

BUILDING GOOD RELATIONS THROUGH HOUSING



Housing
Executive



Building Good Relations through housing

For 45 years the Housing Executive, our staff and tenants have lived through interesting times. Helping our tenants to feel safe, connected and involved is vital to building vibrant communities.

We know a difference can be made when local people are supported to work with others in a spirit of neighbourliness and our work through our Community Cohesion Strategy 2015-2020 aims to continue to help our neighbourhoods become stronger, safer and united.

Through our varied work we aim to build community confidence, increase awareness of and respect for diversity, increase dialogues within and between communities and ensure all our work is relevant and meeting real needs.

We work closely alongside our external and internal colleagues particularly the PSNI, Council Good Relations officers, our local offices and our Community Involvement and Community Safety units.

The booklet will give a flavour of the work we do across Northern Ireland and show how we can help you to help your community be the best it can be.

Mission Statement

To work in partnership to ensure that everyone has access to a good affordable home in a safe and healthy community.

What does Community Cohesion mean to the Housing Executive?

- Creating a common vision and sense of belonging.
- Valuing and appreciating people from different backgrounds and circumstances.
- Providing similar life opportunities for people from different backgrounds.
- Developing strong, positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.
- Brokering good relations between groups and communities.

Our work is spread across five main themes

- Communities in Transition
- Race Relations
- Interfaces
- Flags, emblems and sectional symbols
- Segregation and integration

Our Core Values

**Making a difference through
Fairness, Passion and Expertise.**

Meet the Team



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BI-LINGUAL ADVOCACY SERVICE WITH BALLYMENA INTER-ETHNIC FORUM

John Read

The project

At the heart of our work is ensuring everyone in our community has access to the support they need to make a home. In partnership with the Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Forum the yearlong Bi-lingual Advocacy service delivered a weekly housing clinic in the Ballymena Office to help people settle into the area, increase integration and help people report hate crime.

Making a difference

A better service was provided for people without English as their first language. They got the support needed to make a home and maintain their tenancy. The project helped people overcome cultural barriers, complete

application forms, liaise with other agencies, view properties and understand the tenancy agreement. The Advocates also provided support with Housing Benefit claims and have provided valuable assistance to local office staff.

In relation to housing alone the nationalities supported include Polish, Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Romanian and Lithuanian people and almost 400 people were seen at the clinics in 2015-2016

Similar support is available in other areas such as Newry and Bangor.

“This personalised customer service in our area provides a more welcoming message and we would like to thank the Housing Executive for backing this initiative.”

Ivy Goddard, Project Director, BIEF



MARY MEETS MOHAMMAD DOCUMENTARY FILM

Linda Hutchinson

The project

In 2015/16 over 500 people across Northern Ireland watched this film about Tasmania's first asylum detention centre, one of its detainees Muslim Afghan Mohammad and local Christian woman Mary. Our two hour long screenings include a Q&A session.

Linda Hutchinson, our Race Relations Officer, said: "We show the film to reduce fears, dispel myths and show asylum seekers and refugees are individuals and not an anonymous part of a huge jumble of statistics. Watching Mary's changing attitudes over the course of the film is a moving experience."

Making a difference

Our Chief Executive attended a screening and recognised its value in supporting discussions around refugees and building better race relations and this was particularly timely with the arrival of the Syrian refugees and the key role of the Housing Executive.

The majority of people attending have never met a refugee and get their information from the TV news or social media. They found the film and the Q&A valuable and encouraged us to continue to roll it out across Northern Ireland.

"It focussed my attention on the impact on individuals; my neighbours are just like Mary was at the start; excellent chance to hear facts."

Attendee at Mary Meets Mohammad screening



CRAIGAVON INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMME SUMMER SCHEME

Michelle Hazlett

The project

Children in the Portadown area had a week long 'out of this world' summer scheme thanks to the Community Intercultural Programme (CIP) and the Housing Executive. Central to the success of the scheme was the commitment shown by 70 young volunteers, from Oasis Youth Club, aged 12-19, most of whom come from the various ethnic communities now living in the area.

