



ISHF INTERNATIONAL
SOCIAL HOUSING
FESTIVAL
4-6 JUNE 2025 DUBLIN, IRELAND

Impact Report

International Social Housing Festival 2025

Creating social impact for Dublin





Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Section 1	
Intentional Impact Project Overview	4
Tenant Empowerment	5
Strengthening the Housing Ecosystem	7
Section 2	
The Impact of ISHF for Dublin	10
Section 3	
Methodology	13
Theory of Change	14
Analysis	15
Testimonials	19

Foreword

In 2025 Ireland unveiled a bold new vision for its business events sector with the launch of Business Events 2030; a national strategy that represents a fundamental shift in how Ireland approaches business events.

[Business Events 2030](#) is a product of collaboration between the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and industry leaders.

Business events can yield lasting societal benefits by influencing government policy, engaging stakeholders, and propelling research and education. They facilitate networking opportunities for Irish businesses, profile the country as an attractive destination for investment and knowledge acquisition and foster a culture of innovation and creativity. Moreover, business events establish vital links between government and industry, driving dialogues and identifying investment opportunities for future growth.

The social ambition of Business Events 2030 is clear: to build stronger communities — locally, sectorally, and nationally — by making a positive impact on host communities, delivering long-term legacy benefits for sectoral networks and contributing to national goals and objectives.

The International Social Housing Festival 2025 (ISHF) embodies this ambition. As Fáilte Ireland's first intentional impact pilot project, ISHF showcased how business events can serve as catalysts for social change. Hosted by the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Co-operative Housing Ireland, and Housing Europe, the festival created a powerful platform to amplify tenant voices and strengthen collaboration across the sector.

This report examines the process and outcomes of impact creation, highlighting the opportunity to embed social impact into how we attract, deliver, and evaluate association conferences in Ireland. As we advance Business Events 2030, this initiative sets a compelling precedent for future events hosted in Ireland. We are proud to have played a role in its success — and even prouder of the partners who turned this vision into reality; a special thanks to Housing Europe, the Irish Council for Social Housing, Conference Partners International, and the Convention Centre Dublin.



Paul Mockler

Head of Commercial Development



Introduction

The International Social Housing Festival (ISHF) welcomed over 2,300 delegates to the Convention Centre Dublin in June 2025, bringing with it an opportunity for Ireland to contribute to Housing Europe's mission – to provide access to affordable, quality, and decent housing for all across Europe.

The Irish Council for Social Housing

(ICSH), partnered with Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, on an intentional impact project to define, implement and measure the positive impact of the International Social Housing Festival, and to leverage the opportunities that the event brought to Ireland.

The event's central theme, **"Storytelling,"** transformed Dublin into a living laboratory for housing innovation and social dialogue, and underscored the power of lived experiences in shaping housing policy and practice. The festival was hosted across multiple venues, including community housing developments, civic spaces, and university campuses, each highlighting Ireland's diverse housing ecosystem.

Since its inception in 2017, The International Social Housing Festival has evolved into a movement that connects housing practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and residents around shared goals of equity, participation, and innovation.

The ISHF programme included:

- ✓ High-level policy dialogues with Irish and European ministers, leaders from approved housing bodies and tenant representatives;
- ✓ Site visits showcasing Dublin's retrofit, mixed-tenure, and community-led housing projects; Innovation and research showcases linking Irish expertise with European networks;
- ✓ Cultural events, including exhibitions, film screenings, and performances centred on the meaning of home. Through public exhibitions, field visits, artistic collaborations, and high-level policy dialogues, ISHF 2025 showcased social housing as a driver of stability, sustainability, and belonging.

This impact report showcases the key outcomes of ISHF 2025, how it deepened partnerships, amplified tenant voices, and contributed to enhancing Ireland's standing in social and affordable housing innovation.



2,348
delegates attended



€3m
economic impact



48
countries represented
across 5 continents



2.5
day event
(4–6 June 2025)

Section 1



AILBHE MCLOUGHLIN
DIRECTOR ISHF DUBLIN 2025



Intentional Impact Project Overview

This report represents Ireland's first intentional impact project associated with a business event and serves as a pilot aligned with Ireland's business events strategy, Business Events 2030. The strategy aims to support government policies and objectives that drive robust economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Intentional impact projects are designed to ensure that the benefits are provided to the local community and sector, as well as delegates. In this way, intentional impact projects further amplify and expand the impact that is already being generated through conference activities.

