

# Migrant Workers & the Housing Market

## A Report to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
Terms of Reference	9
Approach and Methodology	9
Report Structure	10
<b>2. LOCAL HOUSING SYSTEMS AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT</b>	<b>11</b>
Local Housing System Analysis	11
Migration: Potential Economic, Social and Housing Impacts	12
Economic	12
Social	14
Housing	14
Implications	16
Northern Ireland Policy Contexts	17
Economic and Regional Development	17
Migration and Social Inclusion	20
Welfare	22
Housing Policy	24
<b>3. MIGRANT WORKERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction	25
Northern Ireland trends in international migration flows	25
Data limitations	25
In-migration flows	26
Out-migration flows	27
Migration flows at local authority level	28
Changes in the stock of international migrants in Northern Ireland	29
Ethnicity and Country of birth	29
Spatial distribution of the migrant/minority ethnic population	34
Qualitative Perspectives on Northern Ireland Economic Migration	36
Respondent Views	36
Key Points	40
<b>4. THE DUNGANNON LOCAL HOUSING SYSTEM</b>	<b>42</b>
Introduction	42
The geography of Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough	42
The Dungannon and South Tyrone economy and labour market	43
Economic performance since 2000	43
Structure of the labour market	44
Patterns of economic activity	46
The position of foreign workers in the labour market	47
Demographic trends	49
Population growth	49
Age distribution of the population	52
Household trends	52

<b>Evolving tenure patterns</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Owner occupation and private sector development</b>	<b>55</b>
Private housing completions	55
Housing market conditions and recent price trends	57
Affordability	57
Foreign nationals and homeownership	58
<b>Private Renting</b>	<b>59</b>
Private rented stock and its ownership	59
Growing demand, rents and affordability	60
Greater competition and the risk of displacement	60
HMOs and overcrowding	62
<b>Social Renting</b>	<b>63</b>
 <b>5. THE LARNE LOCAL HOUSING SYSTEM</b>	 <b>67</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>The spatial structure of Larne District</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>The local economy and labour market</b>	<b>69</b>
Structure of the local economy	69
Economic performance before and after the 2007/8 downturn	70
Prospects	72
<b>Demographic trends</b>	<b>74</b>
International migration	74
Household trends	75
<b>The local housing stock</b>	<b>76</b>
Housing development	76
Tenure	77
<b>Owner Occupation</b>	<b>79</b>
Recent housing market dynamics and short term prospects	79
Negative equity, debt and repossessions	80
<b>Private renting</b>	<b>82</b>
Growing constraints for low income tenants	82
Risk of exploitative landlords	83
<b>Social renting</b>	<b>83</b>
 <b>6. DUNGANNON AND LARNE: CONTRASTING EXPERIENCES</b>	 <b>85</b>
 <b>7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	 <b>91</b>
<b>Summary and Conclusions</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Final Thoughts</b>	<b>99</b>
 <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	 <b>100</b>
 <b>APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY INTERVIEW SCHEDULES</b>	 <b>105</b>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall aim of this study was to undertake two housing market analyses, using these to compare and contrast the impact of migrant workers on the local housing markets of Dungannon and Larne district council areas.

The research involved policy and academic literature reviews, secondary data analysis and a programme of in depth interviews with local and province-wide stakeholders. The material assembled was then used to implement two local housing system analyses.

The existing academic evidence base provides few robust conclusions with respect to the economic, social and housing impacts of international economic migration. A big problem is that few of the studies conducted to date specifically disaggregate EU migration from other forms of migration. Another problem is that studies usually fail to differentiate between recent migration and longer term migration/permanent relocation. A further issue is that while problems are likely to be locally (place and time) specific, most studies focus on the national/regional picture. The evidence suggests nonetheless that migration typically adds to the pressure for private renting and increases overall housing demand in the short to medium term. These are phenomena that local housing systems are typically ill placed to deal with. In short, local housing systems are often slow to respond to sharp rises in aggregate demand.

At the same time, migration adds to the challenge of planning for demographic change and future household growth. More generally, local community cohesion is often challenged where the pace of change puts unexpected pressure on existing services and local infrastructure - especially where these pressures cannot be easily/readily addressed.

In the 10 years to 2011, the resident population of Northern Ireland increased by 7.5%. Whilst partly driven by international immigration, natural population change was a more important direct driver of population change, accounting for almost 60% of the 125,600 increase in the resident population of Northern Ireland.

In-migration to Northern Ireland increased rapidly in the period immediately following European Union (EU) enlargement in 2004. In particular, in-migration involved significant numbers of Polish, and to a lesser extent, Lithuanian, Slovakian, Latvian and Romanian in-migrants. The numbers of Polish and Lithuanian born residents now exceed those from China and India, which are the two largest long-standing minority ethnic groups.

The period 2001-2011 also saw a significant increase in the number of Portuguese born people locating into Northern Ireland. Another significant flow, from outside Europe, has involved people born in East Timor.

In the wake of the 2008 economic recession, in-migration fell back. A post-2008 decrease in migrant inflows has been accompanied by an increase in out-migration. The overall result is that net international migration has fallen back, although it remains positive.

International migration inflows have been concentrated in Belfast, Dungannon, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne. Dungannon in particular has seen a very high proportion of

international in-migrants relative to the rest of Northern Ireland. Larne has, in contrast, experienced very little international in-migration.

From a province-wide perspective, there is a degree of concern that the Northern Ireland Executive does not have a clear vision concerning future in-migration, or cohesive policies in place to support the kinds of in-migration that would most benefit the economy.

At a local level, the Dungannon and Larne local housing systems have followed very different trajectories over the last 10-15 years and currently face significantly differing issues.

The **Dungannon** local housing system:

- Is based on a dynamic local economy that is recovering well from the 'Global Financial Crash and is still expanding.
- Has experienced very fast population growth, rapid household growth, and relatively fast growth of large household numbers.
- Has had to cope with significant foreign migrant workforces drawn to opportunities in food processing/packaging, light engineering and seasonal agricultural work.
- Has experienced rapid growth in private renting, much of which is geared towards accommodating the migrant workforce. This expansion of private renting was facilitated prior to 2008 by the large number of new private homes built as a result of the Northern Ireland housing boom.
- Retains a relatively small social rented sector, which provides some accommodation support to the migrant workforce - but not disproportionately so.
- Is showing signs of growing housing need within parts of the District, which is being exacerbated by pockets of community intolerance in areas where supply conditions are otherwise less difficult, and is arising in a context of concerns being expressed by local community members over the transparency of social renting allocation rules.

The **Larne** local housing system:

- Has a moderately diverse economy that prior to 2008 operated in a solid, but unspectacular fashion. While, post-crash, there has been some evidence of green shoots emerging, no great transformation of Larne economic prospects is currently in sight. The threat of slow decline therefore remains very real.
- Has had to cope with only modest population growth and low rates of net in-migration (very little of which has involved foreign nationals).
- Experienced the build-up of a considerable negative equity problem over the boom-bust period, which continues to act as a significant drag on housing market recovery.
- Witnessed considerable growth of private renting and a sharp decline in social renting over the period 2001-2011, especially within Larne Town. This largely involved growth in private renting (again facilitated by private house building) that rendered areas of social rented stock low demand, and precipitated extensive demolition in the social rented sector. Even so, the total stock vacancy rate continued to rise over much of the 2000s.

- Is not experiencing generalised pressure arising from a shortage of housing supply.
- Continues to operate under a shadow of paramilitary sectarian activity within the unionist community. This affects the reputation of Larne Town and the day-to-day operation of the housing system (especially in terms of the perceived suitability of specific areas for specific households).
- Has a lack of smaller units for single people, which is aggravated by the absence of generally well integrated housing/care services for vulnerable groups. Moreover, social housing allocation processes are combining with limited supply of small units to cause problems by concentrating vulnerable young single people within the town centre.

Policy recommendations for **Dungannon** include:

- Introduction of time limited development planning permissions.
- Additional social rented housing, possibly led by a local supply taskforce with a broader remit to explore creative financing solutions.
- Additional temporary housing for families, possibly through a private leasing initiative.
- Increased clarity on the social housing allocation process to dispel local concerns regarding favouritism.
- Review of LHA boundaries as they apply to Dungannon Town.
- Establishment of a Department for Social Development (DSD) led Working Group on ways to improve private landlord standards of performance and legislation compliance.
- An enhanced role for healthcare workers in identifying households that are subject to poor housing circumstances
- Close monitoring of the impact of welfare reform on the numbers of homeless without recourse to public assistance

Policy Recommendations for **Larne** include:

- A portable negative equity initiative.
- Introduction of a choice based letting initiative to ameliorate low demand in parts of the social rented sector.
- Promotion of shared social tenancies amongst qualifying single people aged 25-35.
- A private rented leasing initiative to reduce the spatial concentration of young single people within the Larne Town centre.
- Prioritisation of tenancy support initiatives through community planning.
- Landlord accreditation linked to Private Sector Grant for property maintenance.
- Development of a voluntary local letting code.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland housing system is slowly emerging from a period of tempestuous change. The roller coaster of speculative boom followed by spectacular bust in the post 2007 period has reconfigured the housing landscape in fundamental ways<sup>1</sup>. In 2014, average house prices in Northern Ireland were still only half what they were just seven years earlier. The consequent negative equity overhang in the province remains imposing. Private renting, reflecting both the investor driven boom and demand from potential first time buyers unable to access owner occupation had grown from 3.5 per cent of total housing stock across Northern Ireland in 1990 (fewer than 20,000 dwellings)<sup>2</sup> to 16.5 per cent in 2011(125,000+ dwellings) - and was providing a home to 18 per cent of all households.

Private renting now exceeds social renting in Northern Ireland in terms of absolute/relative scale of provision. As social housing provision (Housing Executive plus housing association) has fallen - from 134,000 dwellings (almost 21 per cent of total stock) in 2001 to less than 111,000 dwellings in 2011 (less than 15 per cent of total stock) waiting lists for social housing and recorded levels of 'housing stress' (need) have essentially doubled. Of necessity, private renting has come therefore to much greater prominence in meeting housing need in Northern Ireland.

Demographic trends have proved equally dramatic. In 2011 the total usual resident population of Northern Ireland included just over 81,000 people born outside of the United Kingdom (UK) or Republic of Ireland (RoI) – an increase of around 200 per cent over 2001(Krausova & Vargas-Silva, 2014). Between 2001 and 2011 the population of Northern Ireland born outside of the UK and the RoI grew by over 54,000 people, accounting for 43 per cent of total population growth over the decade (ibid). Many of these people were economic migrants from other parts of Europe and, to a lesser degree from farther afield. On arrival they did not distribute evenly across Northern Ireland; while some parts of Northern Ireland have experienced little or no influx of economic migrants others have seen the establishment of (in local area terms) fairly considerable numbers of workers originating from abroad.

The relative economic fortunes of different nations, the configuration of national social and welfare policies and individual entitlements to move across national borders have, collectively, provided a dynamic backdrop, informing migratory patterns and intentions. In consequence some local areas in Northern Ireland may have experienced patterns of in and out movement of migrant populations that by virtue of their comparative speed, have posed challenges to a range of service providers and to the housing system.

Against this backdrop the Northern Ireland Housing Executive decided, in 2013, to commission a study examining the effects of migrant workers on two housing markets.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the statistics in this section derive from NIHE (2014)

<sup>2</sup> NIHE (2005)



## **Terms of Reference**

The specific Terms of Reference for the research were set out in NIHE's Tender Document of December 2013. They stipulated that the overall aim of the project was to undertake two housing market analyses, using these to compare and contrast the impact of migrant workers on the local housing markets of Dungannon and Larne district council areas.

The key objectives of the research project were further articulated as follows:

- To provide a profile of private rented, social and owner occupied accommodation in both towns.
- To establish recent trends in Dungannon and Larne in the demand for housing in the private and social sector, including the incidences of homelessness, and estimate how these have been affected by the inflow of migrant workers in Dungannon.
- To analyse any changes in the role of migrant workers in the local housing markets of Dungannon and Larne over the last three - five years.
- To provide an insight into affordability issues around property prices and private rental levels in both towns and also how this impacts on migrant workers in Dungannon.
- To assess the impact of the downturn on the local housing markets of Larne and Dungannon and how this has affected migrant workers in meeting their housing needs.

The research was to be carried out between February and October 2014.

## **Approach and Methodology**

The methodology agreed for undertaking the research involved:

- Conducting a literature review of salient policy material relating to Northern Ireland, the UK and Europe.
- Exploring wider literature relating to economic and demographic trends and, more specifically, to the impacts of migration on housing.
- Assembly of secondary data relating to the Dungannon and Larne local government districts
- In depth interviews with a range of national and local stakeholders that have a strategic interest in the housing of migrant worker households
- Preparation of local housing system analyses for Dungannon and Larne

It is important at this stage to establish the limitations of the research. No primary research beyond the interviews with national and local stakeholders was undertaken. Specifically, while some focus group work was conducted with migrant workers in Dungannon, the research did not involve any survey work with migrant populations. This reflects the primary focus of the study, which was an investigation of the impacts of migrant groups on local housing systems and not the experiences of migrant groups within those systems per se.

The research work was overseen and informed by two local Project Reference Groups (PRG) established by NIHE. We are grateful to the PRGs for the advice and guidance offered on

who to interview, issues to explore locally, what the data assembled meant and possible policy issues. They are not however responsible for the content of this report.

## **Report Structure**

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets the scene by explaining the core research framework in more detail, summarising existing general understanding of migrant worker housing impacts and summarising the relevant Northern Ireland policy scene.
- Section 3 presents further statistical information on recent migrant trends into and within Northern Ireland to further contextualise the findings of sections 3 and 4 and to inform the remaining analysis.
- Sections 4 and 5 present the key features of the Dungannon and Larne local housing systems respectively. In both instances, attention is restricted to the areas demarcated by existing (pre-2015) local government district boundaries, as instructed through the research commissioning process. These sections also draw out specifically the more localised experiences of the Dungannon and Larne local housing systems in terms of economic migrant experience and impacts, using local interview evidence, while section 6 reflects further on the contrasts between the two local housing systems in economic migrant terms.
- Section 7 summarises, offers conclusions on the analysis undertaken and makes some policy recommendations.

## **2. LOCAL HOUSING SYSTEMS AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT**

In this section we first explain the nature and relevance of ‘local housing system analysis’ (LHSA) before going on to consider previous research work on the impacts migrant workers can have on housing systems. Finally, we consider briefly the Northern Ireland policy context for the research.

### **Local Housing System Analysis**

LHSA is essentially a structured approach to understanding local housing outcomes (O’Sullivan et al 2004). It is based on the following underlying ideas:

- A housing system is normally differentiated in terms of the housing available and the neighbourhoods in which housing is located. There are also often wide variations in composition, income, lifestyles and attitudes of households who occupy or are seeking accommodation.
- Aside from households, other relevant influences on housing processes and outcomes include government bodies (central and local), financial institutions, landlords, regulatory bodies, the construction industry and estate agents. Housing outcomes generally reflect the interacting decisions and transactions of these different interests.
- A housing system involves complex flows: These include construction, demolition, allocation and transaction processes. Unless a particular element or component is set in the context of the bigger housing system, it is not possible to have a clear understanding of what is happening to it and why it is happening.
- A local housing system is influenced by the broader (national, regional) economic, demographic and policy changes occurring beyond its boundaries. In particular, broader socio-economic trends shape the local scale and spatial patterns of housing demand, need and supply. Any analysis of a housing system must therefore be accompanied by an examination of both the local economic environment, and of broader socio-demographic trends.
- Housing systems are dynamic, changing constantly over time.

In practical terms, what this all means is that to make sense of what is happening locally to housing involves taking into account broad drivers of change and local interactions between tenures, while conclusions are necessarily time-contingent.

When a housing system is operating effectively it is in ‘balance’ (at that point in time); otherwise it can be said to be ‘imbalanced’. LHSA aims to identify the nature and extent of such imbalances.

The LHSA framework is used as the basis for local housing strategic planning across Northern Ireland and has previously been applied in a number of locations, including to the Belfast metropolitan housing market area (Young et al, 2011).

## **Migration: Potential Economic, Social and Housing Impacts**

In this section we review the academic, official and grey literature that has examined the economic impacts (chiefly labour market but also fiscal outcomes, etc), social impacts (primarily issues of cohesion operating at different spatial scales) and housing impacts of migration.

### ***Economic***

Labour market performance is a key source of contested impact from immigrants to the UK. Green et al (2013), in the context of a wider hollowing out of jobs into low and high skilled, found no evidence that employers prefer migrants to UK workers in low skilled jobs but that there is evidence to suggest that both UK workers and migrants with higher level skills have taken lower skill jobs in order to work during the recent recession. Displacement is also likely to be more apparent when absolute volumes of in-migration are high and where it leads to employment in low skilled jobs.

Devlin et al (2014) examine the impact of migration on UK native employment. They find relatively little evidence that migration has displaced native UK employment in periods of economic growth, but that there is some more recent evidence of displacement during recession. However, these displacement effects dissipate over time. In an earlier study, Clark and Drinkwater (2008) found that labour market performance varies greatly across different migrant groups and so does their impact on native UK workers, while recent migrants tend to fare worse than native born UK workers in terms of employment rates and earnings after controlling for personal characteristics. Dustmann et al (2005) argue that there are no discernible aggregate migrant effects on native born workers, but that there are some differences across different educational groups.

Barrell et al (2006) contrast UK experience with other European nations. Polish nationals who migrated were found chiefly to go to Germany, Italy and the UK. The authors ran simulations of much increased migration into these countries and found the effects only to be transitory for employment and inflation but permanent for GDP. Output rises also help to accommodate or absorb population increases (there are also mirror effects for the sending country – in this case Poland, in terms of reducing output and population).

There have been a number of wider studies of the economic impact of migration within Europe. Di Georgi and Pellizarri (2006) consider the question of welfare migration to the EU15 countries. They find a small but statistically significant effect of the generosity of benefits on migration and argue for a feasible common welfare benefit system across Europe (a common minimum income). More conceptually, Riley and Weale (2006) argue that an unanticipated increase in the supply of a factor (labour) will reduce its price and generate switches in the relative capital and labour intensity of the economy. If migrants have higher level skills than the jobs they are doing this can increase the productivity difference between them and indigenous workers with consequent economic and political implications. Salient lower wages can offset the fiscal benefits of immigration. Blanchflower et al (2007) (in a more benign economic climate) argue that migrant-driven expansion in labour supply has reduced inflationary pressures and the natural rate of unemployment.

The Centre for Economic Performance (2010) contends that worries about immigration are over-stated: immigration acts to fill gaps in skills and labour supply during growth periods, immigrants do little to displace native workers and have little if any impact on housing (i.e. there is no preferential access). However the authors of this study recognise modest negative effects on native lower skilled labour and agree that not enough is known concerning the wider economic impacts of immigration in the recent downturn or of longer term effects.

In a report for IPPR, Reed and Latorre (2009) conclude that migration effects on the economy are complex, multi-dimensional, and do not produce neat short- or long-run conclusions. However, their review of the evidence suggests that overall these effects should best be thought of as neutral or mildly positive. As others have argued, many of these effects are transitory and they do caution that the EU accession impacts may be of an unprecedented order.

Specifically Irish studies that have considered the economic impacts of migrant workers coming into Northern Ireland include those by Rogers, 2007; McVeigh and McAfee, 2009; Bell, et al, 2009; Oxford Economics, 2009 and Russell, 2012.

Rogers (2007) looks at post 2004 accession country migration into Northern Ireland, finding a large variation across space as to where migrants settled (with Dungannon the most popular location). Compared to migrants in the UK as a whole, Northern Irish-based EU accession migrants were disproportionately found in manufacturing, food processing, construction and administrative jobs.

McVeigh and McAfee (2009) consider the impact of the downturn on Polish migrants in Northern Ireland, and found much higher levels of unemployment than amongst indigenous workers, greater job insecurity and lower take up of benefits. These issues were compounded by language issues and difficulties using certain public services such as the NHS. Bell, et al (2009), through a large study of migrants in Northern Ireland during the economic crisis, confirms the findings of McVeigh and McAfee (and other earlier studies). Bell et al also record frequent expression of positive attitudes to living in Northern Ireland by migrant workers.

Oxford Economics (2009) offer a comprehensive study of the economic impacts of migrants in Northern Ireland. The authors found it challenging conceptually and empirically to undertake this assessment but their key findings were that:

- Migrants make a significant contribution to the Northern Irish economy and that Polish migrants in Northern Ireland are of a significant scale compared with the UK as a whole.
- Migrants do often fit the stereotype of being overworked and over-skilled but are not as likely as popular belief dictates to exit in recession back to their origin countries.
- Economic analysis of net contribution to the local economy is positive. In their central scenario simulation for 2008, post 2004 migrants contributed strongly to the Northern Ireland economy, with a net increase of just under 40,000 jobs created and £1.2 billion additional GVA.

## ***Social***

The second major dimension of migration is its effect on society, especially with respect to social cohesion and integration. Münz (2004) argues that more active integration policies are required to cope with the impacts of younger migrants living alongside an ageing native resident population. As this latter group shrinks, more positive migration policies may well be required. Vertovec (2007) highlights the multi-dimensionality of contemporary immigrant characteristics, referring to ‘super-diversity’. Vertovec points to the variety of age/gender/skills involved as well as rights and status variations. This necessitates accommodating variation in local area responses and service provision with corresponding complex challenges for cohesion, integration and service delivery.

In a widely cited analysis, Hickman et al (2008) conclude that more effective cohesion policies will require both relational and structural reforms. Addressing how people get on with each other will not resolve problems unless policy makers and other actors also address questions of inequality, deprivation and disadvantage. Penninx et al (2008) are critical of much of the research in this area but focus on the necessary connections between immigration and subsequent integration and how this is best understood for the different interests. They argue that integration policies have become as politically sensitive as immigration itself, especially in North Western European countries. In terms of a shared sense of belonging of society as a whole, incomers are often viewed as ‘triggers or threats’ and, it has been argued, this may lead to more fundamental questioning of what national identity means. This analysis sits well with the conclusions of Saggar et al (2012).

Finally, in a JRF study of poverty and ethnicity in Northern Ireland, Wallace, et al (2013) offer minority ethnic group reported examples of racism and discrimination, but also of many ‘positive reports of neighbourliness and acceptance’. The authors recognise that these incidents are difficult to disentangle from Northern Ireland’s uniquely complex community and sectarian context. While the authors recommend a number of policies to support the situation and economic position of migrants and ethnic minorities, they also stress the frequent absence of sufficient, high-quality and regularly updated data with which to dig into these issues properly and consistently.

## ***Housing***

In this section we survey specific housing and migration literature with an emphasis on the housing circumstances, needs and problems faced by migrant workers. This review starts by looking at a selection of UK and Irish studies before moving on to look at specific Northern Irish dimensions and research.

Although Whitehead et al (2011) focus on tier 1 and 2 migrants; the literature review provided by these authors is more widely drawn and makes a number of important points:

- There has been much more research on labour market impacts of migration than on housing sector impacts.
- Migrants tend to be spatially concentrated and therefore impact on local housing systems much more than on regional or national systems.

- There is evidence from North America and England to suggest that immigration can have (particularly local) demand and hence price and rent effects that are non-trivial.
- Research on the housing careers of long term migrants suggests that they are initially predominantly private renters but over time take on the housing profile of the wider host population.

Robinson et al (2007) explored the housing pathways of new migrants in Sheffield. They found evidence of initial problems with temporary accommodation, establishing rights to housing, etc and, even once housing was 'settled', challenges in identifying and negotiating 'safe' and 'hostile' places and neighbourhoods. A similar study in Sheffield by Gryszel-Fields and Reeve (2007) found from in depth interviews with 10 Polish migrants that they initially faced insecure temporary accommodation, had to rely wholly on their own resources to find accommodation, and, like Poles generally in Sheffield, were predominantly located in the private rented sector (typically securing a tenancy within a month of arrival). A Scottish study (Collins, 2007) stressed that despite the generally positive experience of migrants moving to Glasgow, there were many shortfalls with respect to the availability of suitable advice and information.

Perry (2008) provides a review of JRF funded research on the housing and neighbourhood impact of changing British ethnic mix (covering both recent migrants and established minority communities). Perry stresses that policy has not taken sufficient account of the insecure and poor housing conditions in the private rented sector that often confront new migrants. He argues that neighbourhood policy has also shifted away from a community cohesion focus. According to Perry, super diversity and diverse neighbourhoods need not mean lower social capital in those neighbourhoods, and he concludes that much more needs to be done to find out 'what works' in this broad area of policy and practice.

Turning to the Irish context, Paris (2006) focuses on the pre global financial crisis (GFC) boom in demand and immigration into the Republic of Ireland (ROI), contrasting it with the more modest performance of Northern Ireland (NI) (which was facing net migration loss in the 1990s). The analysis charts the growth of European migration into the ROI but notes that it was too early in terms of data to make too much of the housing market impacts in NI. The ROI analysis did however indicate that European immigration often involved young people seeking housing in the private rented sector. Krings et al (2012) note that Ireland has been a major destination for Polish migrants since 2004 and they argue that such mobility represents more than just labour market choices but embraces wider lifestyle choices to move and work across different national borders and appears to be (at least partially) resistant to the effects of economic downturn.

The key Northern Ireland housing study thus far is that of Campbell and Frey (2010) which looks at migration in the Dungannon area using a detailed case study approach. Dungannon experienced a large and visible influx of migrant workers, first Portuguese and then A8 nationals. The study covers the peak and subsequent decline of the economy and housing market (2006-08). The authors confirm UK research indications that migrant workers face a range of housing-related problems. These include:

- Poor quality housing on arrival, often in the private rented sector.

- Overcrowding and insecurity.
- Difficulties accessing social housing and often evidence of hostility from local residents.

Campbell and Frey further note that migrant workers have also been an important part of first time buyer markets. The broader study conclusions are that:

- Migrant worker households in Dungannon tend to be larger, younger, predominantly male, with higher employment rates but lower income than comparable households in the area.
- Migrant workers have a significant impact on the local housing market primarily in the private rented sector, but increasingly in the social rented sector, often because of homelessness applications.
- Migrants play an increasing role in the normal pattern of local social housing flows in terms both of additional households joining the housing register and the taking up of subsequent vacancies.
- Most of the housing issues facing migrant workers are a direct result of the fact they live predominantly in the private rented sector.
- Wider housing issues also arise because of language problems.