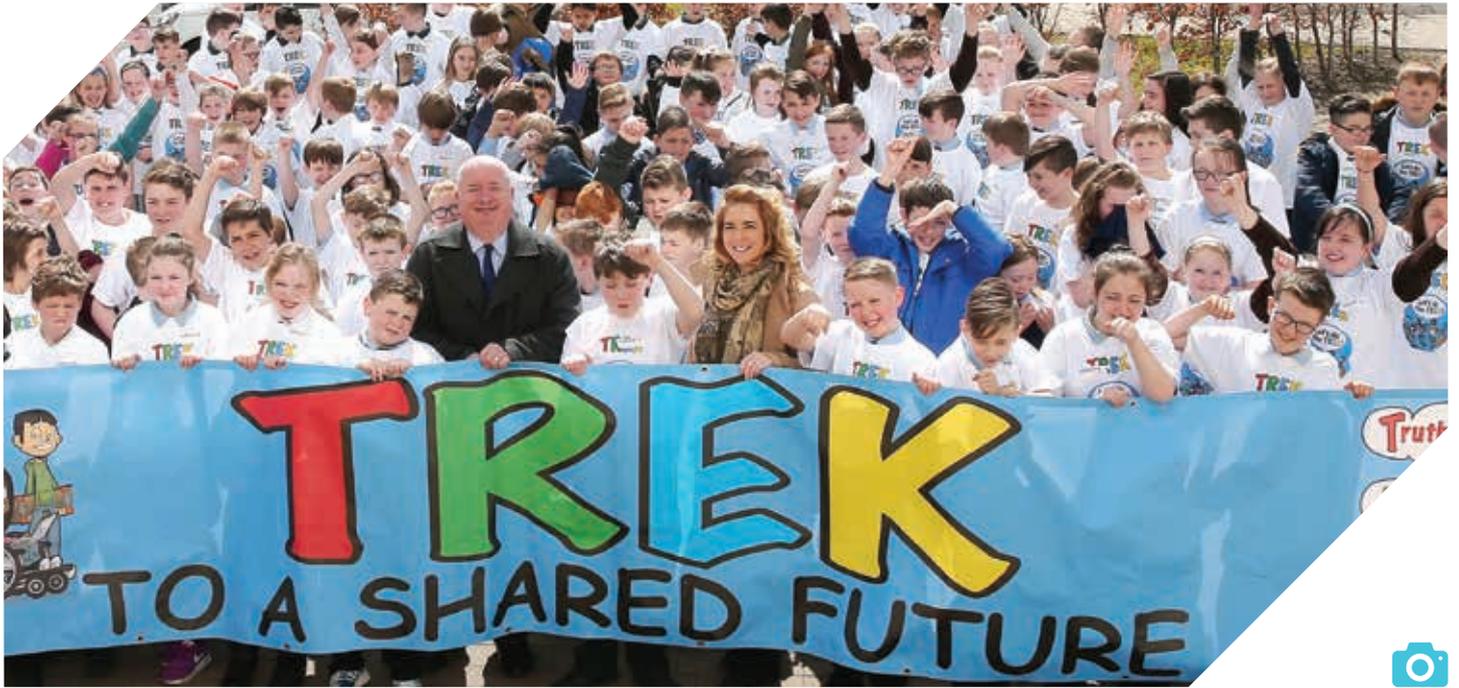
Some Syrian refugees will be housed in the Craigavon area and the need to support them and encourage a positive environment for them is paramount for CIP.

Making a difference

The shared summer scheme gave 230 local primary school children the opportunity to learn new skills and make new friends. The scheme focussed on each person's unique identity, promoted integration and inclusion, developed their civic leadership skills and celebrated the diversity within the housing estates of Portadown and central Craigavon.

"I just want to let you know that the scheme is extremely well organised and the amount of volunteers you have shows that people understand the ethos behind the scheme. As we live in a multicultural society I am pleased that my son had the opportunity to mix with different races and backgrounds to allow him to make friends and learn that we should not judge or discriminate against others. Thank you."

Summer scheme participant



TREK PROGRAMME - TRUTH RESPECT EMPATHY & KINDNESS

Amanda Ashe

The project

Our funding enabled 21 Primary Schools and communities in North Belfast to join together and participate in the Celebrating Difference TREK.

