area. An overwhelming 95.9% of residents agreed that the projects they saw will make a real impact on the health and wellbeing of people in their area, demonstrating that when communities choose their own priorities, they back projects they truly believe will make a difference. Equally, 92% felt the process gave them a genuine say in local decisions, reinforcing that Participatory Budgeting successfully empowers communities to shape their own future through direct democratic engagement. Perhaps most tellingly, 96.6% said the sessions made them more aware of groups and activities in their area, highlighting great local initiatives that many residents simply hadn't known existed before attending.

APPENDIX 3

EVENT REPORT YAFTAS (JANUARY – MARCH 2024)

NMD – NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN YOUTH VOICE

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT? SO WHAT?	WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE?
WHAT DID WE SAY WE WOULD DO? Having their voices heard and listened to		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of individuals engaged – 227. Total number of Youth Council participants engaged – 35. Number of planning sessions – 20. Launch Event 13 February (Downpatrick). Awards Ceremony 28 March (Newry). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of youth councillors involved with a key role during either the launch, shortlisting, or the event – 100%. Average percentage of those in attendance during the planning sessions – 65%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We found this very rewarding, as our hopes for the event turned into reality, empowering us and increasing our confidence in our abilities." "Being trusted with £5,000 to run an event for other young people made us feel valued, and we found it very rewarding to see how our choices and voices were impactful, empowering us further." "The council's trust in us with £5,000 to organise an event for fellow young people was incredibly empowering. We felt valued, and seeing our hopes materialise into reality increased our confidence in our abilities."

WHAT DID WE SAY WE WOULD DO? Collaborating on themes and topics that are important to them		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people explored the topic of citizenship and decided on the categories for awards. Young people from across Newry, Mourne and Down collaborated to deliver this programme. Themes of the awards correlated to the strategic outcomes for Community Planning. Young people gaining knowledge on shortlisting of nominations experience with key stakeholders from the project board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of youth councillors involved in shortlisting – 40%. Link between each category and strategic outcomes for community planning: Good Relations, Inclusion and Community Safety – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful safe and vibrant communities. Environmental – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from a clean, quality, and sustainable environment. Mental Health & Wellbeing – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down enjoy good health and wellbeing. Social Enterprise/Action – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities. Voice of Young People and Inspirational Young Person – All people in Newry, Mourne and Down get a good start in life and fulfil their lifelong potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We found it great that the categories we had were very relevant to young people, offering a safe and comfortable environment for collaboration. This promotes teamwork and allows individuals to become better at group work." "We believe that the categories were well chosen and very inclusive, linked to the strategic outcomes for community planning. This provides a good link between District Council and Youth Council, supporting collaboration and youth engagement."

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

HOW WELL DID WE DO IT? SO WHAT?

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE?

WHAT DID WE SAY WE WOULD DO?

Engaging with stakeholders and interested groups

- Total number of community groups engaged with - 57.
- Total number of post primary schools engaged with - 23.
- Total number of Further Educational Colleges engaged with - 2.
- Engaged with the Project Board members during all stages of the programme.
- Percentage of those engaged with that submitted nominations - 32%.
- Percentage of those engaged with that attended the Ceremony event - 22%.
- "It's good to meet the people behind the nominations. We had already been very inspired by them."
- "This allowed opportunity for collaboration whilst also offering specialist knowledge and engagement with different groups and seeing different views and perspectives. In diversity, we find strength, innovation, and a broader understanding of the world."

WHAT DID WE SAY WE WOULD DO?

Having the opportunity to showcase their creativity

- Number of nominations received - 26.
- Number nominees shortlisted for awards - 15.
- Range of projects being delivered across the district.
- Planning and Organising of Launch and Event allowed Youth Councillors to showcase their creativity in event management.
- Youth Councillors liaised with Canal Court Hotel Staff to express their needs.
- Percentage of participants who were recognised for their work - 100%.
- Percentage of participants who received awards for their work - 58%.
- Number of nominations under each category:
 - Good Relations - 6
 - Environmental - 1
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing - 5
 - Community Safety - 2
 - Social Enterprise/Action - 2
 - Voice of Young People - 3
 - Inspirational Young Person - 4
 - Inclusion - 3
- "Seeing our ideas put into action gave us a sense of pride; it has allowed people ample opportunity to showcase their creative side, allowing ideas to be shared. Together, we feel we were doing something very positive for our communities."
- "Proud to showcase our hard work and express our ideas in a real event, we felt a sense of accomplishment. Seeing our ideas put into action not only filled us with pride but also allowed others to showcase their creative side, fostering a culture of innovation and community betterment."
- "In the midst of showcasing our hard work and expressing our ideas in a real event, we felt a surge of pride. This platform has allowed people ample opportunity to showcase their creative side, allowing ideas to be shared. Together, we feel we were doing something very positive for our communities."

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

HOW WELL DID WE DO IT? SO WHAT?

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS MADE?

WHAT DID WE SAY WE WOULD DO?

Gain confidence in their own ability to carry out a project from its inception to final product

- Number of participants gained confidence in their own ability - 35.
- Number of participants who gained skills in photography - 4.
- Number of participants who gained skills in project planning and event management - 35.
- Percentage of participants who gained knowledge and enhanced skills due to their involvement in their project - 100%.
- Types of skills gained or enhanced were, Communication, teamwork, problem solving, project and event management, budgeting, creative arts, digital media, photography, public speaking, public relations, leadership, negotiating, networking, adaptability, reflective, risk management, interpersonal, community engagement and resourcefulness.
- "The real sense of achievement is truly rewarding to see our project come to life. It brought us together collaboratively as a youth council."
- "The success of the project allowed participants on the youth council to gain confidence in themselves and their ability to problem-solving. It's truly rewarding to see our project come to life."

WHAT DID WE SAY WE WOULD DO?

Gain experience in public speaking and market research

- Number of participants gained experience in public speaking - 24.
- Percentage of Youth Councillors who gained skills in public speaking - 69%.
- "Public speaking, increasing the confidence of those who participated. This result may encourage those involved to continue to engage in public speaking activities."
- "Pushed us out of our comfort zones particularly in public speaking. A great opportunity for us to expand our skills."
- "Interacting with new people boosted our self-confidence. Great to gain experience of collective decision making based on our research."



APPENDIX 4

PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE BY ORGANISATION

NAME OF ORGANISATION	BOARD MEETINGS ATTENDED
Department for Communities	6
Department of Education	3
Department of Health	2
Education Authority	2
Invest NI	2
Libraries NI	2
NI Housing executive	5
Police Service of Northern Ireland	5
Public Health Agency	2
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	6
South Eastern Regional College	4
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	5
Southern Regional College	4
Sport NI	3
Strategic Stakeholder Forum	6
Tourism NI	2

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

0330 137 4000

newrymouredown.org