



Department for
Communities

An Roinn

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Department fur

Commonities

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Audit of Inequalities

2021 – 2022



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In line with our statutory equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 the Department for Communities (DfC) has undertaken an audit of inequalities.

This audit will set the framework for DfC to address inequalities impacting on Section 75 categories relevant to its functions and will enable the Department to identify areas where it can better promote equality of opportunity and good relations for our service users and those affected by our policies.

We have collated and analysed existing information as an evidence base to inform the audit and presented it for each of our functional areas; Work and Health, Supporting People, Engaged Communities, Housing, Urban Regeneration & Local Government, and Strategic Policy & Professional Services.

We have aligned the inequalities with the four cross-cutting themes set out in the Department's Strategy "Building Inclusive Communities 2020-25" of Anti-Poverty, Wellbeing & Inclusion, Sustainability & Inclusive Growth and Agility & Innovation.

Who We Are

The Department for Communities delivers a diverse range of functions that impact on the lives of everyone in our society. Our common purpose is to make this a great place to live for everybody by supporting people, building communities, shaping places.

What We Do

The Department provides support to meet the needs of some of the most deprived people, families and communities here.

Our areas of responsibility include:

- ensuring the availability of good quality and affordable housing
- delivery of the social security system including child maintenance support and pensions
- providing advice and support for those seeking employment and for those who are unable to work
- encouraging diversity and participation in society
- promoting social inclusion within the community to encompass:
 - Anti-Poverty
 - Gender Equality
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Disability
 - Child Poverty
 - Active Ageing
- promoting sports and leisure within our communities
- supporting local government to deliver services
- identifying and preserving records of historical, social and cultural importance to ensure they are available to the public and for future generations
- realising the value of our built heritage
- supporting creative industries, and promoting the arts, language and cultural sectors
- providing free access to books, information, IT and community programmes through our libraries
- maintaining museums
- revitalising town and city centres.

Work and Health

The Work & Health Group is focused on the delivery of social security policy, working age benefits and the development of bespoke, tailored employability provision to help, support and encourage people to remain in work, move closer to work or return to work.

Work & Wellbeing Directorate leads on developing and implementing a social welfare policy agenda with focus on work, health and benefits. The Directorate has responsibility for the development of employability programmes to help people into work, provision for those who are unable to work and pathways for those who need additional help and support to overcome barriers to work.

Social Security Policy and Legislation Division develops policy and legislation for social security, pensions and child maintenance in Northern Ireland and ensures parity with GB. The division also ensures that NI requirements are included in the development of UK social security, child maintenance and pensions policy.

Working Age Services has responsibility for the delivery and digital transformation of working age legacy benefits and the provision of critical financial support to people in crisis. In addition, Working Age Services has responsibility for delivery of the full implementation of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland and development of labour market employability programmes.

Universal Credit Operations has day to day responsibility for the processing and maintenance of Universal Credit claims, timely payments and the delivery of employability services to help and support people increase work, move closer to work or return to work. The team are also responsible for the provision of Vacancy Management services for employers, including Job Fairs, Redundancy Services, etc.

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Young people (18-24 year olds) have the lowest working age employment rates and the highest rates of unemployment and economic inactivity | Anti-Poverty Wellbeing & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • Jobseeker's Allowance Summary of Statistics • Universal Credit Summary of Statistics • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2021 (DfC, 24/11/2021) • Labour Market and Social Welfare Statistics (NISRA) |
| People with dependents or caring responsibilities may be more likely to be economically inactive and unable to access the labour market | Anti-Poverty Wellbeing & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland (NISRA, 04/06/2019) • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2021 (DfC, 24/11/2021) • Labour Market and Social Welfare Statistics (NISRA) |
| People with a disability and/or health conditions may experience barriers of economic participation, social isolation and poverty | Anti-Poverty Wellbeing & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • University of Ulster Economic Policy Centre Research Data • Annual Population Survey • Disability and Employment Annual Survey (ONS, 2019) • LFS – Disability employment GAP in NI Disability Research conducted in conjunction with PSU and UU |
| Adults aged 50-64 are at higher risk of economic inactivity | Anti-Poverty Wellbeing & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland (NISRA, 04/06/2019) |

Supporting People

The Supporting People Group manages the Child Maintenance Service and services delivered through Pensions, Disability & Benefit Security & Debt.

