

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION



17th Annual Report

31st August 2017

Equality Unit

The Implementation of the Equality and Good Relations Duties under Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998 & the Disability Action Plan under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006.

31st August 2017

Please note that this document is available on request in alternative formats including:

- Large font
- Audio
- Braille
- Computer Disc
- Main minority ethnic languages
- DAISY

Please contact:

Tony Steed

Equality Unit

The Housing Centre

2 Adelaide Street

Belfast BT2 8PB

Tel: 02895 982 556

Textphone: 18001 03448 920 900

Email: tony.steed@nihe.gov.uk

Website: www.nihe.gov.uk

Contents

Part A

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice:

Section 1: Part 1	page 5
Section 1: Part 2	page 27
Section 1: Part 3	page 43

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme Commitments and action plans / measures:

Section 2: Parts 4, 5 & 6	page 47
Section 2: Parts 7, 8 & 9	page 51

Section 3: Arrangements for Consulting

page 60

Section 4: Arrangements for Assessing and Consulting on the likely impact of policies.

page 69

Section 5: Arrangements for Monitoring and Publishing the Results of Monitoring.

page 72

Section 6: Staff Training

page 77

Section 7: Public Access to Information and Services

page 83

Section 7a: Provision, Access to Information and Services

page 87

Section 8: Complaints

page 94

Section 9: Looking Forward

page 95

Part B

10th Report on the Disability Action Plan

page 99

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice: Part 1

In 2016-17, please provide examples of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

The Housing Executive's Corporate and Business Plans provide strategic housing policy and strategy business objectives across not only the social housing sector but also the private and privately rented housing sectors.

Many of these objectives are aimed, fundamentally, at promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. We are structured in three main divisions and our objectives and supporting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set out separately for Regional Services, Landlord Services and Support Services.

Our Vision is

“Everyone is able to live in an affordable and decent home, appropriate to their needs, in a safe and attractive place”

In setting the organisation's priorities we are guided by the draft Programme for Government (PfG), Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-2017, other relevant government policies and research findings.

One of the Housing Executive's Core Values is fairness - which we have always kept at the heart of our organisation. We measure the impact of our work on stakeholders to aid our processes and regular policy reviews include employment issues, Equality Screening and Equality Impact Assessment, and we work along with our partners in the Consultative Forum on Equality, Disability Forum and Housing Community Network.

In the past year we have moved from Regional and Landlord specific objectives to three themes, applicable to all Divisions. These are:

- **People - To provide housing solutions, services and support to the people of Northern Ireland.**
- **Property - To ensure everyone has access to a quality home which is safe, affordable, warm and appropriate to their needs;**
- **Places - To work with others to develop, maintain and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places.**

Regional Services and Landlord Services each developed their own Mission Statement:

Regional Services' Mission Statement is

“To ensure the provision of all forms of housing in sustainable neighbourhoods across Northern Ireland”.

Landlord Services' Mission Statement is

“To provide our customers with good quality services/support when they need it, shaped around them”.

The organisation has a statutory role in researching housing issues and our housing policies are founded on a combination of research evidence and consultation. Our research, which includes targeted equality based research and equality based questions as part of general housing surveys (see Section 1:Part 2), focuses on customer trends and satisfaction, housing conditions, an annual review of the NI Housing Market, and a

number of technical areas, and helps to set the context for the Corporate and Business Plans.

We carry out a range of consultations each year (detailed in Section 3), and consult widely on the draft Corporate and Business Plans to ensure that the views of consultees are taken into account when these Plans are finalised.

Over time a framework for communication with tenants at Estate, Area, Regional, and Central levels has been developed through the Housing Community Network (HCN) consisting of around 400 community groups. Through this representatives can debate new and developing policies, along with more local issues, with the appropriate levels of management.

The Consultative Forum on Equality brings together around 150 organisations from the voluntary and community sector (covering Section 75 groups) to debate housing policy issues with a focus on equality. The Chair of the Forum is shared between the Housing Executive (the officer who develops the Corporate and Business Plan) and a representative from the voluntary sector.

Regional Services Corporate Themes

People – To provide housing solutions, services and support to the people of Northern Ireland.

Many people find themselves in challenging or potentially vulnerable circumstances. As part of our wider role in shaping vibrant, cohesive places, and housing services, for sustainable living, we need to ensure that our work is inclusive and contributes to cohesive places for sustainable living for all housing needs. It is important for place shaping and providing services, that we understand this market and work to ensure that whatever the solution, the person's experience of achieving a housing option or our housing services is as best as we can make it.

During 2016/17:

- We distributed approximately £77.8m Supporting People funding on over 850 housing support schemes with the capacity to support over 19,000 vulnerable people. This funding allocation included the development of both new and existing support services for a range of vulnerable client groups;
- We took and continue to take a project management approach to implement both the strategic and business improvement priorities, arising from the Department for Communities (DfC) review of Supporting People. An Outcomes framework has been piloted and will be further developed during 2017/18 in order to ensure benefits to service users are captured effectively;
- The number of households presenting as homeless fell from 18,628 to 18,573, representing a marginal decrease overall although those accepted as having Full Duty Applicant status showed a 2.6% increase from 11,202 to 11,488 over the year. The average time in temporary accommodation increased over the year and we are working to reduce this;
- We worked on a new Homelessness Strategy which was published in April 2017 following wide consultation. The Strategy 2017-22 has a vision of 'Ending Homelessness Together' and reflects the key role that other statutory and voluntary partners have to play, particularly in preventing homelessness. The Strategy was

developed in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies who sit on the Central Homelessness Forum which acted as a consultative body in the development of the Strategy;

- Work progressed in developing a Housing Options approach which is due to be rolled-in by March 2018;
- We supported 1,070 grant applications for adaptations to help people with disabilities to live independently in their own homes. This exceeded our target of 900. As part of our transformation programme, we are currently reviewing the processes for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). This review will ensure that grants applicants receive all the help and support they need to get the works carried out to their homes in the shortest possible time.
- We manage a range of accommodation for traveller families and we conduct regular research into Traveller accommodation needs.

Property - To ensure everyone has access to a quality home which is safe, affordable, warm and appropriate to their needs.

Our Research Department continues to play an important role in guiding the intervention of the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland's housing market. In 2016/17 the planned Research Programme comprised a total of 14 projects as well as a range of in-house research led projects, several of which were carried forward, already under way, from the previous year.

One of the key objectives for the year was to carry out fieldwork and produce preliminary findings on the 2016 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (HCS). During the year we also held two Housing Market Intelligence Exchange forums which was set up for key players in the wider Northern Ireland housing market to share and discuss housing research and key issues facing them and their organisations, for the benefit of all working in the sector. An '*Insight Briefing*' is produced following these forums and details can be found on our website.

New Homes

Social housing need is assessed annually including the need for Supported Housing and the need for wheelchair accessible housing. This helps direct the delivery of social and affordable housing, in the locations required as part of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP).

- During 2016/17 there were 1,604 new social housing starts against a target of 1,600. This was made up of 1,231 urban general needs starts, 148 rural general needs starts and 189 Supported Housing starts. The total number of general needs starts included 260 one bedroom units which will add smaller sized accommodation to the social sector. In addition, there were 1,387 completions exceeding our target of 1,200;
- Each year, we support the social new build programme by transferring land in our ownership to housing associations to facilitate new developments. In 2016/17, we transferred sites to support the construction of 170 new homes, over 10% of the overall units delivered;
- We produced 11 Housing Investment Plans which were reported upon annually to each local council, continuing to set out the schemes and programmes to be delivered in each council area in response to the identified housing needs.
- The SHDP also supports the objectives of 'Together Building United Communities' (TBUC) through identifying and supporting schemes that can be developed as shared communities. This reflects government's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. Ten schemes were identified with four completed and the remaining six had commenced by 31st March 2017.

Supporting a range of initiatives aimed at reducing Fuel Poverty across Northern Ireland

Poor thermal efficiency is one of the three main causes of fuel poverty, the other two being low household income and the cost of fuel. The 2011 House Condition Survey results showed that the overall rate of fuel poverty in NI was 42% (294,200 households), having peaked in 2009 at 44% (302,300). Clearly this is an important issue for some of the most

vulnerable citizens including disabled people, older people and children. Although housing organisations have no influence on world fuel prices and very limited influence on household income, housing policy can completely remove poor thermal efficiency as a primary cause of fuel poverty. Whilst it is for other agencies to deal with the other causes, improved energy efficiency deals with the worst effects of the problem for households.

The Housing Executive sets targets for energy efficiency improvements to our own stock. We also administer the Affordable Warmth Scheme and the Boiler Replacement Scheme on behalf of DfC, which can help vulnerable people in the private sector to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. In addition, we provide energy efficiency advice to the residential sector including a programme of school visits each year to ensure that we are communicating this important issue effectively with children and young people.

During 2016/17:

- We administered the Department's Affordable Warmth Scheme which enabled the installation of 9,963 energy efficiency measures in 5,069 homes with funding of £21.6m. This included heating replacements, window replacements, loft insulation measures, cavity wall insulation measures, solid wall insulation measures and draught proofing measures;
- The Boiler Replacement Scheme, managed and administered by us, funded 3,184 new boiler installations at a cost of over £2.1m;
- In partnership again with Bryson Energy, our outreach to influence young people on the benefits of energy efficiency was delivered into 160 primary schools to 8,090 pupils;
- We continued to fund Bryson Energy to provide Northern Ireland's only local, impartial energy advice line offering an array of services including energy efficiency, switch and save of energy suppliers, energy grant opportunities and benefits check. Last year over 7,000 calls were successfully dealt with, including over 3,400 referrals to grants and/or benefits;
- We produced our annual Home Energy Conservation Authority report.

Grants

Repair grants are available to landlords, agents and others towards the costs of repairing homes. During the year 668 applications were approved.

Funding for discretionary grants, (renovation, replacement and home repair assistance grants) for improvement and repair is limited, and these grants are available only where exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist. During the year 420 applications were approved.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are part of the private rented sector and play an important role in meeting the needs of a number of different household groups including singles, students, low income households, migrant workers and applicants who are in temporary employment. We have a statutory responsibility to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the occupants in HMOs by enforcing appropriate standards (including fire standards) through the implementation of the HMO Statutory Registration Scheme. The responsibility for HMOs is expected to transfer to Councils during 2018/19.

During the year we registered 235 HMOs against a target of 120 and carried out 1,354 inspections of HMOs, exceeding the target of 1,000. This brings the total of registered HMOs to 5,840.

It should also be noted that demand for HMOs can be impacted by changes in economic migration.

Places - To work with others to develop, maintain and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places.

Place Shaping

In 2016 we rolled out our place shaping approach which is aligned to supporting delivery of Council led Community Planning. This provides a local land and planning expertise for local authorities.

The beneficiaries of making the place work should be the people of the area – primarily those who live there, but also those who work, invest, learn and take their enjoyment there.

Our KPIs help to address housing need, stimulate demand, foster more cohesive communities through the creation of mixed use/mixed tenure developments, assist in town and city centre regeneration, and through our Rural Strategy we aim to help build and revitalise rural areas.

During 2016/17:

- Four new shared neighbourhoods were completed under the government's Together Building United Communities programme and a further six were commenced;
- We identified two flagship 'mixed use/mixed tenure' schemes in Belfast. A community led production of a future masterplan was completed for Galliagh Estate, Derry/Londonderry. This will provide additional social housing opportunities within an area of high housing need;
- We worked and continue to work with the DfC on six pilot areas for the Building Successful Communities Programme (BSC);
- We progressed the Housing and Heritage scheme with nine properties brought back into use with a further 2 to be completed by April 2017. The Housing and Heritage scheme is a 3 year programme to bring 15 empty properties in conservation areas back in use for private rental.

Landlord Services Corporate Themes

People - To provide housing solutions, services and support to the people of Northern Ireland

Listening to our customers

Each year, our research department carries out a Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey to measure our tenants satisfaction with our service. At March 2017 it was reported that 87% were satisfied with our overall service provision, an increase on March 2016 percentage of 82%.

Our Landlord Services remains in the top quartile for our services (Housemark) and we aim to maintain this position. It is essential that we collect all the rental income due to us as this provides the financial resources required to deliver services to our tenants, including repairs and improvements to their homes. At the year-end we had collected 99.87% of rent due, against our target of 99.6%.

Our services help our tenants to sustain their tenancies and we provide assistance to those tenants experiencing difficulty in paying their rent by implementing a range of intervention activities, with particular emphasis on early and ongoing personal contact. We implemented our Financial Inclusion Strategy which helps our customers to access the right financial help, support and services when needed to help manage their money better.

Supporting our tenants

During the year we worked closely with the DfC to identify and assess the impact of the proposals for welfare reform on our customers, and to make preparations for the implementation of the proposed changes.

Property - To ensure everyone has access to a quality home which is safe, affordable, warm and appropriate to their needs.

Asset Management

The aim of our Asset Management Strategy is to establish a portfolio of housing stock that matches social housing needs, provides a quality of

housing that meets residents' requirements and aspirations, and both supports and is supported by a robust business plan.

We commenced the implementation of the Interim Investment Plan to carry out investment to our stock while we developed a new investment strategy and all 63 projects had commenced with 43 completed. The remainder are due to complete in 2018. We also worked to deliver against project timescales, the Small Scale Stock Transfer Programme.

Planned Maintenance & Compliance

In 2016/17 we carried out a significant investment programme, completing:

- External Cyclical Maintenance works for 10,091 dwellings,
- New heating installations for 3,627 dwellings and
- Revenue replacements for 4,297 dwellings.
- Full double glazing to 1,133 homes
- 99.8% of all our homes had a valid gas certificate and the remainder are going through our no access procedure.

New contracts are now in place for responsive maintenance and these are being monitored.

