



Department for  
**Communities**

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

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**Communities**

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# Department for Communities Key Deliverables 2024 – 2025

**Objective: Deliver social security, employment support, child maintenance and pensions to ensure everyone has access to the right (financial) support when they need it.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
<p>To transform the health assessment services by:</p> <p>(a) Transitioning the existing contracts to one Functional Assessment Service contract; and</p> <p>(b) delivering the digitalisation of the PIP application process in 2024, whilst retaining the existing methods to apply for PIP.</p>	<p>By 30 July 2024, have commenced a Gate 4 Gateway Review of the Department's transition to and preparation for implementation of a single service provider.</p>	<p>CSG</p>
	<p>By 6 September 2024, have completed the transition of the existing health assessment contracts to the new Functional Assessment Service Provider.</p>	
	<p>On 9 September 2024, have commenced Service delivery of the new Functional Assessment Service provider to deliver health assessments for Personal Independence Payment and Work Capability Assessments.</p>	
	<p>By 9 September 2024, to have fully implemented a revised Claimant Satisfaction Survey, a solution for video assessments and an audio recording solution to support the Functional Assessment Service contract.</p>	
	<p>By 31 March 2025, to have commenced the Ramp Up Drain Down (RUDD) process for Capita's move on to the PIP ITMS system.</p>	
	<p>By 31 March 2025, have commenced the rollout of PIP Apply in Northern Ireland.</p>	

Activity	Milestone	Group
Complete the implementation of Move to UC for all impacted Tax Credits in Northern Ireland and commence the Move to UC exercise for the remaining non-tax credit legacy customers.	By 31 May 2024, to have issued migration notices to all Tax Credit only claimants due to Move to UC.	WHG
	By 31 May 2024, to have developed the planned Move to UC approach for claimants in receipt of Tax Credits with Housing Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income based), Income Support (Income related), Housing Benefit (Rental) and Employment and Support Allowance claimants in receipt of Tax Credits.	
	By 31 May 2024, to have commenced the issue of migration notices to Tax Credits with Housing Benefit claimants.	
	By 30 September 2024, to have commenced the issue of Move to UC migration notices to Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-Based), Income Support (Income-Related), Housing Benefit (Rental) and Employment and Support Allowance claimants in receipt of Tax Credits.	
	By 31 October 2024, to work with DWP to develop and agree the planned approach to migrate Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) only and Employment and Support Allowance claimants in receipt of Housing Benefit.	
	By 31 December 2024, to have developed the planned approach and issued migration notices to all those mixed and pension age claimants due to Move to UC.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed the expansion of Move to UC within NI for people who get Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-Based), Income Support (Income-Related), Housing	

Activity	Milestone	Group
	Benefit (Rental) and Employment and Support Allowance claimants in receipt of Tax Credits.	WHG
To ensure the relevant legislation is in place for social security, child maintenance, pensions, and Welfare Mitigations.	By 31 March 2025, to have taken forward the relevant legislation in relation to social security, child maintenance, pensions, and welfare mitigations through the legislative process within the prescribed timelines.	
To consider reform of the Discretionary Support scheme to ensure it best targets available resources to support for people in a crisis situation.	By 30 September 2024, to have secured Ministerial agreement on proposed amendments to the Discretionary Support Scheme.	
	By 31 December 2024, to have brought forward legislation to amend the Discretionary Support scheme in accordance with the recommendations from the internal and independent reviews of the scheme.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed progress of the legislative amendments through the Assembly.	
To consider the future delivery of a package of welfare mitigation measures that provides support to people on a low income	By 30 June 2024, to have completed a refresh of the estimated costs for new welfare mitigation payments approved by Minister.	
	By 31 August 2024, to have shared details of costs for new welfare mitigation payments with the Executive.	
	By 30 September 2024, to have completed a statutory review of the future delivery of Welfare Supplementary Payments.	
	By 31 December 2024, to lay the report on the findings of the statutory review of future delivery of Welfare Supplementary Payment before the Assembly.	

