

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION



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 2016

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

In 2015-16, 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 "One in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society."

In setting the organisation's priorities we are guided by the Programme for Government 2011- 2015 (PfG), the Department for Social Development's (DSD now Department for Communities) 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. Regional Services and Landlord Services have 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 Objectives

1. Identification of housing requirements across Northern Ireland

During 2015/16 the Housing Executive undertook a client-led programme of research which included an analysis of housing market trends, conditions and housing related need. The programme included 20 projects; 15 were carried out during the year of which 13 were completed, 4 have slipped into 2016/17 (subject to budget), and one is no longer required. We also consulted with councils on our plans and programmes for their council area and 11 Housing Investment Plans were published.

The Housing Executive hosted the first housing market intelligence exchange forum in November 2014 and a further two were held in 2015/16. These fora provided opportunities for key players in the wider NI housing market to share and discuss housing research and the key issues facing them and their organisations for the benefit of the housing sector. A briefing has been published on our website and emailed to 'insight invitees' and can be found at

www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/housing_research/housing-market-intelligence-exchange.htm

2. Investing in homes and neighbourhoods

There are key performance indicators for increasing the supply of social and affordable housing, including supported housing (see Section 2: Part 7). The programme for social housing is developed through an annual assessment of housing need, including the need for wheelchair accessible and supported housing, and we work with our Housing Association partners to build new houses.

During 2015/16 there were 1,568 new social housing starts against a target of 1,500. 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 153 one bedroom units which will add smaller sized accommodation to the social sector. In addition, there were 1,209 completions against a target of 1,200.

A new delivery strategy is being developed for the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) focused primarily on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

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 and nine had commenced by 31st March 2016.

3. Improving People's homes

Grant aid for private sector homes plays an important role in reducing unfitness, helping people to remain in their own homes, and in helping to reduce fuel poverty. It also provides opportunities for families with a disabled family member(s) to make their homes more accessible through grant aided adaptations.

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 (which replaced the Warm Homes Scheme in 2015) on behalf of DSD/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 2015/16:

- 9,198 homes were helped with energy efficiency measures - 3,057 through the Affordable Warmth scheme, 5,245 boiler replacements and 896 energy efficiency measures through the grants scheme.
- 736 repair grant applications approved against a target of 700.
- 996 approvals for disabled facilities grants against a target of 900.

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. These properties need high safety standards as there are greater risks involved to tenants and our work remains focused on effectively regulating HMOs through:

- The inspection of properties – 1,897 were inspected during the year against a target of 1,800.
- The HMO Registration Scheme and management standards - 370 were registered during the year against a target of 320.

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

4. Transforming people's lives

Many people find themselves in challenging or potentially vulnerable circumstances. Through the Supporting People programme and homeless services we aim to provide people with the right housing options and support to enable and sustain independent living in the community.

Our Supporting People service funds a range of housing-related support services for vulnerable people. Investment during the year was mainly to support the work of voluntary and community organisations in providing the Supporting People programme. The future commissioning of homeless and housing support services will focus on three priority groups: older people, those with learning disabilities and mental health problems, and those who are homeless.

Putting our customers at the heart of service delivery

During 2015/16:

- The Housing Executive undertook the development of 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.
- The Housing Executive continued to administer funding for Supporting People with 20,223 places supported (14,525 in accommodation based support and 5,698 through Floating Support).
- The number of Homeless presenters (18,628) continued to be monitored and showed a reduction of 5% on the 12 month target.

The average length of time in temporary accommodation was 37.2 weeks, narrowly missing the target of 36 weeks.

- A 'Housing First' model piloted in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry was evaluated. The model provides hard-to-reach individuals with wrap-around support and other services in their own independent accommodation rather than in a hostel.
- Training was carried out with frontline staff in relation to homeless presenters with mortgage arrears so that guidance can be given at the earliest possible stage and especially when homeless prevention may still be possible.
- A Housing Options scheme approach is progressing with the development of policy and the recruitment of staff, while a scoping exercise for a Common Assessment Framework has been completed.

5. Enabling sustainable neighbourhoods and regeneration

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

During 2015/16 we:

- Worked on two large scale regeneration development opportunities to set up Masterplans for the Areas, one in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry.
- Continued to support 'Building Successful Communities' pilot areas with a target of completing the action plans - all six baseline studies were completed.
- Progressed the Housing & Heritage (Living over the Shop (LOTS)) scheme. 8 properties totalling 10 residential units were completed.
- Developed and consulted on a new Rural Policy and Action Plan.
- Continued working to identify empty homes with the aim of bringing them back into use in the affordable sector.

Landlord Services Corporate Objectives

1. Delivering quality services

The Housing Executive's aim is to maximise our resources, making our Landlord business better, so that we can invest in the best possible services for our customers now and for the future. We set and monitor a number of targets to help to increase the efficiency of our services and we use customer feedback such as the Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey to measure progress.

During 2015/16 we commenced four 'Journey to Excellence' strategies to help us deliver top class housing and regeneration solutions in all that we do. This has been progressing well.

Business objective 1 focuses on those Key Performance indicators (KPIs) which show how we are working to maximise income from our assets. At the end of March 2016 the number of void properties had decreased significantly, relet times were reduced to an average of 23 days, and we had met our targets to collect 99.6% of rent due. The greater our income after paying running costs, the more we can invest in better services for the people and communities we support.

In addition:

- 13 Tenant Scrutiny Panels met throughout the year and training was delivered to the members.
- A Sustaining Tenancies Strategy was piloted in South Region. This has been evaluated and further work is being carried out under the 'Build Yes' approach, with the policy and action plan being revised.
- A Tenancy Fraud Action Plan is being implemented and again revisions will be made utilising the 'Build Yes' approach.
- Collectively these actions have ensured the maximum availability of much needed housing stock.