To ensure that the event's outcomes translated into long-term change, ISHF Dublin 2025 was accompanied by two social impact initiatives, co-developed with domestic and international partners under a shared Theory of Change.

The intentional impact project focused on two key impact pathways:



1. Tenant Empowerment

to elevate the voice and perspective of tenants in housing debates and exchanges



2. Strengthening the Housing Ecosystem

to improve collaboration between different actors in the housing sector



Learn more about the ISHF intentional impact project.

[Watch here](#)

1. Tenant Empowerment



As a core element of the ISHF intentional impact project, the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) aimed to centre the voice of the tenant at ISHF 2025 by adopting a principle of "not about us without us", demonstrating the power of lived experience.

Short-term goals

In advance of the event, a broad group of stakeholders were consulted to co-create the impact project, ensuring that impact goals were aligned with stakeholder interests as well as national priorities. The group set out to achieve the following short-term outcomes.



Delegates to increase awareness of tenant experiences



Tenants to be given a platform to share their stories



Shift in perceptions of social housing

Impact Intention

The stakeholder group developed the following impact intention to guide the direction of the project.

Increase awareness and understanding of tenant perspectives to help support more tenant centered decision making by social housing organisations in the future.

Impact Activity

In alignment with the festival's theme of Storytelling, an Oral History Exhibition titled from "House to Home" was curated, and situated at the entrance of the Convention Centre Dublin, featuring personal narratives from individuals living in social housing in Dublin.

Six tenants (pictured below) gave their personal accounts and experiences, empowering them to share their insights and allowing them to access a platform where they could feel heard. Delegates actively engaged with their stories, thereby increasing awareness and shifting perceptions.



Oral History Exhibition Participants.

Key Outcomes



The Oral History Exhibition captured insightful personal testimonies of social housing tenants, sharing key findings with ISHF delegates and people working in the social housing ecosystem.



Delegates increased awareness of tenant experiences.

- 2,333 visits were recorded to the Oral History Exhibition webpage over the three-day festival period and the months that followed. This includes both the views of people who saw the exhibition in person at ISHF 2025 and scanned the QR codes to learn more, and of people who saw the exhibition assets through Housing Europe.



Tenants were provided a platform to share their stories.

- This project collected 6 personal stories on the lived experience in social housing in Ireland, helping local organisations and businesses to better understand the tenant perspective. The audio clips were played during the opening ceremony to a live audience of 1,000+ delegates.



Shift in perception of social housing noted and stigma reduced.

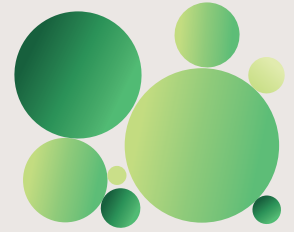
- The Oral History Toolkit was created to share best practices, with 178 downloads to date. The toolkit was designed to help others to collect similar stories, documenting the lived experience of social housing tenants in different localities. The number of downloads is indicative of how many people may have been interested in replicating the project in other contexts, helping to shift perceptions and reduce stigma across Europe.



Oral History Exhibition repurposed to create future impact.

- The ICSH shared them at the ICSH National Housing Conference in October 2025 and at the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) Conference in November 2025. Housing Europe plans to replicate the project, creating a 'living library', building on the success of the Oral History Exhibition to capture stories of tenants across Europe.

2. Strengthening the Housing Ecosystem



The "Strengthening the Housing Ecosystem" pathway focused on fostering collaboration across the housing value chain — from policymakers and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to architects, developers, and financial institutions.

Short-term goals

In advance of the event, a broad group of stakeholders were consulted to co-create the impact project, ensuring that impact goals were aligned with stakeholder interests as well as national priorities. The group set out to achieve the following short-term outcomes.



Delegates to increase awareness of collaborative delivery models



Establish connections between delivery partners



Increase interest for a collaboration network

Impact Intention

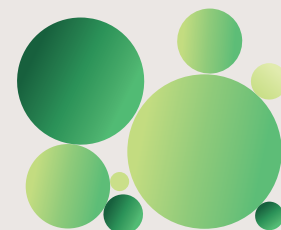
The stakeholder group developed the following impact intention to guide the direction of the project.

Increase collaboration between delivery partners to improve housing development in Ireland.

Impact Activity

The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) collaborated with Fingal County Council to host a Knowledge Network Breakfast at ISHF to share learnings and foster collaboration. The presentation included a case study from Fingal County Council, and participants had the opportunity to connect and explore best practice collaboration.

Key Outcomes



Thirty-five stakeholders from twenty-four organisations participated in the Knowledge Sharing Network Breakfast to learn about collaboration models and explore opportunities for partnership. A post-event survey indicated the following results:



Increase in awareness of collaborative delivery models

- 100% respondents found the knowledge network breakfast very or extremely interesting and useful.
- 100% respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had gained new knowledge or understanding during the session.



Increase in interest and desire for a collaboration network

- 100% believed that the session would help housing sector organisations to work collaboratively in the future.
- 92% reported meeting people and organisations that could help them to adopt more collaborative models.



Connections made between delivery partners

- 92% intended to keep in touch with two or more people from the session.



Knowledge Sharing Breakfast participants.

Section 2



Impact of ISHF for Dublin



The International Social Housing Festival 2025 created significant impact for Dublin. The event provided a platform to showcase Dublin's social and affordable housing projects and initiatives to an international audience. Hosting the festival brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners from around the world, fostering collaboration and the exchange of innovative ideas and best practices.

Social Impact

- The festival actively involved the local community, including tenants, service users, children's choirs and advocacy groups.
- The Oral Histories project engaged tenants, allowing them to share their experiences and contribute to the festival's content and insights. This initiative sought to create impact by raising awareness of tenant experiences, fostering improvement ideas, and influencing housing policies.
- At a European level, a living library of oral histories and an oral history toolkit will be shared with future ISHF host cities to shape discussions across Housing Europe member countries, and beyond.
- The Oral Histories Exhibition created a replicable national asset adopted by the Irish Council for Social Housing and used at multiple Irish conferences post-event.
- Ireland demonstrated a model for cross-government collaboration between the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, local authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, and community partners.
- Ireland strengthened its positioning as a European leader in housing policy debates.

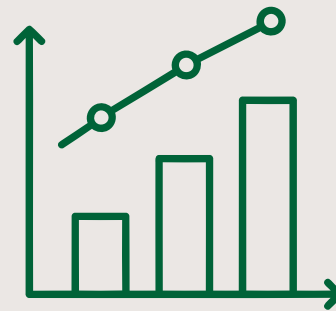


Impact of ISHF for Dublin



Economic Impact

- The influx of over 2,350 delegates from 48 countries generated an approximate economic impact of €3m for Dublin, benefiting local businesses, venues, hotels, restaurants, and services.
- The Knowledge Network Breakfast unlocked interest in new collaborative delivery models with ripple effects for procurement, design, and mixed tenure development.
- The project accelerated Ireland–Europe knowledge exchange, positioning Dublin as a hub for social housing innovation.
- Dublin's visibility increased through media and digital reach, including online publications and social media.
- Evidence from the impact project supports Fáilte Ireland's Business Events 2030 strategy and assists future bids for high impact association conferences.



Environmental Impact

- The International Social Housing Festival was an early adopter of Fáilte Ireland's Business Events Carbon Calculator, helping to measure and manage the environmental impact of the event for future iterations of the International Social Housing Festival.
- The carbon footprint report for ISHF 2025 found that 1.01 tonnes of CO₂e was generated per attendee on average, 89% of which was air travel. The remaining 11% of emissions were generated through ground transportation, the venue, accommodation and catering. Fáilte Ireland intends to use this data to better understand emissions patterns and to support future events in Ireland by helping them to reduce their carbon footprint where possible.
- The event was hosted at the Convention Centre Dublin, the world's first carbon neutral constructed convention centre. The venue uses renewable energy, energy efficient light fixtures and conscientious food waste management practices to manage their carbon emissions and reach their net zero emissions targets.



Section 3



Methodology

The assessment of ISHF Dublin 2025 was guided by an outcome-oriented methodology designed to capture both the immediate effects of the Festival and the deeper systemic changes it catalysed across Ireland's housing ecosystem.

The evaluation framework was grounded in the #MEET4IMPACT methodology, applying a Logic Model approach that linked ISHF activities to measurable outcomes across two interconnected pathways:

(1) Tenant Empowerment

(2) Strengthening the Housing Ecosystem

This framework placed intentionality at its core, examining not only what occurred but why it mattered for Ireland and for the broader European housing movement. Each festival activities were mapped to short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.