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) promotes the financial responsibility parents have for their children, providing information and advice through a Statutory Child Maintenance Scheme across NI and through a Service Level Agreement with DWP to parts of GB.

Pensions, Disability, Benefit Security & Debt delivers benefit services for disability and pensions and welfare supplementary payments. It has responsibility for tackling fraud and error, the recovery of debt and continuous improvement and modernisation of pension and disability services through a number of digital projects.

Information Services & Property Management has responsibility for IT Services, Property and Accommodation, Information Management, and Departmental Security Branches.

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|---|---|
| Child Maintenance Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are more likely to be living in poverty • Women may experience barriers to employment and economic participation • People with dependents or caring responsibilities may be more likely to be economically inactive and unable to access the labour market | Anti-poverty Wellbeing & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loneliness, Social Isolation and COVID-19 (Local Government Association, 21/12/2020) • Pension Credit: Estimates of Benefit Take-up 2017/18 (DfC, 29/10/2020) • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2021 (DfC, 24/11/2021) |
| Make the Call Wraparound Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people may experience social isolation and income poverty • High levels of poverty are more likely to be experienced by people with disabilities, and people with dependents | Anti-poverty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Report on the Social Return on Investment of the Make the Call Wraparound Service (Ipsos, 23/06/2021) • Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NISRA) • The Family Resources Survey for Northern Ireland 2019-2020 (DfC, 25/11/2021) • Health Inequalities Annual Report 2020 (DoH, 25/03/2020) |

Engaged Communities

The Engaged Communities Group aims to deliver good policy and services to the voluntary and community sectors, across the culture, arts and sport/physical activity functions and in relation to our stewardship of the historic environment.

Active Communities has responsibility for policy development and delivery, governance and accountability and operational management. It includes Sports & Lottery, Together Building a United Community (TBUC) and Regional and Sub Regional Stadia Programmes.

Community Empowerment Division (CED) has responsibility for policy development and implementation of a number of area based initiatives designed to address spatial concentrations of deprivation. These include People & Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal including Small Pockets of Deprivation and the Areas at Risk programme. CED also has responsibility for a number of actions under the Fresh Start Agreement 2015, specifically Tackling Paramilitarism.

Culture Division has responsibility for policy development and supporting knowledge, learning and participation across a range of areas within NI's Culture sector, including arts and creative industries, community festivals, museums & libraries, as well as the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment in Northern Ireland. The Division supports promotion and use of Irish language, Ulster-Scots and sign language.

Historic Environment Division (HED) surveys, records and maintains an archive about the historic environment and designates our most important features as: Monuments in State Care, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens. The Division includes Heritage Advice and Regulation, Buildings Designation, Development and Change, State Care Heritage, Records and Designation.

The **Public Records Office (PRONI)** receives, catalogues and preserves the public records of Government Departments, courts of law, public bodies and non-Departmental Public Bodies. It also records material deposited by private individuals, churches, businesses and institutions.

Voluntary & Community Division (VCD) supports a vibrant, effective & more sustainable Voluntary & Community Sector through a range of programmes & initiatives. It includes Engagement, Charity Legislation and Business Support, Policy and Innovation. VCD is the sponsor branch for the Charities Commission of Northern Ireland, the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and the Commissioner for Older People (COPNI).

