

08 January 2024

Our Ref: FOI 247

Request

We received your request on 15 December 2023 for the following information:

We wish to understand how NIHE are responding to the rise of racist hate crime and far right extremism and advising housing applicants regarding personal safety. See below links for further information;

<https://hyphenonline.com/2023/10/26/the-attack-was-a-message-you-are-not-safe-here-belfast-racist-attacks-muslim/>

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-67614223?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA

Please provide the following for Belfast;

- 1. Any guidance or advice the NIHE provide to housing applicants, advice agencies or housing associations regarding the NIHE assessment of the potential danger of racist or sectarian violence in Belfast - for example when people are selecting areas of choice.*
- 2. The NIHE analysis of the safest and most dangerous areas of choice for;*
 - Minority Communities*
 - People from a Catholic community background*
 - People from a Protestant community background*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

1. *Any guidance or advice the NIHE provide to housing applicants, advice agencies or housing associations regarding the NIHE assessment of the potential danger of racist or sectarian violence in Belfast - for example when people are selecting areas of choice.*

The Housing Executive does not provide such guidance as selection of areas of choice is a customer led process. Customers are encouraged to select those areas of choice where they would be content to live. Customers are free to change their areas of choice at any time, and for any reason, while they are on the waiting list for accommodation.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is an issue that concerns everybody. Tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour including hate incidents in our estates is a priority for the Housing Executive as we aim for every resident to feel safe, enjoy living in their neighbourhood and feel confident when reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour to us. The Housing Executive has a range of statutory and non-statutory interventions in place to address ASB, using an incremental and proportionate approach as and when necessary. We also have comprehensive and rigorous policies and procedures designed to address ASB thus enabling us to respond in a quick and efficient manner. The Housing Executive continues to work with our statutory partners and build on our well-established relationships with voluntary and community-based agencies to improve community safety in our communities. We have and will continue to take a proactive approach by investing in local initiatives through the community safety funding programme as a preventative measure to ensure community safety, deal with local issues, create safer communities, lessen the fear of crime, and build community confidence.

2. *The NIHE analysis of the safest and most dangerous areas of choice for;*

- *Minority Communities*
- *People from a Catholic community background*
- *People from a Protestant community background*

NIHE does not carry out such analysis.

This concludes our response.