Adaptations to Homes

In 2016/17 we continued to provide considerable assistance to allow many of our tenants to maintain their independence and live more comfortably in their own homes. We carried out 95 major adaptations including 57 extensions; we also carried out additional enhancements including 250 lifts, 15 changes of heating and three internal re-arrangements. We also installed 1,157 showers and carried out 3,788 other minor adaptations.

Places - To work with others to develop, maintain and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places.

We are committed to helping our neighbourhoods become strong, vibrant and united through our work in this vital area. We aim to make a difference in the neighbourhoods and communities that we serve by supporting greater community cohesion in our deeply segregated residential sector.

Community Safety

With our Community Safety Strategy “Safer Together” 2014-2017 we have set our strategic direction and action plan across three main thematic areas:

- building community confidence;
- ensuring local solutions; and
- working together.

We continue to respond to all reports of anti-social behaviour in a speedy and effective manner, through a range of housing management services which are delivered through our network of local offices.

We fund a range of initiatives to address anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in our estates. Such funding covers a number of warden schemes, street pastors, home security schemes, good morning services, diversionary activities, physical works to communal areas and inter-generational workshops to name but a few. In so doing, the Housing Executive works with its voluntary and statutory sector partners including Councils and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

Our Hate Harassment Toolkit aims to help those who are experiencing or know someone who is experiencing harassment, persecution and/or intimidation, all of which can be described as hate harassment. The toolkit provides practical information and advice to staff and other practitioners throughout Northern Ireland to enable them to provide a comprehensive service to victims and witnesses of hate crime.

Promoting Good Relations 2016/17

Outputs and Outcomes of our Cohesion Services

Through our social investment in community involvement and community cohesion we have created opportunities to improve community relations, address difficult and contentious cohesion issues and help develop greater bonding and bridging within our estates.

We have increased opportunities for integration, improved responses to hate crime and raised awareness of race relations issues and opportunities. Empowering, enabling and engaging communities to get the best outcomes for their neighbourhoods has assisted in the reduction of

anti-social behaviour and will impact on the delivery of our services and enhance tenant participation, capacity, engagement and inclusion across our business.

We have successfully sought outside funding to support and enhance our cohesion work and are currently working in collaboration with a number of partners in respect of Peace IV applications.

2016/17 publications

A Good Relations booklet has been produced to showcase good practice across the 5 cohesion themes and is available on the internet and distributed to staff, community and key stakeholders. Hard copies were delivered to area and local offices. This will be republished annually.

Community Cohesion Strategy 2015 - 2020

The refreshed Community Cohesion strategy was formally launched in February 2016 in Girdwood Community Hub and the cohesion team in partnership with the area offices (13 across Northern Ireland) continue to translate the strategy into practical actions on the ground with both internal and external key stakeholders.

Working in partnership is a key to the delivery of this strategy on both an internal and an external basis. The Housing Executive is represented on a number of strategic forums and also at an operational level to ensure joined up delivery of services.

The Community Cohesion Unit's overarching objective is: "To contribute to the creation of more stable, safer neighbourhoods by working in partnership with others to address the complex housing needs of a diverse and divided society."

Our Community Cohesion Strategy is delivered across five themes:

- Integration / Segregation
- Race Relations
- Communities in Transition
- Interface Areas
- Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols

The main focus of our activities in 2016/17 across all five cohesion themes has been:

Integration / Segregation

BRIC Programme

The Building Relationships in Communities (BRIC) Programme ended in September 2014. The post project evaluation highlighted a number of examples of good practice within the BRIC Programme and recommended this learning be incorporated into new good relations programmes. This has resulted in the Housing Executive developing a new BRIC2 programme as part of its mainstream activity.

Phase 1 of the BRIC2 Programme has been implemented and the seven Good Relations Officers continue to work across the initial 26 areas in partnership with Supporting Communities.

Phase 2 of the BRIC2 programme is on-going and a further 26 BRIC 2 areas have been identified in collaboration with our Area Managers and are signing up to the terms of engagement and to developing good relations plans.

Grass roots delivery of the good relations plans, which are bespoke to each area, includes good relations training, programmes and signing of the social charter.

TBUC Shared Housing

The Housing Executive's Head of Income and Communities is the chair of the Together Building a United Community (TBUC) Housing oversight group facilitated by the DfC Housing Branch. This is made up of representatives from NIFHA, statutory agencies, private agencies, and community and voluntary organisations.

The Housing Executive's role in this process is to provide support and assist the Housing Associations in the implementation and delivery of the programme and currently 10 TBUC shared neighbourhood schemes in social housing are being supported through the TBUC strategy.

To help and assist Housing Associations we have developed a shared housing booklet "Breaking Down the Myths" to help them on their journey in achieving the objective of TBUC.

TBUC Tension Monitoring

The Housing Executive is currently represented on the TBUC tension monitoring group.

Race Relations

Work on promoting good Race Relations continues in line with the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy and Action Plan initiated in 2006. The Equality Unit is developing an updated Race Equality Strategy in line with the Executive Office Race Equality Strategy produced in 2015.

During 2016/17 the Housing Executive through various internal strategies and units contributed to delivering race relations related projects.

Below is a flavour of what we have supported through good relations:

- Included Hate Crime awareness as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour training developed for the new Patch Manager staff across NI.
- Continued to fund the NIACRO Supporting People project 'Supporting Tenancies for people from Ethnic Minority communities' (STEM). The Housing Executive has two staff dedicated to preventing homelessness and supporting people living in the community who could be at risk of being victimised or targeted because of their perceived ethnicity. The STEM project also strengthens positive community responses in dealing with incidents of intimidation.
- Through Community Safety funding Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) continued to extend their service provision and respond to issues of hate crime and community conflict in South and East Belfast collaboratively with the STEM project.
- Homeplus Drop-in Centre was supported with funding for facilities improvements under the Housing Support Strategy.
- We hosted three Mary meets Mohammad Screenings with Q&A sessions.
- South Belfast Hate Crime Response Plan Steering Group, a partnership between community groups in South Belfast, the PSNI, the NIHE and the South Belfast Policing in the Community Partnership worked together to prepare a draft resource toolkit to

- support the community response to victims and witnesses of race hate crime and incidents.
- The Hate Harassment Toolkit and DVD continue to be rolled out to staff in 2016/17.
 - Supported the development of a Community Response Plan around Hate Crime as part of the Hate Crime Action Plan through the North Belfast DPCSP Hate Crime Working Group.
 - Continued to work with DOJ, PSNI and DfC on Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme and support for Victims of Hate Incidents.
 - Distributed information sheets on the full range of Hate Crime Victim Support Advocates through Victim Support to staff and at events.
 - Supported 43 projects across Northern Ireland that had a substantial Race Relations element.
 - The Causeway Multi Cultural Forum (CMCF) organised an event attended by over 350 people to celebrate International Day in March 2016 which demonstrated unity and increased awareness and appreciation of the various cultures within the local area.
 - RESPECT education initiative in schools - A new initiative addressing the issues of crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety is being delivered in two local schools, with NIHE funding. Developed by the Children's Safety Education Foundation, the Respect Programme teaches young people about the consequences anti-social behaviour, hate harassment and crime can have on communities and the students' own health, safety and well-being.
 - Side by Side Project – Links during World War 2 between Poland and Northern Ireland were celebrated at a special event in August 2016 in east Belfast. The project was launched as part of the official opening of the Ballymac Centre on the Lower Newtownards Road on Saturday, August 20, 2016.
 - Band of Brothers Artwork- New community artwork was funded in the Village area of Belfast recognising the sacrifice of Polish air crews in World War Two. A paramilitary mural at Benburb Street

was replaced by the Band of Brothers 300 Squadron mural launched in June 2016.

- Young people in the Lower Ravenhill took part in learning the art of self-control and discipline through Chinese martial arts. Up to 14 children joined a weekly class to learn about martial arts and the discipline needed to progress.
- Schoolchildren TREK in North Belfast - A bright future lies ahead for hundreds of schoolchildren in north Belfast, who completed a special trek to promote inclusivity and diversity in April 2016. The TREK (Truth, Respect, Empathy and Kindness) initiative, supported by the Housing Executive, involved two weeks of activity to help create a shared future in twenty one schools from all sectors in north Belfast. This will be repeated in 2017.
- East Belfast Mission (Hosford House) OCN Community Interpreting training March 17. This project was designed to overcome language barriers faced by homeless clients and helped four people train to be qualified bi-lingual community interpreters. The people were already helping through volunteering at the hostel and their work has supported staff, helped people integrate, feel part of the local culture and increased their housing opportunities. The participants are now looking to the future and are focused on getting registered as self-employed and generating an income.

Tackling Hate Crime – our work recognised at an international level

Our on-going work to build race relations and tackle hate harassment has been recognised in 2016/17 in publications and at two international conferences. Staff from our Community Safety Team and the Community Cohesion Unit delivered a joint presentation at a seminar in Dublin organised by the immigrant Council for Ireland.

The experience and expertise sharing seminar was attended by representatives from 20 local authorities across the Republic of Ireland. Our presentation supported their work on “Taking Racism Seriously: Experiences of Racism and Racially Motivated Anti-Social Behaviour in Social Housing”.

The CIH national publication ‘How to tackle hate crime...’ (26/10/2016) included information on how our staff are taking a stand against racism

such as through the Supporting Tenancies for Ethnic Minority Tenants scheme (STEM), the HIPA Scheme (Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme) and the Hate Harassment Toolkit.

Our work was also highlighted at an EU level in the Good Practice Plus Toolkit developed through a partnership between the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Ministry of Interior Finland and the Migrant Centre Northern Ireland. This project aimed to exchange good practice to tackle racial and religious hate crime and hate speech and address effective reporting systems on hate crime.

Communities in Transition

The Areas at Risk programme was established in 2006 to identify and intervene in areas at risk of slipping into a spiral of decline. In 2015/16 the Community Cohesion Unit co-ordinated and delivered the programme in North Belfast (Greater Whitewell and Glenbank) on behalf of DfC.

Interface Areas

Following on from the successful interface removal work at the Ardoyne Road, we are continuing to make significant progress at our interface sites in partnership with the Department of Justice, local Councils and the IFI Peace Walls Groups.

Removal of the Crumlin Road wall

The successful removal of the interface along the Crumlin Road in North Belfast has been a monumental and positive change on the landscape. The area has suffered some of the highest levels of violence and has a legacy of deep division and mistrust.

This project involved local residents, the Lower Shankill Community Association, TASCIT and North Belfast Interface Network and led the way in terms of interface removal. Residents who have been part of the process have expressed a hope that this innovative model will help others to take the brave steps to open up their neighbourhoods and explore new opportunities to remove or re-imagine barriers. The removal of the wall has transformed the hearts and minds of the community as well as the physical look of the area.

Further projects supported in 2016/17 and ongoing in 2017/18 include Phase 2 of Crumlin Road Interface Re-Modelling– (Shankill side of the Road), North BELFAST (North Queen Street and Short Strand in East Belfast).

Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols

Re-imaging

We continue to support our communities where there is a willingness and readiness to engage in this journey and to share best practice, work with partners to reduce the number of contentious murals, and make our communities visibly more welcoming places.

Communities continued to develop projects with Housing Executive support and 49 community re-imaging projects were funded in 2016/17.

Contentious murals have been softened to provide a more acceptable and inclusive message to the wider community.

Peace IV

We are currently working in partnership with Belfast Met and the Princes Trust to develop a regional programme focusing on developing young people's (16-24) capacity in our estates.

This will be delivered through personal development, good relations and civic leadership to create meaningful, purposeful and sustained pathways to employability. This programme opened in June 2017 and we have submitted a Phase 2 bid and a full business case to SEUPB.

The overall aim of the project is “investing in our future customers” and it will also assist us with a platform to engage and identify potential champions who will get involved in mainstream succession planning through our housing community networks.

We have also been in discussions with a number of District Councils re their local peace plans and we will be submitting funding bids in 2017/18 to develop the LAN (Local Area Network) programme.

Training

Good Relations officers and functional trainers have been working together to design a bespoke training package across the 5 cohesion themes in a creative video format for both staff and community groups.

Co-design events have been established to get the views of staff and community groups involved in BRIC2 and the Housing Community Network in order to design and deliver bespoke positive relations training for Housing Executive staff in the transformation offices.

Community Involvement Strategy 2014-2017

Views and comments on the outgoing strategy have been collated from staff and the community to ensure they have their say on the refreshed strategy and associated action plan.

We also ensured that all voices have been heard during this consultation process by using a number of communication channels. Reading Rooms from the Verbal Arts Centre in Derry/Londonderry have been involved to ensure that hard to reach groups have been included in the consultation process.

Next steps in the process will be to take the draft strategy and action plan to the Central Housing Forum for a quality assurance (community proofing check) before it is submitted to the Equality Unit for equality screening after which a full 12 week public consultation will take place in 2017/18.

Community Conference 2016

The Community Conference in Oct 2016 was a huge success. The theme was “Inspiring Leadership” and living our values via our hard to reach groups such as youth, disability and rural residents: -

- Making a difference
- Fairness
- Passion
- Expertise

Presentations from the following inspiring' projects were delivered:-

- Inspiring communities to break down barriers-Belfast - North Belfast TASCIT group and the re-imaging of the wall
- Inspiring communities through health and wellbeing-South – the concept of men’s sheds and in particular Omagh’s Men’s Shed along with the Irish Chairperson
- Inspiring sustainable communities-North - CAW community group Derry/Londonderry

An artist from Liverpool was invited to the event to record the journey in an innovative format through the medium of art. This will be laminated and placed on a wall in HQ.

Community Grants fund

The Community Grant fund aims to enable Area Managers to support community groups in their area who want to bring about positive change in our estates. We want to improve people’s lives and sustain our estates and invest in our future customers by strengthening community activity which will add to our overall Corporate Objective 3 of ‘building vibrant communities’.