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>Infrastructure Planning & Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility to arts, cultural, heritage and active recreation and venues and activities by people with disabilities and older people. | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Audits completed by Councils Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey Disability Sport NI Review of the Access and Inclusion Programme 2018-2020. |
| <p>Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in sport and physical activity. Data indicates less participation by females, older people (over 45), racial group, marital status, LGBT+, people with a disability and people with dependants. | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey 2017/18 ‘Sport Matters - Beyond 2020’ a research document prepared by the Department for Communities Professional Services Unit ‘Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland (Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20) Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport Review (TRARIIS) Report by UK Sport – June 2021. The Children’s Sport Participation and Physical Activity study Young People’s Behaviour and Attitudes Survey A review into National Sports Governing Bodies response to LGB&T inclusion. The National LGB&T Partnership 2016 Research and outputs from engagement and consultation exercises to inform the Active Living strategy in particular insights into the experiences of S75 groups particularly those with no or little local data sources e.g. political opinion, sexual orientation. |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Sign Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility to information and services for Deaf British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language users. (Disability) | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences of Accessing COVID-19 Briefings and Services: An Evaluation Report for Department of Communities - Kristina Sinclair, Bronagh Byrne and Amandine le Maire - June 2021. NI Deaf Campaign Group consultation meetings and reports 2021 Sign Language Framework Consultation 2016 Anecdotal evidence and continuous engagement/consultations with Deaf community & sector |
| <p>Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults with a disability were less likely to visit a place of historic interest in 2017/18 (45%) than those who do not have a disability (58%). | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey 2017/18 |
| <p>Financial Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inequalities in the financial wellbeing of women and people with a disability | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion Anti-poverty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) UK Financial Wellbeing Strategy and the Department's NI Delivery Plan for Financial Wellbeing. Making Ends Meet – Women's Access to Lending Research (Women's Regional Consortium, February 2020) 2016 report by the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. |
| <p>T:BUC Uniting Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people (18-24 year olds) have the lowest working age employment rates and the highest rates of unemployment and economic inactivity Religion is subject to geographical variation, as are patterns of deprivation | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion Anti-poverty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young persons' behaviours and attitudes survey 2013 and 2019; Sport matters: A Northern Ireland strategy for sport and physical recreation 2009 to 2019 Social exclusion and sport in NI 2015 (Ulster University) Urban Villages Sports Scoping Study DFC Urban Villages Early Engagement Project |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|--|--|
| <p>People and Place Strategy is delivered through the Neighbourhood Renewal, Areas at Risk and Small Pockets of Deprivation programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a disability and/or health conditions may experience barriers of economic participation, social isolation and poverty • Women may experience barriers to employment and economic participation • People with dependents or caring responsibilities may be more likely to be economically inactive and unable to access the labour market • People from an ethnic minority background may experience greater impacts associated with poverty as a result of less developed social and economic networks and poorer job security • Religion is subject to geographical variation, as are patterns of deprivation <p>Those living in areas of highest social deprivation are more likely than the rest of NI to suffer from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability and/or long term health inequalities; • Lower level of educational and skills attainment; and • Higher levels of economic inactivity | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> <p>Anti-poverty</p> | <p>The programmes are geographically defined interventions targeting areas of high deprivation. It aims to address and tackle the many facets of deprivation, including inequalities, so as to improve the lives of those living in these areas.</p> <p>The areas targeted for intervention were identified using the indices of Multiple Deprivation – and interventions are informed by review of data available –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NISRA) <p>In addition evidence summary reports are produced and made available via the DfC website alongside other resources –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources for neighbourhood renewal Partnerships (DfC) <p>The interventions supported through the programmes are designed to enhance improvements in a range of key outcomes; such as health, education, employability, community development and cohesion. In addition some physical works are supported, primarily around community facilities</p> <p>Rather than specifically targeting any particular groups or cohorts under S75, the programmes seek to enhance the lives of those living in our most deprived areas and this will include those that fall within S75 categories</p> |
| <p>Community Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-representation of women in community development and leadership roles in public decision-making | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive appointed Panel Report on the Disbandment of Paramilitary Groups in Northern Ireland June 2016 • Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) Annual Report • United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (Para 3.20 Panel Report) |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----|----------|-----|------------|----|-------|-----|-------------|-----|----------|-----|------------|-----|------|-----|--------|-----|---|---|
| <p>Irish Language Strategy and Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people (65 and over) and Protestants less knowledge of the Irish Language • Young people (16-24), males and Catholics less knowledge of the Ulster Scots Language. <p>Age Knowledge of Irish</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>16-24</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 and over</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Religion Knowledge of Irish</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Catholic</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Protestant</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Age Knowledge of Ulster-Scots</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>16-24</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 and over</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Religion Knowledge of Ulster-Scots</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Catholic</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Protestant</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Gender Knowledge of Ulster-Scots</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> </table> | 16-24 | 24% | 65 and over | 12% | Catholic | 35% | Protestant | 3% | 16-24 | 16% | 65 and over | 23% | Catholic | 11% | Protestant | 23% | Male | 19% | Female | 14% | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion / Employment</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey 2019/2020</p> |
| 16-24 | 24% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 65 and over | 12% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Catholic | 35% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Protestant | 3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16-24 | 16% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 65 and over | 23% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Catholic | 11% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Protestant | 23% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 19% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 14% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Housing, Urban Regeneration & Local Government

The Housing, Urban Regeneration & Local Government Group aims to deliver decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support, to tackle area-based deprivation and to create urban centres which help bring divided communities together.

