Department for Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk



Neighbourhood Renewal Report Card 2025-26

© Crown Copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence visit:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright-holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:

Community Empowerment Division
Department for Communities
Level 8 Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

This publication is also available to download from our website at
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Renewal Report Card 2025-26

The Executive's People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal aims to tackle social and economic inequalities by involving government departments, local people and other sectors in improving communities through community, economic, social and physical renewal. Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships develop local plans for these targeted areas.

Goals of the Strategy

The Department for Communities contributes to the strategy through its Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (NRP), Areas at Risk Programme (AaR) and Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme (SPoDs) which combined provide a long-term commitment to tackling social and economic inequalities in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. It provides a framework for community-based action that directly supports the delivery of the Programme for Government (PfG).

- **Targeted Intervention:** People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal identifies and addresses the needs of the most disadvantaged areas, supporting PfG outcomes on reducing poverty, improving health, raising educational attainment and building safer communities

- **Cross-Government Collaboration:** The Strategy brings together government departments, statutory agencies, councils and the voluntary and community sector through Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships - ensuring joined-up delivery in line with the PfG's emphasis on collaborative working

- **Community Empowerment:** Local action plans are co-designed with communities, giving residents a voice in shaping priorities and solutions. This reflects PfG's commitment to citizen engagement and stronger, more confident communities

The NRP contributes to long-term change through four renewal pillars and supporting Outcomes:

- **Community renewal:** Building confident communities able and committed to improving the quality of life in their area
  - Individuals have self-confidence
  - Communities have greater confidence to drive renewal
  - Communities are cohesive and create a sense of belonging for all their diverse members
- **Economic renewal:** Fostering economic activity and connecting deprived areas to the wider urban economy
  - Individuals have better income prospects
  - Individuals have better income
  - Communities have more local businesses and jobs
- **Social renewal:** Improve health, education and community safety

  - Individuals engage better with education
  - Individuals adopt healthier lifestyles
  - Individuals feel safer in their area
  - Communities have better community safety
- **Physical renewal:** Creating safer, sustainable and attractive environments
  - Communities have better built environments
  - Communities have better access to green spaces
  - Communities have cleaner environments

The outcomes show not just the scale of activity but also the impact with information on the number of jobs secured, improvements in health and wellbeing and community safety. The NRP translates high-level PfG commitments into practical, locally owned actions that improve quality of life in Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This investment in local communities also supports over 600 jobs in community organisations.

How it Works The NRP targets areas with the highest levels of multiple deprivation in Northern Ireland, identified through the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure. It is delivered through a cross-governmental partnership involving all departments working alongside local communities. Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, established in 2005, bring together community representatives, government bodies and voluntary organisations to lead this work. These Partnerships develop and implement local action plans designed to address the specific needs of their neighbourhoods, ensuring that interventions are tailored, collaborative, and sustainable.

Examples of initiatives include:

- Community engagement – supporting community bonding projects and community development skills training
- Economic opportunities – providing job specific and employability training
- Education services – delivering educational projects; parenting initiatives and youth work projects
- Health Services – facilitating health education/awareness initiatives
- Physical upgrades – improving community facilities

Key Aspects

- **Long-Term Commitment:**

  People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal emphasises a sustained effort to bring about lasting change in targeted communities.

- **Community Involvement:**

  The active participation of local people and community groups is central to the Strategy's success.

- **Focus on Deprivation:**

  The Strategy specifically targets the most deprived communities to reduce disadvantage caused by where people live.

Key Performance Measures (KPMs)

The Outcomes Based Approach defines the conditions or outcomes that we aim to achieve such as a safer neighbourhood or better health. Performance Measures quantify progress towards the desired outcome.

- The Department's investment of **£21.4m** enabled funded groups to secure an additional **£27.2m** in external funding
- Our investment enabled **340,842** volunteer hours worked at a value of **£4.3m*** in unpaid community work (*based on NLW hourly rate)
- Funding enabled **2,266** people to secure employment through training/employability support
- **39,897** children and young people participated in **870** educational projects
- The capital funding element helped to improve **474** community facilities
- Community safety advice was provided to **26,060** people who participated in **512** community safety projects
- Funding enabled **87,048** people to participate in **2,590** health education/ awareness initiatives/intervention services

Outcomes

Community Renewal

- **7,754** employees or volunteers trained in community development or capacity building skills training, meaning staff and volunteers are better equipped to lead, support and sustain projects that benefited their neighbourhoods
- **25,541** beneficiaries of advice services. This figure evidenced the reach and scale of community-based advice provisions showing how many individuals in deprived areas were directly supported to navigate complex issues that impacted their daily lives, financial stability, and wellbeing
- **253,132** beneficiaries of **2,332** community bonding/relations projects, with **74%** of participants reporting they now felt more comfortable engaging across community environments. This meant thousands of residents in disadvantaged areas were brought together through structured activities that successfully helped break down barriers, reduce tensions, and encourage cross-community engagement—an important PfG contribution to good relations, stronger communities, and social cohesion