2. Delivering better homes

The Housing Executive aims to enhance the quality of life for our tenants by continuing to maintain and improve our homes within our current budgetary levels. The next few years will be an important period in respect of delivering better homes. An independent, comprehensive survey of our housing stock has recently been carried out the outcomes of which have

been used to develop an Asset Management Strategy. This will guide our long term approach to investment and set out clear priorities.

The information will also be used to produce the first of a series of five year investment plans covering the period 2017/18 – 2021/22 although uncertainty over funding means that the finalisation of the plan will be delayed until later in 2016/17. An interim investment strategy has been developed to bridge the gap between our current Maintenance Investment Strategy and the new investment plans, and will reintroduce a programme of major capital improvements across the housing stock.

A key part of the Strategy will be to ensure that investment is made in homes that have a long term sustainable future.

In 2015/16:

- 8,149 homes had external cyclical maintenance work completed.
- 4,184 kitchen replacements were completed.
- 4,645 new heating installations were completed.
- 5,611 homes had double glazing installations completed.
- 99.8% of all our homes had a valid gas certificate and the remaining few properties were being taken through our no access procedure.
- 152 lift installations commenced, mainly for disabled people.
- 101 extensions to properties commenced mainly for families with a disabled family member.
- 1,035 shower installations commenced mainly for disabled people.

Contractor performance for response maintenance improved during the year and targets were met.

3. 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 that 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 in dealing appropriately with all incidents of anti-social behaviour in our estates.

This year we launched a new Social Enterprise Strategy 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.

In order to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour the Housing Executive has in place a range of housing management services which are delivered through our network of local offices. We have also forged a range of partnerships with other agencies working in the field of community safety. A new revised Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan is now being implemented and the Housing Executive is a member of the reconstituted Policing and Community Safety Partnerships PCSP (Section 1: Part 2).

Through the Housing Executive's "Good Relations" Community Cohesion Strategy we are working on a range of sectarian and race issues which are underpinned by the 'Building Relationships in Communities' (BRIC) programme. Good Relations Plans are complete and over 75 staff from Belfast Area and South Area have been trained on racism issues. The new Community Cohesion Strategy was launched in February 2016 in Girdwood Community Hub.

During the year:

- Progress was made on re-imagining a Housing Executive peace wall on the Crumlin Road in Belfast.
- Phase 1 of the BRIC 2 programme was delivered with 26 groups signed up and 26 Good Relations Plans developed.

Good progress was made in the Community Involvement Strategy. A very successful community conference was held in October 2015. The Central Housing Forum also met with the Housing Executive's Board and this will be a regular twice yearly occurrence.

The Housing Executive also commenced scoping a Digital Inclusion pilot to enable those most in need to become digitally included, and to implement a new customer focussed NIHE website.

4. Promoting Good Relations

Outputs and Outcomes of our Cohesion Services

Through creating opportunities to enter into dialogue, and build capacity and confidence, we have empowered communities to get the best

outcomes for their neighbourhoods. This will impact on the delivery of our services and enhance tenant participation and greater cohesion across our business. It will also contribute to greater community cohesion within our estates in this deeply divided society.

We continue to seek outside funding to support and enhance our cohesion work and are currently working in collaboration with a number of partners in respect of a potential Peace IV application.

Community Cohesion Strategy

The Housing Executive's draft Community Cohesion Strategy 2015-2020 was approved by the Board in February 2015. Following this the public consultation process ran from July 2015 through to October 2015. All submissions were taken into consideration and the draft strategy updated to reflect contributions.

The refreshed strategy was formally launched on the 19th February 2016 in Girdwood Community Hub. This was attended by some 200 community and statutory representatives and the event was widely covered in both the print and broadcast media.

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."

The strategy aims to:

- Contribute to the creation of more stable, safer and cohesive neighbourhoods.
- Work in partnership to address the complex housing needs of a divided society.
- Respond to the needs of people in danger as a result of community conflict.
- Facilitate mixed housing where it is practicable, desirable and safe.

Our Good Relations Strategy is delivered across five themes:

- Integration / Segregation
- Race Relations

- Communities in Transition
- Interface Areas
- Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols

Equality of opportunity in housing allocations is central to the Housing Executive's policy, and all allocations are made on the basis of housing need, including those within Shared Housing Schemes.

It is the delivery of all these 5 themes (not just shared housing) which contributes to better community cohesion in Housing Executive estates.

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 main focus of our activities in 2015/16 across all the 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 BRIC 2 programme as part of its mainstream activity.

Seven Good Relations Officers will deliver the BRIC2 programme across our 13 Areas i.e. 2 officers per Region to ensure geographical spread.

Following completion of the engagement and scoping process the Good Relations Officers liaised with community groups. The first phase has now been completed with 26 groups signing up to the terms of engagement and to developing good relations plans; these are currently being implemented.

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.

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

TBUC Shared Housing

We are currently working with DSD/DfC to develop further projects to support shared new build and shared existing Housing Executive estates under the Together; Building a United Community (TBUC) strategy.

The Housing Executive's Head of Income and Communities is the chair of the TBUC Housing oversight group facilitated by DSD/DfC Housing Branch. This is made up of representatives from NIFHA, statutory agencies, private agencies, and community and voluntary organisations.

A programme of 10 TBUC shared neighbourhood schemes in social housing is being supported through the TBUC strategy.

The Housing Executive support and mentor the Housing Associations in the implementation and delivery of the programme.

To help and assist the 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 is continuing in line with the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy and Action Plan initiated in 2005. To date over 75 staff have attended Hate Crime awareness training. This was delivered by South Belfast Round Table on Racism and was very successful.

