

LIV Belfast Student Living

# New era for student 'LIVing'

**£35m+**

/ Project value

**122 weeks**

/ The project duration

**August 2021**

/ The project was completed

LIV Belfast Student Living, an “ultra-modern”, purpose-built student residential complex, has ushered in a “new era” for student accommodation in Belfast. Covering circa 228,000 square feet of space spread over 14 floors, LIV is home to a vibrant community of 700+ students. It features 717 bedroom units, comprising of an intelligently designed mix of shared apartments and studio rooms, with two of the building's floors given over to “amazing” social facilities that include a cinema, gym, karaoke area, games room and café. Despite a range of complex challenges including those presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, our team, which was described as “consummate professionals” by the client, Valeo, completed the project two weeks ahead of programme. Reflecting the quality of the contemporary residences, LIV achieved 100% occupancy within weeks of opening.

## The brief

Following a competitive tendering process, we were appointed by LIV Belfast Partners Ltd on a design and build contract at RIBA Stage 3. Working collaboratively, we helped realise Valeo's vision to develop its fifth major student complex (Dublin, Sheffield, Porto and Granada are the others in its portfolio) with a focus on creating accommodation capable of enhancing the wellbeing of students and transforming their “learning experience”.



“We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone at GRAHAM for the amazing donation of a defibrillator. It will be kept in our Street Outreach Vehicle and will provide potentially life-saving interventions to people who are homeless.”

Jo Daykin-Goodall  
Director of Services at The Welcome Organisation

"GRAHAM have been consummate professionals and our thanks go to them for successfully delivering the building two weeks ahead of programme during a global pandemic, Brexit and severe materials shortages. VMEL would have no reservations in recommending GRAHAM, and wish them every success with their future project deliveries."

Mark Hopkins  
Valeo Senior Project Manager

### The challenges

LIV Belfast was impacted by several national and global issues. Supply chain material disruption borne from Brexit and Covid-19, and the need to rework our usual live site model to ensure employee safety during the pandemic, were two principal challenges. We overcame these by installing a Face Recognition Turnstyle System, which recorded all site workers' body temperatures, while we also established handwashing stations and implemented a more robust cleaning scheme. The height of the building also added a degree of complexity to the roof design, which was seamlessly revised by our team to overcome any potential issues.

### The solution

Regarded as a key driver towards promoting city centre living in one of the fastest growing areas of Belfast, LIV Belfast is a "next generation" student accommodation building. Fundamentally, our works comprised of concrete frame and flat slab construction on piled foundations over 14 floors (ground – 13th). The piles are 630mm and 450mm diameter. Meanwhile, the façade consists of an SFS inner leaf with brick exterior leaf, and lightweight partitions are utilised to divide all internal spaces. In order to reduce our carbon footprint and the noise, dust and vibration emanating from the site, we switched the stair design from in-situ to precast concrete. Demonstrating our flexibility, we facilitated a significant increase in the number of bed units, which rose from 550 to 717 beds. The exemplary design and the innovative use of internal and external communal space, provides students with a unique level of comfort. The development is the first building in Northern Ireland to be awarded 3-star Fitwel accreditation - the highest rating given by the world's leading certification system for buildings which optimise projects to support the health of residents and the surrounding community.

### Outputs & Benefits

- Green Apple Award:** LIV has been shortlisted for the prestigious Green Apple Awards thanks to its exemplary approach to sustainability. Positive examples include 95% of all construction waste was recycled while we generated carbon emissions of 5.36 tonnes per £1 million project value (less than half of our company target for sites)
- Water Conservation Award:** We installed a water pump to feed the site from a cold water storage tank. This meant that the cold-water storage tank (5000 litres) was not discharged to the drainage system to control Legionella Bacteria, but utilised for operations on site. We also recycled our concrete washout which reduced water consumption
- Considerate Constructors Scheme:** We were awarded a Certificate of Excellence - achieving a score of 43 out of 50



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