We Want:-

- Our Tenants/Residents to participate in their estates/communities
- Our Tenants/Residents to develop their skills and broaden their experience
- Improve Tenants/Residents physical & mental health and Wellbeing

Digital Inclusion- Demonstration Project

Working with IT and Supporting Communities staff we have been meeting with DfC and DFP/Digital Transformation Service representatives on the possibility of a joint Digital Inclusion Demonstration project carried out in a number of phases over a 2 year period.

The commencement date was August/September 2016 and centred on 70 Housing Executive properties, in both the rural and urban context. The project (D4c) has now been developed and rolled out to tenants in North and West Belfast, Ards and Fermanagh. The project has included training

through Supporting Communities and provision of broadband, mifi (mobile WIFI hotspot) and tablets.

Headline aims include developing -

- skills/capacity of our tenants,
- getting our tenants online to use services (NIHE & others)
- community involvement

A short 2 minute video has been produced by information on the impact and benefits of this service to our tenants, especially with the onset of Universal Credit and Welfare Reform.

Young People

Northern Ireland Youth Forum

We are working with the NIYF to address the lack of young people engaged in housing issues/services with a view to developing a succession plan, nominating two members onto the Central Housing Forum & developing a shadow CHF. Via their SLA the Northern Ireland Youth Forum will engage with Area Managers and key stakeholders across the 13 area offices to develop a shadow Central Housing Forum group of young people. The group will be known as YC4C 'Young Champions 4 Change'.

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice: Part 2

Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/measures in 2016-17.

The previous chapter sets out key areas of Housing Executive business that impact directly on inequalities in housing in Northern Ireland.

Equality is squarely placed at the heart of policy making in the Housing Executive and the Housing Executive's Equality Unit works closely with business planners and policy makers to ensure due regard to equality is paid in the development and implementation of policy.

Section 1: Part 1 demonstrates the organisation's commitment to the promotion of Equality of Opportunity and the considerable progress made to date in relation to our Good Relations duty. Other sections set out the supporting elements that enhance mainstreaming including training, consultation, and access to information and services.

However it is also important to consider other real changes that have been made which have had a positive impact on the lives of people and communities, and in doing so, have promoted equality of opportunity and good relations. Much of the work detailed below helps inform our Equality Action Plan which is firmly embedded within our Corporate and Business plans.

While "headline" activities set out in the previous chapter are important, there is a vast amount of vital work, much of it informal, which should also be recognised. This is carried out with communities at Regional and Local level through residents groups, community associations, District Housing Networks, Area Housing Community Networks, and the Central Housing Community Network.

There are a number of projects and initiatives set out below that have been carried out, many in partnership with other statutory bodies and voluntary and community organisations, which are integral to the promotion of

equality of opportunity and good relations in their widest sense, in the provision of housing in Northern Ireland.

Asylum Development Unit

The Housing Executive's Asylum Development Unit (ADU) continues to have a responsibility to provide and manage temporary accommodation for Asylum Seekers in Northern Ireland under the COMPASS contract.

The COMPASS contract has been extended for a further two years from 2017 to 2019. Although the Asylum project is a regional service, Asylum Seekers are housed in private rented properties mainly in Belfast while they await a Home Office decision on their immigration status.

There are currently over 720 Asylum Seekers in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) Accommodation in Northern Ireland. This figure does not include those on subsistence only.

On 1st December 2016, Serco purchased Orchard and Shipman, Glasgow and assumed direct operational control and responsibility for the provision of housing for Asylum Seekers in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The ADU continues to work closely with Serco (Initial Accommodation Provider), Bryson One Stop Service (Migrant Help), Health Trusts, Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and voluntary and community organisations in dealing with issues relating to Asylum Seekers.

The temporary private rented accommodation provided to Asylum Seekers is inspected and visited by ADU staff at least once a month to ensure they continue to meet contractual standards and are fit for purpose.

The ADU responds to an average of 120 repair requests and conducts over 340 visits per month. Regular quality assurance checks are carried out by Serco, the Home Office and the Asylum team to ensure that the private rented properties meet contractual standards. All properties, whether HMO or family dwellings, are set up to the highest safety standards recommend by UK or European building controls.

Close links also continue to be maintained with the Housing Executive's Homelessness Services Unit and EXTERN's Multidisciplinary Homeless Support Team with regard to assisting those households who receive a positive immigration decision in finding permanent accommodation and addressing the challenges associated with mainstream service provision.

Community Safety

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is an issue that concerns everybody. If incidents of ASB go unchecked they can have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of both young and old alike.

The Housing Executive has a range of statutory and non-statutory interventions in place to address ASB using an incremental and proportionate approach as and when necessary. We also have comprehensive and rigorous policies and procedures designed to address ASB thus enabling us to respond in a quick and efficient manner.

Partnership Working

The Housing Executive recognises the importance of partnership working and has forged a range of partnerships with other agencies and with communities in an effort to prevent ASB from arising and to tackle it effectively when it does.

One of these partnerships is with the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs). PCSPs are statutory bodies established under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 with the overall purpose of helping to make communities safer and to ensure the views of local people are heard on policing and community safety issues. As a designated member of the PCSP the Housing Executive is committed to contributing to these Partnerships and their work relating to community safety, alongside political and independent members.

We continue to have close formal ties with several statutory agencies including PSNI, Local Councils and Youth Justice Agency with whom we have signed information sharing protocols. We work with political, community and tenant representatives to ensure our resources are targeted at areas and incidents causing concern to our tenants.

Additionally we support a range of initiatives to address anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in our estates. Examples of these initiatives are community safety warden schemes, a scheme to address hate crime, home security schemes, good morning services, diversionary activities, intergenerational projects and educational initiatives.

Strategic Focus

Community Safety Strategy 2015 - 2017

The Community Safety Strategy, 'Safer Together', identified 3 themes and work continued on these:

- Building Community Confidence - we will work to build community confidence in the ability of the organisation to tackle ASB effectively.
- Ensuring Local Solutions - we will ensure that all our efforts to tackle ASB are relevant to the needs of local communities.
- Working Together - we will work closely with other agencies to improve community safety on our estates.

During 2016/17 a number of key strategic and operational objectives were achieved:

The Hate Incident Practical Action (HIPA) scheme continues to be available to support victims of hate harassment where there is damage to property, by providing additional security measures to homes which allow victims to feel safer. During 2016/17, repairs to 37 properties were undertaken in line with the HIPA scheme (82 in 2015/16). A Service Level Agreement between the NIHE, DOJ, PSNI and DSD is nearing completion.

All Housing Executive Area Offices continue to be represented at their respective Council's Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP). Issues relating to anti-social behaviour and hate crime may be raised at monthly meetings of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and this joined up working helps tackle issues by ensuring the appropriate response is put in place.

The Community Safety Team developed a Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM) for anti-social behaviour cases. This RAM places an emphasis on how the victim feels about the problem they are experiencing and how they perceive the level of harassment / intimidation. It has been designed to provide a consistent approach to the identification of vulnerable people and to enable local office staff to provide advice on interventions which could support them.

Early Intervention

Preventative measures continue to be used widely and reflect our strategic focus on early intervention. During 2016/17, 48% of concluded ASB cases were due to the use of warning letters and follow up visits.

The Housing Executive continued its working arrangements with our community based restorative partners Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) and Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI). Both organisations delivered a Mediation and Community Support (MACS) service on our behalf as a means of addressing reported incidents of ASB. During 2016/17 they provided mediation and community support in 239 neighbour dispute cases.

During 2016/17, our procured mediation provider, Tides Training & Consultancy, intervened in 45 neighbour disputes between individuals and families.

Operational Performance

During 2016/17 Housing Executive Local Offices received a total of 2,766 reports of ASB of which:

- 39% (1,079) related to noise nuisance.
- 14% (380) related to multiple ASB i.e. Noise/ Harassment / Verbal Abuse etc.
- 12% (342) related to problems with pets and animals.

The organisation also served 16 Notice Seeking Possessions, 3 Notice of Proceedings and 3 properties were repossessed after court action.

Repossession continues to be a last resort for the Housing Executive, having first tested other interventions as a means of resolving problems of anti-social behaviour.

Corporate Social Responsibility

In the Housing Executive we understand that our staff are impacted by many issues and for that reason we encourage them to be the drivers of the charities that we support and the volunteering activities that we get involved in.

Staff are free to promote volunteering events, raise awareness for their fundraising activities and get support to organise these. They can host and promote events such as coffee mornings, team quizzes, eco days, gardening, and painting and decorating projects, through individual volunteering and teambuilding days.

As a public sector employer the Housing Executive is unable to offer direct financial sponsorship, however the CSR programme offers staff a CSR Leave allowance of up to 37 hours paid leave + 37 hours unpaid leave per individual project per annum, and 14 hours paid leave for a team project.

The [CSR Policy document](#) is available through our internal 'Gateway' site.

We gather facts and figures to promote the health and wellbeing activities surrounding their events so that we can support and enable change.

We also arrange and promote corporate volunteering activities, organise team volunteering events and administer individual events. During 2016/17 staff contributed over 1,000 hours volunteering.

Highlights from 2016/17

Annual Action Cancer Shop's Challenge Campaign in conjunction with Business in the Community – we organised numerous events to raise money for Action Cancer actively encouraging all members of staff to participate while promoting the importance of early cancer detection. Takings on the day of the challenge were a 505% increase on normal business. This resulted in the team winning:

- Overall 3rd Place, largest amount of stock, best video and best use of social media.

Other events in 2016/17 included:

- Staff in Ballymena took part in the Marathon relay event and raised £3,100 for Chest, Heart and Stroke in memory of a colleague who sadly passed away.
- Staff raised over £2,300 for the Neonatal Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital after a colleague gave birth to a child (Meabh) at 23 weeks and who weighed only 1lb. Thanks to the care she received while in hospital, Meabh is now living at home with her family and thriving.

Fundraising

Our Staff continue to be incredibly generous and have been very active in their fundraising and Payroll giving activities raising almost £100,000 during 2016/17.

The Give as You Earn (GAYE) scheme enables staff to make a confidential donation to a charity of their choice. This year we earned the Payroll Giving Platinum Award by having over 25% of our staff giving in this way.

Our staff also raised money for numerous charities as well as donating food and toys. Our Christmas Toy Appeal resulted in over 300 presents being donated.

Charities Supported

Some of the charities that Housing Executive staff members have made a huge difference to through volunteering, raising awareness and fundraising include:

- Action Cancer
- Action Mental Health
- Alzheimer's Society
- British Lung Foundation
- Cancer Research UK
- Chest, Heart and Stroke
- Children's Cancer Unit
- Children's Hospice
- Little Princess Trust
- Macmillan
- Marie Curie
- Mariposa Trust
- Men Against Cancer

- Mencap
- Meningitis Research Foundation
- Movember Foundation
- Mulhern Close Residential Home
- Neonatal Unit in the Royal
- PIPS Upper Bann
- Red Cross
- The Children's Cancer Centre

Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2017-22

The Housing Executive launched the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland in April 2017 following an extensive consultation with Statutory and Voluntary Agencies. The Strategy was subject to a full equality screening assessment.

Strategic Objectives

The vision of the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 is 'Ending Homelessness Together' and this is reflective of the desire for statutory and voluntary organisations to work together to tackle homelessness in all its forms.

There are five strategic objectives within the Strategy which are:

- To prioritise homelessness prevention;
- To secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households;
- To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland;
- To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver this strategy;

- To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the ongoing development of appropriate services.

It has been recognised that homelessness is a cross-cutting issue and that tackling homelessness requires collaboration across Government and between statutory and third sector organisations.

The DfC has noted that the overarching request from voluntary and community organisations involved in the delivery of homelessness services has focused on the request for a re-energised commitment from Government Departments and statutory agencies to see homelessness as a cross-cutting issue and to improve the level of joint working across Government to address it. In light of this, DfC is leading on work to identify what else can be done collaboratively across Government to tackle homelessness.

Review of Our Customer Journey

As part of the Housing Executive’s Journey to Excellence, a major Systems Thinking review was undertaken leading to a redesign of front line service delivery. This approach seeks to improve service delivery by understanding and prioritising customer demand and first time resolution of customer needs. Housing Solutions and Support Teams are now being developed across 3 Area Offices and a general roll out of this approach will continue in 2017/18.

Homelessness Statistics 2013 – 2017

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Number presenting as homeless.	18,862	19,621	18,628	18,573
Number accepted as homeless i.e. Full Duty Applicants (FDA).	9,649	11,016	11,202	11,488
Number of new placements in temporary accommodation in year.	2,878	2,817	2,890	2,746

Types of Household presenting as homeless.	Singles 10,156 (53%) Families 6,484 (34%) Elderly 1,968 (10%)	Singles 10,376 (53%) Families 6,178 (32%) Elderly 2,135 (11%)	Singles 9,713 (52%) Families 6,681 (36%) Elderly 2,234 (12%)	Singles 9,518 (51%) Families 6,663 (36%) Elderly 2,336 (12%)
Households presenting due to intimidation.	668	590	544	634
Average Length of stay in temp accommodation, reflecting the existence of “hot spots” where demand for housing is high.	38 weeks	36 weeks	37.2 weeks	40.7 weeks

Research and Equality

The Research Unit plays an important role in guiding the Housing Executive’s intervention in the housing market. Under the 1981 Housing Order the Housing Executive has a statutory responsibility to regularly “examine housing conditions and need” and may also “conduct or promote research into any matter relating to any of its functions”.

Research into housing conditions and housing need still form a very important part of the research programme, but in recent years the scope has broadened to include other strategic issues and a growing customer orientation. As part of this trend research increasingly emphasises equality related issues in order to provide the necessary evidence base for a continually expanding range of equality related housing policies.