Launch of the Hate Harassment tool kit

A Hate Harassment "Tool Kit" has been developed and was launched by the Housing Executive on the 2nd October to close Good Relations Week 2015.

This support pack has been developed to help those who are experiencing or know someone who is experiencing harassment, and in particular hate harassment. That is harassment, intimidation or abuse on the grounds of their actual or perceived:

- ethnicity
- sexual orientation

- gender identity
- religion, political opinion or
- disability

The Tool Kit highlights the Housing Executive's commitment to dealing quickly and positively with any hate harassment within our estates whether it amounts to a crime or not, and will use the full range of remedies available to take action against perpetrators.

Communities in Transition

Areas at Risk

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 DSD/DfC.

Interface Areas

Interface Normalisation Policy

The Community Cohesion Unit has developed an Interface Normalisation Policy in line with the HIPA Policy and delivered on behalf of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

This policy highlights that the Housing Executive will undertake work at interfaces within our area of responsibility giving tenants the comfort to allow the interfaces to be removed/remodelled or reimaged.

These measures will provide the properties with security protection yet allow for the transformation of the site. Work could potentially include the removal of grills, provision of toughened glass, protection of oil tanks, and door locks, external doors, enhanced fencing and bulkhead lights.

Funding has been secured from DOJ via the TBUC strategy to deliver the interface action plan. However DOJ are currently consulting on their Normalisation Policy which could impact on the above.

During 2015/16 we continued to deliver the 'normalisation programme' with DOJ providing alternative security work to Housing Executive and private properties at interface locations where walls are being re-modelled.

The Housing Executive worked in partnership with the local community to redesign 2 walls in North Belfast:

- Site 1 Crumlin Road (Ardoyne side) - on site February 2016, with a regeneration programme for the Crumlin Road to be launched in August 2016.
- Site 2 Crumlin Road - wall at the top of Columbia and Rosebank Streets.

Consultations were held with the Woodvale community in February 2015 regarding the proposed Crumlin Road regeneration programme. Following this a series of “planning for real workshops”, facilitated by a consultant, were held with young people, older people and local politicians to determine the way forward. As a result an action group was developed to take the project and plans forward with the support of the local Housing Executive Area Office.

Flags, Emblems and Sectional Symbols

Re-imaging

Communities continued to develop re-imaging projects with Housing Executive support, and projects took place in the Shankill estate, Falls Road, The Village, Clonard, Twaddel, Omagh, Derry/L' Derry, Lower Shankill, Mid Shankill, Newtownabbey, Portadown, and Inner and Outer East Belfast.

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.

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 2015-16.

Outcome measures and performance against equality based business objectives are set out in Question 1 above.

Ensuring that equality is placed at the heart of policy making in the Housing Executive is fundamental to the work of the Housing Executive's Equality Unit.

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 peoples' lives, and have promoted equality of opportunity and good relations. Much of the work detailed below helps inform our Equality Action Plan.

While "headline" activities 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.

Set out below are a number of projects and initiatives 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. 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 640 Asylum Seekers in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) Accommodation in Northern Ireland. During 2015/16 the Housing Executive received 170 new referrals of Asylum Seekers requiring temporary dispersal accommodation. As at 31st March 2016 temporary dispersal accommodation was provided to 610 people who had made an application for Asylum. These represented families made up of 476 people, and 134 single adult Asylum Seekers, originating from 35 different countries.

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. The ADU has enhanced the quality of the dwellings within its reserve pool since the compass contract commenced. Regular quality assurance checks carried out within the Unit have been instrumental in continually upgrading standards. All properties, whether HMO or family dwellings, are set up to the highest safety standards recommend by UK or European building controls.

The ADU continues to work closely with Orchard-Shipman (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.

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.

During 2015/16 the Asylum Development Unit referred 88 new cases to the EXTERN Multidisciplinary Homeless Support Team.

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 it occurs on our estates. We also have a comprehensive and rigorous set of policies and procedures designed to address ASB which enables 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 the effort to prevent ASB from arising or to tackle it effectively when it does.

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

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

In addition 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, street pastors, a scheme to address hate crime, home security schemes, good morning services, diversionary activities, physical works to communal areas and intergenerational workshops.

Strategic Focus

During 2015/16 a number of key strategic and operational objectives were achieved:

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.

Early Intervention

Preventative measures continue to be used widely and reflect our strategic focus on early intervention. During 2015/16, 51% of all reports of ASB were resolved through 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), who delivered a Mediation and Community Support (MACS) project on our behalf as a means of addressing reported incidents of ASB. They also provided mediation throughout 2015/16 and community support in 222 cases of neighbour disputes.

In addition both organisations provided, where appropriate, ongoing programmes of support tailored to the individual designed to reduce the risk of re-offending.

The Housing Executive's external panel of independent, trained mediators provided interventions in 51 neighbour disputes involving more than 100 individuals and families throughout 2015/16. In the last quarter of the year we procured a new mediation provider, TIDES Training and Consultancy, and the figure of 51 cases reflects both the panel mediators and those mediations taken by TIDES.

Operational Performance

During 2015/16 Housing Executive Local Offices received a total of 3,230 reports of ASB of which:

- 33% (1,070) related to noise nuisance.

- 14% (456) related to multiple ASB i.e. Noise/ Harassment / Verbal Abuse etc.
- 13% (425) related to problems with pets and animals.

The organisation also served 11 Notice Seeking Possessions, 2 Notice of Proceedings and 7 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, prevent and enable change.

We also arrange and promote corporate volunteering activities, organise team volunteering events and administer individual events. During 2015/16 staff contributed approximately 1,620 hours volunteering.

