

Making an Impact

A summary of our work across our 2022-25 business strategy



ZURICH Municipal

S&P Global Ratings

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION

Devonshire

Housing Finance

CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION LIVERPOOL 2024

#PlanForHousing to boost the economy

#PlanForHousing to end child homelessness

#PlanForHousing to build more social homes

PlanForHousing to fix the housing crisis

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION

Reflections from our Chief Executive



As we enter the final stages of our 2022-25 business strategy, this report looks back over three years and reflects on the journey we've taken together.

This period has presented challenges for social housing residents and those working in the sector. But these obstacles have also demonstrated a resilience and determination that everyone involved can be very proud of.

Three years ago, we were still coming out of a global pandemic and recovering from the impact it had on people's lives, our communities and organisations. Rising costs, compounded by a later energy crisis, added financial pressures at every turn.

Three years ago, we were facing public scrutiny on the quality of homes, which was creating a strong desire for urgent collective action.

Three years ago, we had Boris Johnson as Prime Minister and a Labour opposition. Politics felt unstable, with no one able to guess what would happen next.

The common thread to everything we faced was short-termism. Which is why providing more certainty and stability has been at the heart of our work across 2022-25.

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We've done this through a strategic three-year campaign, supported by our members, calling for a long-term plan to fix the housing crisis. We engaged all political parties and, through building strong relationships with the Labour Party during their journey into government, in 2024 our calls became commitments.

A long-term housing strategy is now expected from the government next year. This strategic work will pave the way for more financial certainty, as we've

been clear through every step of the campaign that our sector is under intense financial pressure and this message has been heard.

Within its first few months, the new government has confirmed a £500m boost to the Affordable Homes Programme, Wave 3 of the Warm Homes Fund, and is consulting on a new social housing rent settlement, which includes the 10-year option we'll be campaigning for.

This recognition and funding extends to existing homes, thanks to the sector's proactive work on the Better Social Housing Review, commissioned in 2022. Collectively, we're addressing urgent issues of quality but we've been clear we can't do all this alone, and this has been recognised across quality and regeneration, building safety and sustainability.

We are proud that we have managed to achieve all of this whilst keeping our affiliation fees below inflation. The cumulative 24% real terms price reduction in fees over the last ten years equates to a total saving for members of £12.5m.

In just three years a lot has changed. In this report we provide more detail on our impact, and how we've performed against our 2022-25 business strategy themes. The road ahead is still full of challenges but, as the government's housing strategy takes shape, we'll have a plan and funding to tackle these challenges.

I believe we can look to the future with optimism. We're in the process of shaping our next business strategy and our work for the next five years, building on the progress we've already made. And I can't wait to get started.

Kate Henderson
Chief Executive, NHF

NHF in numbers

115

In 2024 we held 115 network, national member group, and housing partnership meetings, alongside regional forums

3,100

We have almost doubled our mentions in broadcast and online media from 1,850 in 2022 to over 3,100 in 2024

39%

Our EDI professionals' network has seen a 39% increase in membership between June 2023 and June 2024, with 82 new members

149

We have hosted 149 webinars since 2022

We have worked hard to champion housing associations with our public and political influencing work and have enabled sector collaboration across a range of member events and meetings.

70

Since 2022, the NHF has had more than 130 mentions in Parliament and has met with over 70 senior politicians

13%

Total attendance at member engagement events has increased 13% since 2022

45%

We have increased footfall at commercial events by 45% since 2022

25%

Our engagement rates have increased by 25% on Twitter/X and 33% on LinkedIn between 2023 and 2024. Post clicks on LinkedIn are up 44%

*Please note these figures are up-to-date as of October 2024

Supporting our members to deliver their social purpose

Over the last three years, lots of impactful work has taken place to support our members to deliver their social purpose, including:

- **Widespread coverage with major press stories** - from children living in overcrowded homes to older renters suffering financial hardship - highlighting how the country's housing crisis is affecting people's lives.
- **Becoming a leading voice on homelessness**, working closely with charities including Crisis, Shelter and St Mungo's to write public letters and press releases to keep the housing crisis in the spotlight.
- **Raising the profile of supported housing with campaigns to prevent the decommissioning of services and calls on government to ringfence funding.** And our annual Starts at Home Day, which celebrates the positive impact of supported housing on communities across the country.
- **Using Rural Housing Week to highlight the many social and economic benefits of affordable housing to rural communities.** In 2022, the Chancellor visited the new Broadacres development for people with complex needs which garnered press attention, and in 2023 we used new research to show that demand for social housing in rural areas is growing at over 10 times the rate of that in towns and cities.
- **Progressing our programme on using data to better understand equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in housing associations.** In 2023 we improved our data toolkit and published an updated report on the sector's workforce. And published over 20 case studies and blogs sharing best practice.

“As a North East social housing provider, the NHF ensures our voice is heard nationally, from press coverage to influencing government policy”

– Louise Bassett, Chief Executive Officer, Gentoo

“The NHF EDI steering group has driven the agenda of EDI into boardrooms, where we know real impact can be made”

– Anita Khan, CEO, Tower Hamlets Community Housing, London Regional Chair and EDI National Group member

“The NHF's influence on rural housing issues and the way it responds on our behalf to consultations provides great value for money”

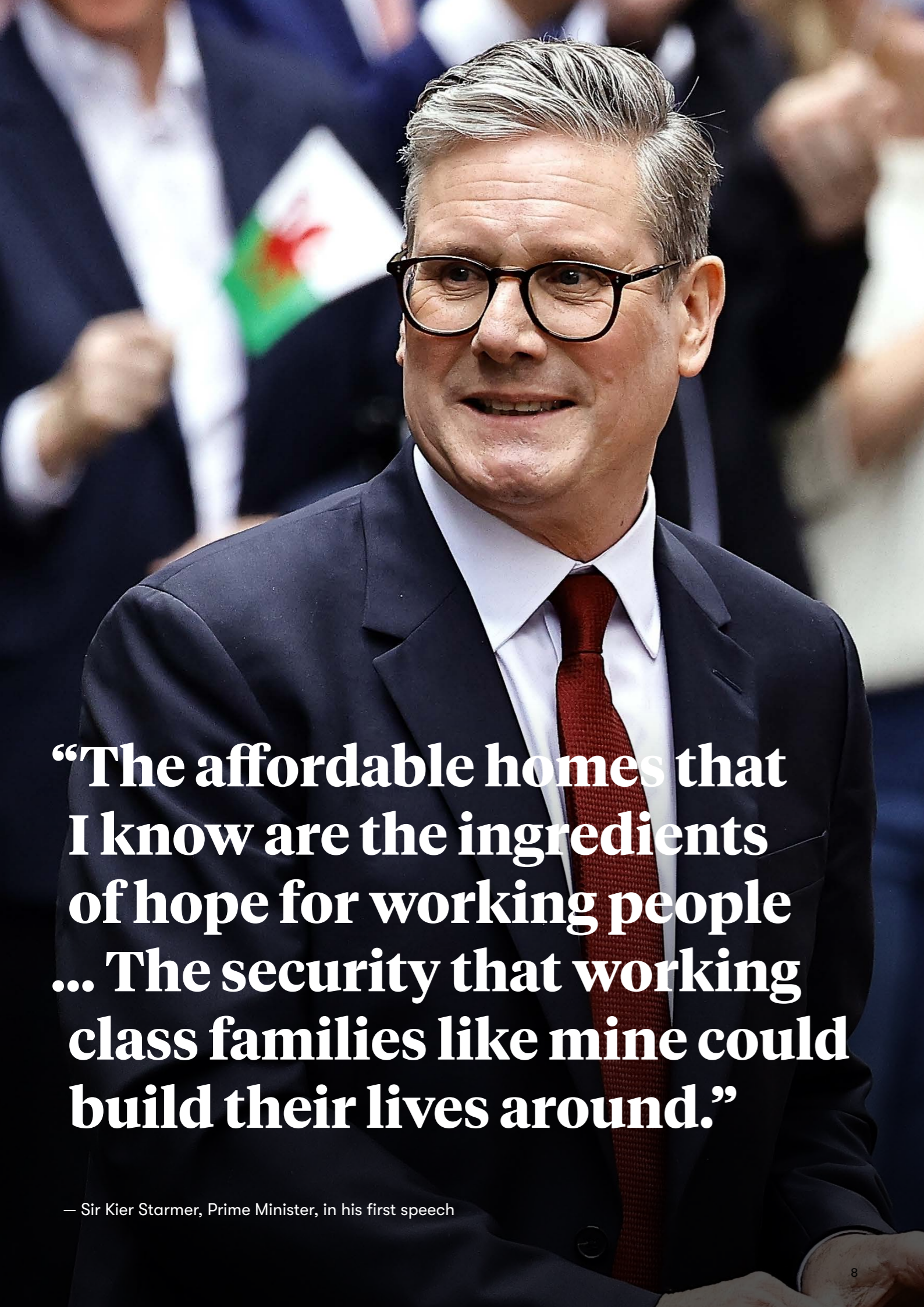
– Gail Teasdale, CEO, Broadacres, Chair of the Rural Housing Alliance

“The NHF's ongoing support, research, and campaigning work for supported housing is invaluable”

– John Verge, CEO, Golden Lane Housing

“The NHF's call for a national strategy on older people's housing will help ensure there are attractive housing options as we age”

– Suki Jandu, Executive Director - Housing Services, Anchor



“The affordable homes that I know are the ingredients of hope for working people ... The security that working class families like mine could build their lives around.”

— Sir Kier Starmer, Prime Minister, in his first speech

Changing political and public perception

There has been a lot of political turbulence over the last three years, including four different Prime Ministers and a recent change in government. Throughout all of this, we have always maintained strong working relationships with serving ministers and those in opposition.

Constructive work with the Conservative government led to a shift in how housing associations were perceived, with the former Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities acknowledging the pressures facing the sector.

Alongside this, we developed a strong partnership with the Labour Party, shifting its focus on new house building to include housing associations as well as councils. Its manifesto made several positive references to the social housing sector, including commitments in response to our asks around planning reforms, funding to upgrade homes, and increasing social and affordable housing.

Our planning and strategic thinking brought immediate rewards when the new government was elected. The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor all referenced social housing in their first speeches. We were also the first external organisation to meet the new Housing Minister on day one of his appointment.

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It has been a collaborative journey. In the run up to the election, housing associations came together and spoke with one voice to deliver a

clear message: we need a long-term plan to fix the housing crisis. The power of this collective voice paid off when Labour announced its commitment to a long-term housing strategy just weeks after forming a new government.

Research we commissioned, often in collaboration with others, became part of the narrative for our sector as the election approached. In partnership with Shelter, we commissioned work from the Centre for Economics and Business Research that demonstrated the economic impact of building the homes we need. This research attracted media attention and was quoted widely by stakeholders and commentators.

We've also used our collective voice to show politicians and the public how the sector is taking collective action on the quality of homes.

Three years ago, scrutiny of the sector was at a high. We committed to support housing associations to address issues of inconsistent performance and put into context the challenges that housing associations were facing.

This led to the Better Social Housing Review, commissioned in partnership with CIH, which has gained recognition from politicians for being a substantial and proactive response to improving the quality of homes and services. Our action plan that followed has created almost 50 new resources and case studies that support housing associations to learn from each other and demonstrate best practice that more people see.

It will remain a challenging priority for our members to fund the increasing costs of improving existing homes, but recognition for the scale of that challenge is here, and increasing support is on the way.

Building the conditions and culture for housing associations to deliver

Over the last three years we've fought hard to secure funding and recognition in a tough operating environment to ensure that our members can keep delivering:

- **Our push for long-term stability has resulted in a five-year – and potentially 10-year – rent settlement for the sector.**
- **We've persistently called for a funding injection to help housing providers deliver new social homes.** This led to a £500m top-up to the Affordable Homes Programme in the 2024 Autumn Budget, safeguarding the future of housing supply.
- **We also safeguarded the future of housing supply** by successfully ending the Infrastructure Levy and default First Homes provision.
- **We've secured at least £2bn for social housing retrofit** via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and related government grant schemes.
- **And, when the energy crisis hit in 2022, we secured help for around 150,000 housing association households** on heat networks, saving residents around £72m a year.
- **We saved larger developing housing associations £1m a year** each by securing an exemption from the Residential Property Development Tax.
- **We've also seen a commitment from government to provide building safety funding to housing associations for the first time.** Over three years we've been publicly building the case for this, which led to the government making new funding available to our sector in the 2024 Autumn Budget.
- **We've produced more than 50 resources to help members navigate the raft of new regulations.**

“As a smaller housing association, we can track the changing face of regulation through NHF forums, training and consultations”

– Clare Norton, CEO, Peter Bedford

“The NHF ensures we are fully sighted of everything that is happening in a fast-changing housing sector”

– Ed Tytherleigh, Director of Services, Centrepont

“Promoting the needs of the sector with key stakeholders has never been more important; the NHF has been key to making this happen”

– Wayne Gales CEO, Weaver Vale Housing Trust

“The NHF has an important role in shaping national policy on issues such as decarbonisation and decent homes”

– Paul Crawford, CEO LiveWest, Co-chair of the Sustainability and Quality of Homes Group

“The NHF continues to support members to address systemic inequalities, using the Better Social Housing Review and action plan to drive through impactful change”

– Tracey Gore, Director of Steve Biko, Chair of the BSHR Group on Race and Inequality



“In the coming months, the government will publish a long-term housing strategy for how we will transform the housing market.”

— Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner

Fighting for financial stability in a period of heightened uncertainty

We understand how challenging the last few years have been for our members' finances and it's been a priority to secure as much funding and stability as possible.

The global pandemic, cost of living crisis, rising inflation and funding uncertainties have created very difficult conditions in which to deliver services, often in the face of increased demand.

Over the last three years we have continuously highlighted how the social housing sector is limited to what it can achieve without new funding. This message has landed, with politicians across all main political parties acknowledging the pressure the sector is under.

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This has resulted in funding commitments on rents, decarbonisation and building safety.

In April 2024, our push for certainty on rents secured a one-year rollover of the current rent settlement, giving members certainty of CPI+1% until April 2026.

Then we pushed once again for longer-term stability, which led to the government announcing a new five-year rent settlement. As part of its consultation, it will also seek views on the option of a 10-year settlement. This will provide a significant boost to the sector's financial certainty after years of short-term decisions.

Looking long term, we've also secured funding for decarbonisation, with a commitment from the government to double spending on decarbonising the country's homes and buildings through their Warm Homes Plan and an initial £3.4bn kickstart, which was announced in the Autumn Budget.

In October 2024 the National Wealth Fund announced £1bn of cheaper, guaranteed lending for housing associations to provide warmer, more energy efficient homes to their residents. The success of our campaign for a long-term housing plan has helped move the government away from short-term measures, giving our members more certainty than ever before.

These are all promising signs that the new government is listening to our sector and that financial support is a priority, and we will keep pushing this message.

There's still lots to do to ensure housing associations are in the best possible position to deliver the best possible services.

Being the best trade body we can be

We have worked hard in recent years to shift our position with the government from a relationship to a partnership; an organisation it respects and trusts. Lots of effort has also gone into more collaborative working, whether that be on campaigns with members, media work with charities, or partnership events.

Post pandemic, we have also strengthened our tailored offers to members, introducing new networks and newsletters.

Here are some highlights from our team:



“Over the last three years, we have increased the rental income from our Lion Court building in London by over 22%. We currently have 100% occupancy across the building”

– Charles Kenneth, Head of Facilities



“Our first Housing Community Summit in September 2024, in collaboration with CIH, was a huge success. We welcomed 3,000 people from across the sector over the two-day conference, and the event scored a 90% satisfaction rate”

– Chris Bancroft, Head of Events



“The results from our 2024 member survey showed that overall satisfaction with our services has increased by 4% to 86% and that chair satisfaction is now 76%, a 6% increase on last year”

– Kevin Garvey, Head of Member Relations



“We actively embrace EDI at the NHF and in recent years have implemented a new Transitioning at Work policy, signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge, and have increased job applications from more diverse groups of people”

– Grusche Michelson, Head of People



“In 2024 we connected our partners to over 290 NHF members, providing savings on a range of services, from pensions and insurance, to IT services and property operations. Between April and September 2024, we passed on savings of nearly £16,000 to members for a range of insurance services”

– Helen Collins, Head of Business Development

“The NHF provides members with an opportunity to collaborate so we can inform government policy and the sector response to it”

– Jonathan Layzell, Chief Officer for Customer Experience & Growth, Stonewater (Delivering Great Homes National Group)

“The NHF offers value to the sector by providing spaces for leaders interested in finance policy to share ideas and experiences”

– Nathan Mallows, Finance Director, Coastline, Chair of Finance Policy Group



Post-pandemic we've built a resilient organisation that collaborates more to benefit our members

Three years ago, we were coming out of a global pandemic and recovering from the impact that had on people's lives, communities and organisations.

At the NHF, we've worked incredibly hard to ensure our commercial income, which is reinvested back into services for members, bounced back and created a clear strategy for commercial recovery.

As part of this, we set a goal to make our events bigger, better and more collaborative than ever before. A tall task given that virtual working was showing no signs of slowing down.

But it led to The Housing Community Summit, our newest and biggest event yet. Working in partnership with CIH, we responded to what members had asked for – one event, not two, that brings the whole sector together under one roof. And it did just that.

This change, alongside many others we've made, has led to us growing our commercial events year-on-year. We're on track to have increased our commercial events by 6.2% over the last three years.

Business development gross income has also increased since April 2022 by 24%.

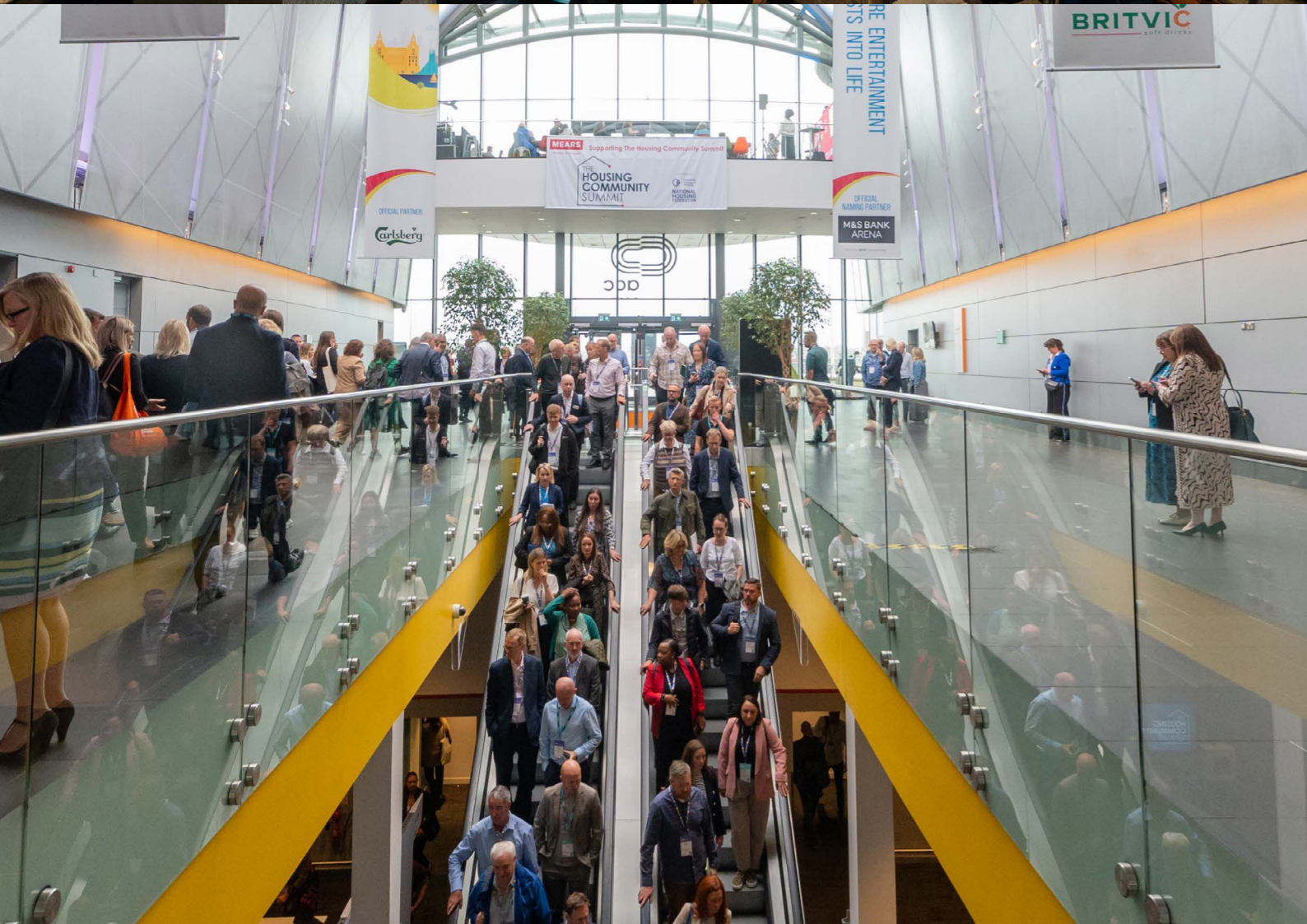
Amid rising costs and fewer resources, we have also worked efficiently to maintain and improve services to members, while keeping affiliation fees below inflation.

The cumulative 24% real terms price reduction in fees over the last ten years equates to a total saving for members of £12.5m.

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Alongside this, we have continued to develop our tailored offers to boards, smaller and rural housing associations. We have increased our communication channels – the most recent addition being the very well received EDI newsletter – and added member networks, including the National Finance Network, which attracted around 150 people to its first meeting.

Just like our members, we have been resilient, adaptable and more efficient during hard financial times. We're proud to have finished the last three years on a trajectory that will put our commercial income back to pre-pandemic levels.



Coming up

Members of our Leadership Team share highlights of what's coming up.



Rhys Moore, Executive Director of Public Impact

Shaping a long-term housing strategy

We are delighted that the new government has already committed to a long-term housing strategy. Our campaign leading up to the election was successful because the whole sector got involved, speaking with one voice and delivering a unified message.

Now we focus on ensuring the government's new strategy is ambitious, focused on meaningful outcomes and supports housing associations to deliver.



Simon Nunn, Executive Director of Member Services

Continuing with our collaborative work

At the NHF, we believe that working in partnership with others adds an immeasurable amount of value to our work. Bringing people together and creating connections within the sector is something we place a huge amount of importance on. We are always looking for opportunities to collaborate and achieve better outcomes for our members.

Our first Housing Community Summit was a great example of showcasing cross-sector collaboration. We hope to build on this next year with an even larger event. We already work with suppliers across the sector to develop NHF products and services and we hope to do more of this, resulting in a range of benefits for our members.

And we plan to build on our current partnership work with other organisations in the sector to develop research, policy and media campaigns.



"I am extremely proud of everything we have achieved over the last three years, and I hope every member feels the benefit of having a highly effective trade body. I look forward to working closely with NHF colleagues to steer and support our new five-year business strategy."

— Maggie Galliers CBE, NHF Chair



Irfan Umarji, Executive Director of Finance and Business Services

Building financial resilience for the future

I joined the NHF in August 2024 at an exciting time for the sector, just weeks after the election. The primary focus for me and my team is ensuring that the NHF has the systems and long-term financial sustainability needed to deliver our important work and provides value for money services that have a lasting impact.

By working efficiently, we will achieve the financial goals that ensure member fee increases remain low while our impact remains high. My team will also play a key role in the business strategy process, ensuring the work and priorities agreed are delivered effectively.



Alistair Smyth, Director of Policy and Research

Looking ahead to our new business strategy

In this report, we look back at what has been achieved throughout our last business strategy. Working closely with members, stakeholders and other partners has reaped rewards that we should all be very proud of.

We take that same spirit of collaboration into the planning of our next business strategy, which will define our priorities and key areas of work until the end of the decade.

Over recent months we have asked members for their feedback, insight and thoughts as part of our strategic review, all of which will help shape our final business strategy. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to get involved. This process will ensure that our new business strategy is firmly grounded in the critical issues affecting housing associations, and that our work leads to positive change.

Keep in touch

The NHF is the voice of England's housing associations.

Our housing association members provide homes for around six million people, and are driven by a social purpose: providing good quality housing that people can afford.

We deliver positive change for our members by understanding and anticipating the critical issues affecting their businesses and the sector.

To find out more about our work, and how you can get involved, get in touch with your local External Affairs Manager by contacting eam@housing.org.uk

Upcoming events

You'll also see us at our award-winning conferences taking place across 2025.

To find out more about these ticketed conferences, and our other free member events, scan the QR code opposite.

Comms and Influencing in Housing 2025 21 January, London

Board Leadership 2025 13-14 February, London

Customer Experience and Resident Engagement 2025 25 February, London

Housing Finance 2025 19-20 March, Liverpool

Affordable Home Ownership 2025 3-4 June, Birmingham

Housing Governance 2025 19 June, London

The Housing Community Summit 2025 8-9 September, Liverpool

Treasury in Housing 2025 9 October, London

Audit and Risk 2025 12-13 November

Leaseholder and Tenant Service Charges 2025 25 November, London

National Smaller Housing Associations' Conference 2025 3 December, Virtual