A mixed-methods research design combined quantitative and qualitative tools to build a multidimensional view of change. Data collection drew on:

- **Post-event impact survey** (n = 270) assessing learning, collaboration, empowerment, and behavioural intention among participants.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with 11 Irish and international stakeholders representing tenants, Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), local authorities, European partners, researchers, and community organisers.

- **Oral History outputs** produced by "From House to Home" project, capturing 6 tenant narratives, were analysed for themes of empowerment, identity, and social value.

- **Partner documentation**, including contributions from Housing Europe, Co-operative Housing Ireland, the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH), Dublin City Council, and cultural partners involved in the public programme.

Each dataset was coded and triangulated to identify patterns of learning, collaboration, narrative change, and institutional evolution. This approach moved deliberately beyond satisfaction metrics — focusing instead on the mechanisms through which the event generated value, such as strengthened tenant voice, the formation of cross-sector partnerships, the emergence of new policy conversations, and the diffusion of innovative housing practices across Ireland and Europe.

Theory of Change

A broad group of stakeholders were consulted to co-create the impact project, ensuring that impact goals were aligned with stakeholder interests as well as national priorities.

The process included the identification of key needs in the local housing sector, exploring potential ideas for impact projects, and listing additional stakeholders to involve.

Theory of Change is a framework for social impact initiatives that maps out an impact project from the problem to be solved,

through to the long term impact vision of the project.

The Theory of Change served as the blueprint for the impact initiatives that were implemented alongside ISHF 2025.

The below table shows a summarised version of the Theory of Change that was developed for this project:

Impact Pathway	Activity	Short-term Outcomes	Impact Intention
Tenant Empowerment	Oral History Exhibition and Toolkit	1. Festival attendees gain increased awareness of tenant experiences, preferences and ideas for improvement 2. Tenants are given a platform to share their stories and they feel more included 3. Shift in perception of social housing, reducing stigma	Increase awareness and understanding of tenant perspectives to help support more tenant centred decision making by social housing organisations in the future
Strengthening Housing Ecosystem	Knowledge Network Breakfast	1. Increase in awareness of collaborative delivery models 2. Connections made between delivery partners 3. Increase in interest and desire for a collaboration network	Increase collaboration between delivery partners to improve housing development in Ireland

Tenant Empowerment Analysis

Summary

To understand the impact of the Oral History Exhibition on delegates, interviews and surveys were conducted on-site and after the event. Analysis of these data sources highlight the short-term outcomes generated through the project.

Overall, the Oral History Exhibition achieved its short-term outcome goals of increased awareness, reduced stigma and provided a platform for tenant voices.

The additional efforts to share the Oral History Exhibition assets at subsequent conferences in Ireland supported the amplification of the impact generated. The toolkit will support the replication of the project at ISHF Lisbon 2027, leading the way for the project to be embedded in future ISHF programmes.

1. Awareness, Learnings and Transfer of Insight

Most interviewees reported increased awareness and understanding of the tenant experience after engaging with the exhibition. Several respondents—including housing officers, consultants and local authority representatives—identified specific, actionable insights drawn from tenant narratives. They noted that hearing lived experiences “helps design better services” and “shows us what to do better going forward,” demonstrating how personal stories informed professional reflection and service improvement.

One survey respondent described the exhibition as “fostering empathy and raising awareness about housing

challenges” in the Irish context. This broad increase in awareness indicates that the exhibition achieved its short-term goal of improving perception and knowledge. Importantly, this awareness also translated into practical insights for enhancing tenant experiences, suggesting that the exhibition successfully converted emotional engagement into conceptual learning.

These findings signal the potential for tenant empowerment initiatives such as the oral history exhibition to contribute to longer-term outcomes, including policy and organisational change aimed at improving tenant experiences.

“The Tenant Oral Histories Exhibition was a powerful reminder that housing is not just about buildings, but about lives and memories. Hearing personal stories gave depth to the challenges we discuss and highlighted the human side of social housing policy.”