Highlights from 2015/16

- When a staff member in Belfast lost a parent after battling Alzheimer's they decided to do a sponsored cycle from London to Paris. Response from staff was immediate and kicked off with a coffee morning. As physical activity is linked with reducing dementia

a team in our Coleraine office organised a beach fun run; a pub quiz is also planned.

- 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.
- Partnered Marie Curie Cancer Helpers Service and sit on their Steering group as well as consult with Business in the Community and numerous charities to encourage best practice in this area.
- Staff also volunteer in programmes like Time to Read, Silver Surfers, Childline 'Speak out, Stay safe service', as well as many more.

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 2015/16.

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, toys (nearly 400 in our Christmas toy appeal), bras (for Africa) and clothing.

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
- Foyle Hospice
- Habitat NI
- Huntington's
- Macmillan Cancer Care
- Mainstay (Adults with learning disabilities)

- Marie Curie Cancer Care & Marie Curie Helper Service
- Movember
- MS Society
- Nepal Appeal
- N.I. Hospice and Children's Hospice
- NSPCC
- PIPS
- Royal Neo Natal
- South Area Hospice
- Stroke Association
- Welcome Centre's Street Gem Project

Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012 - 2017

The Housing Executive launched the Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland on 1st May 2012 following an extensive consultation with Statutory and Voluntary Agencies. The Strategy was subject to a full equality screening assessment.

Strategic Objectives

The aim of the homelessness strategy is that long term homelessness and rough sleeping is eliminated across NI by 2020.

The strategy aims to ensure:

- The risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised through effective preventative measures.
- Through enhanced inter agency co-operation services to the most vulnerable homeless households will be improved.

The Board approved a Re-prioritised Strategy in 2014 to focus on key actions which put homeless prevention at the forefront of the homeless service delivery.

Development of New Strategy

As the existing Homelessness Strategy comes to an end in April 2017, work has begun on the development of a new Homelessness Strategy. While the Housing Executive has the statutory responsibility for the delivery of homelessness services, an integrated strategy is required involving a wide range of partners. The new Homelessness Strategy will be developed in conjunction with our partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and will have at its core the commitment to work together to prevent and tackle homelessness in all its forms.

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 commence in 2016/17.

Homelessness Statistics 2012 – 2016

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number presenting as homeless.	19,354	18,862	19,621	18,628
Number accepted as homeless i.e. Full Duty Applicants (FDA).	9,878	9,649	11,016	11,202
Number of new placements in temporary accommodation in year.	3,399	2,878	2,817	2,890
Types of Household presenting as homeless.	Singles 10,630 (54%) Families, 6,849 (36%) Elderly 1,875 (10%)	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%)
Households presenting due to intimidation.	584	668	590	544
Average Length of stay in temp accommodation,	(42 Weeks*) *As at Dec	38 weeks	36 weeks	37.2 weeks

reflecting the existence of “hot spots” where demand for housing is high.	2012			
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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 house condition 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. Preparations for the 2016 Survey were completed in March 2016 with fieldwork commencing in June.

Ongoing customer related research, such as the 2015 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 show that in Belfast the level of segregation declined significantly 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 2016/17 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 2015/16 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.

Transit Sites

(Authorised sites used for short stays).

- Continued to investigate lands suitable for transit site provision in Craigavon, Newry and Strabane.
- 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 Belfast, Ballyarnett transit site Derry/Londonderry, the Glen site Coalisland, Acorn Grove Craigavon and Daisyfield site in Derry/Londonderry. Schemes are also in the development stage to complete similar works to the last remaining sites at Greenbrae Strabane and Glen Road Heights Belfast. This will form part of a

major improvement package involving substantial funding to reinstate these 2 sites which have been subject to major vandalism and illegal encroachment.

- 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. The Housing Executive are currently at appeal stage, the outcome of which will determine the way forward with regard to the provision of Traveller specific accommodation in the Antrim/Newtownabbey area.

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 finished consultation response document and amended action plan have been submitted to the Department for Communities and Department of Health for approval prior to submission to the Ministers for sign-off.

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.

DSD/DfC ministerial approval for improved design standards will be granted in April 2016. Additional work will be required in 2016/17 to develop some worked examples of wheelchair standard housing, which will be subject to feedback from service users and occupational therapy services.

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 adapted 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.
- The Housing Executive's Chief Executive's Business Committee has approved the procurement of an AHR software package.

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 most 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 delivery of the strategy, 'good relations and equality issues' are a standing item on the Steering Group's agenda.

Social Housing Enterprise Strategy

The central aim of the Housing Executive's Social Housing Enterprise Strategy is to invest where it can help address social, and economic, disadvantage and isolation.

The first 6 months were successfully completed in 2016 with the award of £363,500 to 34 local social economy/social enterprise initiatives, along with progress in other areas of the Strategy.

Communities being supported include both urban and rural, those in poverty, people with disabilities including mental health, and those with different cultural traditions including Irish-speaking social enterprises. The Strategy is supported by an extensive Communications and Marketing Plan, with the aim of highlighting the opportunities offered by the Strategy to all within our social housing communities including hard to reach groups such as young people, older people and BME communities.

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 and/or service delivery areas during the 2015-16 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. Given the recent focus on societal inequalities and the need for collective approaches to addressing endemic or key inequalities this is an important consideration.

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 Communication Support (Sections 7 & 7a: Part 26); Equality monitoring (Section 5: Parts 20, 21, 22, & 23); Community Cohesion and Race Relations (Section 1: Part 1); the Financial Inclusion Strategy (Section 1: Part 2); the Social Enterprise Strategy (Section 1: Part 2) and a range of internal Human Resources Policies.

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, 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 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. For example, our Communications Support policy was used this year to review and pilot new methods of how we provide training for deaf and hard of hearing staff. In addition we have worked with our Housing Benefit team to improve how we send letters to customers who are visually impaired (see Section 7: Part 26).