The House Condition Survey continues to provide regular updates on housing conditions in NI. The 2001, 2006 and 2011 surveys showed that there were no longer any significant differences between Catholic and Protestant households in terms of their housing conditions. The latest

findings, from the 2016 House Condition Survey, will be published in early 2018.

Ongoing customer related research, such as the 2016 Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey, indicates that differences in attitudes to the Housing Executive's services by Protestant and Catholic households continue to be negligible.

The Research Unit also collects information on gender, nationality, ethnicity and disability in all its surveys. In 2015 the Research Unit commissioned Queen's University to undertake an analysis of the levels of segregation on Housing Executive estates. Findings emerging from this analysis have indicated that the level of segregation declined between 2001 and 2011 and highlighted the positive role that incoming migrant workers have played in this process.

The Research Unit will continue to play an important role during 2017/18 in providing baseline evidence of equality related housing issues as well as the evidence required to help formulate policy and monitor its impact.

Traveller Specific Accommodation

Based on the outcomes of the 3rd Comprehensive Traveller Needs Assessment the Housing Executive has established a new 3 year Traveller Accommodation programme (2015-2018) to address the needs of Irish Travellers in Northern Ireland.

Progress continued to be made during 2016/17 including:

Group Housing Schemes

(Residential housing developments with additional facilities and amenities specifically designed to accommodate extended families of Travellers on a permanent basis).

- Following discussions with Newry, Mourne and Down Council regarding access lands a group housing scheme at Father Cullen Park, Bessbrook, comprising 6 units, was completed in September 2014 and is currently fully occupied and managed by Clanmil HA.

Serviced Sites

(Managed accommodation with permanent bases to park caravans or erect timber framed buildings, where electricity, water and sewerage is provided and where other facilities such as communal or individual amenity units may be provided).

- Planning approval has been granted for a serviced site at Burnside, Craigavon, and two additional pitches at Acorn Grove also in Craigavon, which will be subject to discussion with stakeholders and the outcome of the Traveller Needs Assessment. Currently a brief has been prepared to appoint a consultant to refurbish the existing site at Legahory Close which will meet the current need of Irish Travellers in the Craigavon area.

Transit Sites

(Authorised sites used for short stays).

- Continued to investigate lands suitable for transit site provision in Craigavon, Newry and Magherafelt.
- Continued work to provide individual on-site metering due to Power NI's decision to amend existing vending arrangements for Traveller sites. To date a full switchover has taken place on the co-opted site at Glen Road and Glen Road Heights Belfast, Ballyarnett transit site Derry/Londonderry, the Glen site Coalisland, Acorn Grove Craigavon and Daisyfield site in Derry/Londonderry. A scheme is also in the development stage to complete similar works to the last remaining site at Greenbrae, Strabane. This site is currently closed on health and safety grounds pending redevelopment.
- Continued to progress the accommodation options for Travellers in areas of identified need.
- A temporary planning application to accommodate an extended Irish Traveller family in Rathenraw, Antrim made in June 2014 was originally approved. It was subsequently refused at planning committee stage by Antrim and Newtownabbey Council. Despite an appeal by NIHE to the PAC planning approval was denied. More recently the resident families have vacated the site and the

land has been restored to its former use. As per the third Comprehensive Needs Assessment no current need for Traveller specific accommodation in the Antrim area is currently identified.

Adaptations and Accessible Housing

Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services (IDR)

The Inter-Departmental Review of Adaptations: Final Report and Action Plan were subject to public consultation from January to April 2016. The completed Final Report and Action Plan received Department for Communities and Department of Health Ministerial approval in December 2016. The Final Report and Action Plan were then submitted for Executive agreement in January 2017. We are awaiting its agreement by an incoming administration. The DfC/DoH have approved the implementation of several recommendations in the Final Report and Action Plan as interim measures.

Wheelchair Standard Social Housing

Space standards for new build social wheelchair housing have been reviewed by a cross sector task group including Housing Advisory Unit (DfC), Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA), NIHE, Housing Associations, and service user representatives.

Northern Ireland's wheelchair housing standards have also been benchmarked against space standards in other parts of the UK, and best practice emerging from the adaptations design standards toolkit and the review of housing design standards in England. Northern Ireland wheelchair housing standards are some of the most inclusive in the UK as they consider the spatial needs of assisted wheelchair users and their carers.

DfC ministerial approval for improved design standards was granted in April 2016 and the design standards became mandatory in the Housing Association Guide in April 2017. Additional work will be required in 2017/18 to evaluate emerging housing plans and completed schemes.

DfC/DoH Memorandum of Understanding

A memorandum of understanding setting out the legislative and strategic responsibilities of stakeholder organisations responsible for the provision of housing adaptations service in Northern Ireland has been agreed by the

DfC and DoH. Subject to NIHE agreement it will be published summer 2017.

Revised Terms of Reference for the Joint Housing Adaptations Steering Group (JHASG)

A revised Terms of Reference for this cross sector implementation body was agreed in January 2017. The body promotes the representation of disabled people and their representatives.

Available at: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/terms_of_reference_jhasg.pdf

Adaptations Design Communications Toolkit

Initially receiving Ministerial approval in April 2014, the toolkit has been further developed in 2017 with implementation of a number of new initiatives in June 2017. Improvements include:

1. More user friendly and efficient electronic forms.
2. The inclusion of Occupational Therapy housing needs assessment form to support the formulation of housing solutions and the development of architectural briefs for new build wheelchair standard housing.
3. Agreement of a revised regional data access agreement between the NIHE and HSC Trusts.

Accessible Housing Register

One of the key outcomes from the Inter-departmental review above was the development of an Accessible Housing Register (AHR). This is an information tool to enable housing authorities to identify specific properties that may meet the needs of a particular group of applicants on the waiting list.

The AHR will identify where accessible stock with available accessibility features i.e. fully wheelchair accessible/mobility standard/life-time homes standards etc. are located to enable these properties to be appropriately classified.

A number of external factors impacted on the full implementation of the AHR and a phased approach has been agreed:

- Phase 1 of the interim AHR arrangements for Housing Executive properties is now live.

- Phase 2 for Housing Executive Landlord Services will focus on developing a rolling programme to classify accessible stock such as bungalows and ground floor flats.
- Phase 1 for Housing Association stock focused on data cleansing and the classification of properties; this work was co-ordinated / completed by NIFHA.
- Work is underway to roll out the Housing Association interim AHR and a data sharing agreement has been agreed.
- Work is ongoing with NIHE IT to develop a fully functioning AHR system.

Financial Inclusion Strategy

The Housing Executive published its Financial Inclusion Strategy for 2016-2019 in February 2016.

The Strategy recognises that financial hardship can strike anyone at any time and that challenging economic times and proposals for changes to welfare benefits will only increase money worries for those affected. It also aims to address the barriers to financial inclusion experienced by many, including a disproportionate number of social housing tenants.

Implementation of the strategy will help to identify those customers who are most at risk of financial exclusion and support them to overcome the barriers they face.

There are 5 key aims:

- Increase access to the right financial help to assist customers to maintain and sustain their tenancy.
- Help customers to maximise their money.
- Help customers to save on utility bills.
- Reduce fuel poverty.
- Focus on communities.

Strategy implementation is overseen by a Steering Group made up of key stakeholders. In recognition of the significance of equality in the delivery of the strategy, 'good relations and equality issues' are a standing item on the Steering Group's agenda.

The key activity that has taken place most recently is the implementation of a “Supporting Tenants Project”. The objective is to evaluate the impact of the various financial inclusion initiatives that are available to tenants via implementation of the Strategy. Nominated staff from relevant operational units have identified a number of tenants who have agreed to participate in the project. The nominated staff will work closely with the selected tenants over a twelve month period to establish the impact the various initiatives have had on their financial circumstances. This information will be used to identify financial inclusion priorities.

Social Housing Enterprise Strategy

The Housing Executive launched its Social Housing Enterprise Programme in September 2015, since then we have released 2 tranches of funding to the value of £860,000 into our communities. A Further investment of £500,000 was announced in April 2017. The strategy promotes a tiered financing programme from £1000 - £50,000 for individuals (maximum £1000) and organisations from our communities embarking or already involved in the social enterprise sector. The programme also looks to utilising Housing Executive stock such as void commercial premises, garages and land where applicable, for the promotion of social enterprise within our communities.

The programme has had some noticeable achievements to date including;

- 25 new social enterprises created
- Helped in the development / expansion of 8 existing social enterprises
- 37 new jobs created
- 24.5 existing jobs supported
- 108 individuals received a qualification in social enterprise or an employment related qualification.

The Social Housing Enterprise programme is also in the process of establishing social clauses within our maintenance contract, in respect of which discussions are taking place across the province between contractors and officials.

More information can be found on www.nihe.gov.uk (under communities section)

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice: Part 3

Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2016-17 reporting period?

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

The process of embedding Section 75 duties into the planning and decision making processes of the Housing Executive over the past number of years ensures that any changes or analysis of policy includes consideration of equality issues.

This is more than an assessment of equality impacts as the policy team will often look at how housing inequalities can be addressed through the policy development process. This is an important issue given the recent focus on housing inequalities and the role housing can play in addressing, often along with others, societal endemic or key inequalities. Section 1: Part 1 gives a number of examples of this.

To ensure that Housing Executive policies are sensitive to change and flexible in their approach many Policy Managers have agreed with the Equality Unit to maintain “Equality Issues” as a standing agenda item in their performance Management meetings.

This allows new, emerging, or poorly performing areas within the equality function to be brought to the table. Areas where equality issues have impacted on policy during the year include the new Homelessness

Strategy for 2017 to 2022, Annual Leave policy and the rights of pregnant women, the redesign of Housing Services and the disciplinary procedure.

The Equality Unit has also been working closely with the Transformation Team who are developing and redesigning the core services the Housing Executive provides to its customers. The Transformation team recognised from early in the process that the equality characteristics of households such as religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or other aspects, were often central to the housing choices they have and the type of housing solution that they need. These policy areas are reported on separately within this report as detailed above.

Part 3a

With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what difference was made, or will be made, for individuals, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

While the Housing Executive's Corporate Strategy and Business Planning approach is fundamentally centred on targeting social need it is also focused on reducing inequalities. In this way all policies are subject to equality tests to ensure they remain sensitive to the changing equality environment. This rolling process of equality review is managed through a policy governance process that ensures all key policies are examined within a 3 to 5 year cycle.

In this context policy development and policy amendment improve the service for people. Examples of our work in many policy areas are set out in Section 1. It is important though to highlight the fundamental changes that the transformation of our front line housing services will bring. A new Housing Solutions and Support approach is currently being rolled-in on a phased basis to our Area Offices. The new approach provides a customer focussed holistic service starting with a comprehensive analysis of a household's housing needs. Conversations upfront with the customer support consideration of all the equality aspects of the household i.e. religion, community background, ethnicity, gender, race, disability, household size, sexual orientation etc. before providing a range of options or solutions for the customer. The customer is provided with tailored

information to allow them to make informed choices to address their housing issue based on the real options available to them.

Section 1 also sets out in detail the benefits for individuals and households within each of the Section 75 groups e.g. our Community Cohesion policy directly impacts on people with different political and/or religious backgrounds; our Supporting People programme targets households with a range of support needs associated with disability, age, racial background and sexual orientation; our Homelessness policies often consider issues of gender (including domestic violence); our Community Safety policies deal with issues including race and religion; and our Community Involvement and Participation policies often engage those groups which can be more difficult to reach including children & young people and carers.

Part 3b

What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)?

- As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy (*please give details*):
- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (*please give details*):
- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (*please give details*):
- As a result of changes to access to information and services (*please specify and give details*):
- Other (*please specify and give details*):

The Housing Executive has established a number of checks and balances to ensure due regard is paid to equality and good relations issues in policy development, amendment and implementation. Policy managers engage with the Housing Executive's Equality Unit when reviewing or developing a policy. The process of screening is often the end result of this engagement and often simply reflects the outcome of a process of discussions which have ensured that equality and good relations issues have been given the necessary regard within the policy area. This is an iterative process and can involve a degree of informal consultation with members of the Consultative Forum on Equality and/or other specific fora (e.g. the Disability Forum), and /or customers directly, to ensure a full understanding and accommodation of any potential equality impacts.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme Commitments and action plans/measures.

Arrangements for assessing compliance

Part 4

Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2016-17 reporting period?

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Equality is one of the foundations of the Housing Executive and is one of the key values which were re-established when the values were reviewed as part of our “journey to excellence” programme. This approach, reinforced by the commitment of resources to a dedicated Equality department, staff training and clear processes ensures that equality is mainstreamed in the organisation across all functions.

In addition new staff are required to complete online Induction training, where reference is made to our Equal Opportunities Policy. This is further

supported by a one day Corporate Induction Course with a section on Equality and Good Relations.

Managers receive a New Starts checklist highlighting the need to draw to the attention of any new staff members the principles of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Staff who engage in the Performance Management Process (formerly Appraisal) are also expected to demonstrate behaviours which support our Core Values of Fairness when dealing with customers and colleagues. This removes the necessity for explicit equality duties in each job description other than those roles directly concerned with the equality, good relations and human rights functions of the Housing Executive.

Part 5

Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2016-17 reporting period?

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Section 1 of this report sets out in some detail the range and breadth of activities within the Housing Executive that challenge inequalities experienced by people in terms of housing, and demonstrates that, in the context of targeting housing need, we also target housing inequalities.

This process is achieved by ensuring that information on housing inequalities informs the development of the Housing Executive Corporate Plan.

It is supported by the establishment of an Equality department with responsibility for implementation of the Section 75 duties, and a

Community Cohesion department charged with implementing the Good Relations duty.

The Consultative Forum on Equality also reinforces the process by reviewing the performance of our business plan with regard to those objectives that specifically target inequalities. It is also of note that the Asst. Director Corporate Strategy and Planning acts as joint chair of the Consultative Forum alongside a representative from the Voluntary and Community Sector. Minutes of the Consultative Forum on Equality and the Consultative Forum Steering Group are circulated to key staff for information and action.