Activity	Milestone	Group
To work towards the reduction of fraud and error and associated monetary loss within Universal Credit through the completion of Universal Credit case reviews.	Throughout the year ending on 31 March 2025, to complete Universal Credit case reviews within UC Operations.	WHG
To deliver a high-quality service to everyone claiming Working Age benefits and/or Finance Support to ensure that they receive support to make and maintain their claim and are paid the right amount at the right time.	Throughout the reporting year, to deliver a high-quality service to everyone claiming Working Age benefits and/or Finance Support against the range of specific targets reported and monitored at Directorate level, to ensure claimants receive support to make and maintain their claim and are paid the right amount at the right time.	
Set strategic direction, develop, and deliver quality labour market provision that supports customers to move closer, find, retain and progress in employment, working in partnership with stakeholders.	By 31 March 2025, to have delivered a portfolio of Health and Work support provision for those with disabilities and health conditions.	
	By 31 March 2025 to develop an Employer Engagement strategy for DfC.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed the 18–24-year-old JobStart Scheme with customers and work towards achieving 1,441 opportunities for young people.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have delivered a pilot 50+ incentivised employability scheme with the aim of gathering data to ascertain if scaling up would have a positive impact on the unemployed and economically inactive.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have worked collaboratively with Local Labour Market Partnerships to develop and deliver Action Plans across each Local Council.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have delivered a range of Work Psychology services and supports to staff across DfC; and our customers in conjunction with UC colleagues.	

Activity	Milestone	Group
Delivery of social security payments to older people and people with disabilities ensuring that those who require financial support receive the right benefit at the right time.	By 31 March 2025, to have delivered social security payments to more than 540,000 older people and people with disabilities ensuring that they receive the correct financial support at the right time equating to approximately £6.3 million.	ODG
To develop and strengthen our partnerships with DWP, enabling collaboration on service modernisation and securing inward investment through DfC delivering services on behalf of DWP.	By 31 March 2025, to have recruited an additional c2,000 Full time equivalent (FTE) to deliver services on behalf of DWP.	

**Objective: Promote residential building safety and the availability of good quality and affordable housing to offer individuals and families shelter and a place to feel safe.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Develop plans to secure, maintain, invest in, and add to the supply of Housing Executive housing stock, based on sustainable financial plans which are supported by rent and borrowing. <i>(Subject to confirmation of the appropriate Consolidated Budgeting Guidance treatment which is specific to this target).</i>	By 31 December 2024, to have secured endorsement of the appropriate Consolidated Budgeting Guidance treatment of NIHE borrowing as part of the N.I Fiscal Framework.	HSG
	By 31 December 2024, to have considered interim findings of the NIHE's strategic review of the rent scheme and how this might support the development of an investment plan to secure, maintain and improve Housing Executive stock.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have developed investment plans based on a range of scenarios, to secure, maintain, invest in, and increase the supply of Housing Executive stock.	
Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand.	By 31 March 2025, to have initiated an open competition to award funding to an Intermediate Rent Operator.	
	By 31 March 2025, to deliver 846 Co-Ownership intermediate homes.	
	By 31 March 2025, to start up to 600 social homes.	
Deliver a Housing Supply Strategy to ensure citizens have access to good quality, affordable and sustainable homes.	By 30 June 2024, to have provided Minister with a final updated draft of the Housing Supply Strategy for consideration and approval.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have delivered the final strategy to the Executive for approval and (subject to this approval) to publish the final strategy.	

Activity	Milestone	Group
To develop a comprehensive programme of the required primary and subordinate legislation, policy and procedures which will ultimately place citizen safety at the heart of the design, construction, and occupation of high-rise residential buildings.	By 30 April 2024, to have published a Roadmap setting out how the Office of Building Safety will implement the recommendations of the Expert Panel Report.	HSG
	By 30 September 2024, to have established appropriate stakeholder working groups to progress development of building safety policy and legislation.	
	By 31 December 2024, to have identified building safety functions within other Departments that would be better placed within the Office of Building Safety, and to get agreement in principle that they will transfer to DfC.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have issued instructions for a Building Safety Bill to the Office for Legislative Counsel.	