### ***Implications***

Considerable data shortcomings and data capture problems surround migration questions. These problems (discussed further in section 3) have led several of the papers reviewed to conclude that the evidence base is imperfect, sometimes thin and difficult to generalise from. EU accession migration has only been a factor for 10 years, during which there has been a historically significant economic crisis – suggesting one also needs to be careful interpreting even apparently reliable data, let alone local case studies.

The existing evidence base provides few robust conclusions with respect to the economic, social and housing impacts of international economic migration. A big problem is that few of the studies conducted specifically disaggregate EU migration from other forms of migration. Another problem is that studies usually fail to differentiate between recent migration (say 5-10 years) and long term migration/permanent residents. A further issue is that while problems are likely to be place and time specific, most studies consider the national/regional picture.

Given all this, what do we actually know? On a tentative basis, we suggest the following conclusions seem reasonable:

- The identification of economic impacts of migration requires one to account for migrant skill level, short and long run intentions, and the state of the wider economy but in general terms the evidence suggests that displacement of domestic labour is a less significant issue than is often portrayed in the public debate. Oxford Economics and several other studies suggest the effects are on balance broadly positive in terms of jobs and output (GVA) created.



- An influx of (mostly) young adult households can, on the other hand, generate significant pressure on local services. However, the complexity of the task of isolating these effects leaves this subject decidedly incomplete at the present stage.
- In housing terms, once we account for the initial orientation-related difficulties associated with migration to any new country, key issues relate to quality and security of tenure of private rented sector accommodation, especially in the initial period after migration. Consistent access to benefits and housing advice also appear to be recurring themes.
- Evidence is thin on ‘what works’ in policy terms concerning social community cohesion and integration of migrant households.
- International evidence suggests that immigration, via demand effects, does have a positive and significant impact on rents and house prices and that, due to a tendency for migrant groups to be non-randomly distributed, these impacts are usually more significant at the local level than the regional or national levels.

In more general terms, in the short to medium term, migration typically adds to the pressure for private renting and increases overall housing demand, phenomena which local housing systems are (again) typically ill placed to deal with/slow to respond to. At the same time, migration adds to the problems that planning authorities have in planning for demographic change and future household growth. More generally, local community cohesion is often challenged where the pace of change puts undue pressure on existing services and local infrastructure - especially where these pressures cannot be easily/readily addressed.

### **Northern Ireland Policy Contexts**

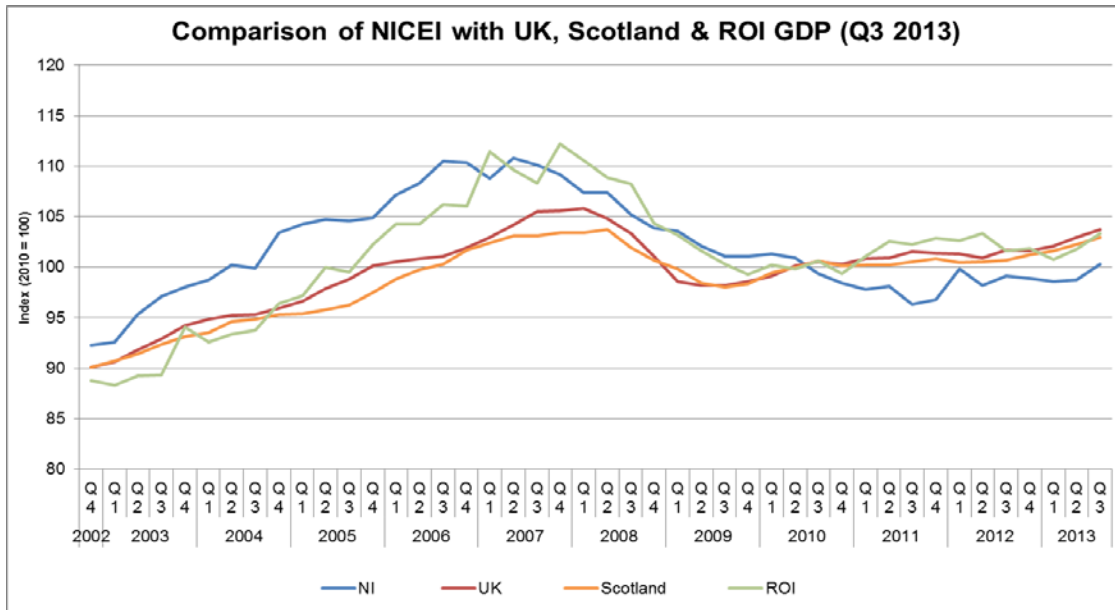
The Northern Ireland, Larne and Dungannon housing systems have evolved, and continue to do so, within the context of a complex economic, planning, welfare and social inclusion policy framework.

#### ***Economic and Regional Development***

The overall economic strategy adopted by the Northern Ireland Executive (2012), recognising continuing challenges to macroeconomic growth and public spending arising from the ‘Global Financial Crisis’ (GFC) places considerable emphasis on increasing employment, wealth and economic competitiveness by building a larger and more export-driven private sector. Within this, the strategy explicitly targets the creation of new rural employment to 2015 under the Rural Development Programme.

While some sectors, such as the ‘agri-food’ sector, rode the GFC rather well, more generally the Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI) confirms that the Northern Ireland economy as a whole was more severely affected by recession than was the wider UK economy (figure 2.1)

**Figure 2.1: Relative Economic Trends 2002-2013**



Source: <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/ni-composite-economic-index- nicei .htm>  
(Accessed 7/4/2014)

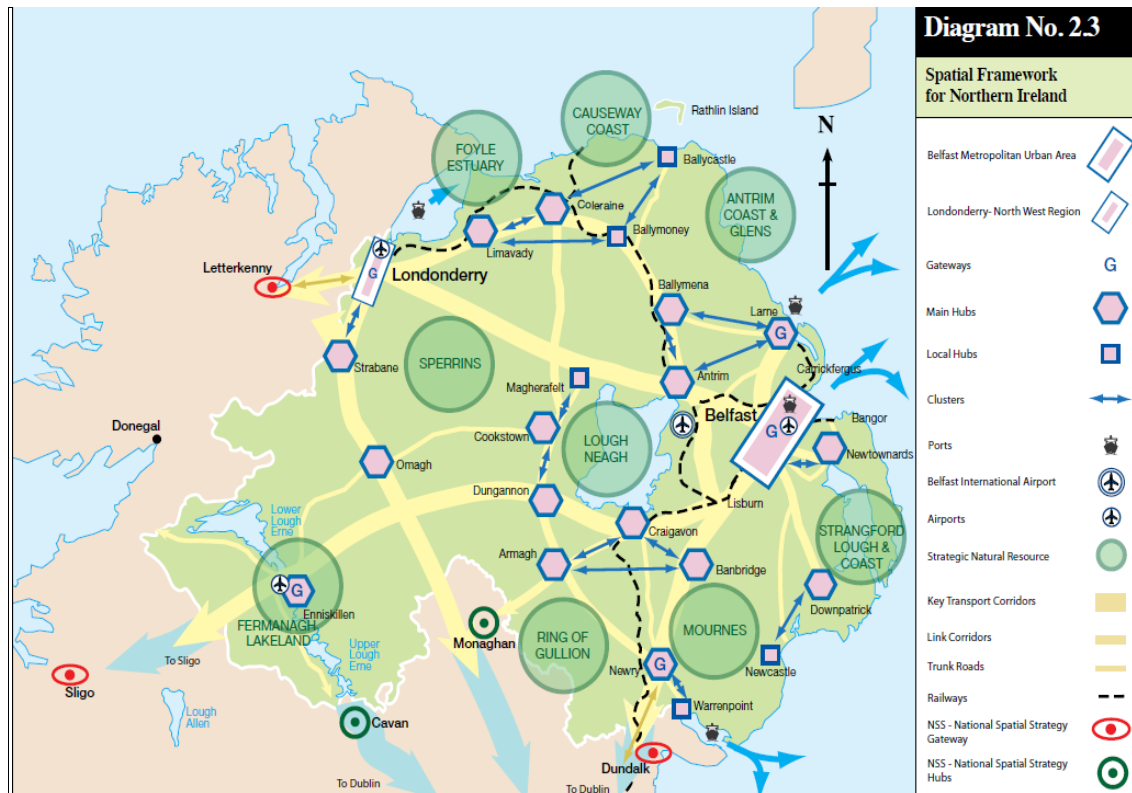
In its first economic strategy monitoring report (Northern Ireland Executive, 2013) the Northern Ireland Executive (NIE) notes that, as a small open economy, Northern Ireland remains vulnerable to the performance of its key trading partners and suggests recovery in NI will be slow but steady over the medium term. Despite the impact of very deep cuts to Northern Ireland Block Grant on infrastructure investment (Strategic Investment Board, 2012) the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) to 2035 (Department for Regional Development, 2012) aims to enhance economic performance by providing a co-ordinating framework for policies with a spatial dimension, and represents the strategic spatial policy context for decisions by both central and local Government. The spatial strategy itself is built around a system of ‘hubs’, ‘gateways’ and key transport corridors (see figure 2.2).

The RDS, which seeks to influence future broad settlement configurations through the mechanism of ‘housing growth indicators’ (HGI), designates Larne as a key gateway (as the second largest sea port of Northern Ireland behind Belfast), and a key hub. Dungannon is also seen as a key hub, with the potential to form an ‘economic cluster’ with Cookstown and Magherafelt. These considerations place both Larne Town and Dungannon Town on Key Transport Corridors within the Regional Strategic Transport Network. However, it has been suggested that the perceived unique contribution of these areas within the overall spatial development framework for Northern Ireland could be further clarified to assist the prioritisation of future public investment, while ongoing local government restructuring may currently be contributing a continuing ambiguity over the appropriate relative local roles for specific settlements (Experian, 2008).

As with the other areas of the UK, Northern Ireland favours a ‘plan led’ system of land development, under which national and local planning policy is set out in formal plans that determine what will development be permitted (Cave et al, 2013). Under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the majority of planning functions will transfer in 2015 from central

government to local authorities. Until then, the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment (DoE) retains the principal responsibility for planning policy formulation and co-ordination.

**Figure 2.2 Northern Ireland Spatial Development Strategy**



Source: Department for Regional Development (2012)

In February 2014 the DoE published a new draft strategic planning policy statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland (Department of the Environment, 2014a). SPPS consolidates 20 separate policy publications, and sets out the core planning principles to underpin delivery of the new planning arrangements from April 2015. Under these arrangements Councils will be responsible for preparing, monitoring and updating local development plans (LDP) to replace existing area plans.

Both the Larne and Dungannon area plans are now outdated. The Larne Area Plan 2010 was adopted in March 1998, with the subsequent Antrim, Ballymena & Larne Area Plan 2016 progressing only to the publication of an issues paper in May 2002. The Dungannon & South Tyrone Area Plan 2010 was adopted in March 2005<sup>3</sup>. The Department for Social Development (DSD) commissioned master planning exercises for the main towns of both

<sup>3</sup> See [http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev\\_plans/devplans\\_lgd.htm](http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_lgd.htm) for full details.

local government districts in 2008 (both of which were subsequently published in 2010)<sup>4</sup>, while both local areas have sought to implement local economic development strategies<sup>5</sup>.

### ***Migration and Social Inclusion***

Migration (and welfare) policy are both areas predominantly under the control of the UK Parliament, albeit open to mediation by positions being adopted at devolved administration level.

The 2014 Immigration Act received Royal Assent on 14 May 2014. The Act, which covers the whole of the UK:

- Simplifies rules on the removal of illegal immigrants.
- Strengthens powers to verify migrant status and reduces the grounds of appeal against immigration decisions.
- Makes it unlawful to rent accommodation to a person does not have leave to enter or remain in the UK<sup>6</sup>.
- Prohibits banks from opening current accounts for those living in UK illegally.
- Introduces charges for NHS services for temporary migrants.

The Act is the latest in a series of actions taken by the UK Coalition Government since 2010 to lessen the attractiveness of the UK to migrants from, in particular, the rest of the European Union. (Welfare dimensions of this are discussed below). From a housing perspective, the most significant aspects of the Act relate to the new responsibilities placed upon private landlords, with many commentators doubtful as to their practicality and fearful of their consequences for private housing supply (Gower et al, 2013).

In the Northern Ireland context there is concern that, with respect to migrants that have already arrived (and where significant proportions of these migrants are living in poverty (Irwin et al 2013; Wallace et al, 2013)), the pace of change is outstripping the development of strategy and policy (Martynowicz & Jarman, 2009; NISMP, 2013). According to STEP (South Tyrone Empowerment Project) (2010):

*“The experience of migrant workers in N. Ireland mirrors in many respects that described in the wider literature...from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and other European states. Migrants often experience exploitation and discrimination in employment, particularly those without appropriate documentation or where eligibility for social support depends on work status. Skills and qualifications from other jurisdictions are not recognised,*

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<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/urcdg-urban\\_regeneration/regional\\_dev\\_office/regdv-publications/rdo-dungannon-masterplan.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/urcdg-urban_regeneration/regional_dev_office/regdv-publications/rdo-dungannon-masterplan.htm) for Dungannon and [http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/urcdg-urban\\_regeneration/regional\\_dev\\_office/regdv-publications/larne-town-centre-masterplan-020610.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/urcdg-urban_regeneration/regional_dev_office/regdv-publications/larne-town-centre-masterplan-020610.htm) for Larne

<sup>5</sup> See Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council (2007) <http://www.dungannon.gov.uk/pubuploads/DSTBC%20Economic%20Development%20Strategy%20&%20Acti%20on%20Plan%202007%20-%202013.pdf> for Dungannon and <http://www.larne.gov.uk/uploads/strategy.pdf> for Larne

<sup>6</sup> This will not take general effect until after the 2015 general election: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/11/landlord-immigration-checks-restricted-lib-dems>

*access to services is problematic, information for basic administration and access to services is limited and there is insufficient language provision, such as information and communication in alternative languages and provision of interpreters. Housing tends to be of poor quality and exploitation by landlords is common, and, while migrants tend to be younger and healthier compared with the host population, this declines at a rapid rate due to psychological and physical stresses, exploitation at work, poor housing and reduced access to health care. This pattern is common to studies at local, regional and national level...There has however been very little attention paid to the particular nature of N. Ireland as a consequence of its lack of internal integration; communal tensions in the context of identity as well as religion; and a legacy of almost half a century of violent political conflict”.*

STEP goes on to make the important point that the migration experience in Northern Ireland is necessarily conditioned by broader and (in the context of the UK as a whole) unique inter-community relations:

*“The conflict has social consequences which feed into xenophobia. There are certain learned behaviours prevalent in society in N. Ireland that have been formed from the experience of conflict and are manifested in inter-personal communication, which is imbued with protection mechanisms to identify friend or foe; contribute to fear and exclusion of any identity which cannot be adequately identified as ‘safe for me /us.’ There remains a tacit acceptance or tolerance of certain phenomenon as ‘normal’ such as a militarised police force, organised military and secret groupings in society; the routine use of aggressive vocabulary and acceptance of a level of formalised or physical violence. These dimensions of social consequences have a range of impacts on the integration of other identities: The guarded behaviour and internalised sectarian codes for identifying and codifying others, together with an inflated sense of international importance of the local conflict makes connecting hard work for little reward. Systems of exclusion, such as sectarianism, and a fear of the sectarian ‘other’ feed wider xenophobia, leading to social exclusion, results in actual physical rejection, such as being forcibly expelled from accommodation.”*

The Northern Ireland Executive, while acknowledging Westminster control over immigration law and policy, centres its own inclusion policy endeavours on the promotion of racial harmony. A recently published draft racial equality strategy (OFMDFM, 2014)<sup>7</sup> takes the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997<sup>8</sup> as the point of departure and notes two initiatives which have significant potential to improve the lives of minority ethnic people: *Together: Building a United Community* (OFMDFM, 2013) and *Delivering Social Change*<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Until the new strategy is formally adopted, the prior Racial Equality Strategy for 2005-10 remains in force (Irwin et al, 2014). <sup>8</sup>The Race Relations Order makes it unlawful to discriminate on racial grounds in the areas of employments and training; education; the provision of goods, facilities or services; the disposal and management of premises and advertisements, and places a statutory duty on district councils to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

That said (and while acknowledging that the recording of racially motivated hate crime both occurs and does not identify major or growing issues on a province wide basis (PSNI, 2013)) the Executive seems concerned at its own lack of intelligence on the extent to which problems exist:

*“With the current absence of robust, reliable statistical or administrative analysis, significant gaps exist in the knowledge base...If we are to make progress in tackling racial inequalities, it is essential that we tackle these gaps. Failure to address this issue systematically will mean that we never get beyond tokenism.”*

The racial equality strategy deals explicitly with immigration, noting that:

*“At times our regional interests will not coincide with those of Britain. We have for example recognised the importance of legal advice in assisting migrants to attain the stability that underpins long term integration. As a result, we have not reduced coverage of legal aid for immigration work or proposed a residence test for legal aid as in England and Wales.”*

Determining the actual rights (including housing rights) that specific migrants and migrant groups do possess can frequently prove no easy matter however (Housing Rights Service, 2011).

## **Welfare**

Welfare reform has been a major focus of UK Coalition Government attention since 2010 and, within this, reform of the housing aspects of welfare reform have figured prominently. This is not the place to detail all aspects of a very complex, dynamic and still unfolding process. Instead, we note three key aspects:

- Much of the change has focused on housing related assistance.
- The welfare debate has become inextricably linked with the debate on the costs and benefits of migration to the UK and this continues to influence the forward prospects for further reform.
- The devolved administrations remain to varying degrees in disagreement with aspects of the Westminster reform agenda and have in different ways sought to amend the main thrust of reform to fit better with more localised policy priorities and social values

The overall aims of the reforms have been to reduce benefit expenditure, incentivise people to enter work, or increase their hours, and to make the benefit system fairer (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2014). Inevitably, this has made benefits harder to access for some, and less generous for others. In overall terms, Beatty & Fothergill (2013) estimate the overall consequence of welfare reform has been to take £750 million annually out of the Northern Ireland economy<sup>10</sup>, with the biggest financial losses arising from reforms

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change.htm>. Local examples of anti-racism policy initiatives in the Dungannon context are provided by Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council (2008) and Fivemiletown Estates Group and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2012).

<sup>10</sup> This includes £23 million from Dungannon and £12 million from Larne

to incapacity benefits (£230 million a year), Tax Credits (£135 million a year), below inflation up-rating of most working-age benefits (£120 million a year) and reforms to Disability Living Allowance (£105 million a year). Housing Benefit reform has so far had a more modest impact, amidst continuing Executive reluctance to implement the ‘bedroom tax’ aspects of reform that have proved particularly controversial on mainland UK or embrace Council Tax Benefit cuts within the specific context of the Northern Ireland rates scheme.

With respect to the private rental sector, Beatty et al (2014) conclude that recent changes to Local Housing Allowances (LHA) and Housing Benefit (HB)<sup>11</sup> had had limited consequences in Northern Ireland to date, in terms of tenant displacement or landlord exit. Longer term impacts could be of greater significance however:

*“Nearly nine in ten landlords said that they intended to continue to let to tenants receiving LHA in the year ahead, mainly because of the retention of direct HB payments to landlords and the security of this rental stream for landlords. However, over a third of landlords also said they might cease letting to under single 35 year olds, and over a fifth said they might cease letting to LHA tenants in the coming year. Over a quarter of landlords, with both smaller and larger portfolios, said that they might sell up and leave the rental market altogether in the next year. Some landlords expressed concern about the future impact of Universal Credit (UC) on tenants' ability to pay the full rent, even if the housing element of UC were to continue to be paid to landlords.”*

With respect to social renting, Gibb et al (2013) note that the significant dislocations anticipated to arise from direct payment of rent to tenants and monthly payment of benefits in mainland UK are concerns of no or limited resonance for Northern Ireland due to the important operational flexibilities in welfare reform implementation that the Executive has secured from the Department for Work and Pensions. However, underoccupation may be a feature of the housing circumstances of around half of working age tenants in the Northern Ireland social renting sector, with around 13 per cent affected by non-dependent deductions. More generally, approximately three fifths of Housing Benefit recipients in the social rented sector could be affected by both the under-occupancy-related Housing Benefit reduction and the change in non-dependant deductions, although the majority are likely to experience relatively modest effects.

The way in which these circumstances are expected to interact with developments in the private rented sector and play out in specific local contexts is assessed by Gibb et al to be quite mixed. In general terms, they note that:

*“Social renting is not independent of the wider low income housing system that includes private rented housing. Given the plentiful supply of privately rented properties to the HB sector, there may in the shorter term be a tendency for*

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<sup>11</sup> Between 2010 and 2012 the basis for setting LHA rates, which govern the amount of HB receivable by private tenants, was changed from the median to the 30th percentile of local market rents; LHA uprating changed from a monthly to an annual basis; LHA rates were capped by property size and abolished for properties of over four bedrooms; an excess that was payable to tenants in properties with a rental value below their HB entitlement was removed; ‘non-dependent deductions’ were increased and the age at which the less generous ‘shared accommodation’ rate of HB was increased (Beatty et al, 2014).

*unemployed younger people to move to the private rented sector rather than 2-bed social tenancies because, depending on LHA rates, the former may become the cheaper option. However, the benefit reductions operate differently in the Housing Benefit-supported segments of the private and social rented sectors and in the future demand for social renting could be increased by any widening of the gap between LHA and market rents in the private rented sector.”*

Future welfare policy reform could prove especially hard on economic migrants to the UK, with plans to extend waiting periods before EU migrants can claim out of work benefits and to limit the time period over which they can be claimed<sup>12</sup>; to increase earnings thresholds for benefit qualification<sup>13</sup>; and to introduce further restrictions on multiple benefit eligibility for some migrant groups<sup>14</sup>. There are also suggestions that temporary workers from the EU will lose the right to tax-free personal allowances<sup>15</sup>.

### ***Housing Policy***

Finally, housing policy in itself continues to evolve within Northern Ireland. The overarching policy framework is supplied by Facing the Future, (Department for Social Development, 2012a; 2012b). Social housing reform figures large within the agenda established by Facing the Future, including the way in which social housing is allocated (Gray et al 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), priced (Young et al, 2013) and capital funded (DoE, 2014).

The national reform agenda is currently at an early stage of development. More locally, housing system development is conditioned by the unmet housing need prospectus<sup>16</sup> maintained by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), which informs housing associations and developers of locations of unmet social housing need, supported housing schemes, travellers and strategic land throughout Northern Ireland, and through the local District Housing Plans/Local Housing Strategies that NIHE prepares annually (NIHE 2013a; NIHE 2013b). These latter statutory documents offer a comprehensive account of NIHE performance in each District Council area over the preceding year and set out funding, plans and strategies for the year ahead.

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<sup>12</sup> Despite International Monetary Fund warnings that such policies may have an undesirable effect on UK productivity growth: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10996721/David-Cameron-announces-immigration-crackdown.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/migrant-workers-will-have-to-earn-150-per-week-or-more-before-they-can-claim-benefits-government-announces-9137060.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rules-to-stop-migrants-claiming-housing-benefit>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/11028013/Osbornes-plan-to-make-250000-migrant-workers-pay-tax.html>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/unmet\\_need\\_prospectus.htm](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/corporate/unmet_need_prospectus.htm)



### 3. MIGRANT WORKERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

#### Introduction

This section first looks at international migration patterns and trends for Northern Ireland, and then shines a more qualitative light on to the recent experience of economic migration into Northern Ireland.

#### Northern Ireland trends in international migration flows

International migration is one of the major drivers of population change worldwide. Within Europe, the incorporation of Eastern European countries into the European Union (EU28)<sup>17</sup> has had a profound effect on cross-border migration flows. In a very short space of time, citizens from Eastern Europe have become one of the main sources of migrants into Northern Ireland and constitute some of the largest foreign born populations to be found there.

#### Data limitations

The following analysis draws principally on the Census, National Insurance Number (NINo) allocations<sup>18</sup> and NI Health Card registrations, supplemented with data from other administrative sources, to explore trends in the arrival of migrant workers in Northern Ireland and the number and profile of long term migrants residing across Northern Ireland.

Migration data for the UK and Northern Ireland has been improving rapidly in the last 5 years, but has struggled to keep pace with the step change in immigration that has occurred over such a short period. Several caveats must therefore be kept in mind when looking at migration flows data and the characteristics of the stock of migrants or newcomers:

- Census 2011 is the most comprehensive population data source. It is possible to explore the characteristics and housing circumstances of migrants through the Census by identifying people born outside the UK and/or holding a non UK passport<sup>19</sup>. However, analysis is hindered by the suppression of tables for smaller geographies to protect confidentiality and, as Irwin et al (2014) have confirmed, some foreign nationals were not registered through the Northern Ireland Census.
- Administrative data sources can provide a good idea of the numbers of long term migrants coming to Northern Ireland each year but there is a dearth of data on short term migrants, such as people employed in seasonal work who stay for a few months only<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> The EU15 refers to countries that were part of the European Union prior to enlargement. The EU10 refers to the eight countries (EU8) such as Poland and Lithuania that joined in 2004 plus Romania and Bulgaria (EU2) that joined in 2007 whilst EU12 refers to the EU10 plus Cyprus and Malta. EU28 refer to all of member states, including Cyprus, Malta and (from July 2013) Croatia.

<sup>18</sup> NINo allocations have been used in preference to lower Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) estimates because the WRS was terminated in 2011. The 2010-11 count of NINo allocations is lower than the 13,500 inflow of people from abroad reported in Census 2011 origin-destination migration tables. However, the Census figures include UK nationals that arrived from abroad and both datasets are known to be subject to some under reporting.

<sup>19</sup> The UN definition of an international migrant is someone who changes their country of usual residence for at least a year.

<sup>20</sup> People who stay for a few months, for example, may not register with public authorities and are rarely included in surveys.