Part 6

In the 2016-17 reporting period were objectives/targets/ performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties integrated into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans?

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2016-17 report
- Not applicable

As is set out in Parts 4 and 5 above, targeting housing needs and addressing housing inequalities are, fundamentally, the mainstream work of the Housing Executive. The main functions of the Housing Executive are set out in performance measures within the Corporate Plans and/or Business Plans with many of these targeting need and eroding inequalities. This is set out in more detail in Section 1 of this report. Our work in relation to new social housing, improvement and maintenance of housing stock, supported housing, homelessness, private sector grants, adaptations to stock, Traveller Accommodation etc. all address key business needs but also are designed in a way that targets housing inequalities. This is

supported by key strategies or projects covering Financial Inclusion, Digital Inclusion, Community Cohesion, Community Safety, BME families and Migrant Workers, Travellers, Sexual Orientation, Children & Young People, Older People, and Disabled People, amongst others.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme Commitments and action plans/measures.

Equality Action Plans / Measures

Part 7

Within the 2016-17 reporting period, please indicate the number of Actions completed, Actions ongoing, and Actions to commence.

Actions completed:

Actions ongoing:

Actions to commence:

The Housing Executive's Equality Action Plan is embedded within the Corporate and Business Planning process and is delivered at either corporate level, where performance is monitored against the Business Plan, or at business unit level where the performance is monitored and reported on at Divisional level.

The main actions that impact on equality at corporate level are as follows:

(N.B. These actions are in addition to mainstream equality actions relating to training staff, consultation standards, access to information and services, screening and EQIA, and communication support).

Regional Services Themes 2016/17

(Regional Services Key Performance Indicators (RSKPI))

Theme 1 – People

To provide housing solutions, services and support to the people of Northern Ireland.

Supporting People (SP) funds housing related support services to a wide range of clients, many of whom have significant vulnerabilities. The SP budget has remained at around £73m and will be invested mainly to support the work of voluntary and community organisations in providing the SP Programme.

Homelessness Services - People can become homeless for a variety of reasons, including family disputes, debt, addiction, mental health issues, and a breakdown in living arrangements. In such circumstances it is crucial to find a suitable home, with follow up support, but we also believe that it is just as important to work with people at an early stage in order to avoid them becoming homeless.

RS KPI 4.1 - Assist at least 18,500 vulnerable individuals to live independently through the Supporting People programme.

RS KPI 4.2 - Deliver the existing Homelessness Strategy as reprioritised in July 2014.

RS KPI 4.3 - Reduce the number of homeless presenters from the end of March 2016 outturn figure.

RS KPI 4.4 - Reduce the average length of time in temporary accommodation from the end of March 2016 outturn figure.

RS KPI 4.5 - Implement those parts of the Supporting People review implementation plan which fall to the Housing Executive.

RS KPI 4.6 - Draft and publish (by April 2017) a new Homelessness Strategy 2017-20 (as per statutory requirement).

RS KPI 4.7 - Set baselines and proposed future targets for measuring the effectiveness of the Homelessness Strategy and Housing Options Services.

Grants for the Private Sector

People with a disability sometimes need adapted/bespoke properties to enable them to live safely and independently. Through our grants programme we provide financial assistance to improve the quality of life for people living in their own homes or in private rented accommodation.

RS KPI 3.2 - Approve 900 Disabled Facilities Grants.

In addition to the above KPIs we also planned to:

- Develop a needs assessment process to produce a comprehensive overview of housing support needs across NI. This will help to inform the development and delivery of future housing support services, shaped around the requirements of our customers;
- Develop an Accessible Housing Register to help promote independent living and social inclusion for people with a disability.

Theme 2 – Property

To ensure everyone has access to a quality home which is safe, affordable, warm and appropriate to their needs.

New Homes

RS KPI 2.1 - Administer grant aid to housing associations to start 1,600 new social homes.

RS KPI 2.2 - Administer grant aid to housing associations to complete 1,200 new social homes.

RS KPI 2.3 - Start 200 one bed units (included in the total of 1,600 starts).

RS KPI 2.4 - (Advance Land Purchase) - Increase land secured for future SHDP delivery from 20% to 22% of next year's SHDP target = 440 units.

The Social Housing Development (SHDP) also supports the objectives of the 'Together Building United Communities' Strategy (TBUC) by identifying and supporting schemes that can be developed as shared communities. This reflects government's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

Market Intelligence

RS KPI 1.1 - Deliver the existing annual client-led Research Programme.

RS KPI 1.2 - Lead 2 Housing Market Intelligence Exchange Forums (HMIE).

RS KPI 1.3 - Develop 11 updated Housing Investment Plans and present them to councils.

RS KPI 1.4 - Commence the House Condition Survey.

Grants for the Private Sector

RS KPI 3.1 - Approve 700 applications for Repair Grants.

Houses in Multiple Occupation.

RS KPI 3.3 - Register 120 new Houses in Multiple Occupation.

RS KPI 3.4 - Inspect 1,000 Houses in Multiple Occupation living standards.

RS KPI 3.8 - Transfer of HMOs to councils during 2017/18.

Energy efficiency

RS KPI 3.5 - Affordable Warmth Scheme (completions): Approximately 3,800 homes helped (with 5,700 intervention measures).

RS KPI 3.6 - Complete 4,000 boiler replacements.

RS KPI 3.7 - Produce the annual Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA) Progress Report.

In addition to the key performance indicators outlined for this theme we:

- Continue the development of a policy framework for strategic adaptation work, to ensure consistency of standards across housing tenures;
- Continue to work with each of the councils and provide reviews of the 11 Housing Investment Plan (HIP) documents to contribute further to the Community Plans for each of the 11 council areas.

We are also a statutory consultee in the Development Planning process.

Theme 3 – Places

To work with others to develop, maintain and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places.

Under this theme we aim to invest and use our public assets, networks and expertise to help develop sustainable, vibrant neighbourhoods that provide people in both urban and rural areas with a sense of belonging. Our KPI's help to stimulate demand, address housing need and foster more cohesive communities through the creation of mixed use/mixed tenure developments, also to assist in town and city regeneration, and through our Rural Strategy we aim to help build and revitalise rural areas.

Enabling sustainable neighbourhoods

RS KPI 5.1 - Develop two large scale regeneration development opportunities.

RS KPI 5.2 - Obtain Departmental approval of the business case, and implementation of acquisition of lands for social and affordable housing.

RS KPI 5.3 - Support the Department on the implementation of key projects arising from action plans for the six Building Successful Communities (BSC) pilots.

RS KPI 5.4 - Implement the Heritage in Housing Scheme.

RS KPI 5.5 - TBUC: Complete and allocate three new shared neighbourhoods by March 2017.

RS KPI 5.6 - TBUC: Progress the remaining six new shared neighbourhoods by March 2017.

In addition to the KPIs we were also tasked to administer the Department for Communities Small Pockets of Deprivation (SPOD) programme to support 17 community groups to deliver localised programmes to support community priorities.

In year we plan to launch and progress 'Sustainable Rural Communities', the Housing Executive's new Rural Strategy & Action Plan 2016-2020 in

which we would set out how we plan to identify and meet the specific housing needs of people living in rural areas.

Landlord Services Themes 2016/17

(Landlord Services Key Performance Indicators (LLKPI))

Theme 1 – People

To provide housing solutions, services and support to the people of Northern Ireland.

LLKPI 1.1 – Maximise income collection –Collect 99.6% of rent due;

LL KPI 1.6 - Update and implement the Welfare Reform Action Plan.

LLKPI 2.9 - Customer Service target – Maintain Tenant’s satisfaction with overall service at 88% or above.

In addition to the KPIs we continue to provide services to help our customers including:

- our Financial Inclusion Strategy to help customers to be able to manage their money and sustain their tenancies, whatever their circumstances;
- Tenancy Sustainment Strategy - giving advice to new tenants on managing their tenancies;
- Energy advice to help people to understand how to get the best use from the energy appliances in their homes.

Theme 2 – Property

To ensure everyone has access to a quality home which is safe, affordable, warm and appropriate to their needs.

Our responsibilities in relation to the Property theme includes lettings and void management, tenancy and estate management, ensuring that our assets are maintained and that everyone has access to a quality home which is safe, affordable, warm and appropriate to their needs.

The overall approach to effective asset management is designed to ensure we deliver and maintain better homes for the long term.

LL KPI 2.2 - Complete the commitments in the Interim Investment Plan covering 2016/17.

LL KPI 2.3 - Develop a new 10 year Stock Investment Programme – to project plan dates.

LL KPI 2.4 - Deliver the Small Scale Stock Transfer Programme.

LL KPI 2.5 – Carry out planned maintenance of our stock to provide tenants with a modern attractive home. This work includes External Cyclical Maintenance (ECMs); new kitchens and bathrooms, heating installations and double glazing.

LLKPI 2.6 - Carry out response maintenance to our stock to agreed response times.

LL KPI 2.7 - Ensure all occupied homes have a valid annual gas safety certificate.

LLKPI 2.7.1- Monitor compliance Action Plan.

LL KPI 1.3 - Ensure 99% of lettable stock is occupied (not void), making the best use of our stock, and maximise rental income.

In addition to the KPIs we carried out adaptations to stock to enable people with a disability to live safely and independently.

To improve our homes we carry out a number of different works to make our homes more energy efficient including changing heating systems and upgrading insulation to optimise the energy efficiency of our stock. The aim of our heating programme is to switch to gas, oil or wood pellets. In the current stock, about 44% have gas and 44% oil with high efficiency boilers and heating controls.

Theme 3 – Places

To work with others to develop, maintain and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places.

Fostering Vibrant Communities

Helping tenants to feel safe, connected, and involved is vital in order to foster vibrant communities. We know a difference can be made in

communities when local people are supported to take action and work with others in a spirit of neighbourliness.

We are committed to helping our neighbourhoods become strong, vibrant and united through our work in this vital area. We aim to make a difference in the neighbourhoods and communities we serve by supporting greater community cohesion in our deeply segregated residential sector. We also aim to support strong resilient communities through our community engagement work and by dealing appropriately with all incidents of anti-social behaviour in our estates.

Government's TBUC strategy, published in May 2013, reflects the Northern Ireland Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

The Strategy represents a key building block in the implementation of the Programme for Government 2011- 2015 (extended to 2016). The Housing Executive, along with our DfC and Housing Association partners, are currently working to bring forward 10 shared new build schemes through the TBUC strategy to assist with delivering the key priorities of shared and safe communities (PfG 90).

Our Social Enterprise Strategy aims to support and encourage social enterprise projects in our estates. Social enterprises are businesses that trade to tackle social problems, and improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment. We want to help communities to help themselves, becoming more sustainable and self-reliant.

Our KPIs for 2016/17 were:

LL KPI 3.1 Community Safety - Implement the Community Safety Strategy 2015-17.

LL KPI 3.2 Community Cohesion - Implement the Community Cohesion Strategy 2015-20.

LL KPI 3.3 Community Involvement - Implement the Community Involvement Strategy 2014-17.

LLKPI 3.4 - Implement the **Social Enterprise Strategy** 2015-18.

Part 8

Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2016-17 reporting period.

No changes were made to the Action Plan.

Part 9

In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2016-17 reporting period, the following have been identified:

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

All continuing actions are set out in Section 2.

Section 3: Arrangements for Consulting

Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance:

All the time Sometimes Never

Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2016-17 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/ or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Effective engagement, participation and consultation are essential to modern quality public services. The Housing Executive recognises this and understands the relationship between quality and equality in policy development and service provision. We therefore continue to maintain and build on the good relationships we have developed with our customers and their representatives to ensure we are responsive to changing environments and demands.

Two main consultation mechanisms, the Housing Community Network, and the Consultative Forum on Equality, have been developed to provide an in-built customer voice, giving clear feedback on both the quality, and equality, of our goods, facilities and services. These are supplemented by more specialist forums in the areas of Good Relations, Race issues, Rural issues and Disability.

Housing Community network

Over the last 45 years the Housing Executive has played a significant role in the physical and social development of our local communities. There has always been the recognition that housing strategies and policies are more than bricks and mortar; tenant involvement has been described as “one of

the jewels in the Housing Executive's crown" by the Customer Service Excellence Assessor in 2013. This is complemented by the Organisation's ability to rise to new challenges and adapt to political, social and economic changes to deliver a top class service that will make a positive difference in people's lives.

Community Involvement is a cornerstone of the NI Housing Executive's service and we commit over £4 million annually to ensure its success; this is a considerable investment and it is important that maximum benefit is delivered to the local communities.

The Housing Community Network was established to ensure that local communities are more involved, better informed and can contribute to better decision-making in relation to housing policy and how it affects them. It equips them with the capacity and skills to challenge and lobby us as an organisation.

The Housing Executive Community Involvement Strategy 2014-2017 has provided a plan of action and commitment for the Housing Executive and our communities to work together towards shared goals, including:

- The development of comprehensive and focused Resident Involvement Structures.
- Delivery of Community Support and training.
- Tenant feedback will be sought and acted upon.
- Development of Social Investment.

The Housing Executive is currently drafting its Community Involvement Strategy for 2018 – 2023 through consultation with our community partners to assess what has worked well and what we can fine tune or improve as we move forward.

Tenant Scrutiny Panels

Tenant Scrutiny Panels have been established in all 13 Areas and have received training from Supporting Communities. The Scrutiny Panels help develop the Area Business Plans and hold the Area Manager to account in delivery of the key areas of service delivery. They play an integral role in the business improvement process. As we move forward with the 2018-2023 strategy the role of scrutiny may be delivered on a regional basis, through consensus with our community partners.

Central Housing Forum

A representative from each of the 13 Area Scrutiny Panels sits on the Central Housing Forum, as well as a representative from the Disability Forum, the Rural Forum, Youth Forum and the Strategic Cohesion Forum. The Central Housing Forum is chaired by a Chair and Vice Chair elected by its constituent members. The Forum meets with the Chairman, Chief Executive and representatives from the Housing Executives Board twice each year. All major policy changes are consulted on with the Central Forum before they are progressed to Chief Executive's Business Committee and the Housing Executive's Board. The Forum has also developed a Manifesto to provide the Forum with a lobbying and challenge function, particularly in lobbying local government on issues such as reinstating the Housing Executive's new build function.

Tenant Involvement Register

The Housing Executive recognises that not everyone can commit to working within a community group for various reasons. In order to maximise involvement, a database of tenants willing to participate in community involvement, in a manner that best suits them, has been established and is maintained by Supporting Communities.

Resident and Interagency Partnerships

Resident and Interagency working groups have been established in all Areas and strive to make our estates better places in which to live. These groups involve other statutory partners, Housing Associations and residents on Housing Executive estates who live in privately rented or owner occupied properties, formally owned by the Housing Executive. Activities such as Estate Inspections involving Statutory Partners and Community Representatives carry out 'walkabouts' to identify issues within their area which results in a toolkit to Statutory Partners identifying action required.

Interagency meetings give Statutory Agencies the opportunity to update community representatives on any action they may have taken as a result of the Inspections, and to raise any further issues. They provide an opportunity for Housing Executive staff to meet, listen to and foster relations with community representatives and address outstanding issues within the estates. These meetings have proved both positive and successful in bringing about meaningful changes within estates.

Hard to Reach Groups

The Housing Executive currently facilitates three “Difficult to Reach” groups through Service Level Agreements. The objective is to ensure that their voices are heard and that all major policies are consulted on with them:

- **The Disability Forum** is facilitated by Disability Action. The Forum has produced an advice leaflet for people with disabilities on finding a home and has carried out accessibility audits of Housing Executive offices. The Forum has organised and filmed a seminar for University of Ulster Housing Students and individual members have been involved in the production of inspirational short films highlighting the difficulties faced by people with disabilities.
- **The Rural Forum** is facilitated by the Rural Community Network and works towards challenging and lobbying for social housing need in rural areas, including the development of a latent demand toolkit.
- **Youth** are represented by the Northern Ireland Youth Forum. Having previously produced a series of films around various housing and homeless scenarios, the Youth Forum is currently working towards developing a shadow Central Housing Forum comprising young people. This group will be known as YC4C (Young Champions for Change).
- **Strategic Cohesion Forum:** Working together in partnership the forum will influence, shape and inform the Housing Executive’s Community Cohesion Strategy. The forum will help communities transition in the journey towards good relations and assist communities move forward.
- **Leaseholder Forum** has recently been established to represent Leaseholders in their local areas and to act as a Sounding Board for NIHE in relation to Leasehold matters. Panel Members will participate in any training and development and this will be coordinated by the Housing Executive and Supporting Communities, as well as other agencies.

Community Conference

The Community Conference is organised annually and is the second largest event in the Housing Executive’s calendar. The Conference on 12th October 2016 celebrated successful community initiatives around the

theme of “Inspiring Communities”, using personal and mixed media presentations. The Conference Working Group, comprising Central Housing Forum, Housing Executive and Supporting Communities representatives are currently planning this year’s “Fit for Future” conference, which will focus on digital inclusion and will once again be compèred by community representatives.

Community Support and Training

Community Development delivery and support is provided by Supporting Communities (SC) on behalf of the Housing Executive. At this point in time there are 500+ Community Groups supported through a variety of accredited and non-accredited training packages.

Community Lettings

The Housing Executive has currently allocated approximately 300 properties to Community Groups within their estates. These provide a backbone for delivery of community services in their areas including crèche facilities, allotments, digital inclusion and cookery classes, afterschool homework clubs and social events, as well as providing a sound base for community-led Social Enterprises.

Digital Inclusion

The Housing Executive’s Housing Services and IT staff have been working with DfC and DfP/Digital Transformation Service representatives on the delivery of a joint Digital Inclusion pilot, “**D4c**” carried out in a number of phases over a 2 year period. The project was initially aimed at Housing Executive tenants living within the Belfast Upper Springfield, Blackmountain, New lodge and Tigers Bay areas on a cross community level. The programme has also been extended to include tenancies in Newtownards and also in Enniskillen to encourage tenants in rural areas to increase networking and reduce social isolation.

The project has included supply of broadband connection for the urban areas and mifi where required in rural areas, together with tablets for use in the project.

The project has also been extended to the provision of tablets and training to the Central Housing Forum in a bid to promote paperless business. This will also be extended to the Rural and Disability Forums.

Supporting Communities has worked in partnership to deliver the appropriate training and support for participants and has conducted baseline surveys to assess participants capabilities before and during the pilot to assess the extent of digital 'take up' in terms of types/complexity of online activity undertaken during the pilot period. Initial introduction and training sessions have been carried out in all areas, which has coincided with broadband installation arranged through DfP. The 2nd phase of training commenced in May 2017.

Housing Executive Officers in the relevant offices have been nominated to be point of contact and carry the project forward in their areas.

Area Officers have been added to the Facebook group for D4c to allow communication and updates to be published and we are currently enquiring about the possibility of providing Area Officers with tablets to help with training support.

Consultative Forum on Equality

The Consultative Forum on Equality provides a framework for consultation on matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties. It is constituted with representation from all the Section 75 categories and a Steering Group works between the annual meetings of the full Forum.

The fifteenth annual meeting of the full Forum was held on 19th October 2016 and, in addition to the Equality Commission, a wide range of representatives from voluntary groups, community groups, trade union groups and public bodies attended.

The annual meeting of the full Consultative Forum serves to address the progress of the Housing Executive in matters of equality during the year allowing participants to question performance issues in areas like new Social Housing, Homelessness or Supporting People. It also provides a platform on which to provide a view on Housing Executive policies in development or issues impacting on housing policy. The meeting also elects a chair (or joint chairs) of the Forum and establishes a Steering Group to meet during the year and monitor progress.

The Steering Group is representative of the Section 75 groups and comprises representatives from Supporting Communities; Housing Rights Service; Community Relations Council; Disability Action; NIPSA; NICEM; The Rainbow Project; Save the Children; Carers NI; Council for the Homeless; National Children's Bureau; Children's Law Centre; Co-

Operation Ireland; NIFHA; STEP; Women into Politics; Women's Aid Federation; MENCAP; Mindwise; Committee on the Administration of Justice; Helm; Women's Support Network; UNITE; NICRAS; Clanmill, MS Society N.I.; Mindwise; Nandi J Project and the Rural Community Network.

The Forum provides a direct link for the Housing Executive with representative groups, forms relationships and puts policy and service managers in direct contact with those representing customers. This can often pre-empt problems by ensuring early input from affected groups.

The 2016 Forum was opened by joint chairs Janet Thomas (NIHE) and Murray Watt (SC). The Housing Executive's Director of Corporate Services Trevor McCartney, welcomed everyone and set out the importance of challenging inequalities in the Corporate plan. The Forum discussed the following issues:

- NIHE Corporate Plan: Addressing Inequalities (Janet Thomas, NIHE).
- New Homelessness Strategy (Maureen Kerr, NIHE).
- the Redesign of Housing Services (Heather Wilson, NIHE).
- Statement of Key Inequalities Update (Deborah Howe, Equality Commission).
- Community Cohesion Unit Update (Christine Davis, NIHE).

The Forum provides a unique access to the voluntary and community sector for the Housing Executive. This is achieved by working together through the Steering Group to discuss and consult on new or changing policy areas, rather than the necessity for meetings with individual representative groups on every occasion.

Consultation Toolkit

The purpose of the Consultation Toolkit is to fine tune the process of consultation by the Housing Executive, and to streamline external consultation, as many consultees have highlighted the pressures of consultation or consultation 'fatigue'.

The toolkit is based on email distribution lists, and promotes a consistent approach to consultation to ensure both compliance and effective

consultation. During 2016/17 the toolkit was used to facilitate consultation on the Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 22.

In the 2016-17 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were most frequently used by consultees:

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (please specify):

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Email invitations had been used by the Equality Unit to offer the consultees an opportunity to participate in Full meetings or Steering Group meetings of the Consultative Forum on Equality that had run in the 2016-17 period.

Additionally, the Housing Executive's quarterly reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme 2016 – 2017 were also circulated among the consultee list via email notifications and posted to postal consultees. The opportunity to receive a hard copy or an accessible/alternative format of the document was provided.

The Equality Unit had also assisted in sending out the documentation regarding the NIHE Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 during the 2016-2017

period. Consultees were able to respond to this strategy with the consultation template provided.

Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme during the 2016-17 reporting period?

Yes No Not applicable

The Housing Executive's Consultative Forum Steering Group met on 2 occasions during 2016/2017 and the full meeting of the forum was held in October 2016.

Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2016-17 reporting period?

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Section 4: Arrangements for Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies

Please provide the number of policies screened during the year:

10

Title of policy subject to screening
Annual leave
Maximisation of Rental income
Renting garages policy
Homelessness Strategy
Landlord Services Redesign
Private Sector Improvement Services
Housing Executive Budget Submission 2016/2017
Constitution of the Joint Consultation and Negotiating Committee
Disciplinary Procedure
Trades Union Facilities Agreement

In addition a number of minor policies and procedures were submitted to the Policy Governance/ Financial Control Committee which includes the Equality Unit Manager and considers equality and other compliance issues.

Policies considered and cleared during 2016/17 included:
Advertising Poster sites
Cash and Cheque Handling
Challenge Function
Cheque Printing Security
eProcurement
Finance and System Security
Grounds Maintenance Non Routine Works
Housing Benefits Overpayments
Housing Stock
Losses, Write Offs and Special Payments
Payroll
Petty Cash
Planned Schemes
Professional Contracts Payments
Public Liability Claims
Recruitment and Payment of Agency Workers
Specimen Signatures
Supporting People (Financial procedures)
Supporting People Recoupment
Travel and Subsistence
Undeveloped Land Schedule

Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2016-17:

1	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

Please provide details of the main consultations conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

The Housing Executive applies a best practice toolkit to consultations (Section 3). When consulting on the review of the Homelessness Strategy during 2016/2017 the Equality Screening report was included with the documentation.

Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees?

Yes
 No concerns were raised
 No
 Not applicable

Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2016-17 reporting period?

Yes
 No
 Not applicable

Section 5: Arrangements for Monitoring and Publishing the Results of Monitoring

From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2016-17 reporting period?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No, already taken place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No, scheduled to take place at a later date | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not applicable |

The Housing Executive's Equality Monitoring policy is reviewed on a regular basis and is scheduled to be reviewed again at the end of 2017.

In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not applicable | | |

Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2016-17 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed: N/A

Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery, planning or policy development:

During 2016/17 monitoring data continued to be gathered from the Housing Executive's Housing Management System (HMS). Information available

includes religion, nationality, age, ethnic origin, gender, dependents and marital status and can be provided up to 31st March 2017.

Equality monitoring data is used to provide information for the following:

- To support Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs).
- Answer Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- Answer Parliamentary Questions (PQs).
- Answer Assembly Questions (AQs).
- Is made available internally for planning and management purposes.

The Equality Unit also utilises other sources such as the Housing Executive's Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (CTOS) to monitor equality issues relating to tenants. For example health and disability questions are incorporated into the CTOS.

Internal Promotion of Equality Monitoring

During 2016/17 the Equality Unit continued to highlight the importance of equality monitoring within the organisation. Actions taken included the ongoing promotion of the in-house leaflet entitled 'Equality Monitoring – What is it about?' and advising staff on how equality monitoring data should be presented. The Equality Monitoring leaflet is also incorporated into the training packs for staff using the HMS system since 2013 and is referenced in Equality Awareness training.

BME and Migrant Worker Population

During 2016/17 the Housing Executive completed its 11th annual mapping report on BME and Migrant Worker communities in Northern Ireland. In this 11th phase of the project the indicators used in previous reports were updated to reflect the new structures (Housing Executive and Councils) and the results of the Housing Executive Area survey were mapped using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to highlight key trends on the housing needs of BME & Migrant Worker communities.

Case studies were also carried out on the work of Housing Surgeries located in Annadale Flats, Belfast and the NIHE office in Newry.

Private Sector Grants

A suite of reports have been developed relating to the Housing Executive's Grants process. However, the Grants department is currently redesigning its services and the Equality Unit will liaise closely with them to ensure that these reports are still fit for purpose.

In-House Research

Over the years a number of research projects and surveys conducted by the Housing Executive have provided valuable information in relation to equality monitoring.

These include:

- The House Condition Survey.
- The Public Attitudes Survey.
- Staff Attitudes Survey.
- The Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey.
- Grants Customer Surveys.
- Neighbourhood Renewal Surveys.
- Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment Report.
- Black and Minority Ethnic and Migrant Worker Mapping Updates.
- Disability Mapping Report.
- Housing and Support Needs.

External Sources

Monitoring of equality of opportunity and good relations includes reference to a wide range of external sources of information.

Sources accessed include:

- The Census.

- The Labour Force Survey.
- The Continuous Household Survey.
- The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.
- Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010.
- Research conducted by OFMDFM Research Division.
- Research conducted by the voluntary and community sector.
- British Social Attitudes Survey.
- Equality Commission.
- Equality Authority.
- National Disability Authority.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- NI Civil Service Departments.
- Home Office.
- Local Government Association Research Bulletin.
- Health Agencies.
- Community Relations Council.
- ARK Northern Ireland.
- Department for Communities.
- Centre for Housing Policy, York University.
- Cabinet Office.
- N. Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA)
- Employers' Forum on Disability.