Tenant Empowerment Analysis

2. Tenant Empowerment through Narrative

The Oral Histories Exhibition enabled tenants to meaningfully share their perspectives in a way that could improve the experiences of social housing tenants in the future. The exhibition had a clear and immediate impact in affirming the value of tenant voice and placing lived experience at the centre of housing discourse. Interview responses consistently indicated that tenants felt proud, safe, and respected while sharing their stories, while delegates described the experience as both powerful and essential. When delegates were asked how well they thought the Oral History Exhibition was meaningfully sharing the experience of social housing tenants, respondents gave an average rating of 4 out of 5.

Stakeholders from the housing and community sectors highlighted the exhibition's respectful and supportive environment, recognising it as aligned with trauma-informed and empowerment based practice. In doing so, the exhibition served not only as a site of representation but also as a platform for agency, enabling tenants to speak for themselves and reclaim narratives often shaped by institutions.

Importantly, the findings indicate a shift from consultative engagement—where tenants are asked to contribute—to co productive engagement, where tenants help shape collective understanding. This reflects a broader move toward more participatory and inclusive approaches to housing policy and governance.

“The first story was particularly powerful, and the way it was presented made it truly engaging. It was incredibly moving to see how the individual, who once experienced homelessness, managed to overcome her challenges and transform her life into what it is today.”

“It gives people an opportunity to tell their story... it's a powerful thing to give somebody a voice.”



Tenant Empowerment Analysis

3. Reducing Stigma, Increasing Empathy, and the Humanisation of Housing Policy

Interviews with delegates and housing professionals revealed a strong emotional and cognitive response to the event. Descriptions such as "eye-opening," "grounding," and "reminding us who we serve" pointed to a shift in how participants viewed tenants—as individuals with dignity and complex lives, rather than policy recipients. One delegate said that it was "really impactful to hear from the tenants", and that the

toolkit influenced them to replicate this project in their home country.

The oral history exhibition played a key role in bridging the empathy gap between professionals and residents by reintroducing human experience into policy discussions typically framed in technical terms. This shift reflects a growing understanding of empathy as a driver for behavioural and institutional change.

It's fantastic because it's the tenants speaking for themselves... it reminds people that it's not just about the houses, it's about their homes and families.



I thought it was an excellent initiative to collect the testimonies and memories of tenants of social housing in Dublin to ensure their voices are represented at the festival. The exhibition was wonderful as it not only told the stories of residents in social housing, but also gave delegates the tools to collect the oral histories of tenants of social housing in other contexts through the toolkit provided.



Strengthening the Housing Ecosystem Analysis

Summary

The Knowledge Network Breakfast was successful in bringing together influential representatives to learn about and explore collaborative delivery models. The event succeeded in its aims to increase awareness and understanding of collaborative models, and to provide networking opportunities for the organisations in the room. To further this impact, a significant potential opportunity lies in the continuation of this network through the development of a national social housing collaboration network, to facilitate further networking and cooperation nationally for the betterment of social housing provision across the country.

The Knowledge Network Breakfast gained very positive feedback from participants. All survey respondents found the knowledge network breakfast interesting and useful. One respondent said "This was one of the best moderated forums I have attended", with another concurring that "The Fingal model development agreement is an excellent model to base future developments on".

When asked how to further explore the topics raised in the session, respondents had several suggestions including templating a Development Agreement, training local authorities in how to implement, and adopting the case study as a basis for public procurement. Several

respondents noted that replicating and reproducing the best practices that Fingal had developed would benefit the wider sector. 100% of respondents believed that the session would help housing sector organisations to work collaboratively in the future.

Following the Knowledge Network Breakfast, Fingal County Council and the Irish Council for Social Housing may be able to leverage the interest in collaboration by developing a collaboration network for organisations to stay connected and learn about better delivery practices.

“ It was an ideal setting to share histories, ideas, concepts and knowledge with people not only from all over the world but also with different backgrounds and to bring them together, create networks or join those already existing. ”



Testimonials

“ I think that the festival is imperative to raising awareness of the housing challenge and the general discourse on housing. I believe it can influence politics towards a more fair and inclusive housing market. ”



“ The Festival creates positive social impact by giving visibility to real housing challenges and solutions, connecting practitioners, policymakers, and residents. It fosters collaboration, showcases innovation, and reinforces the idea that decent housing is a human right. ”



“ Projects like this help embed tenant-first thinking... hearing lived experience helps design better services. ”



“ It was lovely to hear the lived experiences and a real portrayal of life, especially in people, and offer a robust way of seeing that social housing is about the tenant at the end of the day. ”