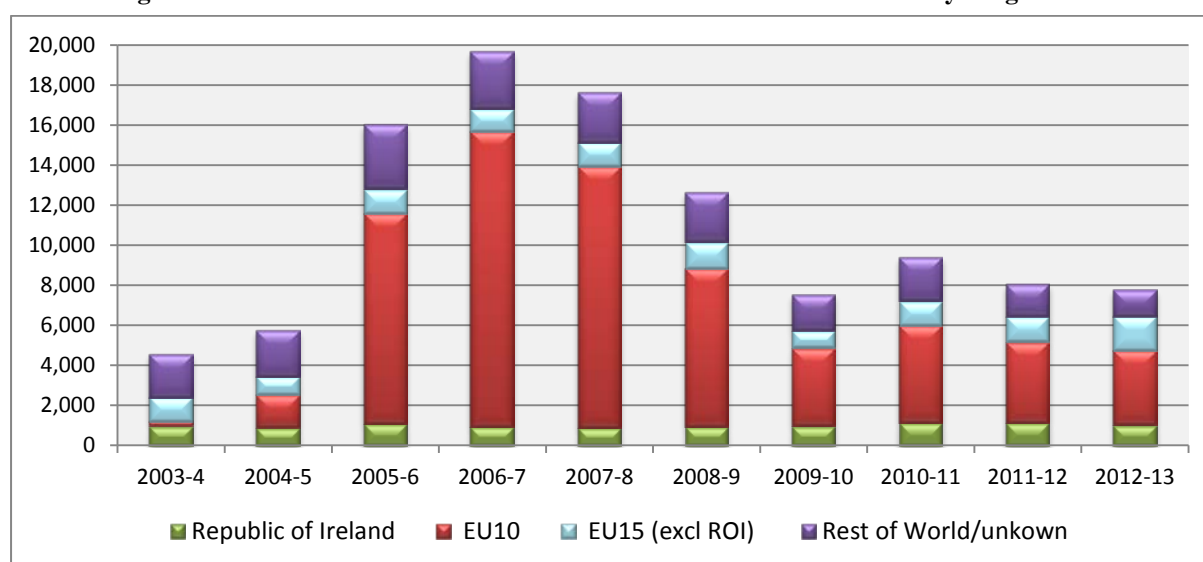
- Estimates of international in-migration flows derived from administrative data lose robustness at local authority level, not least because the movements of migrants within the UK following arrival are rarely recorded.
- Emigration remains very difficult to measure, even at the UK level, as there is no requirement for people to indicate when they leave the country.
- Data sources define migrants in different ways that are not always strictly comparable. For example, the count of people coming from abroad can in some instances include people that have returned home while in others the count of foreign born will include naturalised citizens.

### ***In-migration flows***

In-migration to Northern Ireland increased rapidly in the period immediately following EU enlargement in 2004. NINo allocation statistics suggest the annual numbers of international in-migrants increased from around 4,500 in 2003-4 to a peak of almost 20,000 in 2006-7. As figure 3.1 shows, this was mainly the result of a steep rise in people arriving from the EU8, especially Poland. In the 4 years to 2007-8, around 40% of all NINo allocations were to people from Poland. The two other top origin countries were the Republic of Ireland and Lithuania.

This surge in immigration was shaped by the fact that the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Sweden were the only EU15 countries to permit full labour market access to the EU8 states. At the same time, economic growth fuelled demand for labour in many sectors of the economy that proved difficult to fill through local labour pools.

**Figure 3.1 National Insurance Number Allocations in Northern Ireland by Origin Area**



Source: DWP statistics reported by NISRA

Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) data suggests that on arrival to the UK most EU8 migrants initially secured employment in the agricultural, food processing, hospitality and construction sectors. Whilst a quarter of EU8 migrants were classified as belonging to the

administration, business and management sector, as McCollum et al (2012) have observed, most were engaged by recruitment agencies and working in other sectors of the economy.

In the wake of the 2008 economic recession, in-migration has fallen back, mainly as a result of a reduction of people coming from EU8 countries. This has been most pronounced for Polish migrants. In 2012-13 around 1,700 people from Poland were allocated a national insurance number, down from roughly 9,000 in 2006-7. Growing rates of unemployment in Northern Ireland, especially in construction and manufacturing, alongside falling unemployment and improving wages in Poland enticed migrants to return home (Rogers, 2009). This is supported by Eurostat statistics that report that immigration to Poland has quadrupled since 2008 and that two thirds of in-migrants are Polish citizens returning home.

Reductions in migration inflows from other EU8 countries have been more modest, especially the Baltic countries that were hard hit by the economic crisis. For example, NINO allocations for people from Lithuania fell from around 2,500 in 2006-7 to 900 in 2012-13.

There has also been less change in the flow of in-migrants from the EU15 and from the rest of the world in the last 10 years, with some important exceptions. During the boom years of 2003-7, NINO allocations to people from Portugal halved to around 400 but allocations have started to rise again. Almost 650 NINO allocations were made to people from Portugal in 2012-13. Evidence also points to an upturn in migrant inflows from some of the weakest economies in the Eurozone, such as Spain and the Republic Of Ireland.

NI health card registrations indicate that, since 2008, in-migration from East Timor has been slowly increasing. People born in East Timor and other former Portuguese colonies can secure Portuguese citizenship and thereby access to the EU labour market. People coming from East Timor have in this way contributed to the rise in NINO allocations to Portuguese nationals. In the 3 years to the end of 2012, NI health card registrations to people from East Timor averaged roughly 250 each year compared to around 140 in the 3 years to the end of 2008.

Finally, since the imposition of tighter restrictions on non-EEA workers and students in 2010, in-migration from countries such as India, China and the Philippines has been falling.

### ***Out-migration flows***

The post 2008 decrease in migrant inflows has been accompanied by an increase in out-migration. In the 4 years to June 2012, some 50,000 people moved from Northern Ireland to outside the UK. As table 3.1 shows, out-migration for 2008-12 was 10,000 higher than in 2004-08. NI Health Card de-registrations also show an increase in emigration.

**Table 3.1: Estimated International Migration inflow and outflows, July 2000 to June 2012**

<b>Time-period</b>	<b>International Inflows</b>	<b>International Outflows</b>	<b>Net International Migration</b>
July 2000 to June 2004	27,996	27,681	315
July 2004 to June 2008	66,381	40,272	26,109
July 2008 to June 2012	54,604	50,098	4,506
Total	148,981	118,051	30,930
Source: NISRA (June 2013)			

NISRA international out-migration estimates include both UK and foreign nationals. There is scant statistical data on who is leaving Northern Ireland and why. A recurring message from our programme of telephone and face to face interviews was that a marked increase in out-migration by EU8 migrants began when the labour market started to contract and that they have now been joined by people native to Northern Ireland moving abroad. The overall result is that net international migration has fallen back, although it remains positive.

### ***Migration flows at local authority level***

Earlier waves of international in-migration to the UK and its four constituent countries were concentrated in urban conurbations and educational centres. The recent wave of in-migration has however been rather more dispersed throughout Northern Ireland. Observable patterns suggest that migration is likely to have had varying effects in urban and rural areas.

**Table 3.2 Non-UK Nationals Allocated National Insurance Numbers (NINo) by Local Authority, 2012-13\***

<b>LGD</b>	<b>Number NINo allocations</b>	<b>Share all NI NINo allocations</b>	<b>NINO allocations per 1,000 population</b>
Antrim	180	2.3	3.3
Ards	100	1.3	1.3
Armagh	300	3.8	5.0
Ballymena	310	4.0	4.8
Ballymoney	40	0.5	1.2
Banbridge	90	1.2	1.8
Belfast	2,530	32.4	9.0
Carrickfergus	60	0.8	1.5
Castlereagh	130	1.7	1.9
Coleraine	210	2.7	3.5
Cookstown	150	1.9	4.0
Craigavon	670	8.6	7.1
Derry	310	4.0	2.8
Down	110	1.4	1.6
Dungannon	720	9.2	12.3
Fermanagh	270	3.5	4.4
Larne	30	0.4	0.9
Limavady	20	0.3	0.6
Lisburn	250	3.2	2.1
Magherafelt	150	1.9	3.2
Moyle	20	0.3	1.1
Newry & Mourne	620	7.9	6.1
Newtownabbey	140	1.8	1.6
North Down	160	2.1	2.0
Omagh	170	2.2	3.2
Strabane	80	1.0	2.0
Northern Ireland*	7,800	100.0	4.3
Source: NISRA (2014) Population estimates, in migrant tables			
*A proportion of NINo allocations cannot be assigned at District level and are excluded from this count.			

International migration inflows have been concentrated in Belfast, Dungannon, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne. Dungannon in particular has seen a very high proportion of international in-migrants relative to the rest of Northern Ireland. Table 3.2 shows that in 2012-13 there were over 12 NINo allocations for every 1,000 persons in the borough compared with 4 NINo allocations for every 1,000 persons for Northern Ireland as a whole.

At the other end of the spectrum, very few NINo allocations are made to Larne or Limavady. In 2012-13 the rate of NINo allocations was less than 1 for every 1,000 persons in each area. It is also worth noting that there have been no fundamental changes in the spatial distribution of migration inflows across Northern Ireland in the past decade.

### **Changes in the stock of international migrants in Northern Ireland**

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 summarise Census data on the numbers of usual residents for Northern Ireland by country of birth for 2001 and 2011, whilst table 3.5 provides further evidence for the most common countries of birth. The tables reveal that, in the 10 years to 2011, the resident population of Northern Ireland increased by 7.5%. Whilst partly driven by international immigration, natural population change has actually been a much more important direct driver of population change, accounting for almost 60% of the 125,600 increase in the resident population of Northern Ireland. This may seem puzzling, but the answer lies in the fact that the rapid increase in the flow of migrants started from a very low base. In 2001 no more than 1.5% of all residents had been born outside the UK and Ireland. By 2011 the numbers of residents born outside the UK was 120,000 and the numbers born outside the UK and Ireland was 81,500. This was 2-3 times higher than in 2001. However, the proportion of usual residents born abroad remains well below the UK rate of 12.4%, ranging from less than 5% to 6.6% depending of the definitions used and the treatment of migration flows with the rest of Ireland.

### ***Ethnicity and Country of birth***

The Census reports that the number of people from a minority ethnic background increased by 1% from 14,250 in 2001 to 32,400 in 2011. Although Northern Ireland's population remains predominantly white (98.2%) it has become more ethnically diverse than Census ethnic group statistics, which are largely based around colour and origin, would suggest. In effect, the inflow of migrants from Europe has increased the numbers of people from less visible white ethnic minority groups that have their own language and culture.

In terms of the longer established ethnic minority communities, the Census reports there were 6,300 Chinese people in Northern Ireland in 2011. This includes 2,200 people born abroad, but the Chinese community is increasingly comprised of second or third generation residents. There were 6,200 Indian people and although there is a growing second or third generation population, over half still hold a non-UK passport, suggesting the community includes some recent arrivals. The third largest group is termed 'mixed' and contains 6,000 people whose parents, grandparents or antecedents were from different ethnic backgrounds. The fourth largest group is 'other Asian', with a population of just below 5,000. The 'other Asian' group and several other very small ethnic minority groups stand out because the vast majority were born abroad, implying many are recent migrants.

The other significant visible ethnic minority group is the Irish Traveller community that has its own language (called either Gammon or Cant) and a distinctive cultural identity. In contrast to all other ethnic groupings, the numbers of people in this community decreased from 1,700 in 2001 to 1,300 by 2011 and now make up 0.1 of the population of Northern Ireland. At 230, Dungannon has the largest Irish traveller population in Northern Ireland.

**Table 3.3 Usually resident population by country of birth by local authority area, 2001 and 2011**

LGD	Northern Ireland		Rest of UK		Republic of Ireland		Other EU15 Countries		EU12 Countries*		Other Countries		Total	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Antrim	42,099	46,523	4,549	3,434	693	626	353	334	49	1,338	623	1,173	48,366	53,428
Ards	67,567	71,048	3,640	4,144	881	782	298	361	40	606	818	1,137	73,244	78,078
Armagh	49,736	52,579	1,997	2,145	2,011	1,802	110	181	27	1,904	382	729	54,263	59,340
Ballymena	55,021	58,007	2,261	2,460	573	509	206	253	22	1,977	527	838	58,610	64,044
Ballymoney	25,540	29,012	904	1,295	249	268	51	77	11	355	139	217	26,894	31,224
Banbridge	38,814	44,322	1,528	2,071	569	620	115	180	14	526	352	620	41,392	48,339
Belfast	253,432	245,839	10,814	11,267	6,604	5,422	1,417	2,001	168	6,014	4,956	10,419	277,391	280,962
Carrickfergus	34,408	35,363	2,129	2,257	363	332	186	214	30	256	543	692	37,659	39,114
Castlereagh	61,234	60,679	2,822	2,779	1,080	956	235	333	34	595	1,083	1,900	66,488	67,242
Coleraine	50,802	52,377	3,035	3,264	1,348	978	283	296	59	1,068	788	1,084	56,315	59,067
Cookstown	30,852	33,844	974	1,154	444	429	38	288	8	904	265	394	32,581	37,013
Craigavon	74,900	81,682	3,355	3,518	1,306	1,103	284	1,044	37	3,881	789	1,795	80,671	93,023
Derry	92,617	95,583	5,417	4,742	5,664	4,455	344	472	71	812	953	1,813	105,066	107,877
Down	58,285	62,894	3,530	3,683	1,119	1,097	172	240	54	762	668	1,055	63,828	69,731
Dungannon	44,439	48,818	1,510	1,721	1,302	1,313	97	579	9	3,927	378	1,494	47,735	57,852
Fermanagh	50,048	51,917	2,767	3,380	4,165	4,116	133	245	13	1,397	401	750	57,527	61,805
Larne	28,685	29,623	1,490	1,714	306	249	84	147	6	119	261	328	30,832	32,180
Limavady	28,947	30,806	2,392	1,516	575	547	146	103	17	210	345	354	32,422	33,536
Lisburn	97,888	107,566	6,923	6,460	1,824	1,689	658	729	94	1,366	1,307	2,355	108,694	120,165
Magherafelt	37,864	41,784	1,065	1,210	515	516	45	79	18	1,044	273	405	39,780	45,038
Moyle	14,637	15,455	823	981	294	263	37	52	11	99	131	200	15,933	17,050
Newry & Mourne	78,365	85,981	3,477	4,017	4,291	4,346	193	330	22	3,442	710	1,364	87,058	99,480
Newtownabbey	74,512	77,820	3,215	3,371	897	853	256	357	42	811	1,073	1,927	79,995	85,139
North Down	65,742	67,755	7,071	6,726	1,503	1,196	542	608	62	606	1,403	2,046	76,323	78,937
Omagh	43,526	46,134	2,440	1,870	1,334	1,195	129	144	19	1,336	504	677	47,952	51,356
Strabane	34,308	35,442	1,373	1,545	2,362	2,171	43	56	7	349	155	280	38,248	39,843
Total	1,534,268	1,608,853	81,501	82,724	42,272	37,833	6,455	9,703	944	35,704	19,827	36,046	1,685,267	1,810,863

Source: Census 2001 and 2011

Notes: \* excludes Croatia as it was not an EU28 member in 2013

**Table 3.4 Change in usually resident by county of birth from 2001 to 2011 by local authority area**

LGD	Northern Ireland		Rest of UK		Republic of Ireland		Other EU15 Countries		EU12 Countries*		Other Countries		Total	
	change		change		change		change		change		change		change	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Antrim	4,424	10.5%	-1,115	-24.5%	-67	-9.7%	-19	-5.4%	1,289	2630.6%	550	88.3%	5,062	10.5%
Ards	3,481	5.2%	504	13.8%	-99	-11.2%	63	21.1%	566	1415.0%	319	39.0%	4,834	6.6%
Armagh	2,843	5.7%	148	7.4%	-209	-10.4%	71	64.5%	1,877	6951.9%	347	90.8%	5,077	9.4%
Ballymena	2,986	5.4%	199	8.8%	-64	-11.2%	47	22.8%	1,955	8886.4%	311	59.0%	5,434	9.3%
Ballymoney	3,472	13.6%	391	43.3%	19	7.6%	26	51.0%	344	3127.3%	78	56.1%	4,330	16.1%
Banbridge	5,508	14.2%	543	35.5%	51	9.0%	65	56.5%	512	3657.1%	268	76.1%	6,947	16.8%
Belfast	-7,593	-3.0%	453	4.2%	-1,182	-17.9%	584	41.2%	5,846	3479.8%	5,463	110.2%	3,571	1.3%
Carrickfergus	955	2.8%	128	6.0%	-31	-8.5%	28	15.1%	226	753.3%	149	27.4%	1,455	3.9%
Castlereagh	-555	-0.9%	-43	-1.5%	-124	-11.5%	98	41.7%	561	1650.0%	817	75.4%	754	1.1%
Coleraine	1,575	3.1%	229	7.5%	-370	-27.4%	13	4.6%	1,009	1710.2%	296	37.6%	2,752	4.9%
Cookstown	2,992	9.7%	180	18.5%	-15	-3.4%	250	657.9%	896	11200.0%	129	48.7%	4,432	13.6%
Craigavon	6,782	9.1%	163	4.9%	-203	-15.5%	760	267.6%	3,844	10389.2%	1,006	127.5%	12,352	15.3%
Derry	2,966	3.2%	-675	-12.5%	-1,209	-21.3%	128	37.2%	741	1043.7%	860	90.2%	2,811	2.7%
Down	4,609	7.9%	153	4.3%	-22	-2.0%	68	39.5%	708	1311.1%	387	57.9%	5,903	9.2%
Dungannon	4,379	9.9%	211	14.0%	11	0.8%	482	496.9%	3,918	43533.3%	1,116	295.2%	10,117	21.2%
Fermanagh	1,869	3.7%	613	22.2%	-49	-1.2%	112	84.2%	1,384	10646.2%	349	87.0%	4,278	7.4%
Larne	938	3.3%	224	15.0%	-57	-18.6%	63	75.0%	113	1883.3%	67	25.7%	1,348	4.4%
Limavady	1,859	6.4%	-876	-36.6%	-28	-4.9%	-43	-29.5%	193	1135.3%	9	2.6%	1,114	3.4%
Lisburn	9,678	9.9%	-463	-6.7%	-135	-7.4%	71	10.8%	1,272	1353.2%	1,048	80.2%	11,471	10.6%
Magherafelt	3,920	10.4%	145	13.6%	1	0.2%	34	75.6%	1,026	5700.0%	132	48.4%	5,258	13.2%
Moyle	818	5.6%	158	19.2%	-31	-10.5%	15	40.5%	88	800.0%	69	52.7%	1,117	7.0%
Newry & Mourne	7,616	9.7%	540	15.5%	55	1.3%	137	71.0%	3,420	15545.5%	654	92.1%	12,422	14.3%
Newtownabbey	3,308	4.4%	156	4.9%	-44	-4.9%	101	39.5%	769	1831.0%	854	79.6%	5,144	6.4%
North Down	2,013	3.1%	-345	-4.9%	-307	-20.4%	66	12.2%	544	877.4%	643	45.8%	2,614	3.4%
Omagh	2,608	6.0%	-570	-23.4%	-139	-10.4%	15	11.6%	1,317	6931.6%	173	34.3%	3,404	7.1%
Strabane	1,134	3.3%	172	12.5%	-191	-8.1%	13	30.2%	342	4885.7%	125	80.6%	1,595	4.2%
Total	74,585	4.9%	1,223	1.5%	-4,439	-10.5%	3,248	50.3%	34,760	3682.2%	16,219	81.8%	125,596	7.5%

Source: Census 2001 and 2011

Notes: \* excludes Croatia as it was not an EU28 member in 2011

**Table 3.5 Country of birth of persons usually resident in Northern Ireland by local authority area, 2011**

<b>LGD</b>	<b>All usual residents</b>	<b>UK All</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Rest of UK</b>	<b>Republic of Ireland</b>	<b>Rest of EU</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Philippines</b>	<b>East Timor</b>	<b>USA</b>
Antrim	53,428	49,959	46,523	3,436	626	1,671	19	321	636	59	35	231	21	284	100	0	86
Ards	78,078	75,192	71,048	4,144	782	967	91	194	205	19	29	34	46	60	80	0	105
Armagh	59,340	54,727	52,579	2,148	1,802	2,078	242	802	614	19	33	42	32	73	39	0	130
Ballymena	64,044	60,467	58,007	2,460	509	2,228	32	32	1,094	27	318	390	25	71	72	0	79
Ballymoney	31,224	30,307	29,012	1,295	268	432	37	6	277	11	14	9	7	17	4	2	28
Banbridge	48,339	46,397	44,322	2,075	620	702	26	103	337	6	26	8	29	26	31	0	83
Belfast	280,962	257,120	245,839	11,281	5,422	8,001	143	288	4,124	109	254	665	1,029	1,786	1,129	1	886
Carrickfergus	39,114	37,622	35,363	2,259	332	470	5	22	167	19	18	24	26	60	25	0	46
Castlereagh	67,242	63,467	60,679	2,788	956	918	16	48	423	11	8	34	98	227	298	0	130
Coleraine	59,067	55,643	52,377	3,266	978	1,363	17	21	913	14	19	28	108	102	61	2	138
Cookstown	37,013	35,002	33,844	1,158	429	1,188	126	142	273	232	7	324	14	13	4	24	93
Craigavon	93,023	85,208	81,682	3,526	1,103	4,921	270	1,094	2,140	719	23	168	82	189	209	148	100
Derry	107,877	100,330	95,583	4,747	4,455	1,275	32	74	603	22	18	19	132	398	108	12	339
Down	69,731	66,582	62,894	3,688	1,097	996	91	138	420	13	19	42	37	104	38	0	165
Dungannon	57,852	50,540	48,818	1,722	1,313	4,506	308	1,923	1,396	488	17	139	22	66	27	699	130
Fermanagh	61,805	55,298	51,917	3,381	4,116	1,640	137	390	715	12	19	36	32	114	58	2	164
Larne	32,180	31,338	29,623	1,715	249	265	11	12	42	46	14	14	10	30	10	0	35
Limavady	33,536	32,322	30,806	1,516	547	313	31	23	143	1	1	2	15	21	44	2	96
Lisburn	120,165	114,031	107,566	6,465	1,689	2,090	77	293	771	28	67	48	65	324	192	0	256
Magherafelt	45,038	42,997	41,784	1,213	516	1,118	114	242	498	13	22	106	16	40	22	0	111
Moyle	17,050	16,438	15,455	983	263	148	9	18	60	2	6	1	11	29	2	0	28
Newry etc	99,480	90,006	85,981	4,025	4,346	3,761	287	918	1,902	68	33	106	68	125	80	1	368
Newtownabbey	85,139	81,199	77,820	3,379	853	1,157	21	40	650	17	11	37	202	334	108	0	126
North Down	78,937	74,490	67,755	6,735	1,196	1,204	52	44	352	27	34	49	55	214	114	0	217
Omagh	51,356	48,007	46,134	1,873	1,195	1,476	77	137	694	13	27	121	29	47	74	1	239
Strabane	39,843	36,988	35,442	1,546	2,171	402	26	16	209	1	22	4	12	42	18	0	73
Total	1,810,863	1,691,677	1,608,853	82,824	37,833	45,290	2,297	7,341	19,658	1,996	1,094	2,681	2,223	4,796	2,947	894	4,251

Source: Census 2001 table QS208NI



However, the largest change has occurred in terms of the population from the 12 countries joining the European Union (EU) since 2004. Census 2011 reports that almost 36,000 people were born in one of these countries. This equated to around 2% of the usually resident population in Northern Ireland on Census Day 2011.

Polish born individuals are the most populous, which partly reflects the fact it is one of the most populous of the EU12 states. In 2011 there were almost 20,000 Polish born people living in Northern Ireland compared to around 100 in 2001. However the count of Polish born residents is over 14,000 lower than the aggregate count of NINO allocations, which is consistent with reports that many people from Poland have returned home. There are communities of 500 or more Polish born residents in over half of the local authorities of Northern Ireland, with the largest concentrations situated in Belfast, Craigavon, Newry and Dungannon.

Census 2011 also records 7,300 Lithuanian born, 2,700 Slovakia born, 2,300 Latvian born and 1,100 Romanian born people living in Northern Ireland. Again, the Census indicates there is a relatively high concentration of Lithuanians in Craigavon and Dungannon. The numbers of Polish and Lithuanian born residents now exceed those from China and India, which are the two largest long standing minority ethnic groups.

There has also been a more modest increase in the numbers of people born in the EU15. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of migrants born in this region of the world increased by 50% to 9,700. Around 41% of people from the EU15 were born in Germany, equivalent to 3,900 people. However, there has been very little change in the numbers of German born people living in Northern Ireland since 2001. This indicates that a large share are UK citizens whose parents were military personnel stationed in Germany at the time of their birth.

The single most important reason for the increase in the numbers of EU15 residents has been an increase in the number of Portuguese born people in Northern Ireland. Between 2001 and 2011 the Portuguese born community in Northern Ireland increased from 168 to almost 2,000. As table 3.5 shows, the Portuguese are heavily concentrated in the Craigavon, Dungannon and Cookstown areas. In 2011 around 72% of all Portuguese born residents lived in one of these three areas.

Several of the top 10 countries of birth for the population born outside of the UK and the Republic of Ireland are located outside of the EU28. Aside from India and China, this includes the USA, the Philippines and Canada. The USA is the fourth most common country of birth for those not born in the UK or Ireland. However the majority of the 4,250 residents involved hold a UK and/or ROI passport, indicating most are UK and/or Irish citizens. A similar picture is evident in terms of those born in Canada. People born in the Philippines are concentrated in the Belfast and surrounding metropolitan area and around half now have a UK passport, suggesting many have become naturalised and acquired UK citizenship.