Use of Equality Monitoring Information

During 2016/17 the equality monitoring systems were used extensively for replies to FOI and AQ requests, and for internal information requests. A total of 32 separate requests were completed.

External Requests

External requests were received from various organisations including:

- BBC
- Whatdotheyknow.com
- Department for Communities
- N. Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA)
- MLAs
- Councillors
- Members of the Public
- Students

Internal Requests

Internal requests were received from various Housing Executive departments including:

- Homelessness Housing Policy
- Communications Team
- Landlord Lettings
- Risk Management & Governance
- Housing Analytics
- Welfare Reform

Section 6: Staff Training

Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme undertaken during 2016-17, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives.

In accordance with Equality Scheme requirements the Housing Executive developed an integrated strategy for the training required to support the implementation of our equality duties. Two types of training were identified: Equality Awareness training, including Induction Training, and skills-based training, which covers processes like Consultation, Screening and Equality Impact Assessment.

A programme for the delivery of Equality Awareness training, skills based training, and Induction Training throughout the organisation was established, alongside targeted training for Policy writers, Board members and Directors.

Equality Awareness Training

In developing general Awareness training on the Section 75 duties the Housing Executive worked closely with the Local Government Staff Commission, local councils, and the Equality Commission, as well as Disability Action and the North West Forum of People with Disabilities with regard to disability training, and the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre with regard to Race Relations training.

The comprehensive training programme includes awareness of the Equality Scheme, Human Rights, Disability, Race Relations and discrimination generally and has been ongoing since 2002.

It has been adapted over time to take account of legislative and other changes which have been introduced to the equality agenda and a major review of the content and format took place in 2015/2016, when the course

was updated to reflect changes in focus and emphasis. The Human Rights content of the Awareness training was also enhanced in response to liaison with the NI Human Rights Commission.

Equality Awareness training continued to be developed during 2016/2017 to reflect the new Equality Scheme, housing inequalities and the organisational ethos.

To March 2017 a total of 168 courses, involving over 3000 staff, have been completed. Staff training is also supplemented with Equality Bulletins which highlight any new changes in legislation or policy and their impact on housing in Northern Ireland.

Equality Training for Board & Directors

Specially tailored Equality Awareness briefing sessions have been provided to Board Members, Directors and Senior Managers and this is updated as new Board members/Directors are appointed.

Skills Based Training

The programme for skills based training is more complex and is aimed at training key staff. Five training courses on Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) have been completed to date and a wide programme of Policy Development training has been completed for senior staff.

Other Training

Good Relations Training

The BRIC programme was completed in December 2014 with around 1,870 staff trained over the life of the programme. A very positive evaluation of the project was carried out from the training, reflective practice days and business planning days, putting good relations at the heart of social housing.

Communication Support Awareness Training

Communication Support Awareness training is available to all officers on a request basis.

Sign Language

The Housing Executive has provided funding for staff who wished to take up sign language courses to accommodate customers with hearing impairments.

33 staff members were trained to Stage 1 BSL level and 4 to Stage 1 ISL level, and approximately 40 staff attended 10 refresher courses for both Stage 1 & Stage 2 BSL level.

The provision of sign language training is due to be reviewed in the coming year.

Safeguarding Training

Child Protection

The Housing Executive's Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy & Procedures were approved by the Board in April 2010 and included a commitment to provide suitable training in child protection/safeguarding to staff working with or coming into regular contact with children.

In general, child protection/safeguarding training was provided at three levels -general awareness training for all staff, staff with substantial contact with children e.g. Local Offices, Grants, Hostel and Technical staff, and comprehensive training designed for Safeguarding Officers and Key Managers.

Two intensive Child Protection training courses, followed by two successful pilot courses were held in 2010. The formal programme of Level 2 training commenced in February 2011 providing sessions in all Regions and Headquarters, completing in December 2012. Subsequent sessions were demand-led and a further short programme took place in 2013 /14.

117 sessions of child protection training have been held to date with over 2100 staff attending, and around 110 referrals have been made to the HSC Trusts Gateway Teams/PSNI through the formal referral process.

Child Protection Training

Location	Courses completed	No. staff trained
	@ 31/03/17	@ 31/03/17

Belfast Region / Centre	40	649
North Region	38	662
South Region	35	744
3 rd Level Training	2	24
Information Session	2	44
TOTAL	117	2,123

Adult Safeguarding Training

The Housing Executive's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy was approved by the Board in October 2012. Included in the policy was a commitment that the Housing Executive would provide suitable training in safeguarding adults to staff working with or coming into regular contact with adults at risk of abuse.

In general Adult Safeguarding training was provided at three levels - general awareness training for all staff, staff with substantial contact with adults who may be at risk e.g. Local Offices, Grants, Hostel and Technical staff, and comprehensive training designed for Safeguarding Officers and Key Managers.

One Level 3 intensive Adult Safeguarding training course was held in May 2013, facilitated by 'VolunteerNow', and attended by Safeguarding / Deputy Officers and key managers.

Following this ten successful pilot Level 2 courses were held in autumn 2013. The formal programme of Level 2 training commenced in January 2014 and continued through 2014/15; it completed in December 2015.

Around 130 sessions of Adult Safeguarding training have been held to date with almost 2,500 staff attending, and around 50 referrals have been made to the HSC Trusts /PSNI through the formal referral process.

Vulnerable Adults Training

Location	Courses completed @ 31/03/17	No. staff trained @ 31/03/17
Belfast Region / Centre	52	1013
North Region	36	729
South Region	39	710
3 rd Level Training	2	(included above)
TOTAL	129	2,452

Combined Safeguarding Training

As the formal programmes of Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding training are now completed a combined Safeguarding Training course has been developed and commenced in April 2016. This will be offered to all staff, including Agency workers, on a 6 monthly basis.

It is further intended to merge the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults' policies into a single Safeguarding Policy by April 2017.

Combined Safeguarding Training

Location	Courses completed @ 31/03/17	No. staff trained @ 31/03/17
TOTAL	9	115

Contractors

The Equality Unit has conducted ten Safeguarding Information sessions to date for Housing Executive contractors; further sessions will be made available on request.

Access to Training

Special efforts are made in training situations to ensure that the needs of all staff who are nominated to attend are catered for in appropriate ways. Sessions have been facilitated by using alternative formats, sign language interpreters and other services.

Evaluation of Training

Participants attending training sessions complete evaluation sheets at the end of each course. These are reviewed, noted and summarised by the trainers prior to being forwarded to Learning & Development for retention on the course file.

Comments recorded on Equality Awareness training have been consistently positive and have improved further as the content has been reviewed and developed in the light of feedback.

Comments recorded on Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding training has also been consistently positive and increased as the training progressed. Analysis of the evaluation sheets at the completion of the formal Adult Safeguarding training programme showed that over 90% were completed. Of these 94% felt that the course objectives had been met; 93% that the course was relevant to their current or future job; 91% that the course length was appropriate; 97% that the course content was excellent (61%) or satisfactory (36%); and 94% that the standard of the Equality Unit Trainer was excellent (79%) or satisfactory (15%).

Comments on Communication Support Awareness training continue to be equally positive.

Staff Attitude Survey

The effectiveness of equality training was reflected in the most recent Staff Attitude Survey (2013/14) when 83% of staff (81% in 2011/12) responded that they were aware of the statutory duties placed on the Housing Executive by the Northern Ireland Act (1998), and 82% (74% in 2011/12) were aware of the Equality Scheme document.

Section 7: Public Access to Information and Services

Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2016-17, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services.

Communication of equality issues is central to their promotion and mainstreaming throughout the Housing Executive.

The organisation deals with, and provides services to, a broad range of stakeholders, customers, and staff, all of whom are geographically dispersed. It is therefore essential to disseminate information to staff and provide support where necessary to ensure that they are aware of their obligations and best practice.

It is also important that customers are aware of the way in which the Housing Executive promotes equality of opportunity and good relations via the services and activities it provides.

During 2016/17 the organisation's commitment to equality was communicated internally and externally in a number of ways.

Internal Communication

Two Equality Bulletins for staff were issued during the year and where applicable posted on the Housing Executive website at:

www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/strategies/equality/publications_links.htm

- No. 45 – Guidelines for Using Communication Support Services for People Needing Language Support & Alternative Formats for People with Disabilities (reissued to support Equality Bulletin 47).
- No. 47 – Accessibility for Customers.

Other information provided included:

- Quarterly Reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme distributed to key staff and statutory consultees. Quarterly Reports for 2016/17 can be accessed at the link above.
- Monthly update on government consultations circulated to key members of staff.
- The Equality Unit provided advice to staff on consultation exercises using the Consultation Toolkit. The consultations that the Equality Unit were involved in during 2016/17 are listed under external communication.
- Annual and quarterly updates on Communication Support usage are available to relevant staff.
- The Equality Unit continually liaised with Learning & Development to ensure that deaf staff could access e-learning courses.
- Minutes of the Consultative Forum on Equality and the Consultative Forum Steering Group are circulated to key staff for information and action.
- Equality Awareness training continues across the organisation.
- Communication Support Awareness training is conducted on request or where required.

External Communication

A commitment to equality has been a primary value of the Housing Executive and this is evident in its external communications, for example:

- The commitment to equality is reflected in the Housing Executive's Annual Report.
- The Corporate and Business Plan has equality at its foundation and as a principle underpinning the business function of the organisation.
- The Housing Executive's Publications Policy & Guidance mainstreamed our commitment to making clear and direct

communication with all our customers and ensures information can be made accessible in a variety of alternative formats on request. In 2016/17 we provided information to customers in audio CD, Braille, and large print, as well as translations into various other languages.

- The Housing Management computer system prints rent statements in large print format.
- The Equality Unit has worked closely with Housing Benefit Policy to ensure visually impaired customers receive correspondence in appropriate formats e.g. large print, Braille and correspondence via email rather than letter.
- Staff continued to utilise all available communication support services including telephone interpreting, face to face interpreting, translations, Sign Language interpreting, and alternative formats (see Section 7a).
- An interpreter continues to work in conjunction with the Housing Executive to provide face to face interpretation on a regular basis for Chinese residents in the Annadale Flats area of Belfast. This service has been in place since 2009.
- In 2016/17 the Equality Unit provided funding for a bi – lingual Housing Clinic to continue in the NIHE office in Newry.
- Bilingual advocacy project set up in September 2015 in partnership with the Inter-Ethnic Forum (Mid & East Antrim). This service provides interpreters who deliver a weekly housing clinic at Housing Executive offices in Ballymena.
- We continue to make good use of our extensive consultation network of tenants, residents groups and representatives of equality and voluntary groups in conjunction with the Consultation Toolkit. During 2016/17 the network was utilised to facilitate consultation on the Homelessness Strategy 2017 - 22.
- ‘Streets Ahead’ (tenant magazine) sent out annually to all tenants can be made available in alternative formats. It also includes information for tenants on how they can access free

communication support services. In the magazine details of how to access free communication support services is translated into Chinese (Simplified & Traditional), Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Russian and Slovak. It also includes information on accessing alternative formats and Sign Language interpreters.

- A 'Communicating with the Housing Executive' poster is on display in local offices and other Housing Executive buildings accessed by the public.
- The Housing Executive's website has a help page which provides information for people who do not have English as their first language and for people with disabilities at: <http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/help.htm>
- The Housing Executive is also on Twitter *@nihecommunity* and Facebook at www.facebook.com/housingexecutive.
- Communication continues to be a regular feature of the Equality Unit's internal team briefings and is a key element of the business planning cycle.

Section 7a: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

As the Housing Executive continues to review its services and customers become more diverse the issue of access to information and services remains high on the agenda. To ensure a responsive service and to anticipate the needs of customers the following arrangements have been put in place:

Access to Services

- Telephone interpreting and translation continue to be provided by 'thebigword' in all service outlets, including Housing Executive Homeless Hostels.
- 'thebigword' telephone interpreting service is also available to Voluntary Sector Hostels.
- Face to face interpreting is provided by local organisations including STEP, CWA (Chinese Welfare Association) and the Inter-Ethnic Forum (Mid & East Antrim).
- Sign Language interpretation is provided on a regular basis from a network of self-employed sign language interpreters.
- Hearing induction loops in all outlets.
- Portable one to one (crystal) loop systems in all outlets.
- Comprehensive user-friendly 'Next Generation Text (NGT)' service available. NGT replaced text relay.
- The Housing Executive website has a help page which provides information for people who do not have English as a first language. It also provides information regarding alternative formats and other services to enhance accessibility: <http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/help.htm>
- The Housing Executive is also on Twitter @nihecommunity and Facebook at www.facebook.com/housingexecutive.

- The Housing Executive uses '03' telephone numbers as a cost saving measure for our customers.

Access to Information

- Wide ranging and accessible Publications policy.
- A range of leaflets have been translated into different languages and made available to Housing Executive customers. These include:
 - Tips to Make Your Home More Energy Efficient.
 - Guide to Renting in the Private Sector.
 - Condensation in Your Home leaflet.
 - Wall Hung Gas Boiler Service leaflet.
 - Housing Homelessness Info Pack.
 - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) leaflet.
 - 'Money Worries: Behind with Rent' leaflet.
 - 'Money Worries: Budget' leaflet.
 - Housing Selection Scheme Booklet.
 - Warm Homes leaflet.
- A range of material in different languages has been developed for Asylum Seekers including an induction pack, 'Housing for Refugees in Belfast' leaflet, advice leaflet on support agencies and networks, a leaflet detailing information on schooling in the Belfast area and advice on energy efficiency.
- All main leaflets can be made available in large print format.
- The Housing Management Computer System can print rent statements in large print format.
- Main application forms contain advisory statements in a range of minority languages.

