

Third Quarterly Report (2023/2024) on the Implementation of the Equality Scheme

1.0 Compliance Issues

1.1 Equality Screening/Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) Screening

From 1st October – 31st December 2023 the following policies have been screened:

- Rural Housing Needs Test
- Easements Over Third Party Land Policy
- Ground Rent Redemption Policy

Screening reports are available on request.

EQIA

An Equality Impact Assessment of the Discretionary Housing Payment policy has been initiated.

1.2 Training

Safeguarding Training

There were 5 Safeguarding training courses held during 1st October – 31st December 2023.

Equality Awareness Training

There were 2 Equality Awareness training courses held during 1st October – 31st December 2023.

1.3 Access to Information and Services

Communication Support (Translation & Interpreter Services)

A total of 3,462 telephone based interpreting sessions were held from 1st October to 31st December 2023. The top 3 most requested languages are listed below:

- Arabic
- Somali
- Tigrinya

Translation tasks totalled 93 and face to face interpreter sessions (including Sign Language) totalled 26. There were <10 requests for alternative formats and 82 calls were made using the Video Relay Service (VRS).

1.4 Monitoring

Equality Monitoring waiting list and allocations data is available up to the 31st December 2023.

1.5 Consultation

The Housing Executive's full Consultative Forum on Equality was held on 6th October 2023. The next meeting is scheduled for 20th March 2024.

2.0 Key Equality/Good Relations Programme

2.1 Community Cohesion Team:

Flags, emblems, sectional symbols - Re-imaging

Community Groups are finding creative ways to engage with their local areas to deliver reimagining projects with the Housing Executive's support in Ballymena, Mid and East Antrim, Derry and Strabane, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Antrim & Newtownabbey, North Belfast and Ards & North Down. Further details are available upon request.

Estate Based Cohesion Funding

The Housing Executive has delivered a number of projects across our 70 areas, working closely with local communities to support and assist them. There have been 64 estate based projects funded in total. Further details available on request.

Segregation / Integration

The Shared Housing Programme currently supports 69 shared schemes (1973 homes) and we are currently programming 23/24 with a target of 200 units.

Each shared neighbourhood is supported through the development and delivery of a five-year Good Relations Plan. The Good Relations Plan is managed by the Housing Association developing the shared scheme and includes 'bonding' programmes which are delivered to residents in the new shared neighbourhood and 'bridging' programmes which are delivered within and between new and surrounding communities.

A key support mechanism to the delivery of the Good Relations Plan is the establishment of an Advisory Group to inform the plan. The Advisory Group is made up of local stakeholders from the Housing Executive, Council, Political representatives, Community and Voluntary organisations and other statutory bodies working in the area.

Interfaces

Housing Executive Interface sites

The Housing Executive continue to work with our partners in the Department for Justice to reimagine and reimage interfaces. This is done by taking a people centred, community led approach and working with key stakeholders in each of the areas in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

We currently have 21 sites over 26 locations:

- 17 locations works are completed
- 7 locations currently operational
- 2 locations where there has been no community agreement to pursue at present.

Communities in Transition - Areas at Risk

The Community Cohesion Unit manage the Areas at Risk programme in both Greater Whitewell and Glenbank areas in North Belfast on behalf of Department for Communities (DfC). Details on this scheme are available on request.

Race Relations

Race Relations is an important part of the Housing Executive's work.

We work closely with BME Sector, Area Offices and the Good Relations Officers to support work on the ground promoting integration and supporting

the development of race relations programmes. We have delivered 7 Race Relations projects with a view to raising awareness and promoting integration across and between our estates. Details are available on request.

Strategic Cohesion Forum

The Strategic Cohesion forum continues to work together in partnership, to influence, shape and inform the Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Strategy and Policies.

Community Cohesion

The next Irish Travellers Team update will be in the 4th Quarterly Report 2023/24.

2.2 EDI Steering Group/EDI Workstreams

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group meeting took place on 17 January 2024.

The following EDI workstream meetings were held during 1st October – 31st December 2023:

Community Background workstream: 22 November

- Key activity: Exploring opportunities arising from new partnership with DfC and upcoming affirmative action opportunities through local job fairs.

Disability workstream: 18 October, 4 December

- Key activity: Autism Strategy update, discussion on setting up peer support groups for parents/carers of autistic family members, deaf awareness planning.

Gender work stream: 18 October, 7 December

- Key activity: Baby loss awareness and men's health month planning.

LGBT+ workstream: 19 September, 28 November

- Key activity: discussions around opportunities to improve workplace culture, including links into NICS LGBTQ+ Network and Working with Pride network.

Race workstream: 4 October, 8 November

- Key activity: Planning for Black History Month, participation in NICS Cultural Network Event.

EDI Events and Awareness Raising

Black History Month Expo: 25 October

The Race workstream organised the Housing Executive's participation in the Black History Month Expo at St George's Market.

Baby loss Awareness Week: w/c 9 October

The Gender workstream organised several events to mark the week. This included a coffee morning where colleagues could access information on support services as well as donate to charities supporting baby loss. The workstream also organised a 'little stars walk' on Sunday 15 Oct, bringing colleagues together to remember the lives lost.

Deaf Awareness Training

The RNID carried out deaf awareness training on 28 November. The session was targeted to teams working with colleagues who are deaf or have hearing loss. Feedback was positive and another session is being delivered in January.

Outreach Activity

Job and Careers Fairs

Regular meetings continue to take place with HR and Comms to review upcoming recruitment activity and ensure opportunities for affirmative action are identified and planned in advance. The Housing Executive continues to develop its partnership working with DfC Employer Services, with all vacancies now being advertised through their JobApplyNI website.

Job/Careers fairs attended in October and November included Belfast, Antrim, Ballymena and Cookstown. The Housing Executive also attended a careers night in Dromore High School, and again took part in the annual School Summit on 2/3 October.

Customer Forums

The EDI Outreach Manager also attended several customer forums to help raise awareness of our outreach ambitions, including our apprenticeship programme. This included attending the Rural Residents Forum in Cookstown and the HCN in Downpatrick.

Partnerships

The Housing Executive continues to develop its partnership with Women's Tec through the #notjustforboys programme. This has included offering a work placement in one of our Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) depots for a female student currently studying an NVQ in joinery skills with People First.

Meetings have also taken place with Disability Action to help inform our entry level strategy. This will include work placement opportunities and other affirmation action measures to support disabled people into training and employment.

2.3 Key Documents

The following documents can be viewed and downloaded by accessing the links below:

NIHE Equality Scheme

[Housing Executive Equality Scheme](#)

NIHE Disability Action Plan

[Housing Executive Disability Action Plan](#)

4th Comprehensive Irish Traveller Accommodation Survey

[Irish Traveller Accommodation Survey 2018/19 Report and Tables](#)

If you require any further information on any of topics discussed in this report or if you require the report in an alternative format please email your request to EDISTeam@nihe.gov.uk