The other significant flow from outside Europe has involved people born in East Timor. The Census reports the numbers of people born in East Timor increased from 30 in 2001 to almost 900 in 2011. Around 15% had a UK and /or ROI passport and a further 79% had a passport for another EU country, presumably Portugal. What is very striking is that four out of every 5

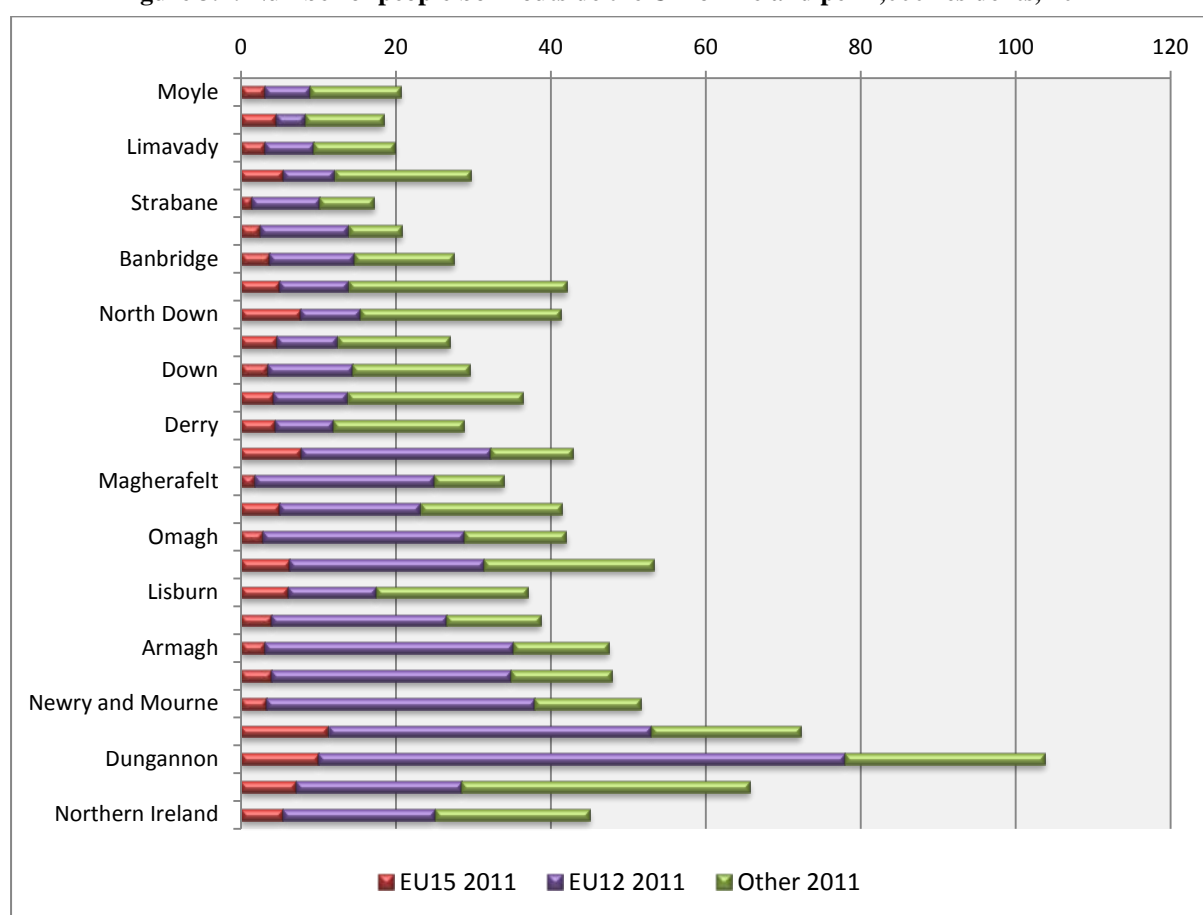
people born in East Timor that live in Northern Ireland were residing in the Dungannon local authority area in 2011.

### *Spatial distribution of the migrant/minority ethnic population*

In the 10 years to 2011, the numbers of people living in Northern Ireland but born outside of the UK and Ireland increased by 199% from 27,250 to 81,500. Different local authority areas have been impacted to different degrees by the increase in the stock of people born abroad and from a different ethnic group from the majority of the population.

In 2011 Belfast was home to 18,400 foreign born residents, the highest number for all local authority areas. As figure 3.2 shows, in 2011, there were 66 foreign born residents in the City for every 1,000 residents. Although the rate of increase in foreign born residents from 2001 to 2011 (182%) has been more modest than the Northern Ireland wide rate, this is a reflection that the city already had a sizeable foreign born population in 2001, of around 6,600.

**Figure 3.2: Number of people born outside the UK or Ireland per 1,000 residents, 2011**

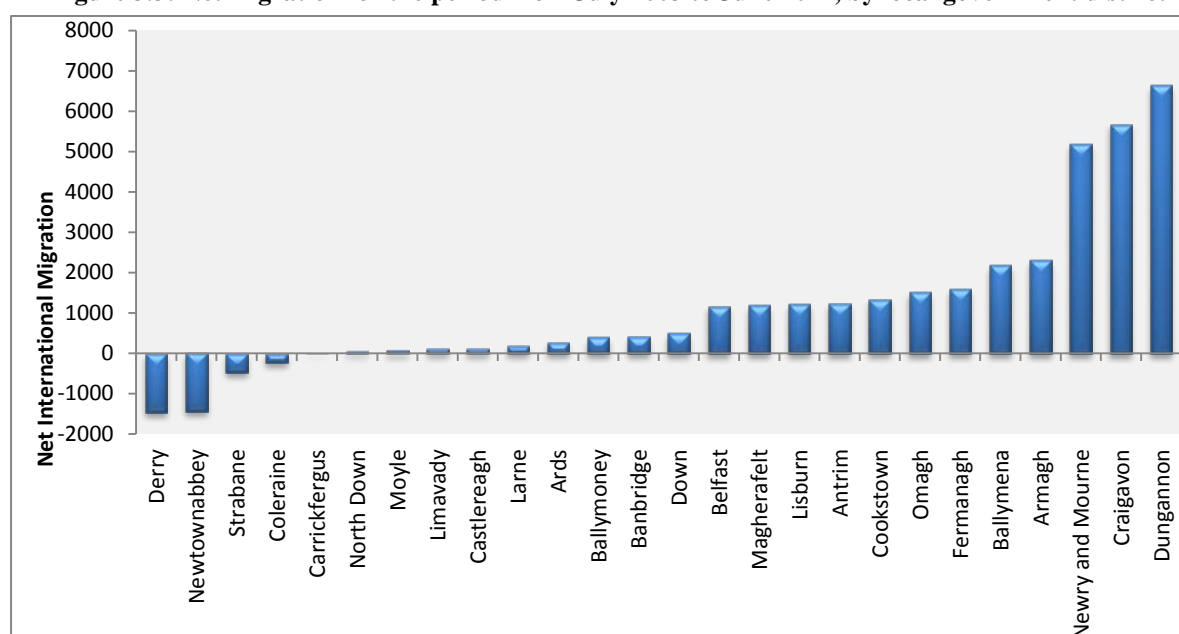


Source: Census, 2011

Consistent with evidence on migration flows, the Census confirms that Dungannon has experienced the sharpest rise in the numbers of foreign born residents. In 2001 around 480 foreign born persons were living in the area but by 2011 this figure had increased to 6,000. Thus around 10.5% of Dungannon residents were born abroad. The influence of this dynamic is also evident from other statistics that can be drawn from the Census and other data sources:

- Dungannon had the highest proportion of people born in one of the EU12 countries, at 6.8%. Other local authorities with high proportions include Craigavon (4.2%), Newry & Mourne (3.5%) Armagh (3.2%) and Ballymena (3.1%),
- Lithuania has become the biggest single sender of migrant workers. Origin-destination tables suggest that, in the year prior to Census day, twice as many Lithuanian than Polish born individuals moved to Dungannon. They also account for close to half of the 690 EU28 residents that arrived in Dungannon during the year.
- Outside of the Belfast metropolitan area, Dungannon has the highest proportions of residents from minority ethnic groups, at 2.6%. This reflects the relatively high concentration of Irish Traveller and East Timorese minority groupings.
- Over 9% of residents in Dungannon have a main language other than English. This is becoming increasingly reflected in the first language of children. In 2013 over 15% of primary school children had English as an additional language as did 6.4% of post-primary school pupils.
- In 2011, around 21% of new births in Dungannon were to mothers born abroad. The next largest figures were for Craigavon (16%) and Belfast (14%).

**Figure 3.3: Net migration for the period from July 2003 to June 2014, by local government district**



Source: NISRA 2014 population estimates

NI Health registrations indicate that, in the last 7 years, the main countries of origin for people coming to Dungannon LGD have been Lithuania, Poland and East Timor. This is also true for the neighbourhood renewal areas of Dungannon and Coalisland.

The other local authority areas that have a high share of foreign born residents relative to Northern Ireland as a whole are Craigavon, Antrim, Newry and Mourne, Ballymena and Armagh. Along with Dungannon, these are largely the areas that NISRA report had the highest cumulative rates of net migration from July 2004 to June 2013, as figure 3.3

illustrates. The one exception is Antrim which had a relatively large foreign born population in 2001 but one that has increased at a rate below the Northern Ireland average.

At the other end of the spectrum there are six local authorities where the EU12 born population was reported by the Census to be less than 500. These include Larne, Ballymoney, Strabane, Limavady, Carrickfergus and Moyle. Other than Carrickfergus, these are also the local authorities that had a total foreign born population of less than 700 in 2011.

It is difficult to draw any meaningful trends from NI Health registrations and other administrative data for Larne due to the small size of its foreign born population but it is clear that, in the last 7 years, the main country of origin for people coming to Larne has been Portugal.

Figures published by NISRA suggest that work remains the primary motivator for migrants coming to Northern Ireland, suggesting employment prospects and levels of wages in Northern Ireland are still perceived to be better than in the countries from which people are coming. However, the figures also lend support to perceptions that growing numbers of EU citizens are moving for other reasons that include family ties.

### **Qualitative Perspectives on Northern Ireland Economic Migration**

A number of telephone interviews were carried out with a range of national and local organisations, variously involved in national policy formulation, advice/rights provision and consulate services. More specifically interviews took place with representatives from the following:

- Community Relations Council (1 Interviewee)
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2 Interviewees)
- Craigavon Intercultural Programme (1 Interviewee)
- Northern Ireland Department for Social Development (2 Interviewees)
- Northern Ireland Housing Rights Service (1 Interviewee)
- Northern Ireland Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (1 Interviewee)
- Latvian Consulate (1 Interviewee)
- EU Consulate (1 Interviewee)

Interviewees were in all instances senior representatives of their respective agencies, but names have been withheld to preserve confidentiality. Collectively, these interviews throw the following qualitative light on the recent experience of economic migration into Northern Ireland.

### ***Respondent Views***

For those working directly in policy making, delivery of services or lobbying, migrant worker issues are reported to constitute an increasingly important area. Even so, a general understanding of the impacts of migrant workers on housing systems was considered to be sketchy.

*“You are undertaking an important piece of work that is required to understand the bricks and mortar effects of the migrant worker dimension of what is going on. Dungannon for instance must be the only place where a big new housing estate can be almost completely let to migrants; what would happen if Moy Park suddenly closed? How would that impact on the housing system? This sort of question needs to be researched.”*

Social cohesion and racial equality issues were noted to have risen up the agenda as a result of both the influx of migrant workers and because of certain recent high profile negative incidents. More positively, a number of efforts to promote cultural diversity and develop stronger relations between local and migrant communities were recorded.

In terms of specific problems migrant workers face in coming to Northern Ireland language was, unsurprisingly, identified as a key and widespread issue. Where command of English is poor, access to language services is needed so that migrants can properly access local services. The key services in question are housing, education and, once settled and often with older family members joining them, access to health and care services also. The Northern Ireland housing rights advice body provides a comprehensive and wide ranging set of language services but still sometimes find itself running behind the need for provision of new language services due to change in the composition of migrant populations. Many interviewees more generally pointed out that migrants are highly heterogeneous in terms of culture, education, language-readiness, etc, posing a range of both policy and service delivery challenges.

Advice bodies pointed to a substantial growth in case loads dealing with migrant worker housing issues over the last five years. Housing issues were understood to predominantly involve houses in multiple occupation (HMO) related matters and whether landlords have obligations or not, as well as the facilitation of social housing access.

Some interviewees distinguished between the different needs of more settled migrants and newcomers. As migrants become more settled they seek longer term housing options and, as they develop networks and enlarge their families, they often need relatively large properties. As their area/house type and tenure choices alter, housing pressures and problems can arise for both them and the local housing system. However, most concern at housing pressure was focused on the more vulnerable short term migrants, often recruited with a bed tied to a job, such that if the employment contract is lost then housing is lost also, meaning such people can become homeless at the end of periods of seasonal/temporary work. One interviewee recounted that in 2001 an influx of Portuguese workers was housed in ‘no man’s land’ cheap housing in an interfaith/deprived part of Craigavon – creating a ‘multiplex of problems’. Over the last five years or so as the more settled have become better established and networked, these workers were reported to have moved on geographically and into better housing solutions.

For housing practice and advice workers, successfully dealing with housing-related queries is difficult by virtue of what can be a complex and an idiosyncratic set of needs to address. The advice work is often relatively labour intensive because of the need to check carefully with current regulations and legislation. The main recurring issues were reported as queries over

housing eligibility and eligibility for homelessness support given the rights status possessed by the migrant following entry to the country. Housing practice and advice workers reported issues over temporary accommodation (whether or not eligible, and also availability – either at all, or in convenient locations), as well as disputes over how and who would pay (the Housing Executive or social work). They pointed out that some hostels are highly pro-active and supportive to people in most extreme need.

In terms of local community acceptance of migrants, respondents argued that in parts of Northern Ireland this was undoubtedly an issue but it reflected several different things and was not a single common experience. One respondent reported that racist incidents had for the most part been in long term decline, but that in the last year there had been evidence of things getting worse again. It was argued that the rise of UKIP in Great Britain had helped to legitimate being ‘anti-immigrant’, such that ‘people feel they can legitimately voice opposition and [even] be non-politically correct’.

A different respondent pointed to the growth of incidents surrounding the Roma community, for which it was argued there is a need for policy and practice to ‘catch-up’ and provide answers to issues faced by that specific community (and that this spreads over into a number of minority religions). At a more structural level, the respondent argued that ‘perennial problems’ exist because of the fact that relatively cheap housing areas are predominantly protestant. Minority ethnic households and economic migrants often find themselves in these traditional protestant areas because that is where the affordable, accessible housing is located, but their presence can be greatly resented.

*“In NI the media coverage and the evidence on the ground suggest that this is a very specific problem that tends to be in loyalist communities and estates. That is to say, the way such communities identify themselves is often by ‘siege mentality’, and flags and emblems, etc. This can be linked back to waiting list claims and the prioritisation of folk with no local connections, and leads to tensions.”*

Several respondents argued that while racist incidents were being reported, they are located in specific places and arise in certain ways – that the more established migrants become, the more they recognised that the great majority of people and areas are welcoming and friendly.

With respect to how common it is for employers to make specific efforts to attract migrant workers to Northern Ireland, respondents pointed to a number of important examples. One said they knew of employers recruiting in Portugal, Lithuania, Poland and East Timor. A second respondent stated that hearsay or anecdote suggested that workers in food processing in Dungannon, are being directly recruited from Portugal and ‘Accession States’, but was not sure if any active role was being played by recruitment agencies. A third interviewee noted that migrant workers brought a range of skills and willingness to work – both to do high skilled jobs (such as professional and even senior clinical work in the NHS) but also the unskilled jobs others were not willing to take on in the agri-business sector.

More generally, respondents presented a varied (and not particularly clear) picture of local agencies and trade missions working with larger employers to help address skill shortages and specific labour needs. One respondent stated that there was no overarching national policy picture or approach. A second respondent argued that by elaborating rights guides,

funding law centres, etc., government was enabling or facilitating migrant worker opportunities but concurred that the Northern Ireland Executive has not thought seriously about target population levels or how to achieve these (and what the migrant share should be).

It was also suggested that recent media and policy discourse around racial incidents may not help to encourage further migrant workers to come to Northern Ireland, as word of mouth and reputation was viewed to be critical for potential migration.

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt migrant worker policy was really a reserved UK matter. One interviewee argued that there were two components to this. Direct policies to address skill shortages, education, etc can be set at the Northern Ireland level, and these affect the number of international students and workers coming into the province. More generally however, policies relating to asylum, security and employment rights are much more a UK issue. A different respondent focused on EU law as the dominant factor, including the distinction between EU and non-EU migrants and their different rights in the UK and Northern Ireland. One respondent also stressed the importance of existing racial equality legislation and that gangmaster policies are relatively strongly enforced locally. A further view expressed was that the legal framework was clear between devolved, reserved and EU competencies; the different branches of the Northern Ireland Government including the Housing Executive know perfectly well where discretion can apply and also where their role is simply to implement existing laws from higher jurisdictions.

Respondents expressed uncertainty about likely future trends in migrant numbers. One argued that it depends on wider drivers of the economy, demographic change, and policies and economic development in the origin country. A second respondent argued that because the average age of migrants is young (under 30) they are typically looking for short term economic benefits and work experience rather than to settle. A different interviewee emphasised that Northern Ireland is an attractive location relative to other parts of the UK for a number of reasons.

*“Northern Ireland can be very nice and housing can be relatively cheap and in nice communities with good employment prospects – there is no casual acceptance of racism in Northern Ireland as in parts of England. It is really important to keep this Northern Irish liberal tolerance”.*

It was argued by one public sector housing professional that, drawing on migrant footprint statistics, net numbers will hold steady or experience a gentle decline – food processing and similar jobs will hold up but the key factors will be capacity and demand in the construction industry; one consular representative said that he was aware of growing demand for migrant workers in construction.

When invited to reflect on policy changes they would like to see introduced given the Northern Ireland experience of migrant workers to date, several interviewees focused on the importance of the completion and implementation of the racial equalities strategy and of changing the discourse towards one that recognises the positive role of ethnic minorities.

*“The big issue is to ensure that the race equality strategy review is finalised and implemented – this is the minimum platform. After that there is a lot of work to be done on education, housing, access to medical services and other social welfare issues, along with profile-raising in general. Migrant workers need to be seen as more of a great advantage rather than having a debate about them as a drain. The tone needs to change. And the policy framework from Government has to lead this process.”*

A further emphasis was on a need to provide the support and services required in a coherent way (mention was made of education, health, housing and other social welfare services). In terms of actions that national organisations or the Northern Ireland Executive could undertake to improve the experiences of migrant workers, one respondent emphasised that policy needs to be more joined up, with sufficient ‘statutory infrastructure’ to get migrant worker policy out of currently ‘unconnected silos’. Others suggested problems are often unavoidable because individual advice requests can be time intensive to handle, take a long time to address and can be quite complex especially when there are changes in circumstances, for example in terms of health status, which can affect benefit entitlement and access to related services.

Regarding housing, one view expressed was a need to strengthen landlord registration schemes in the private rented sector, adding more of a quality assurance dimension that includes compliance with race relations and anti-discrimination legislation. The vast majority of migrant workers are housed in private renting, leading one respondent to conclude that policies and procedures in the social sector are not really as relevant.

Another respondent took the view that the Housing Executive remains the dominant social housing provider, is the main alternative to private renting locally in many parts of Northern Ireland and therefore can play an important housing role. However, because the populace and the media do not clearly distinguish housing for economic migrants and their families from housing for asylum seekers, it was felt that dispensing this role effectively may generate problems.

One respondent argued that policy is already working to improve standards in the private renting sector via rents that are generally affordable, effective registration and monitoring, concluding that the process is working well, albeit still a work in progress. More generally, one respondent expressed concern about the way benefit changes affecting migrants as part of Borders Agency policy might impact on the more vulnerable. In particular, it had been the case that receipt of Job Seekers Allowance would permit private tenants to receive Housing Benefit but this is now being ended, with possible problems and policy costs for helping those adversely affected by such changes.

### **Key Points**

The following points summarise the general views expressed by telephone interviewees:

- Strongly contrasting assessments were offered about policy intervention and effectiveness. On the one hand there is a strong belief that policy can work and make a difference, for example through an enforced racial equality strategy permeating things



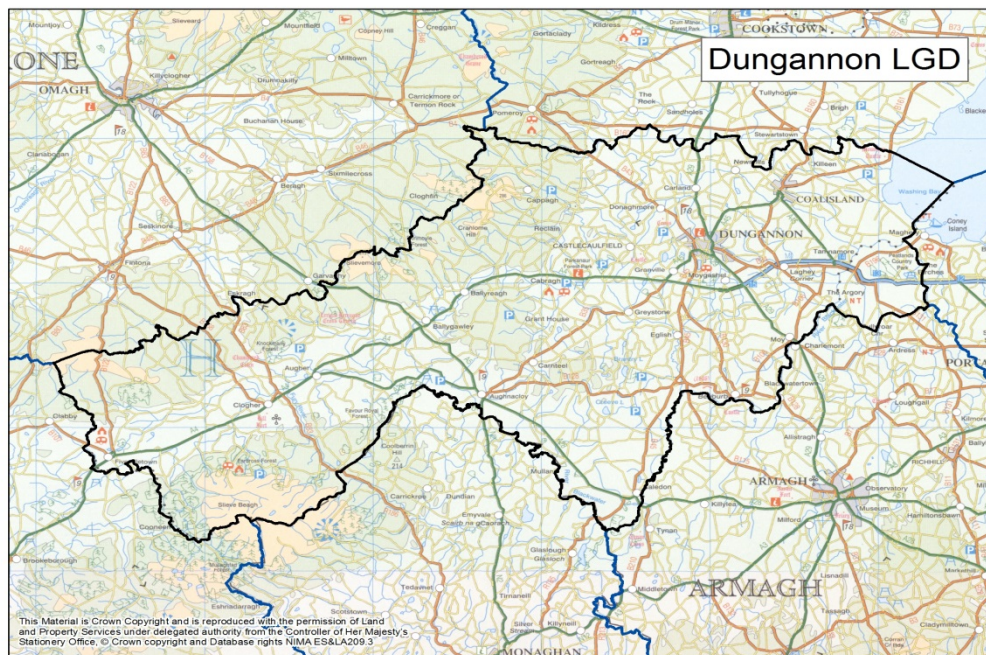
like HMO registration and compliance. At the same time there are those who point to a lack of knowledge about what is going on at ground level, a lack of powers and effective services or indeed of joined up working. It was also suggested that the Northern Ireland Executive does not have a clear vision concerning composition and target levels of population, let alone cohesive policies to support, promote or tailor the kinds of immigration that would most benefit the economy.

- Implicit in some of the policy views expressed was a tension between reserved, devolved and EU-level policymaking. This was clearest in terms of working with UK immigration and benefit rules and the sense that many Northern Ireland policy personnel do not want or recognize the imperatives coming from London on these policy questions. However, it was clearly indicated that agencies and public bodies in Northern Ireland know where the legal boundaries lie.
- Bad conditions were, albeit rarely, remarked on by interviewees. One representative of a specific national community argued that, where they found one or two examples of poor wages and/or poor tied housing, they proposed return to country of origin to those experiencing such conditions. However, like incidents of racism, etc, these were exceptional and anecdotal rather than understood as any sort of general experience. One possibly important ethical policy issue raised was about the impact of recruitment agencies taking a cut of the wage of low income migrant workers – one illustration was of an hourly wage falling from £9 to £6.
- Recent racist incidents and the potential importance of the racial equality strategy figured prominently in interviewee thoughts. There is a complex relationship with community issues here, given that the majority of the high profile problems appear to be related to housing in deprived protestant areas. One respondent asked whether racism is a necessary component of loyalism. The racial equality process is clearly an issue of the moment but is wrapped up in wider, long term cultural policy reform issues. A new dimension was the worry expressed by several about an emerging Roma issue.
- There was extensive recognition across the range of respondents of the relevance of the heterogeneity amongst migrant workers (by country, skill level, etc) and also the importance of the distinction between new and more settled migrants, who have different service and housing requirements.
- Again, it was evident that respondents appreciated the economics of migration decisions, the importance of relative economic performance in origin and destination economies, and, furthermore, the importance of a wider set of locational attributes, including reputation, to potential in-migrants. For newly arrived migrants in particular, the private rented sector is seen as critical, as is how well the HMO sector works in particular places. Confidence in the relevant monitoring system amongst housing professionals interviewed in this regard was striking, but it is unclear the extent to which this confidence is well placed
- Collectively, there was evident sympathy across respondents that there may well be a case for more resources to support language services, advice services and for crisis funding for migrant groups vulnerable to changes in welfare status or subject to unscrupulous employer or landlord practices.

## 4. THE DUNGANNON LOCAL HOUSING SYSTEM

### Introduction

This section examines recent population and labour market dynamics, the inter-relationship between the two and how the Dungannon local housing system has responded to these drivers of housing demand, especially inward migration. It draws on statistical and local interview evidence.



### The geography of Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough

Dungannon LGD has a population of 59,300 and covers an area of 783.6 km<sup>2</sup> that extends from Lough Neagh to the borders of Fermanagh and County Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland. The borough contains 22 wards that are grouped into the four electoral areas of Dungannon Town, Torrent, Blackwater and Clogher Valley.

The administrative centre is Dungannon town. It lies 41 miles west of Belfast and is home to 15,890 people or 26% of the borough's population. The town sits on the A29 between Cookstown and Armagh and provides a mix of commercial, retail, business, educational and community services. Retail space vacancies are evident within Dungannon Town (image 4.1). The small town of Coalisland lies 4 miles to the west of Dungannon. With a population of 5,600, it is the next largest settlement and falls within the Torrent area. The Coalisland & Dungannon Partnership oversee an action plan designed to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of designated neighbourhood renewal areas (NRA) in Dungannon and Coalisland<sup>21</sup>.

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21 The Dungannon NRA includes part of the town centre and the housing estates of Annaghshee, Milltown and Fairmount whilst the Coalisland NRA includes Annagher Road, Town Centre, Dungannon Road, Mourne Avenue, Mourne Crescent, Loughview Drive, Gortgonis Road and Gortgonis Terrace and the travellers' sites at Station Yard & AnTearmann.

The remaining 63% of the population live in small villages, townlands and the countryside, albeit most are in reasonable proximity to the recently upgraded south western (M1/A4) and/or soon to be upgraded western (A5) transport corridors.

**Image 4.1: False Shop Front, Dungannon Town**



Economic flows are important to understanding the spatial structure of areas. Commuting and residential flows indicate that Dungannon has its own distinct local housing market. This is centred on Dungannon and Coalisland and extends across the borough other than the southern half of the Clogher Valley (Young et al, 2010). In this sparsely populated area people tend to work within the Enniskillen travel to work area (TTWA) and most house moves occur within a localised area that includes the wards of Clogher and Fivemiletown plus Brookeborough and Tempo in Fermanagh.

Another economic flow that has shaped housing demand has been strong employment growth and an associated inflow of workers, especially from the EU. This inflow has been most pronounced in Dungannon town where a quarter of residents were born abroad.

In light of the spatial distribution of recent migrants, this section differentiates between Dungannon town and the rest of the borough, although where data permits, pertinent dynamics and issues in the three predominantly rural electoral divisions are also highlighted.

