# Controversial 'local homes for local people' posters condemn housing crisis politics in south Belfast



Posters bearing the slogan "local homes for local people" have sparked significant controversy after being displayed in the Belvoir and Milltown areas of south Belfast. These signs, appearing overnight, have been widely condemned for their perceived exclusionary message and potential to incite division within the community. Local political leaders have voiced their concerns, urging immediate action against the proliferation of such messages.

Sinn Féin MLA Deirdre Hargey led the charge in denouncing the posters, describing their appearance as “sickening” and a clear threat to the international members of the community. Calling for their removal, she emphasised that there is no place for such “hateful attitudes” in society, especially in a region that has experienced its share of divisions and conflict.

Green Party Councillor Aine Groogan echoed these sentiments, expressing alarm at the reactions from local residents in Belvoir. She linked the emergence of these slogans to a broader context of housing instability, stating, "We are in a housing crisis, that is a fact but that is a result of the failure of Stormont and the executive parties who have failed communities for decades." Groogan further highlighted that misdirecting public anger towards vulnerable groups is both “unhelpful” and “encouraging racism.”

This incident is not isolated; earlier in January 2025, similar racially-motivated signs were found outside a primary school in Lurgan, County Armagh. These signs, which also encapsulated anti-Islam sentiments, were removed by police who are treating the case as a potential hate crime. Such recurring incidents raise questions about the underlying tensions in Northern Ireland, particularly concerning housing and community integration.

Local authorities are taking steps to address these issues. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has acknowledged the community's concerns, indicating that they are collaborating with local representatives to ensure the swift removal of the posters. Superintendent Finola Dornan recognised the damaging impact that such incidents have on community safety and cohesion, stating, “Incidents like this have a really damaging impact on everyone living in the local area.”

The backdrop to this controversy is a worsening housing crisis in Northern Ireland, underscored by initiatives aiming to deliver more housing options. For example, Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities have engaged Clanmil Housing to implement a mixed-use, residential-led scheme intended to provide essential housing and community infrastructure in the city’s north-west area. Additionally, a new affordable rent scheme announced by Communities Minister Gordon Lyons aims to construct 300 homes in various locations, including Belfast and Derry, to support renters struggling in a challenging market.

Moreover, the grassroots "Take Back the City" campaign highlights community-driven efforts to tackle housing shortages. This initiative seeks sustainable solutions for providing affordable homes and fostering equitable development, recognising that the challenges faced by many community members transcend political rhetoric.

As debates around housing policy and community safety intensify, it is essential for political and community leaders to forge a collaborative approach that prioritises inclusivity and dispels divisive attitudes. The recent emergence of exclusionary sentiments in the form of posters not only signifies broader societal issues but also underscores the urgent need for empathetic dialogue and holistic solutions to the pressing housing crisis.

**Reference Map:**1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/posters-bearing-local-homes-for-local-people-slogan-condemned/a1720374391.html)2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/posters-bearing-local-homes-for-local-people-slogan-condemned/a1720374391.html)3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/posters-bearing-local-homes-for-local-people-slogan-condemned/a1720374391.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy89wgzwl3o)4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/posters-bearing-local-homes-for-local-people-slogan-condemned/a1720374391.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy89wgzwl3o)5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/posters-bearing-local-homes-for-local-people-slogan-condemned/a1720374391.html), [[4]](https://www.derrynow.com/news/local-news/1745440/300-homes-to-be-built-under-new-affordable-rent-scheme.html)6. Paragraph 6: [[3]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/03/14/belfast-inner-city-housing-initiative-proposed), [[7]](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/take-back-the-city-homes-for-everyone/), [[6]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2024/06/06/750-unit-social-housing-development-unveiled-belfast)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/posters-bearing-local-homes-for-local-people-slogan-condemned/a1720374391.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy89wgzwl3o> - In January 2025, two racially-motivated signs were found outside a primary school in Lurgan, County Armagh. The signs, containing anti-Islam sentiments and the phrase 'Local homes for local people,' were removed by police, who are treating the incident as a potential hate crime. Authorities are investigating and have urged the public to come forward with any information.
3. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/03/14/belfast-inner-city-housing-initiative-proposed> - In March 2025, Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities appointed Clanmil Housing Association to develop a mixed-use, residential-led scheme in the city's inner north-west area. The project aims to deliver a range of mixed-tenure homes, including social and private housing, along with community infrastructure and commercial units, to meet the changing needs of city dwellers.
4. <https://www.derrynow.com/news/local-news/1745440/300-homes-to-be-built-under-new-affordable-rent-scheme.html> - In March 2025, Communities Minister Gordon Lyons announced a new affordable rent scheme in Northern Ireland, with 300 homes to be constructed in 11 locations, including Belfast, Derry, and Dungannon. The homes will be offered to private rental tenants at discounted rates, aiming to support renters priced out of the mainstream private sector. Construction is set to begin next year, with the first homes available by the end of 2026.
5. <https://cih.org/knowledge-hub/good-practice-compendium-library/aiha-good-practice-compendium-2025/best-housing-development-aiha-gpc-2025/> - The Alloa Street development, completed for Clanmil Housing in 2024 at a cost of approximately £2.9 million, comprises 12 homes for families and single individuals, including two specially designed wheelchair-accessible homes. Located in North Belfast, an area of high housing need, the development features a mix of two and three-storey houses and single-storey bungalows, all with private gardens.
6. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2024/06/06/750-unit-social-housing-development-unveiled-belfast> - In June 2024, a proposal for a 750-unit social housing development on the former Mackies site in west Belfast was submitted to the planning process. The scheme includes plans for a city farm, allotments, hydroelectric energy, community space, shops, and a new footbridge, aiming to address significant housing shortages in the west and north of the city.
7. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/take-back-the-city-homes-for-everyone/> - The 'Take Back the City' campaign, launched in September 2024, is a grassroots movement aiming to develop a sustainable, equitable, and climate-ready community on the former Mackies industrial site in West Belfast. The coalition, comprising homeless families, academics, community organizations, and built environment experts, has developed a masterplan for a mixed-use housing-led development to address Belfast's chronic shortage of affordable housing.