Economic Renewal

- **7,181** people received job specific or employability training; with **2,266** securing employment, thus reducing income inequality. Training programmes (e.g. skills workshops, apprenticeships, sector-specific training) directly supported thousands of people, with many progressing into jobs. This demonstrated how the Strategy helped move people from unemployment or low skills into work, narrowing inequality
- **76%** of participants in receipt of employability training gained formal qualifications. The majority of participants not only trained but also achieved accredited qualifications (e.g. NVQs, trade certificates), which strengthened long-term employability

Social Renewal – Education

- **39,897** children and young people participated in **870** educational projects (large-scale investment in educational support e.g. after-school clubs, mentoring, literacy/numeracy programmes)
- **96%** of participants completed educational projects - high retention rate, showing strong engagement and value to participants

- **83%** of participants reported improved behaviours and/ or attendance - clear impact on attitudes to school, discipline, and commitment to learning
- **3,071** individuals gained formal qualifications – participants leave with recognised educational attainment, boosting future opportunities

Social Renewal – Health

- **87,048** people engaged in **2,590** health education/awareness initiatives/intervention services, improving their health and wellbeing. This shows a mass participation in activities like healthy eating workshops, exercise schemes, smoking cessation, or wellbeing campaigns
- **82%** of individuals reported improved mental health/wellbeing through adopting healthier lifestyles. There is strong evidence that interventions led to tangible changes in how people feel and live

Social Renewal – Social Safety

- **26,060** people took part in **512** community safety projects. Activities such as neighbourhood watch schemes, youth diversion programmes, and safety awareness events
- **12,268** people were supported through **369** crime prevention initiatives/projects, with **80%** of participants reporting feeling safer. Targeted prevention measures (e.g. home security, anti-social behaviour programmes, community policing initiatives) had measurable outcomes, with most participants feeling safer in their communities

Physical Renewal

- **3,911** improvement projects supported with **93%** of residents reporting increased pride in their living environment/area. Investments in physical environment (e.g. new community facilities, upgraded housing, environmental clean-ups, play areas). The fact that around 9 in 10 residents felt greater pride shows a strong link between physical renewal and community morale/identity

Year-on-year change

When the 2025/26 Report Card figures are compared to those for the 2024/25 period:

Community renewal increased. The number of people benefiting from community bonding and relations projects increased by 44%. The number of local community groups supported increased by 3%. Volunteering hours increased by 9%, while the proportion of employees and volunteers completing community development or capacity building skills training increased by 13 percentage points.

Economic renewal improved. The number of people securing employment through training or employability support increased by 42% and the proportion completing training increased by 3 percentage points.

Education continued to grow. Participation in educational projects increased by 26%, while completion rates for educational and parenting projects both increased by 4 percentage points.

Health outcomes were mixed. The number of people using sports facilities increased

by 123% and the proportion engaging in increased physical activity rose by 14 percentage points. However, participation in health education, awareness initiatives and intervention services fell by 9%, while the percentage of individuals reporting improved mental health and wellbeing through adopting a healthier lifestyle fell by 6 percentage points.

Community safety outcomes were also mixed, with participation in community safety projects rising by 11%. However, the proportion of people who reported feeling safe in their local area fell by 12 percentage points.

Physical renewal increased substantially. The number of improvement projects supported increased by 164%, while the proportion of residents reporting greater pride in their area increased by 6 percentage points.

Neighbourhood Renewal Report Card 2025-26

260* Projects

Community Renewal:

2,660 local community groups supported

253,132 beneficiaries of **2,332** community bonding relations projects

6,773 adults volunteering in the community

340,842 volunteer hours equiv to **£4.3m** in wages

25,541 beneficiaries of advice services

Social Renewal - Education:

39,897 children and young people participating in **870** educational projects

11,823 parents participating in **351** parenting projects

9,330 engaged in **282** youth work projects

Physical Renewal:

3,911 improvement projects supported

93% residents who are happy and have increased pride in their living environment/area

474 community facilities improved and/or accessible

£21.4m DfC

NRA Interlinking Strategic Objectives:

- Community Renewal
- Economic Renewal
- Social Renewal
- Physical Renewal

People and Place Strategic outcomes:

- Confident communities able and committed to improving the quality of life
- Economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods; connected to the wider urban economy
- Improved health, education and community safety
- Attractive, sustainable environments
- Improved public service delivery that is accountable to the community
- There is a genuine, equal and reciprocal partnership between government and communities

DfC Business Plan 2025-26:

- Promote respect and inclusion by recognising diversity and tackling poverty
- Support communities through stronger collaboration with government and the voluntary sector
- Develop safe and sustainable towns and cities where people want to live, work and invest
- Strengthen governance, finances and workforce to deliver effective public services

Programme for Government Wellbeing Domains:

- Thriving Children
- Equal Society
- Healthier Lives
- Brighter Futures
- Safer Communities
- Caring Society
- Living Peacefully

£27.2m Additional Funding

Economic Renewal:

7,181 people received job specific or employability training

3,914 people received employment, career, jobs, self-employment or social enterprise start-up advice or support

45 care places to support economic activity or employability training by parent or carer

Social Renewal - Social Safety:

26,060 people taking part in **512** community safety projects

12,268 people supported via **369** crime prevention projects

22,530 young people engaged in **440** youth inclusion or diversionary projects

Social Renewal - Health:

87,048 people engaged in **2,590** health education / awareness initiatives / intervention services

77,433 people using sport facilities for sport/exercise

Outcome Supported 1: Community Renewal All Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Individuals have self-confidence
- Communities have greater capacity to drive renewal
- Communities are cohesive and create a sense of belonging for all their diverse members

"You contribute to this outcome by helping people living in your NRA gain confidence, knowledge and bonds to help improve quality of life for everyone"

How much did we do?

2,660 local community groups supported

253,132 beneficiaries of **2,332** community bonding/ relations projects

7,754 employees or volunteers trained in community development or capacity building

25,541 beneficiaries of advice services

4,059 beneficiaries of victim support services

How well did we do it?

100% employees or volunteers completing community development or capacity building skills training

Is anyone better off?

6,773 adults volunteering for the community for a total of **340,842** volunteering hours

74% of participants that now feel more comfortable engaging across community environments with people with different community backgrounds

72% of participants that now feel their area is more welcoming to people from other cultures or community backgrounds

Outcome Supported 2: Economic Renewal All Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Individuals have better income prospects
- Individuals have better income
- Communities have more local businesses and jobs

"You contribute to this outcome by supporting people in your NRA to move into employment."

How much did we do?

7,181 people receiving job specific or employability training

3,914 people receiving employment, career, jobs, self-employment or social enterprise start-up advice or support

45 care places to support economic activity or employability training by parent or carer

How well did we do it?

93% participants completing job specific or employability training

Is anyone better off?

76% of participants gaining formal qualifications

43% of participants securing employment through training/ employability support

35% of participants who progressed to further training/ education

Outcome Supported 3a: Social Renewal - Education All Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Individuals engage better with education

"You contribute to this outcome by supporting children and young people in your NRA to move into, engage in and get the best from education. This contributes to the strategic aim of closing the gap in educational attainment."

How much did we do?

39,897 children and young people participating in **870** educational projects

11,823 parents participating in **351** parenting projects

9,330 people engaging in **282** youth work projects

3,597 people engaging in **175** adult education projects (not related to employability or community capacity)

How well did we do it?

96% completing educational projects

97% completing parenting projects

Is anyone better off?

51% of participants gaining formal qualifications

83% of participants reporting improved behaviour and/ or attendance

Outcome Supported 3b: Social Renewal - Health All Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Individuals adapt healthier lifestyles

"You contribute to this outcome by supporting people living in your NRA to protect and improve their health"

How much did we do?

87,048 people engaging in **2,590** health education / awareness initiatives / intervention services

77,433 people using **309** sports facilities for sports/ exercise

How well did we do it?

68% participants completing health education/ awareness initiatives / intervention services

Is anyone better off?

97% of individuals engaging in increased physical / sporting activity

82% of individuals that have reported improved mental health/ wellbeing through adopting healthier lifestyle

Outcome Supported 3c: Social Renewal - Social Safety All Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Individuals feel safer in their area

"You contribute to this outcome by creating a neighbourhood that is safe and secure"

How much did we do?

26,060 people taking part in **512** community safety projects

12,268 people were supported through **369** crime prevention initiative/projects

22,530 young people engaging in **440** youth inclusion or diversionary projects

2,721 victims of crime supported

How well did we do it?

80% of participants in community safety and crime prevention projects reporting feeling safer

89% of children and young people completing youth diversionary programmes

Is anyone better off?

76% of people who feel safer in the area that they live

Outcome Supported 4: Social Renewal - Physical Renewal All Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

- Communities have better built environments
- Communities have better access to green spaces
- Communities have cleaner environments

"You contribute to this outcome by creating attractive, safe, sustainable environments in the area"

How much did we do?

3,911 improvements projects supported

How well did we do it?

474 and **84%** of community facilities that are improved and/or accessible

Is anyone better off?

93% of residents who are happy and have increased pride in their living environment/ area

Supporting

260

Projects across

36

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

*Project total includes collaborative projects comprising multiple delivery groups

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

Available in alternative formats.

© Crown Copyright 2026

Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk