

Panel Meeting
11th September 2025 – 11am
Hollywood

Present:

Lesa Kelly, Senior Tenant Engagement Officer
(CHAIR)
Ashleigh Mulgrave, Tenant Engagement Officer
Stewart McClean, Assets Manager – Response
Caroline Slevin, Asset Officer
Samantha Collins, Business Support Officer
(Minutes)
Bobby McConnell, Tenant Board Member
Isabelle McAuley, Tenant Executive Committee
1x Tonic Fold
1 x Cromac Wood Court
2 x Knock Road
2 x Gortgole Fold
2 x Fletcher Lodge
1 x Longlands Road
1 x Spafield Fold
1 x Scrabo Fold
1 x Valley Fold
1x Claremont Court
1 x Drumcor Court

Apologies:

1 x Laurel Hill Gardens
1 x Cromlyn Fold
1x Spafield Fold
1 x Garvaghy Avenue
2 x Carrickblacker Fold

1.	Welcome and Housekeeping Lesa Kelly introduced herself as Senior Engagement Officer and Chair of today's Panel Meeting. She opened by welcoming and thanking everyone in attendance. Lesa also acknowledged a number of new attendees and noted the apologies received. Today, we are continuing with our themed Panel Meeting format which came after feedback from tenants and a working group of Tenant Executive Committee members. This quarter, the focus is on the Assets Department, with discussions repairs timescales, contractors, adaptations and refurbishments led by Response Manager Stewart McClean. Lesa reminded everyone to switch their phones to silent and noted that no fire drills are scheduled today. Lesa explained that everyone should have received in advance of this meeting a copy of the Agenda, the July Easy Read scorecard and previous minutes. This is a public forum, and we would like to remind everyone that we are unable to discuss any personal or scheme specific issues due to GDPR. Everyone will have the opportunity to discuss personal/scheme issues with a member of staff before or at the end of the meeting. If you have a first time repair, please call the office to report. Lesa gave a round of introductions of Radius staff. Lesa asked if there any outstanding actions that need to be addressed before we move on to today's agenda?	
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	All attendees confirmed they were happy to proceed, and the minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record of the discussion.	
2.	Performance Scorecard	
	Assets The first item on the agenda was the Easy Read Scorecard, beginning with the Assets section. <i>Compliance</i> Compliance targets, that include Risk Assessments, Fire Alarm Servicing and Emergency lighting were met at 100% with the exception of Gas Boiler yearly servicing which is at 99% due to the servicing contractor been unable to gain access. Given that it is a legal requirement for gas safety checks to be carried out yearly on boilers, a discussion took place regarding the procedures Radius follows to gain access to properties when a tenant does not comply with having their gas safety check carried out. Stewart explained that the Assets Team will try to engage with the tenant and, if unsuccessful, they will go to court to apply for an injunction. It is a legal requirement to have a gas safety check every year and not complying is a breach a tenancy agreement. <i>Response</i> Stewart McClean went into detail on the response repairs timeframes and jobs that are logged and categorised with the contractor required to attend the repair job within the target date: emergency (24 hours to make safe), urgent (4 working days), and routine (20 working days). The performance for emergencies (96.22%) and urgent (92.59%) is above the Radius target of 91% and the DfC target of 85%. Routine repairs are slightly below the 90% target, and this is primarily due to the performance of one of the major contractors. Radius are working with the contractor and have implemented financial penalties to this contractor who wasn't meeting their targets. Stewart assured members that he expects the routine repair figures to improve in the coming months. Communities The next section of the Scorecard focused on Communities, with Lesa giving an update on Voids and Rent Arrears. The Department for Communities (DfC) has set a target of 1.6% for lettable voids (Radius properties available and ready for tenants to move into). As of 30th July 2025, there were 229 lettable voids across Radius properties, representing 1.79% of total stock. Of these, 111 were within Independent Living schemes for tenants aged 55 and over, and 118 were within General Needs homes. Radius continues to prioritise the reduction of voids to ensure that tenants can move into properties as soon as they become available. The urgency in reducing voids is underlined by several factors: • There is significant housing need across Northern Ireland, and reducing voids helps to ease pressure on the housing waiting list. • Empty properties generate no rental income for Radius.	

- Long-term voids may attract anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, and can negatively impact the surrounding community.

Arrears

The target for rent arrears across Radius properties is 10%. As of the latest reporting period, Radius is at 7.65%, which is below the target threshold.

Rent is the main source of income for Radius, and arrears have a direct impact making it more difficult to fund maintenance, repairs, and the delivery of new housing. In addition, pursuing arrears requires significant staff time, and legal proceedings can be costly.

Early engagement, with support from Radius' Financial Inclusion Team, helps tenants to manage debt, sustain their tenancies, and reduces the risk of eviction or homelessness. Maintaining low levels of arrears also enables Radius to reinvest in neighbourhood projects and services that benefit all tenants.

Corporate Services

The next item on the Easy Read Scorecard, Corporate Services. As of the reporting period, 96.3% of complaints received by Radius were responded to. A total of 54 complaints were received, of which 22% were classified as official complaints and were upheld.

An upheld complaint indicates that, following a review or investigation, Radius has agreed that the complaint was valid and that an error or issue occurred, confirming that the complaint was justified.

Lesa then asked the members if anyone had any questions in relation to the Communities and Corporate Services sections of the Easy Read Scorecard.

One member of the group asked, in relation to the Corporate Services section of the Scorecard, how many complaints have been upheld?

Lesa responded that 54 complaints were upheld, which represents 22% of the total received.

Another member asked if Radius could reduce rent arrears to less than 10%?

Lesa noted that Radius' aim is to keep rent arrears to a minimum. The current arrears figure is at 7.65%, At certain times of the year this figure can rise significantly such as around Christmas time. Radius will continue to work ensuring tenants receive support from the Financial Inclusion Officers and the Income Recovery Team.

One member asked why does it take so long to respond to complaints?

Radius follow the Complaints Policy and Procedure but Lesa acknowledged that Radius are working internally to get better at responding to tenants who are reporting dissatisfaction of service before it goes to an official complaint. We have set up a working group with staff from different departments and are looking at examples from other organisations such as Choice Housing to see how learn, during the Tenant Conference we will have a session on improving complaints handling and communication with tenants and staff.

3.	Assets Update on Repairs & Maintenance	
	<i>Radius Direct</i> Stewart informed members that Radius are actively recruiting for their own in-house direct labour tradespersons including: plumbers, joiners, and electricians, which will be known as “Radius Direct”. This initiative is expected to give Radius more control over jobs and save money in the long term. Attendees were encouraged to inform friends and family with relevant trade skills about the opportunities to apply for the positions. Members expressed support for Radius’ plans to establish an in-house maintenance team. <i>One member enquired about the progress of the recruitment for Radius Direct.</i> Stewart responded that, as the recruitment process is being managed by HR, Radius staff do not have access to detailed progress updates. He confirmed that Radius recently advertised for a number of positions and reminded everyone that posts will be advertised on social media. <i>Stock Condition Surveys</i> Stewart explained that Radius Housing has commissioned Savills (A surveying company) to carry out condition surveys to Radius properties with initially a pilot of 2,500 properties to take place in the upcoming months. The surveys are to help give us a better understanding of the condition of our homes, so that we can review what maintenance and improvement work will be required in the future such as replacement kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors. Initially a Savills surveyor will be in your area undertaking inspections with no direct appointments being made. Stewart also noted that not all properties will be surveyed; instead, Savills will carry out a sample survey within each area. A discussion took place regarding the refurbishment of kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, and similar works, and why these are lower on the priority list. Lesa suggested including an explanation in an upcoming newsletter to clarify that Health and Safety works must take precedence over refurbishment projects. This approach was agreed by all, as it would help manage tenant expectations. A member asked whether older properties would be prioritised for works? Stewart confirmed that the survey looks at the condition, wear and tear of properties and not necessarily the age of the bathroom/kitchens etc A member asked why Radius does not carry out stock condition surveys in-house rather than employing an external company? Stewart explained that this is primarily a resourcing issue and that this is a specialised role, Radius currently does not have sufficient staff to conduct surveys across all properties adding that Radius would like to be in a position in the future to carry out surveys internally. <i>Commercial Heating</i> Stewart informed members that the contract for commercial heating within our Independent Living Schemes and Apartment blocks was tendered following public procurement and the company who successfully won the tender is called Orona.	L.Kelly

Lift Refurbishment

Stewart listed a number of schemes within our Independent Living and General Needs Apartment blocks that are on a programme to receive a new lift in the upcoming year.

A discussion took place with a tenant saying their lift was out of order for a number of days, Stewart explained that lift repairs are categorised as Emergency jobs and should be repaired within 24 hours, unfortunately if a part is required this can take longer.

A member from Cromac Wood Court asked if their lift could be considered for refurbishment as it is over 20 years old?

Stewart explained that a lift is replaced if it is regularly breaking down and the repairs are costing a substantial amount of money, Cromac Court may not be on the list if it is still in good working order, Stewart will ask the planned team to see when/if Cromac Wood Court is due to have a lift replacement in the near future.

S.McClean

A member from Knock Road raised concern that the lift does not hold the recommended 8 people, and the small size makes it difficult for tenants to move furniture, often forcing them to use the stairs. The noise from the lift also affects tenants living next to it.

Stewart offered to organise the Asset Officer visit site to investigate the noise issue. The size of the lift sits with the Development Team who are responsible for New Builds, but the size of the lift would be out of our control.

Stewart suggested asking the Development Team to a future Panel Meeting for them to answer these types of questions in regard to new builds. Lesa to invite Development.

A discussion took place regarding adaptations, specifically fire safety doors within Independent Living Schemes, which can be heavy and difficult for some tenants to operate. Stewart explained fire doors within schemes are a mandatory safety requirement and can be heavy to open/close, tenants experiencing difficulty with their own front door should consult with their GP/ Occupational Therapist who would be able to make a referral to the NIHE Staying Put Fund to fund an automatic door opener.

S.McClean

New Software System

Stewart noted there is a new housing management system being implemented business-wide soon which will enable staff to check and log repairs jobs on their tablet or phone while on-site.

LK

Grounds Maintenance

A member of the group asked if the gardening contractor has been changed as the standard in the service received has recently declined? No, we currently using 3 smaller contractors for the Independent Living Schemes.

C.Slevin/LK

Stewart requested that Caroline organise the AO for this scheme to investigate the standard of work and that Stewart would be having a conversation with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor in this area to ensure their standards improve. Ashleigh added that some Radius tenants are involved in a Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Group, which completes monthly checklists to monitor the quality of work carried out by grounds maintenance contractors. Continuing with the discussion around the Grounds Maintenance, Glenravel Fold noted that the Weeds are not currently being pulled by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Stewart agreed to contact McAuley Tree Services to discuss this issue. <i>Voids</i> <i>One member noted that some relets are not being cleaned before new tenants move in.</i> Stewart stated that, before properties are let, they must meet the lettable standard. The lettable criteria for a property to be ready for new tenants, ensures it is safe, clean, secure and in a reasonable state of repair Radius normally goes above and beyond this requirement, particularly for difficult to let properties. For Independent Living Schemes, the Scheme Coordinator normally conducts inspections and provides feedback to the Assets Team who then log the necessary jobs unless a more detailed inspection is required when the Voids Asset Officer takes this responsibility on. For General Needs properties, inspections are carried out directly by the Assets Team. Stewart agreed to discuss the process further with Scheme Coordinators. He also noted that it is the responsibility of the Scheme Coordinator to liaise with the Communities and Void Team regarding any works required to ensure properties meet the lettable standard. Some tenants are happy to receive the keys of their property before all works have been completed to carry out their own painting and decorating etc. <i>A member asks how Radius monitors tenants carrying out their own adaptations?</i> Stewart explained that in an effort to limit the number of staff members visiting people's homes, Radius has a policy where if a person is painting, decorating, new flooring then they don't need permission, for adaptations that change the structure of the building or a communal area, they MUST ask permission in writing to seek approval from Radius, the adaptations then must be carried out by a qualified contractor with a certificate of completion. If the works required are more complex or require structural changes for example a wet room, the tenant is required to have a full application and a medical professional's approval before any adaptations can happen. <i>A member of the group asked if Radius are looking at the possibility of thermostatic radiator valves to help tenants save money?</i>	S.McClean CS S.McClean
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	Stewart agreed that thermostatic radiator valves should be fitted where they can be.	
5.0	Tenant Engagement	
	Tenant Satisfaction Survey update Following the results of the recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey, Radius is developing an action plan, which is currently a working document with input from staff across different departments. To ensure tenant involvement, a session has been added during the Tenant Conference using the “Start, Stop, Continue” approach. Discussions will focus on complaints, repairs, and communication which are all areas identified as requiring improvement. Updates on progress will be provided at future panel meetings, and this item has been added as a rolling agenda item for the Tenant Executive Committee meetings. Tenant Conference Lesa advised that the Tenant Conference will be held on 1 October 2025. All tenants and schemes nominated for a Radius Community Award have been invited to attend. Due to expected high attendance, the number of tenants from each scheme has been limited; however, a waiting list has been established to accommodate any cancellations. Tenants wishing to be added to the waiting list were advised to contact either Lesa or Ashleigh. The conference programme will include discussions on the Customer Service Centre, Asset Management, Apprenticeships, and the highly anticipated Radius Community Awards. Rural Forum Update MMK from Valley Fold, is a Radius Tenant Representative and a member of the Rural Community Network Forum based in Cookstown, which is an initiative set up for rural communities to address their specific housing needs and challenges. Myrtle gave an update from the recent meeting she attended which impacts tenants living in all areas. The forum meeting focused on the cost of living and preparing for winter. Those in attendance received leaflets on energy efficiency, damp and condensation, and a home budget planner from organisations NI Energy Advice and the Consumer Council. NI Power also gave a presentation on switching suppliers to help save money. Lesa Kelly offered to make copies of the Information leaflets which were provided at the end of the meeting for members to take and will email them along with the minutes. Consumer Council are also attending the Tenant Conference to provide valuable information to our tenants.	L.Kelly
6.0	AOB	
	<i>Members from Tonic Fold and Gortgole Fold raised concerns about repeated false alarms at Tonic Fold and Gortgole Fold.</i> CS will follow up on the issue. Stewart McClean also agreed to send an engineer to both sites by the end of the week to provide a report. <i>One of the members of Cromac Wood Court commented that tenants had not been receiving the monthly newsletter.</i>	CS/SMcC

	Lesa explained these are sent to the Scheme Coordinator by post and will follow up with them to ensure tenants are receiving their newsletter. All tenants on the Register of Interest and Over the age of 55 also receive a copy to their email. The newsletter can also be found on the Radius Website. Lesa will follow up. <i>Knock Road enquired about how to establish a communal sitting area outside their scheme, noting that their premises doesn't have the space. Ashleigh from Tenant Engagement agreed to attend Knock Road and see if there is an opportunity to apply for a Community Chest grant which could assist with funding outdoor furniture when this opens again in the Autumn time. She also offered to explore the possibility of setting up a Tenants Association, which could enable access to additional grants to support this initiative.</i>	LK AM
	Meeting End	
	Lesa thanked those who attended the meeting today. Meeting ended at 12:20pm.	