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 housing services will bring. The redesign is currently underway and is being piloted in four offices across the organisation. The new approach provides a more comprehensive analysis of a household's housing needs and the real choices available to them. It considers all the equality aspects of the household i.e. religion, community background, gender, race, disability, household size, sexual orientation etc. before providing a range of options or solutions for the customer.

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):

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 2015-16 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. 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 2015-16 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 Business Planning Manager 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 2015-16 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 2013-14 report
- Not applicable

As is set out in Parts 4 and 5 above, targeting housing need and addressing housing inequalities form the mainstream work of the Housing Executive. Our work in relation to new social housing, improvement and maintenance of housing stock, supported housing, homelessness, private sector grants, adaptations to stock 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 Community Cohesion, 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 2015-16 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 Objectives 2015/16

(Regional Services Key Performance Indicators (RSKPI))

Objective 1 – Identification of housing requirements across Northern Ireland

Under this objective, and as part of our statutory duties, we will use our expertise in research and market intelligence both to guide our plans and programmes, and also to support other decision-makers in Northern Ireland.

RSKPI 1.1 – Deliver the annual client-led Research Programme.

RSKPI 1.2 – Lead 2 Housing Market Intelligence Forums (HMIE).

RSKPI 1.3 – Develop 11 Housing Investment Plans and present them to councils.

In addition our Land & Data Analytics Team carries out annual housing need assessments and undertakes Housing Market Analysis (HMAs) at three levels: the NI level, individual Housing Market areas, and smaller studies such as housing market profiles, and latent demand testing in rural areas, to help identify areas of hidden need.

Objective 2 - Investing in homes and neighbourhoods

Under this objective our aim is to deliver programmes for excellent sustainable places for people.

New social homes

RSKPI 2.1 (PfG 28) - Administer grant aid to Housing Associations to start 1,500 new social homes.

RSKPI 2.2 - Administer grant aid to Housing Associations to complete 1,200 new social homes.

RSKPI 2.3 – Start 200 one-bed units (included in the total of 1,500 starts above).

In addition to the key performance indicators outlined for Objective 2, during 2015/16 we worked to support the Department for Social Development to provide at least 3 intermediate housing pilot sites on Housing Executive land to test and evaluate the draft Affordable Housing Policy.

In addition to the starts and completions KPIs, budget provision was made to allow for advance land purchase of sites to facilitate the delivery of 1,000 new housing starts in future years.

The Social Housing Development Programme (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.

During 2015/16 we worked to produce a SHDP Delivery Strategy, to be implemented from the 1st April 2016. The aim of the strategy is to maximise social housing supply and minimise delivery risks.

Objective 3 – Improving people's homes

This objective is aimed at ensuring that the quality of people's homes is improving, and to tackling other issues affecting our customers.

Grants for the Private Sector

RSKPI 3.1 – Approve 700 applications for Repair Grants.

RSKPI 3.2 – Approve 900 Disabled Facilities Grants.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

RSKPI 3.3 – Register 320 new HMOs.

RSKPI 3.4 – Inspect 1,800 HMO living standards.

PfG Energy Efficiency

Install efficiency measures to 9,000 homes to help reduce fuel poverty.

RSKPI 3.5 – Implement the Affordable Warmth Scheme to 3,000 homes with 4,500 measures installed.

RSKPI 3.6 – Approve 2,500 boiler replacements.

Annual Home Energy Report

RSKPI 3.7 – Produce an Annual Home Energy Conservation Authority Progress Report.

During the year we continued with the development of a policy framework for strategic adaptation work, to ensure consistency of standards across housing tenures. In addition, we developed an accessible housing register for our social stock which 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 (see Section 1: Part 2).

Objective 4 – Transforming people’s lives

Many people find themselves in challenging or potentially vulnerable circumstances. Through the Supporting People programme and homeless services we aim to provide people with the right housing options and support to enable and sustain independent living in the community.

RSKPI 4.1 - Continue to provide 20,000 Housing Support places through Supporting People.

RSKPI 4.2 – Deliver the Homelessness Strategy as reprioritised in July 2014.

RSKPI 4.3 – Reduce the number of Homeless presenters.

RSKPI 4.4 – Reduce the average length of time in temporary accommodation.

During 2015/16 we undertook and developed 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.

In addition, we will review our Supporting People Strategy and Programme to ensure that we are providing the right services to the right people. We will take into consideration any actions or issues emerging from the Supporting People policy review being undertaken by DSD/DfC.

People can become homeless for a variety of reasons, including family disputes, debt, addiction, mental health issues or a breakdown in living arrangements. In such circumstances it is crucial to find a suitable home, with follow up support. However we also believe that it is just as important to work with people at an early stage in order to avoid them becoming homeless if possible. This will include implementing recommendation 16 of the Housing Repossessions Taskforce report by providing information and support to those customers presenting with mortgage arrears.

The current Homelessness Strategy comes to an end in April 2017 and work is underway on the development of a new Homelessness Strategy. Future delivery of this new Strategy will see a renewed emphasis being given to the prevention of homelessness.

Objective 5 – Enabling sustainable neighbourhoods and regeneration

Under this objective 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 KPIs 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 centre regeneration, and through our Rural Strategy we aim to help build and revitalise rural areas.

Our work under Objective 2, investing in homes and neighbourhoods, also complements some of our work under this objective.

RSKPI 5.1 – Develop two large scale regeneration development opportunities to provide mixed use/mixed tenure developments to regenerate and enable sustainable communities.

RSKPI 5.5 – Develop a 2016 - 2020 Rural Housing Strategy to address rural housing issues which often require different solutions.