The TREK began with special breakfasts in each school and events including community coffee mornings, fancy dress days, ball games, arts and crafts, mini-TREKS and sessions for parents on celebrating difference.

Making a difference

The final cross community TREK involved 2,000 pupils, parents and community representatives united under the banner of the shared values of TREK - Truth Respect Empathy & Kindness.

"It is a great pleasure and privilege to have so many children from so many schools join our boys here in Belfast Boys' Model School for our diversity day.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together young people of all ages and backgrounds to take part in exciting activities which will help to bring about a better understanding and acceptance of each other.

"The experience will undoubtedly challenge the misunderstanding and indeed mistrust of 'different' cultures which is so often evident in our society."

Alan Logan, Principal, Belfast Boys' Model School

"We cannot underestimate the importance of grassroots, good relations activities like TREK and the Housing Executive is very proud to have supported such a positive development."

**Malachy McKinney, North Belfast Area Manager,
Housing Executive**



CULTURAL DIVERSITY CELEBRATED AT ANNADALE

Emma Galway

The project

Events supported in 2015/16 in Annadale Haywood, one of our most culturally diverse areas, included a celebration of diversity at the after-school club, a Lantern Parade and Carol Service and English classes for people from BME communities.

Making a difference

These events brought the whole community together through workshops where over 50 children made their own lanterns and the celebration at the community house and the once a week after school club including a multi-cultural educational programme.

These projects helped strengthen relationship and cultural understanding between mothers and children regardless of their cultural background and emphasised that we all have more in common than we may initially think.



“The programme has been hugely successful in that it has helped us build cohesion within this community and improve relations between the indigenous community, large Chinese community and other BME communities residing in the Annadale area.”

Jeanette McMillan, Organiser
Annadale Haywood Residents Association



INTERFACE WINTER MARKET

Eddie Breslin

The project

The Housing Executive funding enabled the IFI Peace Walls Project to deliver a Winter Market to engage more residents and the wider community in Derry/Londonderry through a unique event on the interface at the Fountain and Bishop Street. The festive market gave people the opportunity to listen to local choirs, chat together and purchase local handmade crafts.

Residents in the local area, market patrons and participants also recreated a historical scene between Fountain and Bishop Street area, as this was an old market place in times gone by. Residents learnt about local history and an era before the Peace Wall, allowing discussion to develop around lives without a wall.

Making a difference

A key outcome of the winter market was the community spirit built through the workshops.

“The marquee and funfair along the interface wall was a great outcome for this area. This was a three day event well attended by all the families from both sides of the community creating a safe space for all the community. It is now being proposed as an annual event as it was so popular”

Eddie Breslin, Good Relations Officer





RICHHILL HEN'S SHED

Michelle Hazlett

The project

The Richhill Hens' Shed is the 'women only' equivalent of a Men's Shed and offers members space to feel at home, chat, socialise and pursue an interest in crafts and cohesion. We helped the Hens to buy equipment to produce a range of exciting sellable crafts.

Making a difference

In August 2016 the Hens hosted their first craft fair in Richhill. To build greater self-sustainability, the group has expanded and recently moved to two industrial units on the Portadown Road which offer accessible ground floor accommodation and all-important car-parking and new members would be warmly welcomed. They share this with the Richhill Men's Shed who they work closely with to create wooden pieces for sale.

"Attending the shed has given me a new outlook on life. Before joining the group I was feeling isolated and rarely left the house. The shed has given me the chance to meet new friends. I feel more confident and this has increased my own self value. It is great craic and there is always opportunity to learn something new and everyone is so helpful and supportive."

One of the 'Hens'





MEN'S SHEDS IN OMAGH AND FERMANAGH

Marilyn Giboney

The project

Men's sheds helped members break down social barriers, share experiences, offer peer support and improve overall mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The Omagh project helped men become more active, improve their skills and feelings of self-worth as we refurbished a workshop and provided tools to help members carry out small repairs and painting for the local community and to build self-sufficiency.

Making a difference

Over 30 men from all walks of life have already joined the Men's Shed in Old Market Place where they can hang out, relax, make or fix things, drink tea, chat, share skills and help others. The project worker for New Horizons Fermanagh Men's Shed organised programmes and forty eight members took part so the wider family circle of approximately 300 people benefited from the Creating Opportunities and Enhancing Connections programme.