Belfast Regeneration manages strategies and programmes to regenerate the Central and Greater Belfast area. It includes planning, advising and programme direction, a Laganside unit, city centre public realm and promotions and Physical Development.

Communities, Regeneration & Housing is tasked with the continual regeneration and improvement of local areas, housing and building sustainable communities. It is made up of teams managing Regulation & Inspection, Policy Implementation, Policy & EU Funding.

Housing Policy & Performance looks at Housing Policy, Social Housing Reform, Fuel Poverty, Housing Executive sponsorship and liaison.

Local Government Policy supports local government including policy, legislation, finance and community planning.

The **North West Development** area delivers the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme and physical regeneration schemes in Londonderry, Strabane and Limavady

Regional Development manages strategies and programmes to create vibrant and viable areas and town centres in the north, south and western areas of the province.

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Supporting People Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a disability may need extra support to live independently • Older People may need extra support to live independently • Younger People may need extra support to live independently • Survivors of Domestic Abuse may need extra support to live independently | <p>Anti-Poverty</p> <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Accommodation Based Services Funded by Supporting People (RSM McClure Watters 2015) • Statistics, Perceptions and the Role of the Supporting People Programme (North Harbour Consulting 2014) • The Experience of Learning Disabled People Resettled from Long Stay Hospitals (North Harbour Consulting 2017) • Strategic Needs Assessment for the Supporting People Programme (DfC, DoH and DoJ 2017) • Campbell Tickell Research following 2015 Review of Supporting People |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Housing Strategy</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Differentials in the housing outcomes of people of different gender were apparent in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, households with female household reference persons have smaller homes and are more frequently in rented accommodation than households with male household reference persons. Single women that live alone, however, obtain larger homes and are more frequently in owner-occupation than single men living alone, suggesting that intersections with dependants, marital status or living arrangements and income is important to housing outcomes; • Other households of female household reference persons are more frequently found in social housing than those of male household reference persons. Lone parents were overwhelmingly female and predominantly in either the private or social renting sector; and • Older women more frequently experience poor housing conditions than older men in rural areas, while in urban areas the situation is reversed and older men experience poorer housing conditions than older women. • Rates of relative poverty in the private rented sector increase once housing costs are taken into account more for women rather than men; but rates of relative poverty are reduced for women more than men, when the minimal housing costs in outright homeownership are considered. | <p>Anti-poverty</p> <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and Communities' Inequalities in Northern Ireland (Alison Wallace June 2015) • Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence Report (December 2021) • The Equality Commission NI 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland' (2017) • NISRA Statistical Bulletin June 2021 • DFC Recommendations for an Anti-Poverty Strategy (Report of the Expert Advisory Panel December 2020) • NIHE Shared Housing Data • The Equality Commission NI Equality Awareness Survey 2016 • United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 'Jurisdictional 'Parallel' Report on Implementation in Northern Ireland Working Paper (August 2017) • Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel (Report & Recommendations December 2020) • Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin (July to December 2020) • Through our Eyes – Housing and Homelessness experiences of LGBT people in NI (Rainbow Project & Council for the Homeless NI 2015) • LGBTQI+ Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report (Dec 2020) • Analysis of Homelessness Presenters and Acceptance (NIHE March 2020) • UK Report (Poverty in the UK/Statistics) House of Commons Library October 2021 • Family Resources Survey 2018/19 • The Equality Commission NI Gender Equality – Policies, Priorities and Recommendations. • NISRA 2020 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland June 2021 |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| <p>Age</p> <p>Housing outcomes are influenced by age in early adulthood, or the transition to adulthood, and in later life; Indicators of inequalities for different age groups were found as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor physical housing conditions in Northern Ireland’s stock have declined but older people remain more likely to have inadequate non-decent housing conditions than younger age groups; • Homeownership contains the largest pool of older people in poor housing conditions. Previous reports have highlighted this differential suggesting it is a persistent problem; • Outright ownership is associated with a reduction in the incidence of relative poverty once housing costs are taken into account for older homeowners; and • Homeownership’s poverty reducing qualities in old age are well documented, a function of the front loading of housing costs in this tenure. • Private renting is associated with a significant increase in poverty after housing costs for people aged 16 to 24 years old. Whether the increased rates of relative poverty among young people in the private rented sector after housing costs are considered are longstanding or have emerged as a result of various housing benefit changes over the last decade is unclear. <p>Religion</p> <p>Shifting demographics, spatial segregation in residential communities, not least in neighbourhoods dominated by social housing, and difficulties in delivering new housing supply make for significant inefficiencies in the local housing system. With limited descriptive data, this analysis observed the following community differentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using data for all of Northern Ireland, Catholic households wait longer than Protestant households to be allocated social housing and are allocated proportionately fewer homes, despite comprising a greater proportion of the waiting list and a greater proportion of applicants in housing stress; • Earlier analysis suggests differentials existed in previous periods and therefore this is a persistent problem. Community differentials in terms of proportionate allocations may have narrowed over time for a variety of reasons, reflecting population shifts and changes in self-identification, but lengthening waiting times for social housing have been uneven, disproportionately affecting applicants from other religions and Catholics; | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA Continuous Household Survey • NI Life & Times Survey • Racial Equality Policy Priorities & Recommendations • PSNI, Hate Motivational Statistics, Quarterly update, period ending 30 June 2021 (published 26 August 2021) • PSNI Data 2019/20 • 2016 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These patterns are complicated by the fact that dual housing markets exist with different pressures on housing demand and supply in different locations. In areas with the greatest shortages of new social housing supply, Catholic applicants wait the longest prior to being allocated a home; except in North Belfast, where people from other or unknown