- Information is provided in various formats on request including large print, audio, DVD, Braille, and DAISY, as well as main minority languages. A statement is placed in all publications advising of the alternative formats available. In 2016/17 we provided information to customers in audio CD, Braille and large print.
- A 'Communicating with the Housing Executive' poster is displayed in Housing Executive Offices and buildings accessed by the public. The poster highlights in different languages the number of ways customers can communicate with the Housing Executive.
- From 2009/10 an interpreter has worked in conjunction with the Housing Executive on a weekly basis providing face to face interpretation for Chinese residents in the Annadale Flats area of Belfast.
- Bilingual advocacy project was set up in September 2015 in partnership with Inter-Ethnic Forum (Mid & East Antrim). This service provides interpreters who deliver a weekly housing clinic at the Housing Executive's Ballymena offices.
- In 2016/17 the Equality Unit provided funding for a bi – lingual Housing Clinic to continue in the NIHE office in Newry.
- The Equality Unit continues to promote the use of communication support through Communication Support Awareness training, Equality Bulletins and by providing advice directly to staff.
- The Housing Executive in partnership with the NI Youth Forum produced two DVDs aimed at the under-25 age group. These focus on the housing process and the issue of homelessness and under 18's, and on helping young people to avoid getting into unnecessary debt. These short films can be viewed on the N.I. Youth Forum website <https://www.niyf.org/nihe/>

Communication Support Services

The use of telephone interpreting remained consistent in 2016/17, as did the use of face to face interpreting and translations. Service outlets are aware of the benefits of all the communication support services. Use of communication support services from 2014 - 2017 is detailed below.

Telephone Interpreting Service 2014-2017

NIHE Overall Usage Summary	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total No. of Calls:	2,847	3,145	3,420

Voluntary Sector Hostels & Asylum Seekers Unit	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total No. of Calls:	1,361	1,777	1,627

Languages Requested in 2016/17: All Users = 48

Language	No. Times Requested	Language	No. Times Requested
Polish	1027	Pashto	5
Slovak	476	Vietnamese	5
Arabic	418	German	3
Lithuanian	383	Bahasa Indonesia	3
Romanian	356	Albanian	3
Mandarin	294	Turkish	3
Hungarian	255	Sinhala	2

Portuguese	230	Lingala	2
Somali	176	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	2
Farsi (Persian)	149	Punjabi	2
Czech	81	Oromo	1
Russian	65	Nuer	1
French	51	Catalan	1
Spanish	47	Dinka	1
Latvian	41	Dutch	1
Bulgarian	21	Tamil	1
Cantonese	20	Greek	1
Swahili	19	Gujarati	1
Bengali	12	Malayam	1
Italian	11	Sudanese	1
Amharic	10	Mongolian	1
Tigrinya	9	Pahari	1
Farsi (Afghan)	7	Norwegian	1
Urdu	6	Sudanese	1

Translations (NIHE Only) 2014 -2017

Translations	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total No. of Translations:	227	225	316

Languages Translated in 2016/17= 25

Language	Total	Language	Total	Language	Total
Polish	78	Arabic (Egypt)	5	Spanish	2
Arabic (Syrian)	22	Chinese Simplified	5	Persian (Farsi)	1
Slovak	19	Romanian	5	French	1
Lithuanian	16	Somali	4	Russian	1
Portuguese	16	Hungarian	4	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	1
Czech	9	Braille	3	Bangala	1
Tetum	8	Latvian	3	Turkish	1
English	8	Chinese Traditional	3		
Audio Conversion	8	Large Print	3		

Face to Face Interpreting (NIHE Only) 2014 - 2017

Face to Face Interpreting	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total No. of Interpreter Sessions:	66	102	108

Languages Interpreted in 2016/17 = 14

Language	Total	Language	Total
Chinese	24	Mandarin	2
Arabic (Syrian)	8	Farsi (Persian)	2
Sign Language	6	Czech	1
Tetum	6	Romanian	1
Polish	5	Portuguese	1
Lithuanian	3		

Irish Sign Language	3		
Cantonese	2		
Slovak	2		

Section 8: Complaints

How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2016-17?

Insert number here:

2

Chapter 8 of the Equality Scheme for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive sets out the procedure for investigating any complaints regarding the discharge of its Section 75 duties.

Two complaints relating to the statutory duties have been received and satisfactorily dealt with during 2016/2017.

The Housing Executive has comprehensive complaints systems for all its operational services.

It is the practice of the Housing Executive to manage complaints efficiently and when appropriate to adapt and change its policy, practices and procedures where deficiencies have been identified through these processes.

Section 9: Looking Forward

Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The NIHE Equality Scheme is due for review in 2018/2019.

Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period?

The Housing Executive will be reviewing the Equality Commission's Statement of Key Inequalities in Housing. This review will consider those inequalities which lie within the functional scope of the Housing Executive with a view to ensuring our Corporate and Business Planning mechanisms appropriately address the issues. In addition we are awaiting a report on Traveller Accommodation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. This report will help inform Traveller accommodation Policy in the medium to long term.

In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next (2017-18) reporting period?

- Employment
 - Goods, facilities and services
 - Legislative changes
 - Organisational changes/ new functions
 - Nothing specific, more of the same
 - Other (please state):
- The Equality Commission's Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing will provide a focus to ensure the Housing Executive's Corporate and Business strategy is adequately targeting housing inequalities.

- Goods, facilities and services: there are potential issues with forthcoming age discrimination legislation, the emerging issue of refugees generally and the Syrian refugee programme.
- Organisational changes / new functions: the restructuring of Council boundaries and the Community Planning relationship may be issues that require advice.
- General Employment advice in the context of Brexit, migration and organisational change.
- Monitoring is becoming a priority within Programme for Government and advice on monitoring service delivery in traditional fields such as religion and race but also new areas like sexual orientation and age will be required.

This page has been left intentionally blank.

This page has been left intentionally blank.

10th Report on the Disability Action Plan

April 2016 - March 2017

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

n/a

Fully achieved

n/a

Partially achieved

n/a

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
Local ⁱⁱⁱ	Produce a Hate Crime Harassment Toolkit.	Toolkit produced and disseminated.	More informed customers.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Training on general Disability Equality Awareness delivered to all Staff including Board members and new recruits as part of the induction process.</p> <p>This will include training on Disability Equality Legislation and on the duties included in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).</p> <p>Training on the duties will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting equality of opportunity; • eliminating discrimination; • eliminating harassment; • encouraging participation in public life; and • steps to meet the needs of disabled people. 	<p>5 Induction training sessions held covering basic disability awareness.</p>	<p>New staff aware of equality ethos and basic disability</p> <p>Prepares staff for more detailed training to be conducted in the first year of their employment with the Housing Executive.</p>

	<p>Training will be ongoing, relevant and updated to take into consideration amendments and new inclusions to the DDA as required.</p>		
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Disabled people will receive communication in the media they understand.</p>	<p>The Housing Executive has in place a reactive system for meeting customer communication needs as and when required.</p> <p>During 2016/17 the Equality Unit worked closely with Housing Benefit Policy to ensure visually impaired customers received correspondence in appropriate formats e.g. large print, Braille, and email correspondence rather than by letter.</p> <p>The Housing Management System was enhanced in Feb 2014 to produce statements in large print format.</p> <p>In 2016/17 eight audio conversions, three</p>	<p>Customers and staff were provided services in a positive way that accommodated the communication barrier.</p> <p>Disabled staff have access to all training available to staff generally.</p> <p>Customers receive communications that are immediately accessible to them.</p>

		<p>large print conversions and three Braille conversions facilitated tenants with regard to rent account statements, and Housing Benefit.</p> <p>6 sessions with customers were facilitated by a British Sign Language Interpreter and a three sessions with Irish Sign Language.</p> <p>The Housing Executive website has a help page which provides information regarding alternative formats and other services to enhance accessibility: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/help.htm</p>	
2	Enhance Awareness of disability issues and promote positive	<p>Five Equality Bulletins regarding Disability Issues have been issued since 2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. 42 - Disability Mapping Pilot Report 2013: provided a summary of the Report which includes details on disability from the CTOS. • No. 44 - Summary Equality Scheme. • No. 45 – Guidelines for Using Communication Support Services for People Needing Language Support & 	

		<p>Alternative Formats for People with Disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. 46 – Staff Briefing Autism Advice and Information. • No. 46A – Staff Briefing Autism Factsheet • No. 47- Accessibility for Customers. <p>In addition the Equality Unit distributed a guidance note prepared by the Disability Forum to all staff entitled 'Useful Tips for NIHE Staff'.</p>	
	<p>Review the current system of approval, resources and delivery of housing adaptations.</p>	<p>Better more efficient adaptation services.</p>	<p>The Inter-Departmental Review of Adaptations: Final Report and Action Plan were subject to public consultation from January to April 2016. The completed Final Report and Action Plan received Department for Communities and Department of Health Ministerial approval in December 2016. The Final Report and Action Plan were then submitted for Executive agreement in January 2017. We</p>

			are awaiting its agreement by an incoming administration. The DfC/DoH have approved the implementation of several recommendations in the Final Report and Action Plan as interim measures.
--	--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to 'encourage others' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	The Housing Executive ensures that all partnerships arranged under supporting people adhere to the principles of key equality legislation.	From April 2008 onwards.	All Supporting People providers have signed funding agreements requiring compliance with all applicable equality legislation and the DDA. Validated on a rolling annual basis through implementation of Supporting People contract management arrangements.
	Wheelchair Standard Social Housing.	New standards applied from April 2017.	Space standards for new build social wheelchair housing have been reviewed by a cross sector task group including Housing Advisory Unit (DfC), Northern

			<p>Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA), NIHE, Housing Associations, and service user representatives.</p> <p>Northern Ireland's wheelchair housing standards have also been benchmarked against space standards in other parts of the UK, and best practice from the adaptations design standards toolkit and the review of housing design standards in England. Northern Ireland wheelchair housing standards are some of the most inclusive in the UK as they consider the spatial needs of assisted wheelchair users and their carers.</p> <p>DSD/DfC ministerial approval for improved design standards was granted in April 2016 and the</p> <p>mandatory in the Housing Association Guide in April 2017. Additional work will be required in 2017/18 to evaluate housing plans and completed schemes.</p>
--	--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Disability Issues included as a standing item for the Consultative Forum Steering Group.	<p>The Consultative Forum Steering Group agreed to have disability issues included as a standing item on the agenda.</p> <p>2 meetings held during 2016/17.</p>	<p>Having disability issues as a standing item on the agenda of the Consultative Forum Steering Group ensures there is a regular review of progress, and new actions can be introduced on an annual basis, or when required.</p> <p>A number of disability groups including Disability Action regularly attend the Steering Group and disability issues are discussed at meetings.</p>
2	Attitudinal (and associated) studies will be included in the main research projects conducted by the Housing Executive. It is include the Continuous Tenants Omnibus Survey (CTOS), the Public Attitudes Survey, the Staff Attitudes Survey (every two years) and the House Condition Survey (every four years).	From October 2008.	<p>Data regarding attitudes to disability will be collated using the Continuous Tenants Omnibus Survey (CTOS), the Public Attitudes Survey, Staff Attitudes Survey and House Condition Survey.</p> <p>The Public Attitudes Survey 2012 included a chapter on 'Attitudes to disability in Northern Ireland' (a on the NIHE website).</p> <p>Continued inclusion of disabled people in all research.</p>

		Reports on findings/disability issues published.
	Accessible Housing Register.	<p>One of the key outcomes from the Inter-departmental review above was the development of an Accessible Housing Register (AHR). This is an information tool to enable housing authorities to identify specific properties that may meet the needs of a particular group of applicants on the waiting list.</p> <p>The AHR will identify where accessible stock with available accessibility features i.e. fully wheelchair accessible/mobility standard/life-homes standards etc. are located to enable these properties to be appropriately classified.</p> <p>A number of external factors impacted on the full implementation of the AHR and a phased approach has been agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 of the interim AHR arrangements for Housing Executive properties is now live. • Phase 2 for Housing Executive

			<p>Landlord Services will focus on developing a rolling programme to classify accessible stock such as bungalows and ground floor flats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 for Housing Association stock focused on data cleansing and the classification of properties; this work was co-completed by NIFHA. Work is underway to roll out the Housing Association interim AHR and a data sharing agreement has been agreed. Work is ongoing with NIHE IT to develop a fully functioning AHR system.
--	--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

3. Please outline what action measures have been partly achieved as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesiv / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Adaptations Design Communications Toolkit.		Initially receiving April 2014, the toolkit has been further developed in	Ongoing.

			<p>2017 with implementation initiatives in June 2017. Improvements include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More user friendly and efficient electronic forms.2. The inclusion of an Occupational Therapy; <p>support the formulation of housing solutions and the development of architectural briefs for new build wheelchair standard housing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Agreement of a revised regional data access agreement between the NIHE and HSC Trusts.	
--	--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

4. Please outline what action measures have not been achieved and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Disability Forum to complete a review of Equality Awareness Training.	Disability Forum changed priorities during the year . This has been shelved as an action.
2	NIHE will establish a Regional Disability Hate Floating support service (subject to approvals).	Approval and funding from Supporting people programme not received to progress this.
3	NIHE, in partnership with the Disability Forum, will examine the development of a Disability Relations Charter for Community Groups.	Disability Forum changed priorities during the year . This has been shelved as an action.

5. What monitoring tools have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

(b) Quantitative

Monitoring will continue through the Continuous Tenants Omnibus Survey (CTOS), the House Condition Survey (every four years), and the Public Attitudes Survey. In addition the Staff Attitude Survey helps us monitor the number of staff being supported in respect of learning and development, and to identify areas where more consideration should be given to the development needs of disabled staff, and assist in monitoring our work under the Disability Duties. Reports on findings and disability issues are published.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Please select

No

If yes please outline below:

7. Do you intend to make any further revisions to your plan in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

A review of the Disability action Plan will be conducted in 2017/2018.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

^{iv} **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.