"The ethos of the programme is to reduce social isolation and to improve mental and physical health for men 60 plus and the new skills they have been learning have all contributed to this. For some having access to computer classes has seen them improve their contact with family and friends as well as benefit from online shopping. In addition the mutual support each member has been giving each other is invaluable."

Sonya Slevin, Project Co-ordinator



LOOKING GOOD ESTATE - GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Marilyn Giboney

The project

The Fox Park Residents Association took the lead on this project and wanted an activity to improve their rural estate for everyone, to build friendships and bring neighbours together. The group brought in a garden supplier to help residents fill up summer baskets or pots to enhance their homes and improve the overall look of their gardens and estate and create a peaceful and inclusive atmosphere. For those unable to attend, the elderly or those with long term health problems, the residents committee and youth from the estate delivered filled floral pots to their homes

Making a difference

Eddie Doherty, our Area Manager, was very supportive of this initiative by the residents of Fox Park. It was a great way to bring people together for a fun event that has obviously benefitted residents by making this lovely rural estate even nicer with the planting.



"The planting event was well supported by all ages and you can feel the increased sense of pride among residents. I've seen some of the younger members of our community take on responsibility for the planters by watering and weeding which I am delighted about."

Sally Mulholland, Fox Park Residents Association



ADULT LEADER TEAM BUILDING AND COHESION DEVELOPMENT RESIDENTIAL

John Read

The project

Community leaders and influencers from Woodburn, Sunnylands, Castlemara, Davy Street worked together to improve relationships within and between estates in Carrickfergus, to develop community capacity, leadership and tackle estate based issues.

The three community groups undertook team based challenges, developed strategies for problem solving and had an opportunity to build relationships between local leaders in neighbouring communities in a neutral environment.

During the residential, one workshop on Community Cohesion explored the issues affecting the areas in terms of shared history and culture, whilst discussing barriers such as territorial markings, flags and Bonfires in the areas.

The second workshop, Future Initiatives discussed the effectiveness of the residential; the outcomes achieved and shared development of future ideas and programmes.

Making a difference

The residential was attended by 22 adults and was aimed at developing joined up approaches to issues facing their communities in the Carrickfergus area. The attendees will continue to work together on estate based issues to make a difference for their neighbourhood.

It was useful to discuss and deal with issues that are basically the same in all areas. The team building tasks are something we will be using working with our youth in our own areas."

Sunnylands Resident



GOOD RELATIONS IN CARRICKFERGUS

John Read

The project

Over 400 young people from area in and around Castlemara, Glenfield, Woodburn came together In the summer of 2015 to enjoy an inter-community activity day at the Castlemara Community Centre play park.

A 'Hands on History' workshop was delivered by War Years Remembered to help those attending explore our shared history through the role played by an Irish soldier from the 10th Irish Brigade and 16th Irish Brigade during WW1.

An eight week Flag and History project by the Castlemara group was designed to look at different perspectives and to increase knowledge of our shared history such as how the Irish soldier is perceived in the Loyalist Unionist community.

Making a difference

Forty four residents of the Castlemara Area attended the flags and history workshops. The Polish contribution during WW2, the rise of the Nazi Party and the holocaust were discussed.

"Members of Castlemara Community Association have been on a journey of increased engagement and community dialogue but we recognise that our area's future is in the hands of our young people. This event, and the preceding week's summer scheme, is part of our aim to involve them from an early age, embedding good community relations, respect and tolerance of culture and history."

**Susanne Campbell, Chair
Castlemara Community Association**



INTERFACE REMOVAL, CRUMLIN ROAD

Gail Green

The project

This interface was located along the Crumlin Road in North Belfast. The area has suffered some of the highest levels of violence and has a legacy of deep division and mistrust. The removal of the wall has transformed the hearts and minds of the community as well as the physical look of the area.

Making a difference

The removal of the interface along the Crumlin Road has been a monumental and positive change on the landscape. It will create greater opportunities for social integration/mobility by opening up the community to the outside world and exposing them to an environment that is not inward. As the community looks to the future with optimism, the younger generation will be gently exposed to a new set of norms.