religions wait the longest; and • In terms of housing conditions, people from other religions or no religion have the smallest homes in terms of square metres and experience the most overcrowding, despite the fact that the average Catholic household is slightly larger (in terms of family size) than households from other religions. However, Catholics comprise the largest proportion of people in overcrowded homes. • People from other religions, mixed religions or no religions are the most likely to live in non-decent homes, and Catholic households the least likely. <p>Race</p> <p>Data limitations constrain the precise understanding of how similar or divergent different ethnic groups' housing circumstances may be, but the data and literature review highlighted certain differentials as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower proportions of Black residents and those from the EU Accession countries are in homeownership and among minority ethnic and migrant groups there is a higher prevalence of private renting. The main research report notes the positive aspects of the private rented sector, including that there are higher levels of satisfaction with the services provided by private landlords in Northern Ireland than in England. However, common weaknesses in the private rented sector include limited security of tenure, high housing costs, poor housing management, and for some but not all households there are poorer housing conditions. There is also some evidence that landlords attach additional terms to tenancies of minority ethnic groups and provide unsatisfactory information about tenant rights; • Access to social housing varies between different minority ethnic groups, with some minorities (African and households of mixed ethnicity) waiting longer than the White population, and some groups (Chinese, Irish Travellers and households of other ethnicity) a shorter length of time than White applicants before being allocated a home. It is uncertain whether these are persistent or newly emerging patterns as data is limited; • Tied accommodation for migrant workers remains a concern since it was identified in the 2007 report. Conditions are often poor, residents isolated and overcrowded and often have little general understanding of their rights; | | |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to quality transit and settled sites for Irish Travellers is limited and although they do not wait a long time for social housing, this is not always their first choice of home. Irish Travellers experience a serious lack of basic amenities on some sites, identified as a persistent theme; • People from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly Black people and Irish Travellers, experience significantly more overcrowding than other White people, especially in housing association and private rented sector properties; and • A resurgence in racial attacks on people from minority ethnic communities' homes is a critical concern, with implications for the safety of the home. • The highest rates of overcrowding anywhere were found among Indian and African households in housing association accommodation. <p>Disability</p> <p>Key indicators of inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people were found in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability of people with learning disabilities to live independently away from parents and/or congregated institution-like settings is a persistent inequality not experienced by non-disabled people. The Government's project to resettle all patients with learning disabilities away from hospitals to supported or independent living nears completion in 2016; • No data was available to assess disabled people's experiences of social housing applications. An earlier assessment conducted by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in 2011, using data from 2004 to 2009, showed that wheelchair users waited a much longer time to be rehoused than applicants not in a wheelchair. In response to this, the NIHE adopted a case management approach for each applicant with special needs in order to address this differential. To date, no research has been undertaken to assess if this approach has indeed addressed the differential as intended; and • There is a strong association between older people and disability; disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members. • Disabled people of all ages face delays in securing occupational therapists and funding to ensure their homes are adapted to meet their needs, especially in the private market. | | |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|
| <p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>There is limited data or evidence available that examined the relationship between housing outcomes and sexual orientation, but two themes emerged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anecdotal evidence identified an increased rate of family breakdown due to young people’s sexual orientation resulting in homelessness. • LGBTQ+ people feel harassed and fearful they will be a victim of hate crime and feel compelled to leave their home, and on occasions have experienced insensitive responses from frontline workers. <p>Marital Status</p> <p>Marital status is rarely a focus of housing studies but data resources do allow some examination of different people’s housing outcomes. The following differentials were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single, divorced and separated people experienced poorer housing conditions than married people, especially in the private rented sector, with divorced and separated people having the highest incidence of non-decent homes; • Single people (and couples without children) had the highest incidence of negative equity, following the housing market downturn, with resulting constraints on mobility and remortgaging. But married and divorced or separated people are likely to experience greater sums of negative equity; and • Age and cohort affects may influence some of these outcomes but the impact of relationship breakdown on housing outcomes is underexplored. <p>Dependants</p> <p>There is little literature that examined children’s housing circumstances specifically. Moreover, it was clear that there were interactions with other equality grounds, such as gender, marital status and/or ethnicity, which were associated with different housing outcomes. Differentials were found as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income families are increasingly found in private renting, where they lack security of tenure, rather than social housing; • Housing costs of private renting increases the rate of relative poverty among households with dependants by 27 percentage points compared to five percentage points for households without dependants; • The proportion of non-decent homes for families in the private and social rented sectors was the same in 2009, but households without dependants in the private rented sector experienced poor conditions, with the highest rate of non-decent homes; and | | |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households with dependants are more likely to live in overcrowded social housing homes, especially lone parents and multi-adult households that may include dependent children, with the potential for adverse impacts on household members. | | |
| <p>Local Government and Housing Regulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial Group – access to appropriate accommodation for Irish travellers is limited. The homes of minority ethnic people and migrant groups may be vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation with poor conditions and overcrowding. | <p>Anti-Poverty and Well-Being and Inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Equality Commission NI ‘Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland’ (2017) Housing and Communities’ Inequalities in Northern Ireland (Alison Wallace, June 2015) Equality Impact Monitoring Report on Unauthorised Encampments in Northern Ireland |

