

History of Family Housing Association

The origins of Family Housing Association can be traced back over fifty years to 1963, when a group of local people met to discuss how they could help support local people buying their first home. They went on to form the Birkenhead Catholic Housing Aid Society, one of many Catholic Housing Aid Societies across the country. They met each week to provide free housing and financial advice to the local community in Birkenhead. They set up a savings scheme to help people save up for their deposit and the Society would act as guarantor to help them get a mortgage.

After a couple of years, the Society purchased its first properties. They were let as temporary homes and required the tenants to pay a small amount of rent and also pay an additional amount into a savings scheme to save up a deposit to buy a home.

In 1964 the Housing Corporation was founded with the purpose of distributing loans to enable housing societies to build properties for rent. This was the catalyst for the growth of the modern Housing Association movement. At a meeting of representatives of the Catholic Housing Aid Societies from across the country, it was suggested each one should set up as a Housing Association as this would make them better placed to access Housing Corporation loans. So, in 1968, Family Housing Association (Birkenhead & Wirral) Ltd was created. Family Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

Initially, the Association owned only a handful of properties. The Board Members would collect the rent and manage the repairs in their spare time after work. Office accommodation was rented in Hamilton Square for the Board Members to meet and operate the Association. During the 1970s, the Association began to expand more quickly, often buying homes in poor condition before renovating them and letting them out. By 1978, the number of properties had grown to a level where the Board Members were struggling with the workload and so Smith & Sons, local Estate Agents, were appointed to collect the rent. In 1982 the Association purchased its own office at 84 Woodchurch Road and in 1985 the Association appointed its first full time member of staff.

We remained in Woodchurch Road until 2007, when we moved to our current Marcus House office in Marcus Street, Birkenhead. We now have seven staff and 393 homes. We remain a charitable organisation, providing homes at Social Housing Rents to help those in housing need, with Board Members who are volunteers.