**Objective: Recognise diversity, tackle poverty, encourage participation in society and promote social inclusion to create a society of respect and acceptance.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Progress Sign Language Legislation into the Assembly	By 30 June 2024, to have a draft Executive Paper for Minister's consideration to seek Executive approval of cross-cutting legislative proposals for Sign Language Bill.	ECG
	By 30 September 2024, to have completed a first draft economic appraisal of the Sign Language Framework/Bill in conjunction with the Sign Language Partnership.	
	By 30 September 2024, to have a draft Sign Language Bill for Minister's consideration and approval to forward to Executive for approval.	
Develop a strategy for disability.	By 31 October 2024, to present to Minister a draft Disability Strategy for consideration and agreement of next steps.	
	By 31 January 2025, to present to the Executive a draft Disability Strategy for public consultation.	
Develop an Anti-Poverty Strategy to address poverty based on objective need.	By 31 October 2024, to present to Minister a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for consideration and agreement of next steps.	
	By 31 January 2025, to present to the Executive a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for public consultation.	
Develop and promote interventions to address place-based deprivation and poverty and the hardship caused by food poverty.	By 30 September 2024, to have completed Year 2 of the People & Place Review sectoral engagement exercise and prepared a draft strategy suitable for public consultation.	CPLG

Activity	Milestone	Group
	By 31 October 2024, to have finalised a mid-year review in respect of People & Place project costs and spend against budget.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed the public consultation exercise iro the People and Place review.	
Develop a revised policy and delivery framework for independent advice services including debt to inform new commissioning approach.	By 31 December 2024, to have finalised policy proposals for an integrated independent advice and debt service, following public consultation	
Develop and deliver evidence based and targeted programmes of support to address Paramilitarism within communities.	By 31 March 2025, to have delivered 8 'Developing Women in the Community' projects and 4 'Fresh Start in the Community' projects.	
Develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy.	By 30 June 2024, to have completed pre consultation stakeholder engagement to inform the Fuel Poverty Strategy.	HSG
	By 31 December 2024, to have launched a public consultation on the Fuel Poverty Strategy.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed a public consultation on the Fuel Poverty Strategy.	

**Objective: Engage with and support, through improved collaboration, central and local Government and the Voluntary and Community sector to build more empowered, confident communities and reduce disadvantage**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Refresh the Department's strategic infrastructure support framework to enable core voluntary and community sector capacity.	By 30 September 2024, to have developed a refreshed Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support framework which reflects response from public consultation.	CPLG
	By 30 September 2024, to have developed and agreed formal proposals from the Joint Forum for a refreshed strategic agreement between government and the VCS, in collaboration with NICVA and other sectoral partners.	

**Objective: Support our creative industries and arts sector, promote our language and cultural sectors, and foster knowledge including within our libraries and museums, to break down barriers, connect people and communities, shape our places and deliver economic social value.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Develop a strategic framework to underpin a portfolio of Culture and Creativity policies that includes activity to raise aspirations, build skills and inspire people.	By 30 June 2024, to have established contact arrangements and engagement processes for Executive Departments and local councils to develop Culture and Creativity policies.	ECG
	By 30 September 2024, to have finalised a timetable for the necessary stages to complete the various policies and related action plan.	
	By 31 December 2024, to have opened public consultation on at least two of the Culture and Creativity policies.	
Ensure that our culture and heritage sectors contribute to economic prosperity, drive inclusive growth and address disadvantage	By 30 June 2024, to have worked with partners to agree a Local Management Plan for Gracehill in advance of a decision by UNESCO to include the village on the World Heritage list at the end of July.	
	By 30 September 2024, to have reviewed and revised the programme plan for the State Care Investment Programme.	
	By 30 September 2024, to have completed research on the condition of listed buildings in line with the Ministerial commitment to the Culture Arts and Heritage Taskforce.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have progressed the delivery of the State Care Investment Programme to the agreed 2024/25 programme plan.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have developed a strategic business case to address evidenced market failure in the historic environment.	

Activity	Milestone	Group
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed programmed works to State Care Monuments in Carrickfergus as part of preparations for the Carrickfergus Growth Deal project.	ECG
	By 31 March 2025, to have managed the target programme with Mid Ulster Council for the Bellaghy Bawn Writers Residency Project (Shared Island Investment).	
Develop an Ulster Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy and an Irish Language Strategy.	By 30 April 2024, to reconvene the Languages Strategies Cross Departmental Working Group.	
	By 30 June 2024, to issue a Languages Strategies position paper to Minister for agreement on the next steps.	