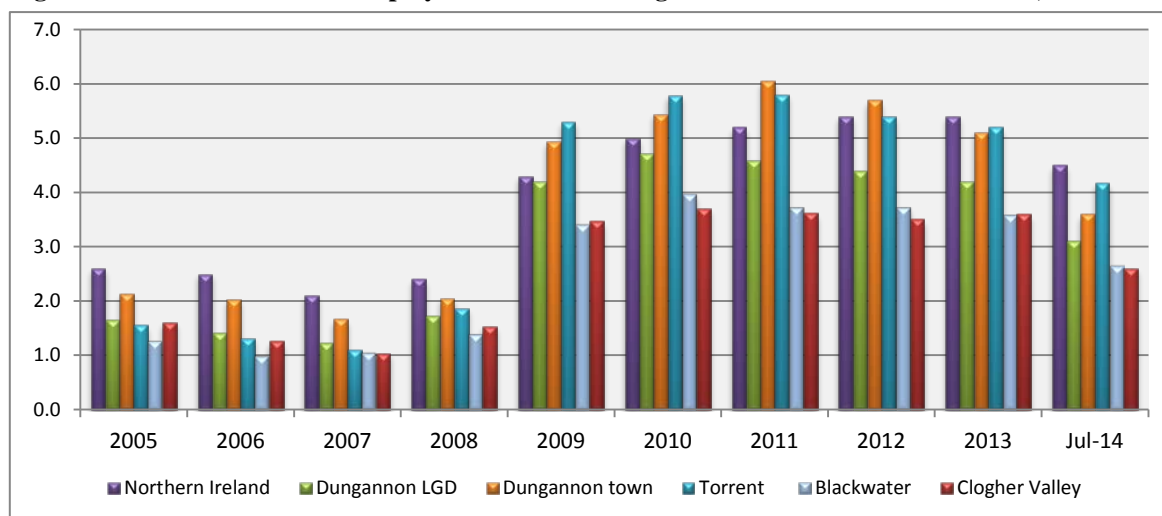
## **The Dungannon and South Tyrone economy and labour market**

### ***Economic performance since 2000***

Dungannon has one of the most dynamic local economies in Northern Ireland. Until the onset of the global financial crisis in 2007 and ensuing recession, the local economy grew rapidly. The NI Labour Force Survey indicates that over the period 2001-2007 the numbers of people in work increased by 33%, from 19,000 to 25,000, compared to a 12% growth in employment for Northern Ireland as a whole. With jobs growth outstripping population growth, the employment rate for working age adults (16-64 years) increased by 7 percentage points, to

68%. Likewise, as figure 4.1 shows, claimant count based unemployment fell to 1.3% in 2007.

**Figure 4.1: Claimant count unemployment rates for Dungannon LGD & Northern Ireland, 2000 -2014**



Source: NISRA (2014) annual average claimant counts and rates DETNI (2014) monthly claimant based rates

The recession saw job numbers contract and unemployment rise sharply. From March 2008 to March 2011 the numbers of residents included in the claimant count more than trebled, from 477 to over 1,800, and the unemployment rate rose to a peak of 4.9% in early 2011. The Dungannon LGD economy has, however, recovered well from the recession. The most recent NI Labour Force Survey reports that, by 2012, the employment rate for 16-64 year olds had climbed back to over 67%. Claimant based unemployment has also been falling back more sharply than for Northern Ireland as a whole. In July 2014 it stood at 3.1%. Reasons for the comparatively strong recovery of the local economy are its distinctive industrial structure and the fact that it is not reliant on any single sector or employer.

### ***Structure of the labour market***

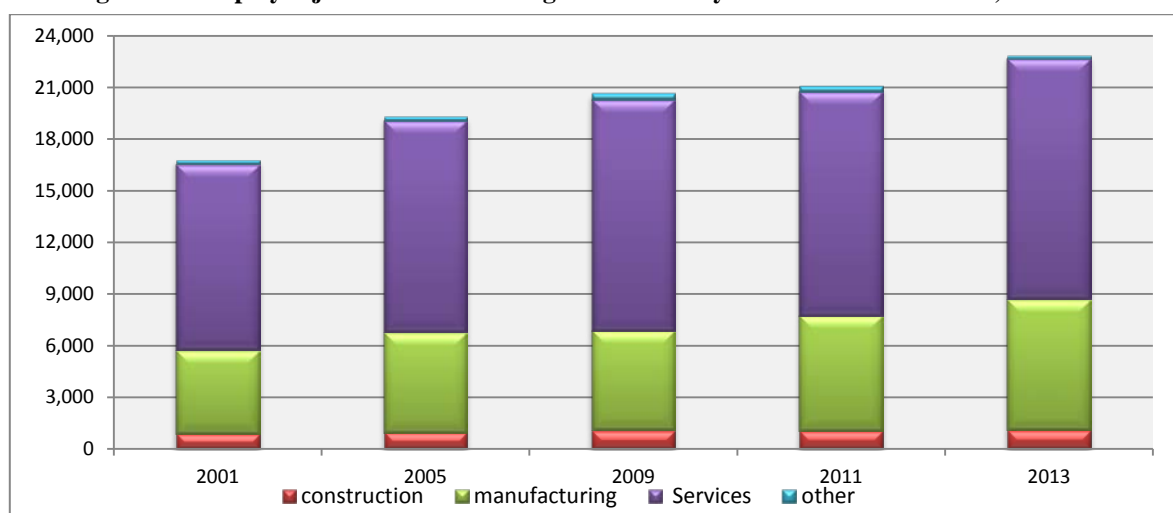
Figures 4.2 illustrates that manufacturing is a major and growing source of direct employment in Dungannon LGD. In 2013, some 33% of all employees were directly employed in manufacturing, which was three times higher than the Northern Ireland rate of 11% (see table 4.1). The local economy has carved out niches in food processing, food packaging and light engineering. Major food processing and packing firms include Moy Park, Dunbia (Dungannon Meats), Linden Foods, Hughes Mushrooms and Greiner Packaging. Light engineering firms include Powerscreen and Sandvik, both of which produce mining and quarrying equipment; the McAvoy Group and Western Building Systems (supplying modular buildings); and Mallaghan, which produces airport ground support equipment. Most of these larger firms trade outside Northern Ireland. There is also a host of family owned businesses spread across Dungannon LGD, many of which also trade outside Northern Ireland. The majority of businesses employ less than 10 people.

In the last 15 months it has been confirmed that Linden Foods and Moy Park are expanding production at Dungannon and that Sandvik is consolidating its UK based manufacture of

mobile screens and crushers at Ballygawley. These developments point to continued growth in manufacturing jobs.

Although it employs few people, the mining and quarrying sector remains significant to the local economy. Dungannon LGD is an important source for materials required for road and building construction and there is commercial peat extraction near Lough Neagh.

**Figure 4.2 Employee job numbers in Dungannon LGD by broad industrial sector, 2001-2013**



Source: Census of Employment 2001 to 2013, via DETNI and NISRA - NINIS portal

Note: Data before and after 2009 are not fully compatible due to survey method and data definition changes

**Table 4.1 Employee Jobs in Northern Ireland and Dungannon LGD, 2013**

Industrial group	Northern Ireland		Dungannon LGD	
	No.	%	No.	%
Mining And Quarrying	1,553	0.2%	224	1.0%
Manufacturing	75,031	10.8%	7,623	33.0%
Construction	29,382	4.2%	1,097	4.8%
All Services	577,389	83.4%	13,976	60.6%
<i>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade; Repairs</i>	122,093	17.6%	4,464	19.3%
<i>Transport &amp; Storage</i>	24,831	3.6%	826	3.6%
<i>Accommodation &amp; Food</i>	43,005	6.2%	889	3.9%
<i>Information &amp; Communication</i>	16,777	2.4%	120	0.5%
<i>Financial and Insurance</i>	18,148	2.6%	190	0.8%
<i>Real Estate</i>	6,381	0.9%	109	0.5%
<i>Professional, Scientific &amp; Tech</i>	25,479	3.7%	623	2.7%
<i>Admin and Support</i>	47,096	6.8%	584	2.5%
<i>Public Admin. &amp; Defence</i>	54,235	7.8%	855	3.7%
<i>Education</i>	67,547	9.8%	2,230	9.7%
<i>Health &amp; Social Work</i>	122,815	17.8%	2,622	11.4%
<i>Arts, Entertainment &amp; Recreation</i>	14,405	2.1%	167	0.7%
<i>Other Service Activities</i>	14,577	2.1%	297	1.3%
Other	8,548	1.2%	159	0.7%
All Industries	691,903	100.0%	23,079	100.0%

Source: Census of Employment, 2013 SIC2007 Industrial Sector

Note: the Census of Employment is not intended to provide robust evidence on agricultural employment.



The service sector accounts for 61% of employee jobs in Dungannon LGD, which is lower than the Northern Ireland wide rate of 83%. The composition of service sector jobs suggests that manufacturing is an important generator of service jobs. Almost 32% of the 14,000 service jobs available are in wholesale, retail and the repair of motor vehicles. This diverse sector includes businesses engaged in the distribution and marketing of manufactured goods and farm products. The two other service industries that have experienced a growth in employee numbers since 2011 have been transport & storage and accommodation & food. Both these sectors are also likely to have benefitted from the spillover effects of manufacturing.

A consequence of the growth in direct and indirect manufacturing jobs is that the local economy is less reliant of public sector jobs than Northern Ireland as a whole. In 2013, 20% of employee jobs were in the public sector compared to 31% throughout Northern Ireland. The makeup of the local economy is also reflected in the fact that disproportionate numbers of people are skilled tradesman, process operatives or engaged in routine or elementary occupations and comparatively few are engaged in managerial, professional and administrative or clerical positions.

Partly reflecting the rural geography of the borough, disproportionate numbers of people are self-employed or own account workers. Around 4,700 residents are self-employed and not counted in the employee figures reported in table 4.1. In 2011 some 17% of economically active residents were self-employed, ranging from 10% of those in Dungannon town to over 20% of those in Blackwater and Clogher Valley. This highlights that farming and related activities remain important local economic activities.

According to the 2013 Agricultural Census, over three quarters of the 3,100 people that work in farming are individual farmers plus partners, reflecting the relatively small size of most farm businesses. Some 725 employees in the sector are mainly employed in part time, seasonal or casual employment. Seasonal and casual workers are often foreign born workers, including those engaged in mushroom farming.

Whilst the number of self-employed farmers has been slowly declining, the number of self-employed and own account workers in other sectors of the economy has been increasing. After allowing for farmers and their partners, perhaps a half of all self-employed and own account workers now work in other sectors of the economy, which is equivalent to 8-9% of all economically active residents. As one interviewee observed:

*"The local economy is very entrepreneurial. The population has a lot of get up and go...foreign nationals are now setting up their own businesses and contributing to economic life and dynamism of the area"*

UK trends also suggest that some of the increase in self-employment is due to working practices in the construction sector and a growth in older workers unable to find a job.

### ***Patterns of economic activity***

Although the 2011 Census was undertaken during the most recent recession, at a point when unemployment rates were at their peak, comparisons between the 2001 and 2011 Census for residents aged 16-74 years, which are shown in figure 4.3, show that:

- In 2001, 60% of Dungannon LGD residents were economically active compared to 62.3% for Northern Ireland as a whole. By 2011 this rate was 67.5% and was higher than the Northern Ireland rate of 66.2%. This was due to a marked increase in the numbers of residents in both full time and part time work. In contrast, growth in the Northern Ireland economic activity rate was largely due to an increase in people working part time.
- The sharp rise in employment over the decade was boosted by considerable numbers of inward migrants moving to the area but the numbers of economically inactive residents of working age also fell, suggesting many local residents that had been economically inactive, especially women looking after home and family, entered the labour market.
- In 2011, Torrent was the only sub-area where employment rates were below those for Northern Ireland. This largely reflected the higher proportions of local residents that were unemployed or had retired during the decade.

The recession imposed a greater burden on residents of Torrent and Dungannon Town than other parts of the local government district. Claimant count unemployment rates for both areas peaked at around 6% in 2011 whereas rates for Blackwater and Clogher Valley remained below 4% (see figure 4.1). These numbers are consistent with local opinion that contraction in the retail, engineering and construction sectors was most keenly felt in Dungannon Town and Coalisland.

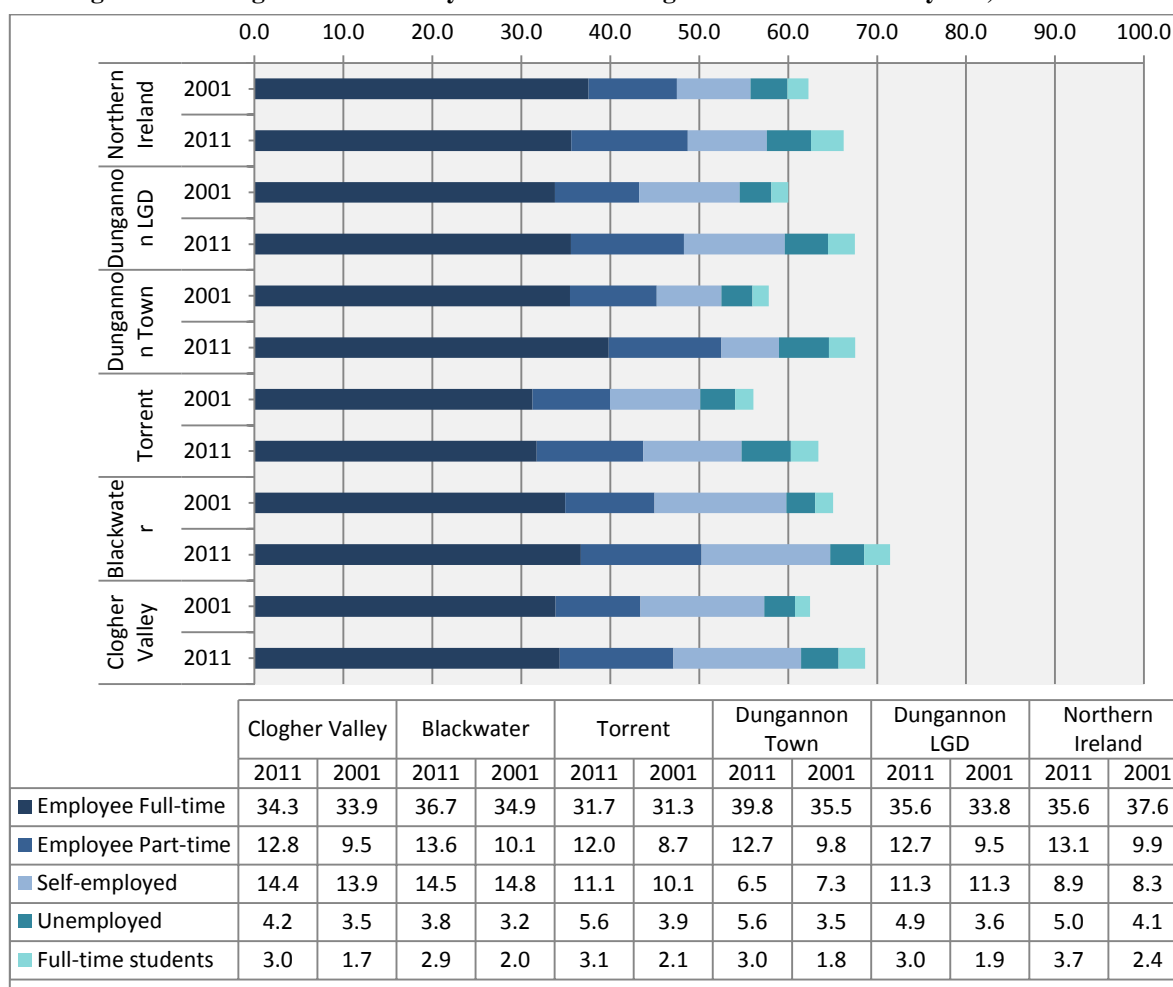
By July 2014 unemployment in Dungannon Town had fallen back to 3.6% and in Torrent to 4.2%, but unemployment remains above the Dungannon LGD wide rate. This is mainly due to concentrations of unemployment in the wards of Ballysaggart (5.6%) and Coalisland South (6.6%), which extend across much of the two NRA areas. At the time of the 2011 Census, the majority of unemployed people in both NRAs had either never worked or had last worked before 2005, highlighting that not everyone has shared in the benefits of a growing economy and that both areas face longstanding challenges of concentrated worklessness.

Young adults, especially males, were more severely affected by the recession than older age cohorts. At the time of Census 2011, 13% of economically active residents aged 16-24 years were unemployed, ranging from 9% for young women to 17% for young men.

### **The position of foreign workers in the labour market**

Within Dungannon town a large share of foreign born workers, in particular East Timorese and other Portuguese speaking people are employed in the food processing sector. Some foreign born workers that have been in Northern Ireland for some years have advanced to supervisory and other better paid jobs, but most are employed in what was described as low paid, routine jobs that can involve long and unsocial hours undertaking unpleasant, monotonous and physically demanding tasks.

**Figure 4.3 Change in economically active residents aged between 16 and 74 years, 2001 - 2011**



Source: Census 2001 KS09a and Census 2011 KS 601 and QS601

Outside of the town, there is a concentration of people from Poland and Lithuania in the engineering sector with specific skills that are in otherwise scarce supply locally. Elsewhere there are foreign born residents, mainly from Europe, employed in agri-food businesses, including mushroom farms, and in private care homes and other small businesses.

Interviewees said there is essentially no evidence that foreign born workers had displaced native workers in the local labour market to any significant extent, either before or after the onset of the most recent economic recession. The consensus is that foreign born and native born workers operate in different sectors of the labour market and thus tend not to compete for jobs.

*"Local people haven't filled many of the jobs created over the last decade, migrants have. Unemployment was already low and local people wouldn't apply for the jobs on offer; the work and long hours don't appeal".*

*"Some of the jobs in the food processing sector involve very unpleasant work and 12 hour shifts; no amount of money would pay me to do it"*



*"In spite of the recession most locals will still not do the kind of work migrants do. The jobs in the agri-foods sector are hard, dirty and low paid"*

During the 'noughties' employers often used recruitment agencies to source workers from Europe and the rest of the world. Interviews confirmed this had given rise to instances of abuse and exploitation. This problem was often compounded by language barriers and lack of access to independent advice, particularly for those employed and living in rural areas. People working on farms were also at high risk of exploitation and what some interviewees called modern day slavery. Examples of abuse that were often mentioned included verbal abuse, paying derisory wages, withholding pay, refusal of time off and squalid housing.

*"There were instances where people were being paid just £2 per hour but Moy Park were paying agents over £7 per hour".*

*"Some agencies are still very exploitative; their operations are like virtual slavery- its modern day slavery"*

The impression we formed is the employers, at least those based in the Dungannon Town area, have become less reliant on the use of recruitment agencies over time, perhaps partly influenced by the large pool of foreign born workers already living locally. Migrants are also tending to rely more on word of mouth, their own networks, direct job applications and job adverts to search for employment.

Some interviewees felt that, in the specific case of Dungannon town, foreign born workers had not been especially more vulnerable than other workers to unemployment or underemployment during the downturn. In large part this was because the food processing sector was less severely affected by the recession than other industries. On the other hand, redundancies in the engineering sector affected migrants working in this sector. The number of new migrants registering to work also reduced by 75% and those that did arrive, especially those lacking proficiency in English, often struggled to find regular paid work. Often the only work open was temporary and casual in nature.

*"The food industry kept the economy going, Engineering and manufacturing have been in flux but are picking up; construction hasn't recovered".*

*"The steep rise in unemployment in Coalisland was an indication that engineering firms weathered the storm by reducing their workforce".*

## **Demographic trends**

### ***Population growth***

Throughout the 'noughties' population growth in the Dungannon local government district area outstripped population growth for Northern Ireland as a whole (see table 4.2). This trend was most pronounced in the period from 2006 to 2010 when the population grew by 10.7%. Whilst the rate of population growth has slowed since 2011, it remains ahead of the Northern Ireland wide rate.

Between 2001 and 2003 over 55% of the growth in the population of Dungannon LGD was the result of natural change (i.e. more births than deaths) but this proportion fell to 45% in the period from 2006 to 2010. Since 2011, natural growth has again become the single most important driver of population growth, due to a decline in net external in-migration (involving flows in and out of Britain, the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the world) and a sharp increase in net domestic out-migration (i.e. flows to the rest of Northern Ireland).

**Table 4.2 Population estimates for Dungannon and its electoral areas, 20001-2013**

Year	Dungannon town	Torrent	Blackwater	Clogher Valley	Dungannon LGD	Northern Ireland
2001	12,056	14,171	10,932	10,670	47,830	1,688,838
2002	12,002	14,401	11,114	10,758	48,274	1,697,534
2003	11,973	14,510	11,241	10,858	48,582	1,704,924
2004	12,132	14,770	11,419	10,919	49,240	1,714,042
2005	12,547	15,139	11,674	11,148	50,509	1,727,733
2006	13,297	15,485	12,108	11,267	52,158	1,743,113
2007	14,061	15,905	12,660	11,407	54,032	1,761,683
2008	14,585	16,239	12,952	11,513	55,288	1,779,152
2009	14,892	16,544	13,285	11,600	56,320	1,793,333
2010	15,130	16,817	13,581	11,735	57,263	1,804,833
2011	15,350	17,141	13,816	11,791	58,100	1,814,318
2012	15,576	17,260	14,100	11,877	58,813	1,823,634
2013	15,668	17,463	14,191	11,975	59,298	1,829,725
2001-2005	491	968	742	478	2,679	38,895
	4.1	6.8	6.8	4.5	5.6	2.3
2006-2010	1,833	1,332	1,473	468	5,105	61,720
	15.2	9.4	13.5	4.4	10.7	3.7
2011-2013	318	322	375	184	1,198	15,407
	2.6	2.3	3.4	1.7	2.5	0.9
2001-2011	3,294	2,970	2,884	1,121	10,270	125,480
	27.3	21.0	26.4	10.5	21.5	7.4

Source: NISRA (2014) Small area population estimates, 2001-2013

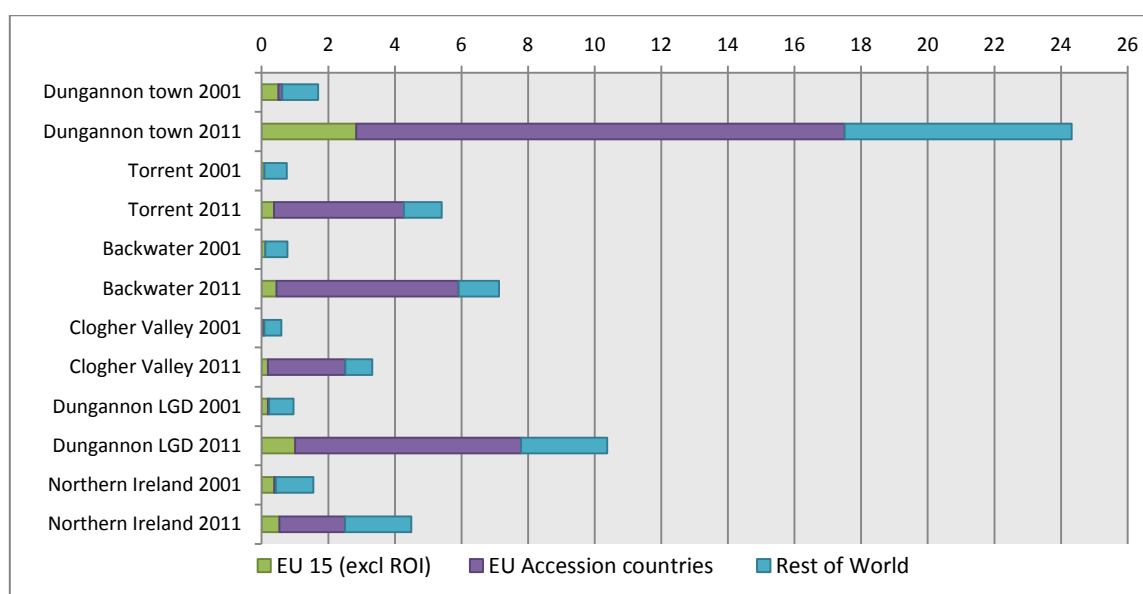
As noted in chapter 3, Dungannon LGD has experienced the sharpest proportionate rise in the presence of foreign born residents of all Northern Ireland's local authority areas. In 2011 over 10% of the borough's residents were foreign born. Of the almost 6,000 foreign born residents in the area, 80% were born in just five countries: Lithuania (1,920), Poland (1,400), Latvia (310), Portugal (490) and East Timor (670).

Looking across the borough, international in-migration has exhibited a distinctive spatial pattern and has been an important, (but as already noted, not the sole) driver of population change. Table 4.2 and figure 4.4 suggest that:

- Dungannon town experienced the sharpest rise in foreign born residents. In 2011 some 24% of the town's residents were foreign born, up from less than 2% in 2001. The origins of the 3,700 foreign born residents were similar to that for the borough as a whole. The main difference was the extremely high concentration of the borough's Portuguese speaking residents within the town. In 2011 over 96% of the borough's East Timorese population and 86% of the borough's Portuguese population lived in the town, reflecting a preference to live near work in factories like Moy Park and Dungannon Meats.

- The increase in the number of foreign born residents in the town was somewhat higher than the total increase in the town's population from 2001 to 2011. As the town's population also includes children born in Northern Ireland to foreign nationals, this supports estate agent perceptions that there has been something of a growing trend for households to move to settlements in easy reach of the town such as the Moy and Bush wards etc.
- In 2011, there were 970 foreign born residents living in Blackwater, mainly in the Moy, Benburb and Aughnacloy ward areas. Most were from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovakia. In spite of much lower numbers of foreign born residents, the rate and scale of population growth in Blackwater were not much lower than for Dungannon town during 2001-2011. This indicates that natural population change and the inflow of households from the town and elsewhere also contributed to population growth in the area.
- Torrent ward was home to 920 foreign born residents in 2011, of which 40% were Lithuanian and a similar proportion other EU8 nationals. Most lived in and around Coalisland and Donaghmore and many are said to work for local engineering firms. The lack of new housing development in Donaghmore may explain the relatively slower rate, at least relative to Dungannon LGD, of population growth in Torrent between 2001 and 2011.
- Of the 380 foreign born residents living in Clogher Valley, 30% were Polish, 47% were from the rest of Europe and the remainder were from various countries outside Europe. Although there were higher proportions of EU8 migrants in Ballygawley and Fivemiletown, foreign born residents were generally dispersed across the area. The more modest rate of population growth reflects the fact that the south western half of this area is some distance from the main employment centres.