Strategic Policy & Professional Services

The Strategic Policy & Professional Services Group aims to deliver high quality corporate and professional services to the Department. It plays an important role in creating a well-led, high performing and outcome-focused Department, unified by our common purpose of supporting people, building communities and shaping places.

Central Policy Division has the overall responsibility for analytical services, cross-divisional policy issues, equality and safeguarding. It is also responsible for leading on the development, publication, monitoring and reporting of the Executive's Strategies for Poverty, Disability, Active Ageing, LGBTQI+ and Gender Equality. The Directorate also leads DfC preparations for the UK's future relationship with the EU.

Financial Management Directorates are responsible for overall financial management of the Department's budget as allocated by the Executive and HM Treasury resources allocated to Social Security. They provide financial support services across the Department including finance business partnering, statutory financial reporting, benefit delivery payment and treasury management.

Governance and Commercial Services is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Department's Corporate Governance Framework to support effective and innovative delivery of DfC strategic and business objectives. The Directorate ensures the application of legislation and best practices across the Department in respect of

programme, portfolio and project management, procurement, application of grant standards and contract management. It provides a central public appointments function for the Department and also responsible for the contract and service management of a number of key contracts in place to support business areas across the Department, including a centralised team to assist in the clinical and quality assurance of Health and Disability Assessments in Northern Ireland. Governance and Commercial Services is also responsible for the coordination of Departmental Business Planning activities through which the DfC 5 year Strategy is monitored and reported on, and coordinating and reporting on the Department's contribution to the Programme for Government.

Corporate Services & People Development is a newly created directorate that brings together a range of key corporate functions. These functions ensure provision of support for the Minister, Departmental Management Board, Permanent Secretary, Top Leadership Team and the Deputy Permanent Secretary lead of the Strategic Policy & Professional Services Group.

The People Development support role provides a central focus on developing and delivering against the DfC's key people priorities as detailed in our People Strategy. This work supports and strengthens the capacity and capability of our workforce through oversight of workforce engagement processes and action plans; operational guidance, training development and delivery; Leadership Development, Operational Delivery Profession Apprenticeships, and Workforce Planning.