**Objective: Provide strategic direction for our sports and physical activity sectors to encourage increased and diverse participation and high-quality facilities, delivering on active, healthy, resilient and inclusive society which recognises and values both participation and excellence.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Develop plans to progress the Casement Park Project and The Northern Ireland Football Fund	By 30 June 2024, to have assisted UCGAA in commencing pre-enabling and maintenance works on site at Casement Park.	ECG
	By 31 January 2025, to have developed and designed the 'Performance Strand' of the Northern Ireland Football Fund and opened to applications, subject to approval of Performance Programme Business Case by DoF.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have agreed and managed a target programme for the delivery of Casement Park in line with the Executive's Flagship Commitment.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have researched the Northern Ireland Football Fund needs at Grassroots level.	

**Objective: Transform our towns and cities into safe, accessible and sustainable centres through growth in homes, retail, business and leisure; thereby creating places where people want to live, work and invest.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Support the delivery of the City and Growth deal projects.	By 30 April 2024, to reach Heads of Terms stage for Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal.	CPLG
	By 30 September 2024, to have progressed Derry & Strabane Outline Business Cases (OBCs) through the DfC and DoF approval processes (for projects which DfC are lead department for).	
	By 30 November 2024, to have approved the Newry Mourne and Down District Council Full Business Case for Newry City Centre Regeneration Project as part of the Belfast Region City Deal.	
	By 30 January 2025, to have ensured Newry, Mourne and Down District council commence the planning process for Newry City Park.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have ensured Mid and East Antrim Borough Council commence the planning process for the Carrickfergus Project as part of the Belfast Region City Deal.	
	By 31 March 2025, to participate in the development of the OBC, led by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council for the Armagh Gaol and Transformation project as part of the Mid Southwest Growth Deal.	
	By 31 March 2025 to have progressed the Outline Business Case for the Coleraine Leisure Centre through DfC and DoF approval processes.	
	By 31 March 2025, to work collaboratively with Councils in progressing City and Growth Deal projects for:	

Activity	Milestone	Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfast Region City Deal.</li> <li>• Derry City &amp; Strabane City Deal.</li> <li>• Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal</li> <li>• Mid Southwest Growth Deal.</li> </ul> <p>By 31 March 2025, to have approved the procurement of 4 of the 5 ICT teams for the Bangor Waterfront projects as part of the Belfast Region City Deal.</p>	CPLG
To progress a range of major regeneration projects in line with agreed Plans and maintain and develop the partnership and collaboration with the 11 NI district councils to ensure the legislative framework delivers effective local government for communities.	<p>By 31 December 2024, to have commenced Phase 1 on-site works at Queen's Parade (Bangor).</p> <p>By 31 March 2025, to have progressed the outline planning application for Queen's Quay regeneration scheme (Belfast) with BCC.</p> <p>By 31 March 2025, to have progressed the outline planning application for Fort George (Derry~Londonderry) towards planning approval; agreed a way forward regarding the Pennyburn roundabout delivery; and agreed a plan for marketing the remainder of the site.</p>	
To have progressed PEACE IV and PEACE PLUS implementation in accordance with Accountable Department responsibilities.	<p>By 29 November 2024, to have reached decisions on applications to PEACEPLUS Investment Areas 1.4 Re-imagining Communities.</p> <p>By 20 December 2024, to have opened calls for PEACEPLUS Investments Areas 1.2 (€30m).</p> <p>By 28 February 2025, to have completed all Accountable Department PEACE IV closure requirements.</p>	



**Objective: To support a just transition to a more sustainable Northern Ireland, ensure all policies and functions of the Department reflect the statutory duties set out in the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Develop and implement a Residential Sector Climate Action Plan and a Departmental Climate Change Strategy.	By 31 July 2024, to have published a 1-year Departmental Climate Change Action Plan to assist with the Development of a longer-term Departmental Strategy.	HSG
	By 31 March 2025, to have developed a Departmental Climate Change Strategy and associated action plan with agreed owners, measures, and reporting mechanisms.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have supported DAERA in the NI Climate Action Plan consultation and have submitted a comprehensive list of policies and proposals to reduce emissions in the residential sector for Ministerial agreement to send on to DAERA.	