In addition to the above KPIs during 2015/16 we:

- Supported the DSD Building Successful Communities pilot programme across 6 areas through neighbourhood-based housing investment programmes.
- Delivered the Special Pockets of Deprivation (SPOD) funding on behalf of DSD.
- Continued to ensure that our work delivered in line with DSD's (DfC) commitments to the Sustainable Development Strategy.

Landlord Services Objectives 2015/16

(Landlord Services Key Performance Indicators (LLKPI))

Objective 1 – Delivering quality services

Our aim is to maximise our resources making our Landlord business better, so that we can invest in the best possible services for our customers now and for the future.

LLKPI 1.3 – Ensure 99% of lettable stock is occupied (not void), make the best use of our stock, and maximise rental income.

LLKPI 1.5 – Implement our Sustaining Tenancies strategy to reduce tenancy failure and help tenants to stay in their own home.

LLKPI 1.6 – Review our Welfare Reform Action Plan and implement as necessary to provide support to our tenants.

LLKPI 1.7 – Meet with our customers and act on their issues through implementing 13 tenant scrutiny panels, to ensure our services meet customer needs both now and in the future.

Objective 2 – Delivering better homes

The next few years will be an important period in respect of delivering better homes. An independent, comprehensive survey of our housing stock has recently been carried out, the outcomes of which will be used to develop an Asset Management Strategy. This will guide our long term approach to investment and set out clear priorities. The information will also be used to produce the first of a series of five year investment plans covering the period 2017/18 – 2021/22. An interim investment strategy has been developed to bridge the gap between our current Maintenance Investment Strategy and the new investment plans; it will also reintroduce a programme of major capital improvements across the housing stock as part of our aim of achieving the Decent Homes Standard.

LLKPI 2.3 – Develop a new 5-year Stock Investment Programme to provide a targeted focus for stock improvement.

LLKPI 2.5 – Planned maintenance of our stock to provide tenants with a modern attractive home.

LLKPI 2.7 – Ensure all occupied homes have a valid gas safety certificate to comply with important health and safety responsibilities.

LLKPI 2.8 – Provide energy advice to 6,300 customers - helping our tenants to make the most efficient use of their heating systems, as well as gaining from our heating programme to help reduce the energy efficiency element which contributes to fuel poverty.

Objective 3 – 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).

During the year we launched a new Social Enterprise Strategy 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, and we believe this important new programme will make a significant contribution to helping achieve this objective.

LLKPI 3.1 – Implement our new Community Safety Strategy to contribute to creating safe and secure places in which people can live.

LLKPI 3.2 – Initiate BRIC 2 to support a further 72 communities. We aim to further develop good relations within both single identity and shared communities.

LLKPI 3.3 – Implement the 13 actions contained in the Community Involvement Strategy 2014 – 2017. Enable our residents to have a real say in making their neighbourhoods good places in which to live and to help build stronger communities.

Part 8

Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2015-16 reporting period.

No changes were made to the Action Plan.

Part 9

In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2015-16 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: Part 7.

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 2015-16 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 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 Strategy is currently under review 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.

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 and the Youth Forum. Since the inception of the Community Involvement Strategy the Central Housing Forum has elected its Chair and Vice Chair, has agreed its Terms of Reference and meets on a monthly basis. The Central Housing 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).

Each of these groups are represented on the Central Housing Forum

Community Conference

The Community Conference is organised annually and is the second largest event in the Housing Executive's calendar. The Conference on 22nd October 2015 celebrated successful community initiatives around the theme of "Communities Making a Difference", 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 "inspiring communities" themed conference, which once again will 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 over 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.

Digital Inclusion

Landlord Services and IT staff have been working with DSD and DFP/Digital Transformation Service representatives on the delivery of a joint Digital Inclusion pilot carried out in a number of phases over a 2 year period. The project is currently aimed at Housing Executive tenants living within the Belfast Upper Springfield, New Lodge and Tigers Bay areas on a cross community level.

The project has also been extended to Housing Executive tenants in rural areas to increase networking and reduce social isolation. The project comprises approximately 70 properties and includes supply of broadband connection for the urban areas and Wi-Fi where required in rural areas, together with tablets for use in the project.

Supporting Communities is working in partnership to deliver the appropriate training and support for participants and have drawn up an initial survey which is being rolled out to assess participants capabilities before, during & at the conclusion of the pilot to assess the extent of digital 'take up' in terms of types/ complexity of online activity undertaken during the pilot period

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 fourteenth annual meeting of the Forum was held on 14th October 2015.

A wide range of representatives from voluntary groups, community groups, trade union groups and public bodies attended.

A Steering Group is elected at the annual meeting of the Consultative Forum to deal with issues throughout the year and to provide a view on

Housing Executive policies by the voluntary and community sector with regard to our Section 75 obligations.

The Steering Group is representative of the Section 75 groups and comprises representatives from Supporting Communities NI; 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 for service delivery issues, and in the process of policy development, which can often pre-empt problems by ensuring early input from affected groups.

The 2015 Forum was opened by joint chairs Janet Thomas (NIHE) and Murray Watt (SCNI). The Forum discussed the following issues:

- A presentation and discussion by Tony Steed (NIHE) on the 'NIHE Equality Duties'.
- A presentation and discussion by Ward Erwin (NIHE) on the 'NIHE Social Enterprise Strategy'.
- A presentation and discussion by Bebhinn Ni Briain (OFMDFM) on the 'Age Discrimination Policy'.
- A presentation and discussion by Chris Davis (NIHE) & Linda Hutchinson (NIHE) on the 'NIHE Community Cohesion Strategy & Hate Harassment Toolkit'.

The Forum provides a working link with a wide range of equality and voluntary organisations and as such enables access to the Housing Executive for representative organisations at a high level and at early stages in policy development.