Figure 4.4 Proportion of usually resident population born outside GB or Ireland, 2001-2011



Source: Country of Birth: Census 2011 KS204NI and Census 2001 Table UV097

### ***Age distribution of the population***

As well as contributing to population growth and ethnic diversity, migration has slowed the ageing of the population of Dungannon LGD. This can be seen by looking at the dependency ratio; that is the number of people of working age compared to the number of people of retirement age. In 2001 there were approximately 17 people aged 65 years or above per 100 people aged 16 to 64 years for Northern Ireland as a whole. The dependency ratio for Dungannon was the same as for Northern Ireland. By 2013 the number of people aged 65 years or above per 100 aged 16 to 64 years for Northern Ireland had increased to 19, but the Dungannon LGD figure was unchanged.

The inflow of international migrants has also boosted the numbers of children living in Dungannon. Many interviewees pointed out that this has helped to boost school rolls and prevent the need to close schools. This has been achieved in two ways. First more children are being born to foreign born females. This has contributed to an increase in the average annual numbers of birth (from 719 in the 6 years to 2005 inclusive to 922 in the 6 years to 2012). Second, a growing number of families have moved to Dungannon LGD to join their partners. In 2011 around 8% of residents aged 0-15 years were born overseas.

### ***Household trends***

Population growth has been accompanied by a sharp rise in household numbers. Table 4.3 shows that in the decade to 2011 household numbers in Dungannon LGD increased by 25% (to 20,270), which was well in excess of the comparable rate for Northern Ireland (12%).

**Table 4.3 Change in the numbers of households across Dungannon LGD, 2001-2011**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>change no</b>	<b>change %</b>	<b>Population change %</b>
Northern Ireland	626,694	703,275	76,581	12.2	7.4
Dungannon LGD	16,268	20,270	4,002	24.6	21.5
Dungannon Town	4,553	5,724	1,171	25.7	27.3
Torrent	4,522	5,749	1,227	27.1	21.0
Backwater	3,698	4,733	1,035	28.0	26.4
Clogher Valley	3,495	4,064	569	16.3	10.5
Source: Census 2001 table uv089 and Census 2011 QS405					

What is also striking is that the rate of household growth in Dungannon Town was lower than the rate of population growth. This is a very unusual dynamic and highlights that foreign born residents tend to live in larger households than those born in Northern Ireland. As table 4.4 reports, on Census day 2011, the average household size for those represented by householders born in Northern Ireland was 2.8 whereas the average household size for those represented by householders born in one of the EU12 countries was 3.2. For East Timorese households the difference was much more substantive; the average household size was 4.5 and over half of East Timor households contained 5 or more persons.

Local interviewees generally suggested that one of the main reasons why migrants live in larger households is that many share flats and houses with unrelated people in order to keep housing costs affordable, particularly in the private rental market. As discussed later, many of these shared lets are said to be unauthorised HMOs. In terms of household composition (see table 4.5), over 1,800 households in Dungannon LGD are classed as 'other households'. This

grouping includes extended families as well as households that contain unrelated adults. Evidence from the 2001 and 2011 Census in relation to household composition is not strictly comparable due to changes in definition. Nonetheless, a 40% rise in "other households" over the 10 year period to 2011 does add some support for local views.

However, an increase in the numbers of households sharing accommodation is not the full story. A sharp rise in the numbers of families with dependent children in Dungannon LGD, in contrast to the decline in the numbers of families at the Northern Ireland level, indicates that a substantial share of foreign born households with 3 or more occupants must be families with dependent children. A fuller picture may become clear when detailed census data on the housing and economic circumstances of migrants by year of arrival becomes available.

### Evolving tenure patterns

Owner occupation has long been the dominant form of housing tenure across Dungannon LGD and, as figure 4.5 shows, this remains the case. In the past decade the number of homeowners in Dungannon LGD increased by 2,070 to 14,030, an increase of 17%. This growth was concentrated in Blackwater and Torrent wards. In spite of this, the proportion of households that were homeowners fell back slightly to 69%.

**Table 4.4 Country of birth of household representative by household size for Dungannon LGD, 2011**

	All households		1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5+ people	Average household size
Northern Ireland								
All usual residents	703,275	100.0	28	30	17	15	10	2.5
Northern Ireland	613,252	100.0	28	30	17	14	10	2.5
Foreign born	31,323	100.0	17	27	23	20	12	3.7
Dungannon LGD								
All usual residents	20,270	100	24	26	17	16	16	2.8
Northern Ireland	16,877	100	25	27	16	16	16	2.8
Foreign born	2,004	100	11	21	25	24	19	3.9
EU15 (excl ROI)	228	100	19	20	25	21	14	2.9
Portugal	185	100	17	20	25	22	16	3.0
EU 12	1,337	100	10	23	27	26	15	3.2
Poland	466	100	9	20	29	27	15	3.3
Lithuania	658	100	10	22	26	26	16	3.2
Slovakia	53	100	11	28	28	15	17	3.1
Latvia	109	100	11	28	26	26	9	3.0
East Timor	181	100	7	8	13	19	53	4.5
Source: Census 2011: Table DC 2409 (LGD)								

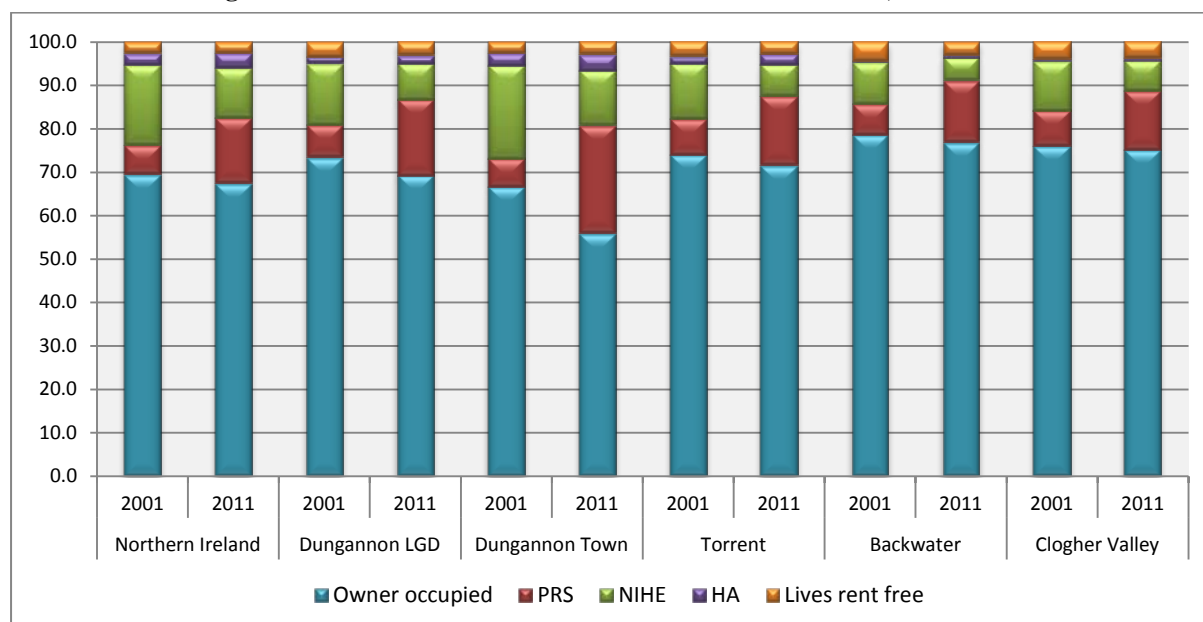
**Table 4.5 Composition of households in Northern Ireland and Dungannon LGD, 2011**

Household type	No		Percent	
	Northern Ireland	Dungannon LGD	Northern Ireland	Dungannon LGD
Single person under 65	118,313	2,828	16.8	14.0
Older single	78,101	2,028	11.1	10.0
Older couple (both 65+)	46,826	1,109	6.7	5.5
Couple	92,821	2,312	13.2	11.4
Family: dependent child(ren)	154,863	5,490	22.0	27.1
Family: no dependents	60,336	2,024	8.6	10.0
Lone parent	64,228	1,610	9.1	7.9
Lone parent no dependents	36,002	1,057	5.1	5.2
Other households: dependent children	18,980	789	2.7	3.9
Other households without dependent children	32,805	1,023	4.7	5.0
All households	703,275	20,270	100.0	100.0
Source: Census 2011 Table DC4101				

One of the main reasons for the proportionate decline in owner occupation was the fact that the size of the private rented sector doubled over the same period, a trend that has occurred throughout Northern Ireland. Around 3,600 households, equivalent to 18% of all resident households, are now private renters. The majority (62%) of residents in the private rented sector were born in Britain or Ireland and the rest (38%) were foreign born.

Conversely, both the number and proportion of households in the social rented sector declined. In 2011 there were 450 fewer households in the social rented sector than in 2001. Currently, 10% of all resident households are social renters compared to 15% for Northern Ireland as whole.

**Figure 4.5 Percent of households in each of the main tenures, 2001-2001**



Source: Census 2001 uv089 and Census 2011 QS405

The tenure occupied by foreign born residents is very different to that of the local population. This and the spatial distribution of foreign born residents have had an influence on the changing tenure patterns observable over the last decade. Census figures suggest:

- Around 72% of residents born in Portugal and East Timor are in the private rented sector. The proportion for people born in one of the EU12 countries is somewhat higher at 78%. The high proportion living in this sector is consistent with patterns across the country and reflects the ease of access to this tenure compared to the other two tenures.
- Around 15% of residents born in Portugal and East Timor are homeowners. The comparable figure for those from the EU 12 is slightly lower at around 13%. However, as discussed below, demand from EU12 nationals is on the increase.
- Around 13% of residents born in Portugal or East Timor are social renters as are 9% of those from the EU12 countries. However, actual numbers of EU12, Portuguese and East Timorese born social tenants remain modest, at somewhere in the region of 250.

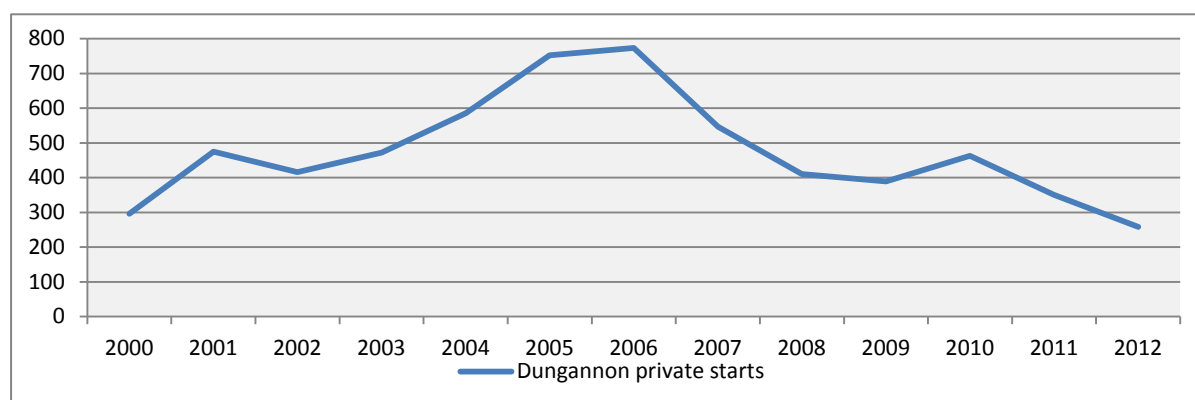
Figure 4.5 shows that the most substantive change in terms of tenure has occurred in Dungannon town. Over the decade there was a fourfold increase in the number of households in the private rented sector. In 2011 a quarter of all households within the town were renting from a private landlord, twice as many as were renting from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Another striking local dynamic, especially when viewed alongside the high rates of private housing construction prior to 2007, is that the number of households that owned their home increased by just 170.

## Owner occupation and private sector development

### *Private house building*

Figure 4.6 shows that in the early part of the last decade, some 400 to 500 private dwellings were started each year. This increased to over 700 a year at the height of the boom. Since 2007 and the onset of the economic downturn the annual number of private house starts has been on a downward trend. In spite of this, the rate of housing starts in the last decade, measured in terms of the number of starts per 1,000 residents, was only exceeded by Fermanagh and Banbridge.

**Figure 4.6 Annual numbers of private housing starts in Dungannon LGD, 200-2012**



Source: NISRA (2014) Neighbourhood Statistics,

Various interviewees affirmed that speculative development increased rapidly in the boom years. At least 12 new estates in Dungannon, 6 new estates in the Coalisland area and other new developments scattered across the rest of the borough were built. This bubble was said to have been fuelled by expectations of continued rising house prices, liberal lending practices and large numbers of investors entering the market. Investors included local people that were new to the market and hoped to benefit through equity growth rather than rental income.

Whilst unplanned, this development fortuitously coincided with EU enlargement and the subsequent inflow of foreign born workers. In Dungannon town, estates built during the boom were initially intended for the owner occupation market. However as the housing market realities of the recession became apparent many of these new dwellings found their way into the private rental market. Local interviewees suggested that perhaps 70% of properties on the Lambfields estate and a similar proportion of the Annagole estate were now in the private rental market (image 4.2). Both these estates house many foreign born residents.

*"It was a lucky coincidence that houses were built in Dungannon when they were needed"*

*"A lot of so call investors were local people; they were hoping to buy and flip but got caught out when the bubble burst - now they are stuck with the property and have become landlords".*

Local market experts also concurred that the increase in foreign born workers played a big role in ensuring that Dungannon town avoided the worst of the housing market slump and prevented new estates from being abandoned, unoccupied or left unfinished.

*""Migrant workers helped to ensure overall demand kept pace with speculative supply; it prevented lots of empty houses appearing in the area"*

*"Due to migration there is demand for houses in the two main settlements but much of the rest of the area was overbuilt. It took 5 years to sell 5 houses in one hamlet."*

**Image 4.2: New Housing at Annagole Considered by Interviewees to be Predominantly Privately Rented**





### ***Housing market conditions and recent price trends***

Since 2007 house prices in Northern Ireland have fallen by 50%. House prices in Dungannon followed a similar, but steeper, downward trend. However, market conditions appear to have improved in the last 12 months. Estate agents reported there has been a modest rise in the number of housing transactions completing and in house prices. Greater numbers of first time buyers and investors are currently returning to the market than at any time since the 2007 housing market bust. Based on local estate agents views and advertised sales it appears that in terms of Dungannon town:

- Terraced houses sell for around £60,000 to £80,000, with prices depending on condition and area. This segment of the market includes ex-RTB properties. Whilst some investors prefer new build, most are seeking to buy at the lower end of this segment of the market because lower prices make it possible to make higher profit from rental income.
- Semi-detached properties sell for around £90,000 to £120,000. This is the product first time buyers are generally seeking, with many wanting a recently built 2-3 bedroom property in walk in condition. Prices for the most popular areas such as Donaghmore and Moy tend to be at the higher end of this price range.
- Demand for detached properties and other properties towards the upper end of the market with a value in excess of £150,000 remains weak due to the absence of existing homeowners 'trading up'.
- Flats of all kinds remain unpopular. There is little demand and thus price levels are hard to determine, but one or two have been recently advertised at below £50,000.

The above prices are of a similar order of magnitude to those reported by Ulster University House Price Index for the Enniskillen/Fermanagh/South Tyrone region for 2014(Q2). The latter indicates that the average house price for the region was £123,042 and that prices ranged from £60,986 for a terraced house, to £84,333 for a semi-detached property and £186,323 for a detached property.

Local market professionals were clear that the housing market is still a long way from full recovery. The numbers looking to buy remain modest and sales can take months to complete. There is a shortage of properties coming onto the market that prospective buyers want to buy. The low numbers of resale properties means that the market is largely dependent on the flow of new homes coming up for sale. The key constraints affecting both demand and supply are negative equity and low prices, which have combined to deter homeowners from returning to the market and to perpetuate the lack of resale properties coming onto the market.

### ***Affordability***

In terms of the owner occupied market local interviewees held differing views on whether current house prices are still a major deterrent for first time buyers that are working full time.

In 2013, the average annual gross median wage for employees that had worked full time in the Dungannon LGD area was approximately £28,300. However, the average is skewed by the high earning power of some employees and the median wage was rather lower at around £22,000. For employees at the lower quartile point of the earnings distribution gross earnings were £17,500.

**Table 4.6 House price to earnings ratios for Dungannon LGD, 2011**

	<b>Average</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Lower quartile</b>	<b>Couple (two earners) at lower quartile</b>
Workplace earnings 2013	£28,339	£21,942	£17,531	£35,062
Semi-detached house	£84,333	£84,333	£84,333	£84,333
Terraced house	£60,986	£60,986	£60,986	£60,986
<b>Ratio: price to earnings</b>				
Semi-detached house	2.98	3.84	4.81	2.41
Terraced house	2.15	2.78	3.48	1.74
Source: NIHE/Ulster University House Price index 2014 (Q2) and DETI (2014) ASHE workplace earnings				

Looking at the relationship between reigning prices for a terraced house and semi-detached house and the earnings of working households is a useful means of illustrating the potential affordability of house prices. The UK and Scottish Governments believe that buying a home should be considered affordable if price is less than 2.9 times gross earnings for a dual income household. Taking this as a benchmark, the figures reported in table 4.6 illustrate that house prices have generally become affordable for households with at least one full time earner on the average wage, and for households with two full time employees at the lower quartile. This is supported by feedback from estate agents that the majority of first time buyers returning to the market are couples or families with children.

However, the need to raise a deposit and poor job security still present considerable barriers to house purchase. Two new regulatory measures are also likely to present additional hurdles. Since April 2014 lenders must conduct a full affordability check that must examine the income and expenditure patterns (for example on food, child care and so on) of mortgage applicants. Since June, lenders must also 'stress test' whether borrowers could still afford their mortgages if interest rates were to rise by 3 percentage points during the first 5 years of a mortgage.

*"First time buyers really need around £15,000 in savings: they need about £10,000 for a deposit and around £5,000 for legal fees and other miscellaneous costs, including buying things for their house".*

*"For couples with two people in work, getting a mortgage if they have a good credit record and have got a deposit is no longer a problem. However, if couples have 2-3 children then getting a mortgage is more problematic. The new mortgage/credit rulings are the stumbling block".*

### ***Foreign nationals and homeownership***

As the Census data shows, some people born in the EU and the rest of the world have already moved from the rented sector to the owner occupied sector. Estate agents and others report that EU born residents now make up reasonable proportions of prospective first time buyers. This suggests foreign born residents are playing some role in helping to kick start the local housing market. It also suggests that, everything being equal, the numbers of foreign born residents that live in the owner occupied sector should increase over coming years as the numbers that have lived in the Dungannon area for 5-10 years or more increase.

*"Migrants figure that if they are paying rent of £6000 a year then they might as well own their own home for the same outlay or less and get accommodation in the area they want"*

Observations made by estate agents and other interviewees also pointed to some emerging trends that, if sustained, could affect the spatial structure of the housing system in the longer term. One apparent spillover effect from the growth of private renting is that prospective buyers are unwilling to buy properties in areas where there are substantial proportions of private lettings, which includes many of the recently built estates.

*"It is difficult to sell to owners where there is a high share of private renters. People are not willing to buy where their neighbours change every 6 months"*

Local or native born buyers are also reported to be wary of buying in estates where there are a substantial number of foreign nationals. This is reportedly contributing to an increase in demand for properties in settlements close to Dungannon town, including the Bush. However whether this points to some form of 'sifting' taking place is too soon to judge. Little is known about the background of recent house buyers or the push and pull motivations behind their residential decisions.

*"Local buyers don't want to buy in somewhere that could be or become little Poland or Lithuania".*

Demand for co-ownership is on the increase. Last year 35 properties were purchased through the co-ownership scheme compared to 6 in 2010. Foreign born residents appear to be the main customers for co-ownership in Dungannon Town. One of its main attractions for them is that it has made it easier to secure mortgage finance from private lenders. Another attractive feature is that it involves lower monthly outgoings on housing costs than full purchase, which can be very important earners with a family. The downside is that the co-ownership route can be difficult for foreign born workers to navigate and it often takes up to 6 months to complete a sale. Language barriers add to the challenge of completing the process.

*"Up to 75% of migrant first time buyers on our books are using co-ownership"*

*"Local residents dislike co-ownership and prefer to rent until they can buy outright".*

## **Private Renting**

### ***Private rented stock and its ownership***

Census 2011 indicates that 90% of the occupied private rented stock in Dungannon LGD is comprised of houses. Around 6% involves purpose built flats, 2% converted houses/bedsits and 2% a commercial building, caravan or mobile structure. Most private landlords are individuals and have 1 or 2 properties for let. Most of these landlords are believed to be local residents, including some default landlords that cannot sell their property and have turned to renting. There are perhaps no more than 6-10 commercial landlords with a portfolio of 6 or more properties in the Dungannon LGD area.

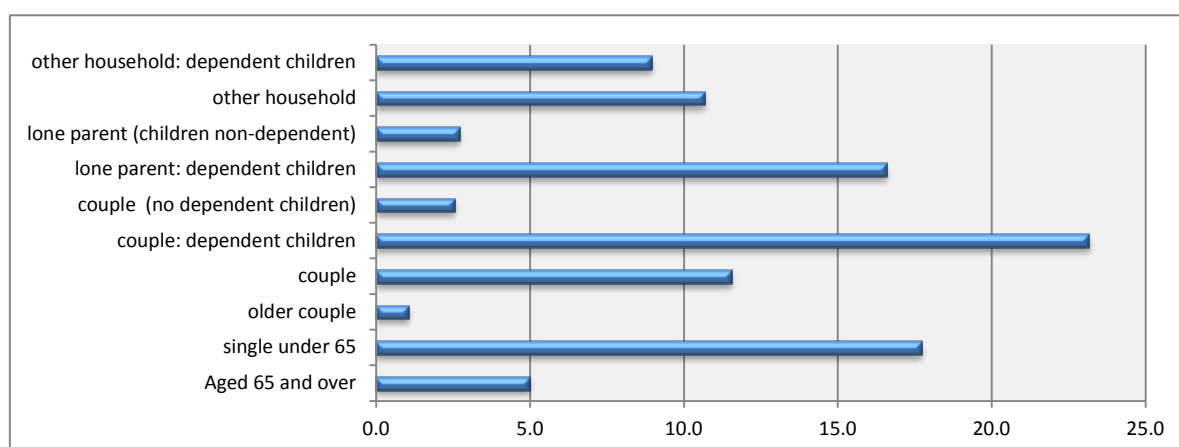
### ***Growing demand, rents and affordability***

Although some interviewees felt that migration was the main reason for the dramatic growth in private renting, the fact that 58% (Census NI 2011) of tenants in Dungannon are native to Northern Ireland suggests the picture is more complex. Other factors include those that have shaped the growth of private renting more generally throughout the UK. In very broad terms these include increased demand from households that have been unable to access owner occupation and increased demand from those unable to access social housing. Whatever the national and local drivers, it is clear that the sector is now home to a wide range of households. Moreover, as figure 4.7 shows, half of households in the private rented sector contain children.

In spite of the quadrupling of supply since 2001, local market professionals reported that demand is outstripping supply and there is growing competition for good quality housing within Dungannon Town. This helps to explain why private rents in the town are higher than in the more rural parts of the borough and in neighbouring local authority areas.

In 2014 there were almost 2,000 private tenants claiming housing benefit assistance with rent and rates payments. Taking the census count as a basis, this suggests that around 56% of tenants are in receipt of housing benefit. The number of private tenants claiming housing benefit in Dungannon LGD has remained reasonably stable over the last 4 years, with annual counts being within 2% of the 2014 total. The Census records that 63% of private tenants aged 16-74 years were in employment in 2011, suggesting there are affordability problems in the sector in the sense that there must be a proportion of households with someone in employment unable to afford current rents. This may be linked to the high proportion of households with children in the sector requiring larger and therefore more expensive properties.

**Figure 4.7 Profile of private rented households in Dungannon LGD, 2011**



Source: Census 2011 Table DC 4101

### ***Greater competition and the risk of displacement***

As the private rented sector has expanded it has accommodated a more diverse range of households with very different housing needs, demands, aspirations and incomes. Foreign born residents now face stiffer competition for good quality provision in the sector. Those likely to face the toughest challenges are those claiming housing benefit, those in casual

work, new migrants and people from East Timor. Local market professionals noted that landlords were wary of letting to people from East Timor in particular due to risk of overcrowding and inadvertent creation of unauthorised HMO's.

*"Things are hard for people, especially when they first arrive. To get a private tenancy they need a lot of money up front. They usually need over a £1,000 up front to pay the deposit and a month's rent but there is no assistance to help with these costs"*

*"With 12-15 people a day looking to rent, landlords don't give people a chance. More and more landlords will only let to people with references and a proven income".*

Ongoing changes to government welfare policy will also increase the risk of displacement. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the basis upon which maximum entitlement to housing benefit is calculated for private rented tenants. Table 4.7 compares the LHA rents applicable to Dungannon LGD with the rents reported by estate agents (which tend to represent the middle to upper end of the market), alongside weekly rents that we derived from private rental data supplied by NIHE. The figures support a widespread concern that the LHA is not reflective of local market conditions. For lower income single people under 35 years of age, recent increase in the age limit for the shared room rate for housing benefit entitlement has added to the problems faced in securing good quality private lets.

*"In Dungannon town, demand for private rentals exceeds supply and this is pushing up rents way above the LHA rates".*

*"The problem is that LHA is based on too wide an area and is not reflective of local market conditions"*

*"People have to find £200 or more a month on top of their housing benefit"*

**Table 4.7: Reported private rents compared with 2014 LHA rate for Lough Neagh Lower**

Property size	Quoted by estate agents	NIHE/UU Private Rented Index Dataset 2014		LHA
		Median	30th percentile	
Room in shared dwelling	NA	NA	NA	£41.95
1 bed	£90- £100	NA	NA	£64.63
2 bed	£110-£120	£102	£94	£78.12
3 bed	£125-£140	£117	£110	£89.82
4 bed	£150	£125	£117	£104.46

The private renting experience of some new or recent migrant arrivals, especially those with little English, is a major concern for local agencies. Problems include disrepair, unheated properties, illegal eviction, withheld deposits, lack of a tenancy agreement and being discouraged from claiming housing benefit.

One of the major barriers to tackling these problems is reluctance on the part of foreign born residents to complain. Another is that landlords often move tenants out of a property as soon as an advice worker or official officer gets involved. A related concern is a reported distinct

lack of appropriate emergency and temporary accommodation within Dungannon town that people can access if they are subject to abuse or illegal eviction.