Corporate Services & People Development also leads on the Corporate COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Central planning functions and supports the department on a range of cross-cutting issues to support a more collaborative approach across the NICS.

Communications Directorate supports all Departmental business areas to promote and communicate their work as appropriate. This includes media releases and enquiries, internal and external communications, print and design, advertising campaigns, and web, intranet and social media management.

It should be noted that, in addition to the information listed in this document relating to Departmental functions, as part of their work on the development of Executive Social Inclusion Strategies (including Ant-Poverty, Disability, Sexual Orientation/LGBTQI+ and Gender Equality), Departmental policy teams hold research and data on inequalities in relation to other departments' functions. As this Audit relates to the services and functions delivered by the Department for Communities, these data sources are not listed here.

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| <p>Executive Social Strategies</p> <p>Anti-Poverty Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are more likely to be living in poverty than the population as a whole • People with dependents are more likely to be in or at risk of falling into poverty • Women may experience barriers to employment and economic participation • People from an ethnic minority background may experience greater impacts associated with poverty as a result of less developed social and economic networks and poorer job security • Older people may experience social isolation and income poverty | <p>Anti-Poverty</p> | <p>There is a wide range of data and research available on poverty in relation to NI the following is not exhaustive but a collection of key reports would include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for an Anti-Poverty Strategy (DfC Expert Advisory Panel Report December 2020) • Households Below Average Income 2019/2020 • Family Resources Survey 2019/20 • Children Can't Wait – Investing in Social Security to Reduce Child Poverty in Northern Ireland (Save the Children, August 2021) • Ten Years Too Long – A Decade of Child Poverty in Northern Ireland (Save the Children, March 2021) • Poverty and Child Health – Views from the Frontline (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, May 2017) • Why Children Die (Part E): A Policy Response for Northern Ireland (Research into the links between infant mortality and poverty) – (National Children's Bureau, 01/06/2014) • Child Poverty – What We Want To See (Recommendation to reduce child poverty) (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) • Cumulative Impact Assessment of Tax and Social Security Reforms in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 09/03/2021) • Households Below Average Income: Northern Ireland 2019/20 Report (DfC, 05/08/2021) • Measuring Poverty 2020 Report (Social Metrics Commission, 01/07/2020) • Poverty and Covid-19 Report (Social Metrics Commission, 05/08/2020) • Shared Island: Projects, Progress & Policy Sharing Knowledge and Lessons in Combatting Poverty (National Economic and Social Council of Ireland, 28/12/2021) |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 and Inequalities (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 11/06/2020) • Destitution in the UK 2020 (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 09/12/2020) • Research on Mapping Food and Fuel Poverty Across NI (Sinead Furey, University of Ulster) • The Impact of Universal Credit on Women (Women’s Regional Consortium, September 2020) • Addressing the Stigma of Poverty (Frame Works Institute) • Framing Toolkit: Talking About Poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 14/03/2019) • Summary of Policy Positions Relating to Poverty and Socio-economic Disadvantage (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, November 2020) |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>LGBTQI+ Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQI+ people are often invisible, under represented or there is a lack of positive role models or imagery used. • The evidence base for an effective assessment of inequality and relative disadvantage by sexual orientation and gender identity is deficient and has major gaps. • Almost one in five LGBT people (18%) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their identity while trying to get a job. • One in eight LGBT people (12 per cent) avoid going to the gym or participating in sports groups because of fear of discrimination and harassment • Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people face homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other barriers to participating in sport. • Almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. • Lack of LGBT safe emergency accommodation for LGBT people fleeing homophobia, transphobia, domestic abuse or sexual violence | <p>Wellbeing and inclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Positive Attitudes (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland) • Government equalities office – NIESR review on LGBT inequalities • Expert Advisory Panel Report for LGBTQI+ Strategy 2020 • LGBT in Britain – Work Report (Stonewall, 25/04/2018) • Out for Sport (Equality Network) • LGBT in Britain – Home and Communities (Stonewall) • The Rainbow Project is currently working with Housing colleagues on this issue and that of collecting and recording LGBTQI+ data on reasons for homelessness |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Gender Equality Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women especially those with dependents or caring responsibilities may be more likely to work part time or in temporary employment • Women are more likely than men to have caring responsibilities. • Women are more likely to be economically inactive. • Women are likely to earn less than men. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICTU Childcare Report (Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee, 15/10/2020) • “Insecure and Uncertain”: Precarious Work in the Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Winter 2017) • Will I Care? – The Likelihood of Being a Carer in Adult Life (CarersUK, November 2019) • Labour Market Report (NISRA, 16/11/2021) • Employee Earnings in NI 2021 (NISRA, 26/10/2021) |
| <p>Active Ageing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people experience relative poverty (before housing costs) and absolute poverty (before housing costs) at a higher level than the general population • Older people experience difficulty in accessing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • services • appropriate accommodation • digital exclusion • Older people are more likely to feel events are influenced by outside factors, making it beyond an individual’s control to shape the events of their life. • Older people (state pension age) are more likely to be providing informal care than working age adults. As people age there is an increasing risk of long standing illnesses which can impact on mobility and independence. | <p>Wellbeing and inclusion</p> <p>Anti-Poverty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty Bulletin: Northern Ireland 2019/20 (DfC, 25/03/2021) • Lived Experience 2021 Report (Age NI, September 2021) • Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2020/21 (Executive Office, 27/10/2021) • The Family Resources Survey: Northern Ireland 2019/20 (DfC, 25/11/2021) • Housing and Communities’ Inequalities in Northern Ireland (Centre for Housing Policy & University of York, June 2015) • The House Condition Survey 2016 (Northern Ireland Housing Executive) |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Disability Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households with a disabled adult are more likely to experience food insecurity. • Disabled people have significantly lower personal wellbeing than people without disability. • Disabled people, people with learning disabilities and parents of disabled children have reported severe impacts relating to Covid-19 and the response to it. Impacts captured included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less support from health professionals • financial impacts • less access to formal and informal support for disabled children • decline in the mental health and wellbeing of disabled children. • Disabled adults are less likely to be employed than non-disabled adults. This Disability employment gap is higher in NI than elsewhere in the UK. • The Disability employment gap is wider for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disabled men • older (aged 50 to 64) disabled people • disabled people with no qualifications • Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working in lower-skilled occupations • self-employed • working part-time (and subsequently less hours) | <p>Wellbeing & Inclusion</p> <p>Anti-Poverty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Family Resources Survey: Northern Ireland 2019-2020 (DfC, 25/11/2021) • Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2020/21 (Executive Office, 27/10/2021) • The Employment of Disabled People 2021 (Gov.uk Department for Work & Pensions, 11/02/2022) • The Impact of Covid-19 on People with Learning / Intellectual Disabilities (Ulster University, 03/12/2021) • The Impact of Coronavirus – A Year in the Life of Families Raising Disabled and Seriously Ill Children and Young People (Family Fund, 12/04/2021) |

| Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted | Strategic Cross-Cutting Theme | Research |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working in the public sector • temporarily away from work • The ability of people with learning disabilities to live independently away from parents and/or congregated institution-like settings is a persistent inequality not experienced by non-disabled people. • Disabled people may need extra support to live independently. • Disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members. • Disabled people of all ages face delays in securing occupational therapists and funding to ensure their homes are adapted to meet their needs, especially in the private market. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Impact of Covid-19 on Disabled People in NI (Disability Action, 08/09/2020) • Disability Strategy (DfC Expert Advisory Panel, December 2020) |
| <p>Public Appointments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on current data, there is under representation of women, young people, people with a disability and ethnic minorities in public appointments | <p>Agility & Innovation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Appointments Annual Reports for Northern Ireland 2017-18 (Executive Office) • Publications issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland (CPANI), including Annual Reports & Business Plans • CPA NI report entitled “Under-Representation and Lack of Diversity in Public Appointments in Northern Ireland” issued in January 2014 |
| <p>Health Transformation Project aims to contribute to the support of people with health conditions and disabilities to achieve their full potential and live better for longer through delivery of a transformed functional health assessment service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a disability and/or health condition may experience a disability employment gap, social isolation and have lower personal well being | <p>Agility & Innovation Well Being Anti-poverty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping Future Support: the Health and Disability Green Paper (Gov.uk Department for Work & Pensions, 12/08/2021) • Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables (NISRA, 15/02/2022) • Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2020/21 (Executive Office, 27/10/2021) |

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