It also gives the Housing Executive unique access to the voluntary and community sector 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 2015/16 the toolkit was used to facilitate consultation on the draft Corporate & Business Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18, Community Cohesion Strategy 2015 – 2020, Interdepartmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services Final Report and Action Plan 2016 and Sustainable Rural Communities: A Review of Housing Executive Rural Housing Policy.

In the 2015-16 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):

Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme during the 2015-16 reporting period?

Yes No Not applicable

The Housing Executive's Consultative Forum Steering Group met on 2 occasions during 2014/15 and the full meeting of the forum was held in October 2015.

Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2015-16 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 2015-16:

14

Title of policy subject to screening
Asset Management
Amendment to Appointments and Promotions
Childcare Vouchers scheme
Filling Temporary Vacancies
Financial Inclusion Strategy
Garage Rent Policy
Performance Management
Redeployment
Rural Housing Strategy
Rent Maximisation Strategy
Smoke Free Policy
Social Enterprise Scheme
SPED amendment

Stock Transfer

In addition a number of minor policies and procedures were submitted to the Policy Governance Committee which is attended by the Equality Unit Manager and considers equality and other compliance issues.

Policies considered and cleared during 2015/16 included:

Accounts Payable

Affordable Warmth Scheme

Asylum Seekers

Bank Reconciliations

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Business EBanking

Cheque Crossing Removal

Fixed Assets Register

GPC Procedures

Heating Contracts

HMO - Statutory Charges

Homelessness Accounting

Land Terrier Controls

Overtime Procedures

Profess Budgetary Management

Redevelopment Area

Response Maintenance

Small Pockets of Deprivation

Social Enterprise Agreement

Special Case Payments
Specimen Signatures
Strategic ICT Services Partnership
Treasury Management
Unpresented Cheques

Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2015-16:

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 Rural Housing Policy during 2015/16 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 2015-16 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 2015-16 reporting period?

Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

The Housing Executive's Equality Monitoring policy is reviewed on a regular basis. The last review was conducted in 2012 and the policy is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2017.

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

Yes No
 Not applicable

Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2015-16

reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

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 2015/16 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 2016.

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, with regard to disability, following an initial report featuring disability issues in 2004 (Equality Bulletin No. 7 - Disability and Housing Executive Tenants), which was circulated to consultees, three further bulletins (Equality Bulletins 19, 24 & 29) updating this data have been produced. In 2012 a Pilot Disability Mapping Report was also completed which included information from the CTOS. To develop attitudinal questions about disability, included in the CTOS since 2008, the Housing Executive has consulted with a number of organisations for advice and drawn on other significant surveys.

Internal Promotion of Equality Monitoring

During 2015/16 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 has also been 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 2015/16 the Housing Executive completed its 10th annual mapping report on BME and Migrant Worker communities in Northern Ireland. Recognising organisational changes to the Housing Executive and the changes to Local Government Districts the report has been restructured and renamed as ‘Mapping Foreign Nationals Living in N. Ireland’. In this 10th 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 foreign nationals.

A case study was also carried out on the work of the Housing Executive’s Asylum Seeker Development Unit.

The 10th report can be accessed via the Housing Executive’s website: <http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/strategies/equality.htm>

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.

- Common Selection Scheme Service Delivery.
- 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 Social Development.
- Centre for Housing Policy, York University.
- Cabinet Office.
- N. Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA)
- Employers' Forum on Disability.

Use of Equality Monitoring Information

During 2015/16 the equality monitoring systems were used extensively for replies to FOI and AQ requests, and for internal information requests. A total of 23 separate requests were completed.

External Requests

External requests were received from various organisations including:

- The BBC
- Belfast City Council
- Department for Social Development (now the Department for Communities)
- N. Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA)
- MLAs
- Muscular Dystrophy UK
- Western Health & Social Care Trust

Internal Requests

Internal requests were received from various Housing Executive departments including:

- Homelessness Housing Policy
- Information Department
- Landlord Lettings
- Risk Management & Governance
- Strategic Planning

- Tenancy Management

Section 6: Staff Training

Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme undertaken during 2015-16, 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 has 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 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 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 2009, 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 2014/15 to reflect the new Equality Scheme. A further in-depth review was carried out in 2015/16 and a 'refreshed' training package re-introduced across the organisation.

To March 2016 a total of 166 courses, involving around 3,238 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.

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. Further courses will be delivered as required.

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 subsequent 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.

Post Project Evaluation

Reflective Practice - BRIC enabled staff and tenants to participate in a process of learning and understanding that included 208 reflective dialogue sessions facilitating the sharing of ideas and learning across the

organisation and with tenants from Housing Executive areas. This led to an exchange of practical solutions to often contentious issues around murals, memorials, and bonfires resulting in the 'shared' designation of a further 85 Housing Executive estates. The process of reflective practice ensured needs were continuously assessed and met. Bespoke business planning days also ensured that good relations remained at the heart of the Housing Executive at a time of organisational change and significant restructuring. It also enabled the programme to widen its reach resulting in 1,873 staff being trained against a revised programme target of 623. Ongoing evaluation evidenced the effectiveness and quality of training provided by TIDES Training and Consultancy. Participants were invited to complete a training evaluation form at the end of each session; results showed a high level of satisfaction with course delivery and content. Each attendee was also asked to devise an action plan that ensured good relations was at the core of their work, and opportunities for reflection and mentoring were also built into the programme.

In addition front line staff achieved accredited training up to OCN Level III in:

- Good Relations and Civic Leadership.
- Conflict Management.
- Developing Group and Teamwork Communication Skills.
- Working with Contentious Issues and Contentious Cultural Issues.
- Training for Trainers (Good Relations Officers and Community Cohesion Advisors).