*"Slums are re-emerging in Dungannon and in the countryside" It's not acceptable to say this is okay because it's only foreigners"*

*"The reality is that we have to make it clear to the tenant that if we intervene and make a complaint they have to be prepared to be issued a notice to quit and be prepared to be made homeless"*

### **HMOs and overcrowding**

*"There are many unregulated HMOs but they are difficult to identify... many involve 3-4 adults sharing a flat with 2-4 bedrooms, rather than the big HMO of bedsits that people commonly understand by the term".*

Data supplied by NIHE reports 57 registered Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Dungannon LGD and that enforcement action had been pursued in respect of 187 properties in the last 10 years. The number of currently registered HMOs is lower than previously reported, which might suggest that some landlords have moved out of this market. However, there is a widespread perception of large numbers of unauthorised HMOs.

In the worst cases unscrupulous landlords have established HMOs to exploit vulnerable people who have little or no choice when it comes to housing options. However, many unauthorised HMOs have arisen because private tenants have sub-let their home in order to reduce their housing costs. It was suggested, for instance, that anywhere from 50% to 70% of properties on the Annagole estate are 'illegal' HMOs. In the case of people from East Timor, the economic necessity of sharing accommodation is also interwoven with cultural traditions of living in extended families and maintaining family and kinship bonds that are not necessarily defined on blood ties.

Foreign born residents are more likely than native born residents to live in overcrowded housing. In Dungannon LGD (see table 4.8) 27% of EU12 foreign born residents live in overcrowded conditions, but this increases to 67% for people born in East Timor. Whilst the greatest prevalence of overcrowding is found in the private rented sector, there are significant proportions of households in all tenures, including the owner occupied sector, that are living in properties assessed to be lacking at least one room. This warrants further review when future releases of census data become available.

**Table 4.8 Occupancy of dwelling by country of birth, 2011**

	All usual residents in households					Overcrowded	
	Total	+2 or more	+1	0	-1 or less	Dungannon LGD	NI percent
Dungannon LGD							
All usual residents	57,462	31,736	11,328	8,044	6,354	11.1%	9.5%
Born outside Northern Ireland	8,944	3,288	1,922	1,758	1,976	22.1%	13.1%
Northern Ireland	48,518	28,448	9,406	6,286	4,378	9.0%	9.1%
Britain	1,973	1,155	423	255	140	7.1%	7.3%
ROI	1,282	857	229	116	80	6.2%	7.3%
EU15 (excl ROI)	576	176	112	140	148	25.7%	13.5%
EU12	3,927	820	1,004	1,051	1,052	26.8%	27.1%
Rest of World	1,358	379	190	223	566	41.7%	18.8%
<i>East Timor</i>	<i>699</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>467</i>	<i>66.8%</i>	<i>64.9%</i>
Source: Census 2011: Table DC 2407 (LGD)							

## Social Renting

The growth of housing pressures in the private rented sector in the decade since 2004 has also had an impact on the social rented sector.

One simple measure of this pressure is the numbers of applicants that have registered for social housing and are part of the Common Waiting List. In 2013-14 there were 1,117 applicants on the Dungannon waiting list compared to 517 in 2003-4.

The numbers of 'housing stress' applicants also increased by 68%, from 380 to 638 between 2003-4 and 2013-14. Housing stress is, broadly speaking, the count of applicants accepted to be in most need of social housing. It is based on the numbers of applicants that have been assigned 30 or more points as a result of their needs in respect of insecurity of tenure, housing conditions, requirements for health & wellbeing and experience of intimidation.

Set against this count, there were 217 allocations in the year to March 2014. The annual numbers of allocations varies from year to year, in part due to the amount of newly constructed social housing that is completed and let for the first time in any given year. However the number of new social rented sector completions in Dungannon has been modest, at just 236 in total for the 10 years to March 2013.

Thus, over the past 10 years, the ratio of number of applicants in housing stress to number of allocations has increased from 2 'housing stress' applicants for each allocation to 3 housing stress applicants for each allocation.

NIHE produces a breakdown of the household composition of applicants in housing stress. The latest available data for the four electoral divisions is summarised in table 4.8, which shows that:

**Table 4.8 household composition of applicants split by area**

		<b>Dungannon 1</b>	<b>Dungannon 2</b>	<b>Torrent</b>	<b>Blackwater</b>	<b>Clogher Valley</b>
Single Person	Applicant	197	43	96	65	30
	Stressed (30+ pts)	119	29	52	38	17
	Allocation	18	14	10	15	15
Small Adult	Applicant	27	4	15	7	7
	Stressed (30+ pts)	14	1	11	3	1
	Allocation	3	1	3	1	0
Small Family	Applicant	238	24	110	18	16
	Stressed (30+ pts)	129	12	64	8	6
	Allocation	15	9	27	25	8
Large Adult	Applicant	13	1	11	2	4
	Stressed (30+ pts)	5	1	4	1	2
	Allocation	1	1	4	2	3
Large Family	Applicant	60	2	26	0	5
	Stressed (30+ pts)	31	1	15	0	4
	Allocation	5	2	8	1	3
Older Person	Applicant	25	20	34	10	14
	Stressed (30+ pts)	21	17	15	7	10
	Allocation	4	2	6	3	6
Total	Applicant	560	94	276	102	76
	Stressed (30+ pts)	319	61	161	57	40
	Allocation	46	29	58	47	35
Source: NIHE stock dataset						

- The highest pressure for social rented housing is in Dungannon 1 and Torrent and, to a lesser extent Dungannon 2
- The annual count of housing stress applicants relative to the annual flow of allocations is more or less in balance in Blackwater and Clogher Valley, suggesting relatively less pressure in these two areas
- Most applicants in housing stress are single people and small family households.

As part of its annual planning process, NIHE also draws on common waiting list and allocations data to produce a social housing needs projection. This quantifies the potential number of additional units that might be required over the coming 5 year period. The annual results for the last 3 years of this exercise, and for 2005 (the earliest data readily accessible) are summarised in table 4.9. This data indicates a significant increase in the ‘residual unmet need’ for social housing.



**Table 4.8 Dungannon 5 year projected housing need 2013/14**

		<b>Dungannon 1</b>	<b>Dungannon 2</b>	<b>Torrent</b>	<b>Blackwater</b>	<b>Clogher Valley</b>	<b>Dungannon</b>
Total	2014	350	13	59	12	7	441
	2013	247	8	109	17	16	397
	2012	296	21	117	60	18	512
	2009						185
	2007						145
	2005	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	82
Source: NIHE District housing Plans 2011-2014							

In terms of migrant workers and social housing, NIHE evidence suggests that:

- The numbers of applicants on the housing list has plateaued and is now running at between 150 and 200 per annum.
- The number of allocations made to migrant workers is considerably lower, at 25-50 per annum.
- NIHE records suggest that the numbers of migrant worker tenants more than doubled, from 80 in 2006 to 190 in 2013.

These figures are supportive of the evidence presented earlier in this section that foreign born residents and other low income households are increasingly competing for both social rented and private rented accommodation. A growing imbalance between housing demand and supply in recent years has contributed to tensions and misunderstandings.

*"Not everyone is okay with change in population mix. There are owner occupiers giving off about the migrants in the area. Tenants don't understand why their kids can't get a house"*

*"There is a perception that migrant workers are getting it all; it is not true but there are persistent rumours that social housing is no longer for locals, so no longer worth applying for"*

There is also well attested evidence that a small number of areas within the District are being effectively closed to economic migrant households by sectarian groups (as image 4.3 makes clear).

**Image 4.3: Public Graffiti, Moygashel**



Source: <http://www.tyronetimes.co.uk/news/tyrone-news/dungannon-s-dup-and-sinn-fein-representatives-condemn-blatant-naked-racism-of-moygashel-graffiti-1-6157566>

More understandably, there is considerable local frustration at a lack of new social rented housing development and of land readily accessible for development:

*"The area has had the highest rate of population growth in Northern Ireland for several years and plans for housing have failed to keep pace"*

*"There is precious little, if any zoned land available for residential development within Dungannon town. There are sites in the surrounding area but these are generally in private ownership and not available for sale"*

*"We want to see housing associations do more buying off the shelf; it is faster...and we want estates to contain a mix of people. We don't just want to see new estates that only house those who are homeless or the most vulnerable"*

*"There is demand for private and social renting in the east side of town. Although considered to be unionist, it is quite mixed. There are enclaves of loyalists where foreign nationals wouldn't be welcome. However, in the rest of the area you could build homes that locals and newcomers would be happy to accept because it is well placed for access to work. However, NIHE and Housing Association will not consider these plots because they say demand is concentrated in the nationalist side of town."*

## 5. THE LARNE LOCAL HOUSING SYSTEM

### Introduction

This section draws on existing evidence regarding local economic and demographic dynamics to examine changes in the local housing system and local housing market conditions within the Borough of Larne (Larne District). The definition of Larne town adopted for the chapter is the NISRA settlement definition. The section draws on statistical and local interview evidence.



### The spatial structure of Larne District

Larne District lies on the east coast of Northern Ireland and covers an area of some 209 square miles, two thirds of which is designated as an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Together with the neighbouring districts of Carrickfergus and Ballymena, it will form the new Mid and East Antrim Council from April 2015.

Larne District lies directly to the north of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and there are strong labour markets links with this area. At the time of the 2011 Census, 43% of Larne District residents aged 16-64 years and in employment commuted to the BMA area for work. This proportion has increased by some 7% since the 2001 Census.

The local housing market in Larne is also influenced by its proximity to the BMA. Prior to the recent market downturn, over 10% of people moving to, or within, Larne District came from the BMA, with the main inflows being to the areas south and north of the town rather than to the town itself (Young et al, 2009). Larne District therefore forms the outer limits of the Belfast Metropolitan Housing Market Area (BHMA), although, as discussed below, the local housing market within Larne Town itself remains very self-contained.

The administrative and local economic centre of the district is the coastal town of Larne. Situated 23 miles north of Belfast and 17 miles from Belfast International Airport, the town is an important transport hub. It is home to the second largest port in Northern Ireland and has rail links to the Belfast-Dublin economic corridor. Current upgrading work on the A8 road link to Belfast, at a cost of £100 million, should reduce commuting time to the city to under 30 minutes.

The Antiville/Craigy Hill areas of Larne town have been designated under the Department for Social Development's 'Areas at Risk' Programme and, according to the Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) 2010 represent the most deprived areas of the town (see image 5.1). The three wards that extend across this area - Ballyloran, Antiville and Craigy Hill - are amongst the 15% most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. The Ferris Park estate (known locally as 'the Factory') and Seacourt have also been identified as 'Areas at Risk'.

Carnlough (see image 5.2) lies to the north of the town along the coastal road and is the only other settlement in the district with a significant amount of population. It falls within the NISRA definition of a village, (an area with a population of between 1,000 and 2,249 people). Other hamlets along the Coastal Road include Ballygally and Glenarm. The Larne Lough to the south of the town includes the small settlements of Gleno, Glynn and Islandmagee, which is the site of the Ballylumford natural gas-fired power station. Together, the Coast Road and Larne Lough make up the area referred to in this report as Rural Larne.

**Image 5.1 Common Ground, Antiville**





**Image 5.2 Housing at Carnlough**



## **The local economy and labour market**

### ***Structure of the local economy***

Larne District has a somewhat diversified economy (see table 5.1). The public sector accounts for 24% of all jobs, which is lower than the Northern Ireland wide figure of 31%. Manufacturing remains a major local source of employment, accounting for a fifth of all jobs in the district. The major manufacturer in Larne town is Caterpillar (formerly F.G Wilson), which has traditionally made diesel generator sets but decided to transfer production to China in 2011. This led to a loss of manufacturing jobs in Larne town, which is reflected in the figures reported in table 4.1

In terms of private sector services, 33% of all employees work in one of three industries: wholesale & retail and repairs; transport and storage; and accommodation and food. The Port of Larne remains a major source of employment both directly and indirectly within Larne town, in spite of a recent reduction of trade at Larne harbour and an associated loss of jobs. The Port is home to Asda's distribution centre for Northern Ireland, which is managed by Wincanton. There have been no major changes in employee job structure since 2011.

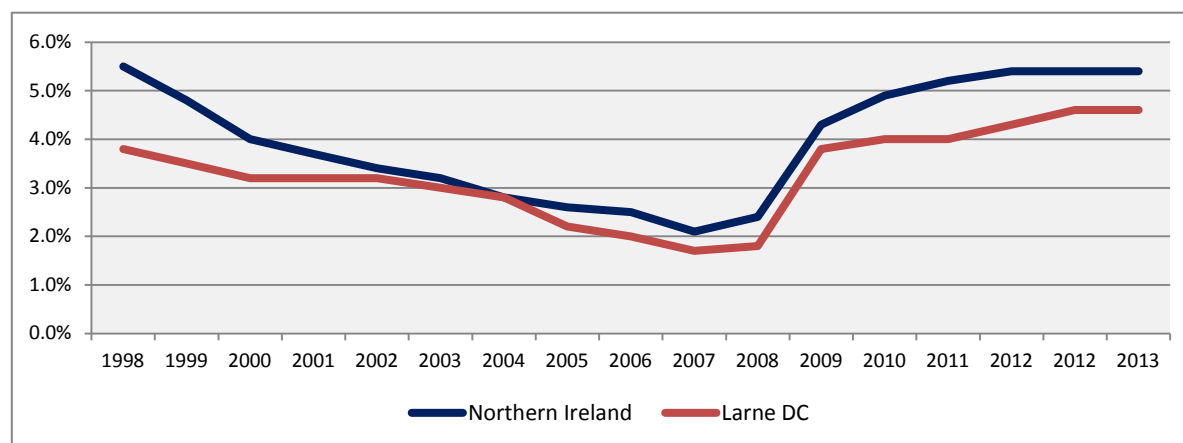
**Table 5.1: Number of employee jobs by industrial group for Northern Ireland and Larne, 2013**

Industrial group	Northern Ireland		Larne District	
	No.	%	No.	%
Mining And Quarrying	1,553	0.2%	*	*
Manufacturing	75,031	10.8%	1,645	20.3%
Construction	29,382	4.2%	320	3.9%
All Services	577,389	83.4%	5,744	70.9%
<i>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade; Repairs</i>	122,093	17.6%	1,454	17.9%
<i>Transport &amp; Storage</i>	24,831	3.6%	626	7.7%
<i>Accommodation &amp; Food</i>	43,005	6.2%	591	7.3%
<i>Information &amp; Communication</i>	16,777	2.4%	70	0.9%
<i>Financial and Insurance</i>	18,148	2.6%	97	1.2%
<i>Real Estate</i>	6,381	0.9%	31	0.4%
<i>Professional, Scientific &amp; Tech</i>	25,479	3.7%	208	2.6%
<i>Admin and Support</i>	47,096	6.8%	210	2.6%
<i>Public Admin. &amp; Defence</i>	54,235	7.8%	292	3.6%
<i>Education</i>	67,547	9.8%	737	9.1%
<i>Health &amp; Social Work</i>	122,815	17.8%	999	12.3%
<i>Arts, Entertainment &amp; Recreation</i>	14,405	2.1%	241	3.0%
<i>Other Service Activities</i>	14,577	2.1%	188	2.3%
Other	8,548	1.2%	347	4.3%
All Industries	691,903	100.0%	8,103	100%
Source: Northern Ireland Census of Employment 2013 (latest avail August 2014)				

There are over 1,100 small to medium firms operating across the district, half of which are engaged in agriculture, retail and construction. A large share of the jobs sustained by these firms are in the Rural Larne area. Thus, most people who both live and work locally are employed through local family businesses.

### ***Economic performance before and after the 2007/8 downturn***

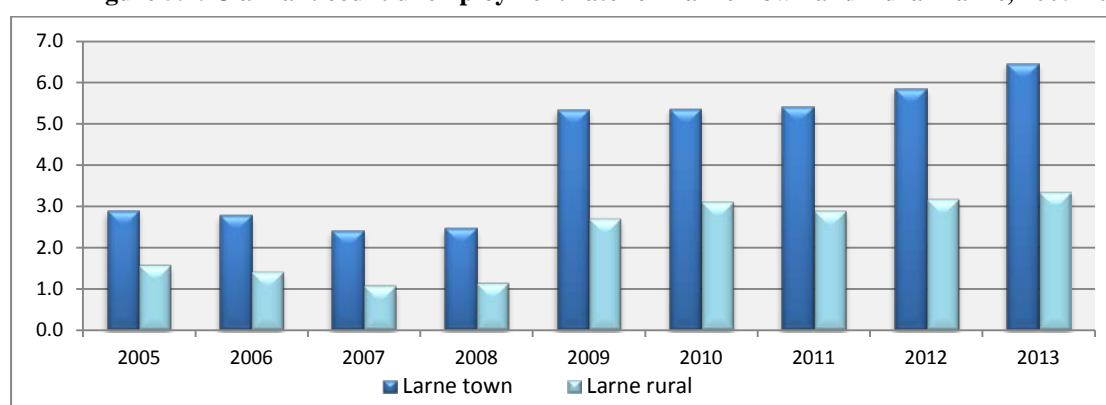
Prior to the recession, the performance of Larne's economy was modest relative to the rest of Northern Ireland. Between 2001 and 2007 the numbers of employee jobs in Larne District grew at an average 1.5% per annum compared to 1.9% for Northern Ireland and 4.5% for Dungannon District. In spite of this, the claimant count based unemployment rate generally remained below that for Northern Ireland as whole throughout the decade to 2007.

**Figure 5.1: Claimant count unemployment rate for Larne and Northern Ireland, 1998 to 2013**

Source: NISRA (2014) and DETI (2014)

The onset of the global economic recession led to a sustained period of contraction in the local economy and labour market. Between 2009 and 2012 redundancies in Larne District averaged around 100 each year. Figure 5.1 shows that unemployment also increased from around 1.7% in 2007 to 4.6% in 2012. At the district level, the rate remained below that for Northern Ireland, most likely helped by some increase in the numbers of people commuting out of the district to work and through small firms with low overheads managing to 'weather the storm'. Reflecting the loss of jobs at the Port and more recently at the Caterpillar factory, unemployment grew at a sharper rate in Larne Town than in Rural Larne, especially from 2009.

**Figure 5.2: Claimant count unemployment rate for Larne Town and Rural Larne, 2005-2013**



Source: NISRA (2014) and DETI (2014)

In recent months there has been some recovery of the local economy, although performance remains some distance from trend growth rates. Redundancies have sharply declined and the unemployment rate has fallen by 1% over the last 12 months. In July it reached a 6 year low of 3.5%. At the turn of the year, Caterpillar confirmed an investment of £5.4 million that will see its Larne factory produce axles and should maintain 100 jobs. Outline planning consent has also just been granted to redevelop a 32 acre former industrial site locally known as Howdens Quay on the south of the town. The site will contain a mix of housing, light industrial units and leisure facilities. More controversially, Gaelectric, a green energy company, is also seeking to develop a compressed air energy storage facility at Carnduff on the outskirts of the town. This could create up to 300 jobs during the construction phase and 40-50 jobs once operational.

Nonetheless, for much of the last two decades, employment and demographic growth in Larne District have been outperformed by growth elsewhere in Northern Ireland. Table 5.2 shows that from 2001 to 2011 there was a modest increase in the proportions of adults aged 16-74 economically active. This was driven by an increase in part time employees - in the main women that had been previously looked after the home. Over the period, the numbers of full time employees remained static, which was in contrast to Northern Ireland as a whole, where the numbers of employees increased by around 5%. Larne District also experienced a comparatively sharp rise in the proportion on adults aged 16-74 classed as retired, although this development was most pronounced in Rural Larne.

**Table 5.2 Change in economic status of usual residents aged 16 and 74 years, 2001- 2011 (%)**

	Northern Ireland		Larne LGD		Larne Town		Rural Larne	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
resident population 16-74	1,187,079	1,313,420	22,086	23,565	11,518	11,962	10,568	11,603
Economically active	62.3	66.2	64.9	67.7	51.4	65.8	57.9	69.8
<i>Employee Full-time</i>	37.6	35.6	41.0	38.4	40.1	38.9	42.0	37.9
<i>Employee Part-time</i>	9.9	13.1	10.4	13.3	10.4	13.5	10.4	13.1
<i>Self-employed</i>	8.3	8.9	8.1	9.0	5.1	5.6	11.5	12.5
<i>Unemployed</i>	4.1	5.0	3.7	4.2	4.6	5.1	2.8	3.2
<i>Full-time students</i>	2.4	3.7	1.6	2.8	1.7	2.6	1.6	3.0
Economically inactive	37.7	33.8	35.1	32.3	38.1	34.2	31.7	30.2
<i>Economic inactive: retired</i>	11.0	12.9	12.9	15.9	14.1	16.2	11.5	15.6
<i>Economic inactive: other</i>	26.8	20.8	22.2	16.3	24.0	18.0	20.2	14.6
Source: Census 2001 KS09a and Census 2011 KS 601 and QS601								

**Table 5.3 Estimated gross annual earnings for Larne, 2013**

Larne	lower quartile	median	ave
Home postcode in Larne (residence based)	£16,660.80	£23,946.00	£29,302.00
Work postcode in Larne (workplace based)	£15,922.40	£21,450.00	£28,990.00
NI	£17,368.00	£23,920.00	£28,012.40
Source: DETI (2014) ASHE 2013 (provisional) gross weekly pay full time (all)			

As noted earlier, increasing shares of working age residents of Larne District commute out of the area to work. In 2011, 55% of local residents that were in work commuted outside the district to work somewhere else in Northern Ireland and 45% worked within the district. At the same time, relatively few people commuted to Larne for work, resulting in a net working population loss of over 3,000 for Larne District. Amongst those aged 25-34 years, the proportion commuting outside of the district was even higher at 60%. This suggests that all things equal, the upward trend in out-commuting may continue.

Aside from the lack of growth in full time employment within the district, the BMA in particular offers a greater variety of jobs, including better paid jobs. This is reflected in the difference in earnings estimates based on place of residence and work (see table 5.3).

### ***Prospects***

*"Tourism is the key. We are on a beautiful stretch of coastline and have a successful country park at Carnfunnock; the Gobbins Path in Islandmagee will re-open in the autumn and the newly restored Town Hall has also opened"*



**Image 5.3 Laharna Apartments**



Local interviewees acknowledge considerable challenges that need to be addressed to turn around the fortunes of Larne and avoid slow decline over time. The Larne Town Centre Masterplan together with local discussions indicates that:

- A key strand of the local economic development strategy is to improve tourism. Work is ongoing to improve the public realm and visual appearance of shop fronts in the town and the imminent re-opening of Gobbins path is expected to be a major local and international tourist draw.
- On the other hand, the harbour highway forms a divisive barrier through the town and blights the town centre. The power station and some old industrial sites have a negative visual impact on the town, as does the recently built Laharna building (image 5.3) and the Riverdale multi-storey block.
- There is a need to grow and diversify the employment base, improve shopping facilities and address the lack of a night-time economy, which is compounded by the lack of public transport after 6 pm.
- Youth unemployment remains above average and unemployment in the town remains high - standing at 5.1% in July 2014. Unemployment is higher still in wards such as Antiville, Ballyloran, Craigy Hill and Harbour.
- Central to delivering the Larne economic development strategy is work by the Larne Enterprise Development Company (LEDOM) to develop a culture of enterprise and to market Larne town as an attractive place to visit and do business, thereby counteracting the slow decline of many small local businesses and the tarnished image of Larne as a consequence of community tensions spanning back over many decades.

*"When the Giro Italia was on, the council ran additional events such as a kids bike fun run but the shops and cafes didn't take advantage of this; there were lots of people in the town but most shops and cafes didn't open in the evening...shops don't want to stay open late, even at Christmas".*

## Demographic trends

Modest growth of the local economy has been accompanied by modest population growth. NISRA population estimates suggest that between 2001 and 2013 the population of Larne District increased by 4.5%, to around 32,220. This was close to half the rate for Northern Ireland as a whole. The rate of population growth for Larne Town was somewhat lower at 3.2%, only partly reflecting a small loss in population in the first half of the 'noughties' (see table 5.4). The low rate of population growth was a culmination of:

- A very modest rate of natural population growth: birth rates in Larne over the decade averaged 11 per 1,000 people compared to 13.5 for Northern Ireland as a whole.
- Low rates of net in-migration: For 2001-2013 net in-migration totalled 450 persons. Most of this net addition occurred during 2002-7 and was primarily driven by an increase in people coming from the BMA and elsewhere in Northern Ireland rather than from abroad.

**Table 5.4 Population estimates for Larne District, Larne Town and Rural Larne, 2001-2013**

Year	Larne LGD	Larne Town	Rural Larne	Northern Ireland
2001	30,823	15,960	14,863	1,688,838
2002	30,874	15,954	14,920	1,697,534
2003	31,007	15,929	15,078	1,704,924
2004	31,046	15,830	15,216	1,714,042
2005	31,299	15,893	15,406	1,727,733
2006	31,519	16,029	15,490	1,743,113
2007	31,804	16,122	15,682	1,761,683
2008	31,926	16,200	15,726	1,779,152
2009	32,124	16,255	15,869	1,793,333
2010	32,154	16,328	15,826	1,804,833
2011	32,135	16,414	15,721	1,814,318
2012	32,192	16,463	15,729	1,823,634
2013	32,219	16,478	15,741	1,829,725
2001-2005	476	-67	543	38,895
	1.54	-0.42	3.65	2.30
2006-2010	635	299	336	61,720
	2.01	1.87	2.17	3.54
2001-2011	1,312	454	858	125,480
	4.26	2.84	5.77	7.43
2001-2013	1,396	518	878	140,887
	4.5	3.2	5.9	8.3

Source: NISRA (2014) Small area population estimates, 2001-2013

## International migration

There was universal agreement amongst everyone that we interviewed that very few migrants had come to Larne in the past 10 years and that some had subsequently left the area following the economic downturn. Various data sources reinforce local opinion. Less than 600 non-UK nationals were added to the NI Health Register for Larne District in the 10 years to June 2014. Similarly, only 515 NINOs were allocated to non UK nationals living in Larne District

in the 10 years to March 2014. The country of origin and ethnic mix of people moving to Larne District suggests some arrived to join families already living in the district<sup>22</sup>.