This project is leading the way in terms of interface removal it is the forerunner and residents who have been

a part of this process have expressed a hope that this innovative model will be help others to take the brave steps to open up their neighbourhoods and explore new opportunities to remove or re-imagine barriers.

“Our job is to work to try to ensure that real regeneration takes place in and around interface communities.”

Ian McLaughlin,
Lower Shankill Community Association

“This is a very positive day for the people of this community and indeed for all communities segregated by physical barriers. The residents who live here have decided to reject the fear and negativity that epitomize peace walls and to embrace hope and a better way of life for their children and their grandchildren.”

Rab McCallum,
TASCIT and North Belfast Interface Network



REIMAGING PROJECT IN THE FOUNTAIN, DERRY/LONDONDERRY

Eddie Breslin

The project

Representatives and residents of the Fountain Estate asked for support to soften/reimage a mural located just off Hawkin Street to improve relations. Tourists visiting the city generally view The Fountain from a vantage point on Derry's Walls overlooking this street. It would be fair to say that the old mural (pictured right) was not welcoming to visitors and was inappropriate for children in the nearby primary school, MUGA pitch and children's day care centre.

After discussions it was clear there was no desire to completely remove a mural, however that local residents were willing to have it softened and they decided that any new mural should focus on culture and history.

Making a difference

The new mural includes an image of the Apprentice Boys of Derry marching to commemorate the Siege of

Londonderry in 1688/1689, and feature an image of the Siege and the City's Coat of Arms.

This completed project received a lot of positive feedback from within The Fountain Estate Community and also helped us as landlord to further develop community relations within this interface area.





SOUTH BELFAST APPROACHES TO REIMAGING

Emma Galway

The project

The Greater Village Regeneration Trust in partnership with South Belfast ACT Initiative developed artwork in South Belfast to reflect the history of Saint Patrick.

Making a difference

The new positive and inspiring images give a true reflection of the history of Saint Patrick. The project entailed workshops with local community and schools.

Other reimagining work includes murals of local history, sporting heroes and celebrations of our shared history such as the South Belfast 'Poppy Trail' mural illustrates local men who gave their lives in WW1.



"Projects such as St Patrick's and Poppy Trail will form a walking tour which tells the stories of local men and women. We are excited about its progress and its contribution to the area's physical regeneration."

Angela Johnston, Greater Village Regeneration Trust



STRABANE YOUTH MAKE THEIR MARK

Eddie Breslin

The project

A mural of graffiti art, created by a group of local young people, was on public display in the Head of the Town. The artwork is a legacy project for the young people from Fountain Street Community Association who were involved in a graffiti and mural arts festival in July.

They were among 50 young artists from Tullyally and Curryneirin, Strathfoyle, the Bogside, Strabane and Ballymagroarty who engaged in a collaborative project to create an 80ft mural, funded by the Housing Executive.

The project was aimed at building positive relationships and addressing current issues including hate crime, sectarianism, youth engagement, community cohesion and urban regeneration.

Making a difference

“This was an amazing opportunity for the young people from Fountain Street youth project to get involved in. I couldn’t be more proud of the progress the young people have made in the last few years. Their new mural is a reflection of that. It will also serve to change the perception of mural art and graffiti in Northern Ireland and celebrate the future of modern and contemporary non-political murals as a tool for social change.”

**Rose Crossan, Youth Co-Ordinator,
Fountain Street Community Centre**



BALLYBEEN ART PROJECT

[Emma Galway](#)

The project

The Bonfire group in Ballybeen engaged with Housing Executive staff to provide fencing around the bonfire site in Ballybeen in an attempt to keep it tidy and reduce the opportunity for dumping and potentially also reduce anti-social behaviour. This group also worked together on an art project to be displayed on boards and fixed to the temporary fencing.

Making a difference

A total of 120 young people from four local schools and one youth club helped develop the boards. Those living in the area commented on the impact that the project had on not only the safety and management of the bonfire but also how proud the young children were to be involved in the art project. The boards were displayed for all to see for a number of weeks in the centre of their community and were then returned to the schools and youth clubs as a long lasting reminder of the project.





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