In going forward the Housing Executive has aligned the BRIC concept into its core business and a new BRIC 2 programme has been developed. The 72 estate based programme will be delivered over 3 years across all Regions and Areas.

TIDES have been engaged to design a good relations tool kit which will be used as a bespoke training aid to deliver good relations training across the Housing Executive. It is also intended that this training will be delivered to our community groups by the Good Relations officers.

We have also utilised services and developed collaborative partnerships with our external colleagues. For example Greater Dunmurry Partnership delivered good relations training to our staff and community groups aligned to the Colin Housing Providers Forum.

Communication Support Awareness Training

Communication Support Awareness training sessions continued with 3 sessions taking place in January and February 2016, attended by 53 members of staff.

A presentation was also held for advice workers from Derry City & Strabane Council on the Housing Executive's Communication Support Services.

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 being reviewed during 2016/17.

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 2010 - 2016

Location	Courses completed @ 18/05/16	No. staff trained @ 18/05/16
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 2013 - 2016

Location	Courses completed @ 18/05/16	No. staff trained @ 18/05/16
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 2016 -

Location	Courses completed @ 18/05/16	No. staff trained @ 18/05/16
TOTAL	3	38

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 and services.

During 2015/16 the Equality Unit provided advice and support to Learning & Development to ensure that hearing impaired staff could access e-learning courses.

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 2015-16, 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 2015/16 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. 46 – Staff Briefing Autism Advice and Information.
- No. 46A – Staff Briefing Autism Factsheet

Other information provided included:

- Quarterly Reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme distributed to key staff and statutory consultees. Quarterly Reports for 2015/16 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 in various departments on a number of consultation exercises using the Consultation Toolkit. The consultations that the Equality Unit were involved in during 2015/16 are listed under external communication.
- Annual and quarterly updates on Communication Support usage are available to relevant staff.
- The Equality Unit liaised with Learning & Development to ensure that hearing impaired 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, which is consulted on, has equality at its foundation and as a principle underpinning the business function of the organisation.
- In 2015/16 a presentation on the Housing Executive's Financial Inclusion Strategy was given to the Consultative Forum Steering Group.
- 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 2015/16 we provided information to customers in audio CD, Braille, and large print, as well as translations into other languages.

- The Housing Management computer system prints rent statements in large print format.
- During 2015/16 the Equality Unit 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.
- A year-long bilingual advocacy project was 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 2015/16 the network was utilised to facilitate consultation on the draft Corporate & Business Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18, Community Cohesion Strategy 2015 – 2020, Interdepartmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services Final Report and Action Plan 2016, and Sustainable Rural Communities: A Review of Housing Executive Rural Housing Policy.
- ‘Streets Ahead’ (formerly Housing News) sent out annually to all tenants is available in alternative formats. It also includes information for tenants on how they can access free communication support services, and 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 'Type Talk' service available.
- 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.
- All 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 2015/16 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.
- A year-long 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 Housing Executive offices in Ballymena.
- 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 has 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.

Communication Support Services

The use of telephone interpreting remained consistent in 2015/16, 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 2013 - 2016 is detailed below.

Telephone Interpreting Service 2013- 2016

NIHE	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Total No. of Calls	3,145	3,420	3,055

Voluntary Sector Hostels & Asylum Seekers Unit	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Total No. of Calls	1,777	1,627	1,345

Languages Requested 2015/16: All Users = 36

Language	Total	Language	Total
Polish	1642	Bengali	15
Mandarin	618	Lingala	9
Slovak	464	Turkish	7
Arabic	347	Italian	4
Hungarian	320	Amharic	4
Romanian	265	Farsi (Afghan)	4
Portuguese	214	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	4
Lithuanian	186	Bahasa Indonesian	3
Somali	178	Hindi	2
Czech	138	Urdu	2
Bulgarian	109	Greek	1
Russian	86	Sylheti	1
Farsi (Persian)	86	Swahili	1
Spanish	82	Twi	1
French	49	Pashto	1
Cantonese	29	Kurdish (Sorani)	1
Latvian	27	Thai	1
Albanian	21	Vietnamese	1

Translations (NIHE Only) 2013 – 2016

NIHE	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Total No. of Translations	225	316	184

Languages Translated in 2015/16 = 25

Language	Total	Language	Total	Language	Total
Polish	97	Somali	3	Romanian	1
Lithuanian	35	Arabic (Syrian)	2	Turkish	1
Portuguese	22	Chinese Simplified	2	Estonian	1
Hungarian	11	Tetum	2	Spanish	1
Slovak	10	Arabic	2	Braille	1
English	9	Greek	1		
Chinese Traditional	6	Sudanese	1		
Latvian	6	Romanian	1		
Russian	5	Czech	1		
Audio Conversion	4	Nigerian Igbo	1		

Face to Face Interpreting (NIHE & Asylum Development Unit Only) 2013 – 2016

NIHE	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Total No. Interpreter Sessions	102	108	105

Languages Interpreted in 2015/16 = 15

Language	Total	Language	Total
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Chinese	38	Cantonese	2
British Sign Language	17	Arabic	2
Polish	11	Hungarian	2
Lithuanian	7	Irish Sign Language	1
Tetum	6	Latvian	1
Slovak	5	Spanish	1
Romanian	4	Czech	1
Portuguese	4		

Dissemination of Information

Corporate Plans and Business Plans are circulated within the organisation for consultation before publication. Public consultation meetings are also held. The finalised Plans can be made available in alternative formats on request and are placed on the Housing Executive website.

Quarterly Reports on the implementation of the Equality Scheme continue to be distributed to all statutory consultees.

Section 8: Complaints

How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2015-16?

Insert number here:

0

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.

No complaints relating to the statutory duties have been received to date.

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 2020.

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 relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next (2016-17) 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.