**Objective: Deliver effective governance, financial and people arrangements to support effective service delivery across the Department.**

Activity	Milestone	Group
Maximize opportunities available to secure and manage Resource and Capital budgets ensuring alignment with Department’s strategic priorities.	By 31 March 2025, to have planned and coordinated all Departmental Budget Exercise submissions (including efficiency exercises and Monitoring Rounds) in a timely manner, to ensure the Department can deliver a balanced budget.	CSG
	By 31 March 2025, to have managed the Departmental budget to ensure financial outturn of no less than 98% resource and capital (a) Annually Managed Expenditure & (b) Departmental Expenditure Limits.	
Implement a Workforce Planning Strategy that offers a sustainable approach to having the right people, with the right skills in the right place.	By 31 December 2024, to agree the Department’s Workforce Planning Strategy with clear milestones for progress and measurement of success.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have modelled and launched a DfC Workforce Succession plan (including an initial pilot).	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed a future skills audit that informs both Learning & Development and resourcing medium to long term priorities.	
	By 31 December 2024, to provide insight on the success and future direction of the DfC approach to recognition and success measurement.	
	By 31 March 2025, to provide a People & Resource Sub Committee with an annual report of People Strategy and People Action progress along with recommendations/forward look for action in 2025-26.	
To agree and publish updated Departmental hybrid working Guidance that builds a cohesive	By 30 September 2024, to have a refreshed approach to hybrid working that provides leaders and staff with guidance and information to support	

Activity	Milestone	Group
workplace that ensures delivery of the Department's business objectives.	successful adoption of a minimum of 40% face to face engagement with their teams on a weekly basis.	
	By 31 October 2024, to have reviewed, updated and agreed the Department's Workstyle Agreements in keeping with the Departmental approach and secured assurance from line managers of compliance.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have completed a short audit/review of the impact and success of our hybrid implementation review recommendations.	
To implement the DfC Workplace Strategy Year 3 Action Plan.	By 30 June 2024, to have the Year 3 Action Plan endorsed by PRSC/DMB.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have developed proposals for a Year 4 Action Plan.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have implemented the Strategic Actions in the Plan endorsed by the Departmental Board.	
Develop stronger, collaborative partnerships with our Arm's Length Bodies to deliver jointly on Executive and Ministerial priorities	By 30 September 2024, to have Partnership Agreements in place for all 6 ECG ALBs, supporting strategic engagements to deliver departmental priorities.	ECG
	By 31 March 2025, to have embedded the partnership arrangements set out in the Partnership Agreements for all 6 ECG ALBs, supporting strategic engagements to deliver departmental priorities and have in place all resources needed for the first annual review of the Agreements.	
	By 31 March 2025, to have reviewed and put in place appropriate skills development for sponsor teams.	
To implement the DfC Digital Strategy's Year 3 Action Plan, whilst ensuring strategic alignment	By 30 June 2024, to have the 24/25 Digital Action Plan endorsed by People & Resources Sub-Committee/Departmental Management Board.	ODG

Activity	Milestone	Group
with DfC Workplace and People Strategies as well as NICS and DWP digitisation plans.	By 31 March 2025, to have successfully completed the Year 3 actions set out in the Digital Strategy Action Plan and developed proposals for Year 4 Action Plan.	
To plan for and deliver the migration to DWP Cloud First and the associated IT device replacements, in line with DWP's UK-wide strategy.	By 31 March 2025, as part of DWP's UK-wide programme, to have successfully migrated DfC sites and workers to Cloud First.	
To develop and strengthen our partnerships with DWP Digital Security and NICS IT Assist to ensure corporate cyber and information management risks are actively managed whilst continuing to embed a strong security culture throughout the Department.	By 30 June 2024, to have developed a Top Leadership Team (TLT) - specific Cyber Incident Response Plan (CIRP).	
	By 30 June 2024, draft 24/25 cyber testing approach for endorsement by the Deputy Secretary responsible for the Digital, Security & Information Services Directorate.	
	By 30 Sept 2024, in collaboration with DWP, to have formalised digital and security interfaces between DfC & DWP.	
	By 31 October 2024, to have commenced the rollout of DfC Security Awareness mandatory e-learning training to all staff.	
	By 31 January 2025, to have completed the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) for two DfC systems, for assessment by Independent Cyber Auditors.	
	By 31 March 2025, undertake a cyber-related test exercise and report findings to TLT.	
Develop and implement policy changes following commitments made in the Charities	By 30 December 2024, to have published a response to the consultation on a registration threshold for charities.	CPLG

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Group</b>
Bill 2022 and recommendations in the Report on the Independent Review of Charity Regulation.		