**Table 5.5 Country of Birth of Usual Residents of Larne District, 2011**

	All usual residents in households			
	Northern Ireland	Larne LGD	Larne Town	Rural Larne
All usual residents	1,810,863	32,180	16,466	15,714
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northern Ireland	1,608,853	29,623	15,098	14,525
	88.8	92.1	91.7	92.4
Born outside Northern Ireland	202,010	2,557	1,368	1,189
	11.2	7.9	8.3	7.6
Britain	4.6	5.4	5.4	5.4
Republic of Ireland	2.1	0.8	0.7	0.9
Rest of Europe	47,207	285	185	100
	2.6	0.9	1.1	0.6
Rest of the World	33,410	296	187	109
	2.2	1.0	1.2	0.8
Source: Census 2011: Table QS208 (SOA)				

Table 5.5 summarises the country of birth of residents living in Larne in 2011. Census district level data indicates that there were 120 people born in one of the EU12 countries living in Larne on Census day. This is consistent with local knowledge of:

- A small, long standing Portuguese community within the town, which initially came to work at the power station, at the port or on the ferries.
- A small Polish born population in the area, which includes a few families that have settled in the area.<sup>23</sup>
- A very small Filipino community in Millbrook.

### ***Household trends***

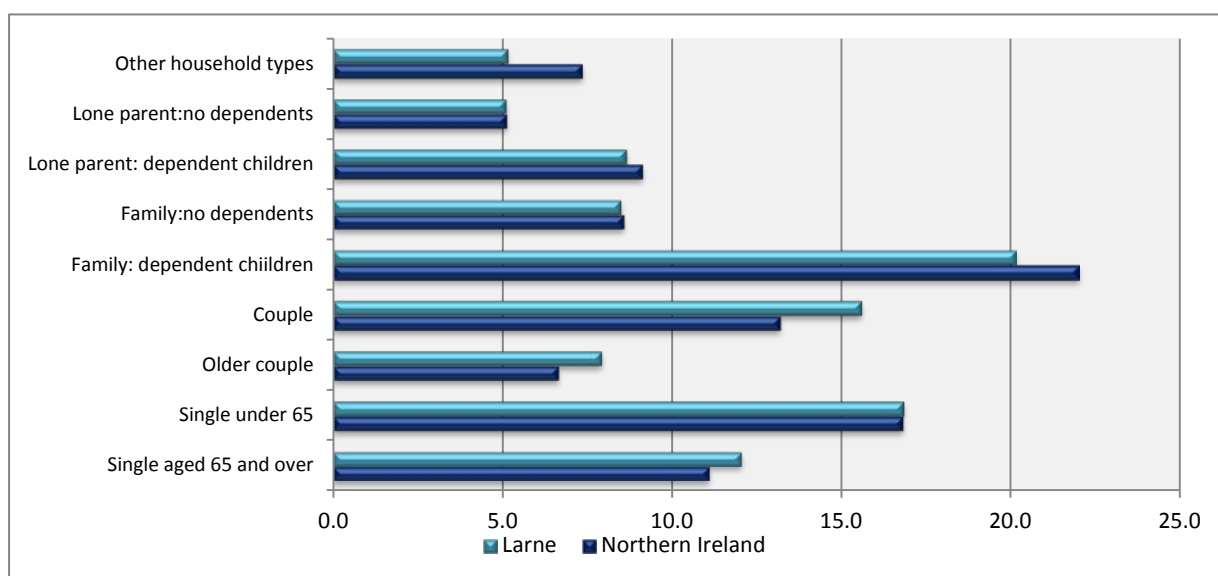
One consequence of the modest rate of population growth has been that Larne District's household population growth has also been somewhat lower than for Northern Ireland as a whole. Between 2001 and 2011 the number of households living in Larne District increased by 8%, from 12,200 to 13,300, whereas the number of households in Northern Ireland increased by 12%

Another consequence has been that Larne District's population is ageing more rapidly than the population of Northern Ireland as a whole. The median age of residents of Larne District is now over 41. To put this in context, the comparable figure for Dungannon is 34. Figure 5.3 demonstrates that this is reflected in the comparatively higher proportions of older single person and older couple households residing in Larne District.

<sup>22</sup> Local opinion is further supported by evidence from the NI Worker Registration System: Over the lifetime of this arrangement an average of some 20 people each year were registered.

<sup>23</sup> Census 2011 reports there were 14 or less people from each of the other EU12 countries. .

**Figure 5.3 Household type for Northern Ireland and Larne District, 2011**



Source: Census 2011 DC4101

### **The local housing stock**

The housing stock across Larne District is largely comprised of unshared houses (92%), around half of which are detached properties. Houses are the most common dwelling type across all the main tenures but flats account for a larger proportion of social rented stock. In 2011 the Census recorded just 65 converted flats/bedsits throughout the district. Second homes are not a major feature of the Larne housing market, although there are said to be a few in Ballygally.

### ***Housing development***

Between 2001 and 2011 1,790 new private dwellings were started in Larne District. This was high relative to household growth. However, the rate of new private housing starts, measured as the annual number of private housing starts for every 1,000 households, was modest compared to the rate for Northern Ireland as a whole and was very much lower than in Dungannon throughout this period (see figure 5.4).

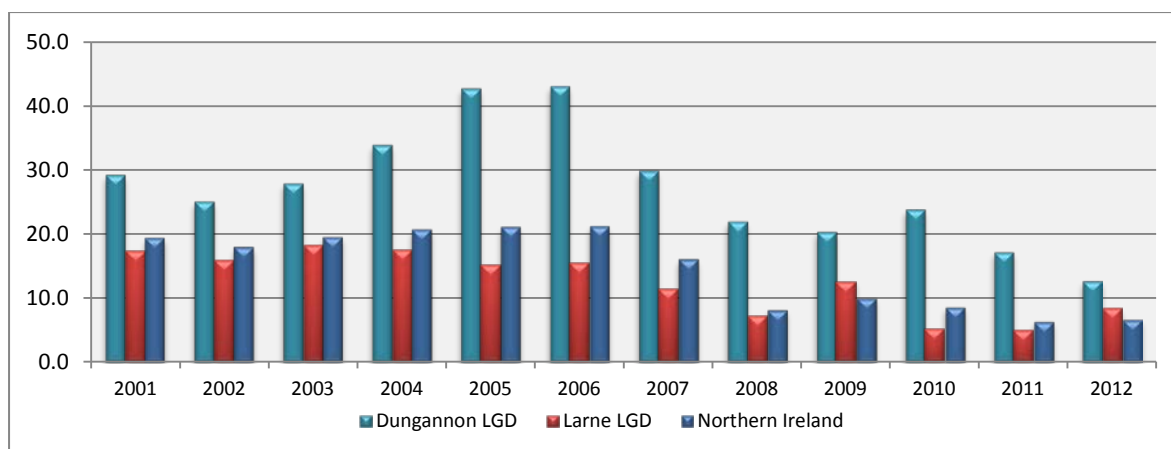
In line with national trends, there was a sharp decrease in the annual number of new private housing starts in 2007. From 2007 to 2011 new starts were averaging less than 100 each year compared to over 200 per year in the 5 years prior to 2007. In 2012 there was a modest increase in the numbers of new starts in response to improved market conditions but it is not clear if this will be sustained:

- At present, the stamp duty threshold of £125,000 is likely to act as a price barrier for prospective first time buyers.
- Some land to the west and north of the Town is now owned by NAMA and this would need to be resolved before that land could be released for development.

Large shares of the newly constructed private housing were built within the Larne Settlement limit, including a number of new estates on the outskirts of the town in the Kilwaughter area. The general consensus amongst local interviewees is that the new private developments were

occupied by local residents, which is not surprising given the low level of migration into the area.

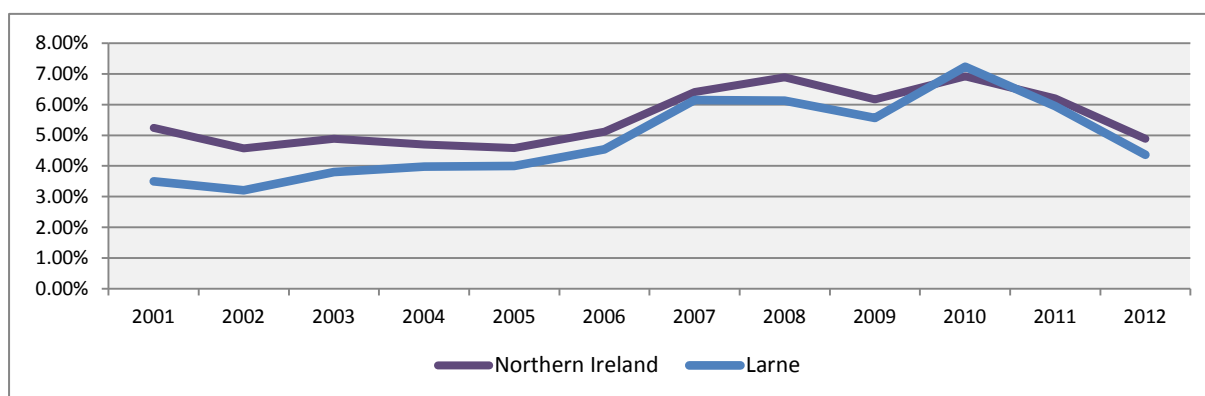
**Figure 5.4 Rate of new private housing starts per 1,000 households, 2001-2011**



Source: NISRA (2014) new private housing starts

Figure 5.5 shows that the vacancy rate for the total housing stock in all tenures was quite low in the period from 2001 to 2003, averaging around 3.5%. From 2004 to 2010 there was an overall upward trend in the vacancy rate, peaking at 7% in 2010. The vacancy rate now appears to be on a downward trajectory. One reason for this decrease in the vacancy rate is that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive completed an extensive demolition programme of some 557 units to address a problem of low demand and social housing surplus to requirements. This programme involved the demolition of 114 units at Old Glenarm Road, 263 units at Linn Road and 180 at Riverdale. Another reason is that a sizeable proportion of the new private sector units that were intended for the owner occupied market were converted into private lets. More recently, more of the new houses have gradually been sold as house prices have fallen back.

**Figure 5.5 Vacancy Rates for Larne District and Northern Ireland**



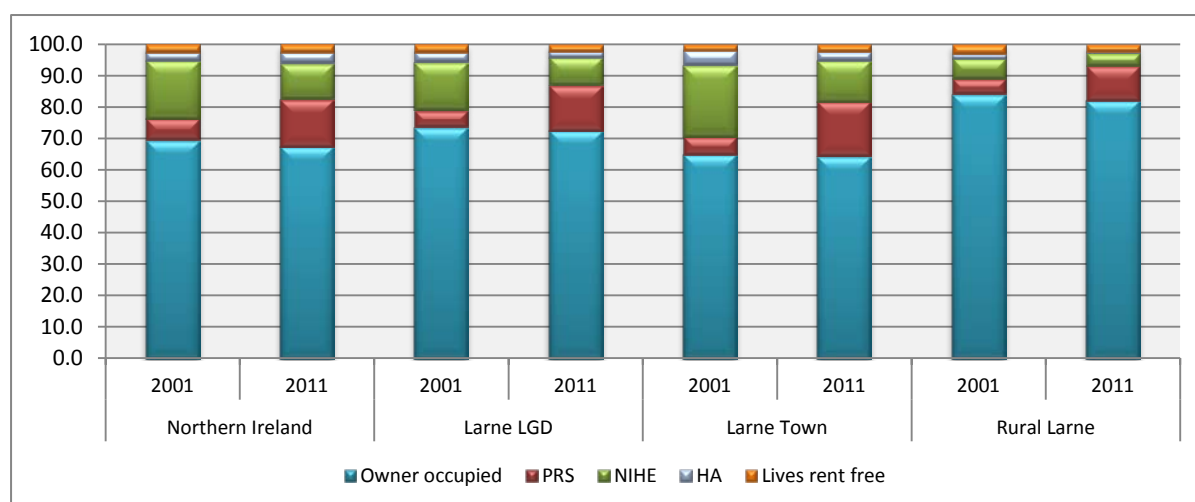
Source: NISRA (2014)

### ***Tenure***

Northern Ireland has seen significant change in tenure patterns in the last decade. Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of households living in the private rented sector (including

those living rent free) doubled to 18%, with private renting becoming the second largest tenure behind owner occupation. The proportion of households in the social rented sector declined by 7% to 12% and the proportion living in an owner occupied dwelling decreased by 2%, to 68%. This change in tenure patterns reflected growing affordability pressures associated with the house price bubble during 2004-7, subsequently followed by the adverse effect of falling prices and tighter credit conditions, which resulted in further growth in the numbers of households choosing to rent rather than buy. The growth of private renting has also been influenced by decline in the number of social rented houses becoming available for allocation each year and by growth in the population aged 20-39 fuelled by inward migration from EU accession countries.

**Figure 5. 6 Percent of households in each of the main tenures, 2001-2011**



Source: Census 2001 uv089 and Census 2011 QS405

To a large extent, change in province-wide tenure patterns has been mirrored by observed change in tenure patterns across Larne District. Figure 5.6 shows that between 2001 and 2011:

- The proportion of households living in the owner occupied sector fell by 1 percentage point to 73%, although there was a slight rise in the numbers of homeowners from 9,000 to 9,640.
- The proportion of households living in the private rented sector increased by 8 percentage points, to 17%. The proportion, excluding those recorded as 'rent free', increased from 5% to 15%.
- The proportion of households living in social housing decreased from 19% to 11%.

Looking across Larne District, the shift from social renting to private renting was most marked in Larne Town. In 2011 around 20% of all households living in the town rented their home from a private landlord (17% if those living rent free are excluded). Local discussions highlighted that several local factors have underpinned this change:

- Much of the private rented stock is situated in attractive areas, not stigmatised by paramilitary activity - in contrast to some estates where NIHE still manage stock.

- The private rented sector offers the kind of ‘turn-key’ or ‘walk-in’ property conditions than tenants are now demanding; namely new, thermally efficient dwellings that come with full central heating, double glazing, new carpets and white goods.
- Whilst private rents are higher than NIHE rents, the fuel costs of heating a new private rented home are typically much lower than the cost of heating NIHE dwellings.
- Some of the new private rented units are adjacent to social housing estates, which has allowed some younger tenants to obtain a property of their choice but remain within very close proximity to friends and family,
- On the supply side, the NIHE demolition programme together with right to buy has reduced the supply of social rented housing.

*“There is a strong paramilitary presence in Antiville and parts of Craigyhill and the Factory. The local paramilitaries “unofficially police” the area and continue to order people out of the estates and Larne”.*

*“Recently built properties that offer gas central heating and are in walk-in condition get snapped up in hours. Older properties, even if they have double glazing, are less popular.*

*“Oil heated houses can take longer to rent out; the heating costs are too expensive”*

*“I’m not aware of any history of intimidation or violence against migrant workers or people from an ethnic minority background in Larne; the local residents are too busy infighting”.*

## **Owner Occupation**

### ***Recent housing market dynamics and short term prospects***

After seven years of falling prices and minimal sales, local market professionals are somewhat optimistic that the Larne housing market is at last showing some signs of improvement. They report that sales are increasing and first time buyers are gradually returning to the market, boosted by private renters now seeking to buy and the availability of co-ownership funding. Investors are also returning to the market after an absence of some years. Existing homeowners however remain generally unwilling (or unable) to re-enter the market.

House price data for the NIHE North Region, derived from 401 advertised dwellings on Property Pal in February 2014, are reported in table 5.6. These data suggest that, with the exception of detached houses, average prices in Larne town are significantly below the Northern Ireland average. However, prices vary greatly by location and the prices reported in the table appear to be more indicative of the middle to upper end of the market. At the risk of simplification, larger homes with good coastal views command the highest prices whilst terraced houses in the most deprived estates and older 'off street' terraced houses without gardens in rundown and industrial parts of town command the lowest prices

**Table 5.6 Average advertised price for properties in Larne Town**

House Type	Larne	NI	% Difference
3 Bed Terrace	£64,809	£74,792	-15
3 Bed Semi	£99,427	£112,474	-13
3 Bed Detached	£168,144	£163,531	3
2 Bedroom Apartment	£77,921	£103,597	-33
Source: NIHE North Region Planning Team - derived from Property Pal, 04/02/2014			

*"The least popular areas in the town are Antiville and Linn Road, past Green Drive. A 2-3 bed house in Antiville would sell for £30,000 - £35,000 but half a mile up the road in Craigy Hill the same house could sell for £45,000 - £50,000. The Factory is also a cheap area, but it has picked up in popularity".*

As in Dungannon, first time buyers are said to be looking to buy new 3-4 bedroom houses in 'turn-key' condition, whilst investors are generally looking to purchase properties at the lower end of the market. Estates popular with first time buyers include the Hamptons.

*"Affordability is not an issue in Larne; prices are the second lowest in Northern Ireland behind Strabane".*

*"BTL landlords are mainly looking at properties in the £30,000-£60,000 range; this is where the high rental rates of return are to be made"*

*"Between 2008 and 2012 almost everyone coming through our doors wanted to rent but now young couples are looking to buy and they are finding it easier to get a mortgage"*

In Rural Larne, Ballygally is the most sought after settlement but Gleno is popular with people coming from outside Larne District.

Looking ahead, the general expectation is that transaction volumes will continue to rise but with no significant rise in house prices in the next 2-3 years. Negative equity, repossessions and an excess of supply on the market relative to prospective buyers are collectively expected to act as a continuing drag.

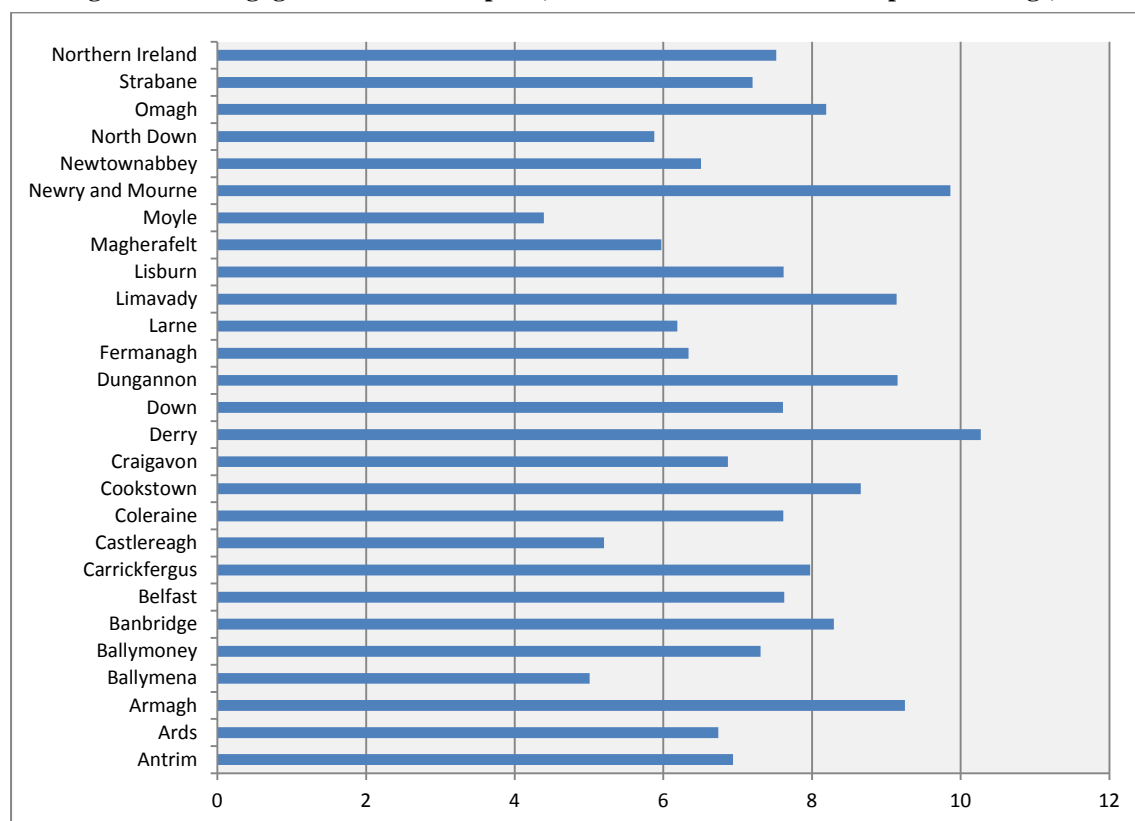
There was also a suggestion that surveyors remained very cautious and appear to be under pressure from mortgage lenders to base their value estimates on three comparators (often necessitating the use of out of date prices) plus the price that could be achieved in the event of a forced sale.

### ***Negative equity, debt and repossessions***

Negative equity was widely reported to be a major issue for families and other households that bought or re-mortgaged their home at the peak of the boom (that is during 2005-7). (Although hardly conclusive, figure 5.7 shows that potential risk of repossession remains a province-wide problem rather than something specific to Larne or Dungannon).



**Figure 5.7 Mortgage Cases Received per 1,000 households in owner occupied dwellings, 2010-12**



Source: NISRA (2014) Mortgage Cases Received and Disposed (administrative geographies) and Census 2011 number of households living in the owner occupied sector

Note: Rate is based on average number of reported cases for the 3 years 2010 to 2012 inclusive

*"Since the property crash, lots of owners are in negative equity; homes for £200,000 in the boom are now worth just £80,000".*

*"We (an estate agent) are handling 2 to 3 repossession properties a month. These are mostly voluntary repossessions where people are simply handing back the keys".*

In common with their counterparts in Dungannon, advice agencies report an increase in homeowners seeking help with debt problems, repayment arrears and the threat of repossession. Households seeking advice include a proportion of first time buyers and existing owners that have become over-indebted through second charge and unsecured loans. There is a strong perception that many marginal homeowners in Larne are just about managing to pay their mortgage but have very little disposable income. There is much trepidation that a rise in interest rates may lead to a sharp rise in the numbers of households falling into arrears and at risk of repossession.

## **Private renting**

Although much of the private rental stock is provided by landlords that own one or two properties, there is an impression that letting and estate agents manage up to 70% of the private rental market in Larne town.

*“Landlords on our books range from very fussy to moderately fussy. The ones who don’t care who they rent to or the upkeep of their property stick an ad in the local paper”*

Following the housing market crash there was a large increase in the supply of private rental properties from both intentional BTL investors and from ‘accidental’ landlords who found themselves unable to sell their property. The general consensus is that this resulted in an oversupply of private rentals that has exerted a downward pressure on rents for much of the last 5 years. In the town, rents for a 3 bed house in the ‘agency managed’ sector are typically between £400 to £550 per month, with new properties in more central or sought after locations securing rents at the upper end of the range.

When the private rental market began to expand rapidly, many of the new tenants were households that had previously lived in or had applied for social housing. Large shares of private rented tenants are therefore in receipt of housing benefit. However, within the ‘agency managed’ rental sector, demand has changed over the last 5 years, stimulated by a growth in demand from couples and families with one or two earners that have decided not to buy a home for the time being.

*“Most of our new tenants prefer to rent because they can readily pay the rent for recently built properties in walk in condition but cannot easily raise a deposit or secure a mortgage to buy one”*

### ***Growing constraints for low income tenants***

Discussions suggested that many low income households now face mounting constraints to securing a suitable private tenancy, especially in the ‘agency managed sector’. These include:

- Difficulties raising the funds to pay a deposit plus upfront fees including those charged by agents for processing and vetting applicants.
- Changes to the LHA and single share room rate, combined with virtual absence of bedsits and shared apartments, which make it difficult for low income single people under 35 to find somewhere suitable to live.
- A move away from renting to tenants in receipt of housing benefit on the part of some landlords, in the wake of welfare reforms.
- That the screening (or filtering) systems being employed by agents tend to exclude people that have not rented before, do not have satisfactory references and/or cannot demonstrate they have been in employment for a period of several months.

*"As there are no one bed properties to rent, young single people can't afford to rent the properties we have".*

*"Single tenants aged 25-34 that have a good tenancy are not moving to avoid being caught up in the single room rate".*

*"Whilst DHSS Crisis Loans can assist in paying the first month's rent, our clients struggle to find a deposit and often have to turn to family and friends".*

### ***Risk of exploitative landlords***

In contrast to Dungannon there was little, if any, discussion about problems with HMOs and overcrowding. However concerns were expressed that a proportion of private landlords have adopted bad practices such as failing to provide a written tenancy agreement, not returning deposits, failing to maintain their property and failing to respond to complaints about antisocial behaviour by their tenants.

*"Landlords are not always undertaking dwelling repairs or fixing/replacing white goods that have stopped working, in breach of legal duties. Instead tenants are simply being told if they don't like it then leave"*

*"Some tenants have had a nasty surprise when they have received a notice to quit when repossession has occurred"*

### **Social renting**

Overall, expressed demand for social housing in Larne District is low and the annual numbers of lettings are sufficient to accommodate those assessed to be in housing stress. As table 5.7 shows, in the year to March 2014, there were 452 applicants registered on the waiting list for social housing in Larne District. Of these, 168 were assessed to be in housing stress (37%) as against a supply of 137 allocations.

The NIHE rolling programme of housing need projections also suggests there is very little requirement for additional social rented housing in Larne District, with the exception of Rural Larne where there has been a projected shortfall for some time (table 5.8). This shortfall is in Carnlough, which falls within the Coast Road area.

Whilst there is therefore no evidence of an overall shortage of supply relative to need, there are some imbalances in relation to the range of provision that is available within the sector:

- There is a lack of small units in the social rented sector, which is compounded by as similar lack of this size of properties in the private sector
- There is a lack of supported housing for young people leaving care and/or with mental health and addiction problems.

There are also pockets of housing within two or three estates that are becoming increasingly difficult to let and some void properties are re-emerging. These areas generally have good quality housing stock but are blighted by personality and paramilitary issues.

NIHE also have a land disposal strategy for Larne Town, which is summarised in table 5.9. However current market conditions mean it may be difficult to sell these sites.

**Table 5.7 Larne Housing Applicants Household Composition 2013/14**

		<b>Larne Town</b>	<b>Rural Larne</b>	<b>Larne Lough</b>	<b>Coast Road</b>	<b>All</b>
Single Person	Applicant	189	37	12	25	226
	Stressed (30+ pts)	72	17	4	13	89
	Allocation	54	6	5	1	60
Small Adult	Applicant	15	6	2	4	21
	Stressed (30+ pts)	3	2	1	1	5
	Allocation	12	0	0	0	12
Small Family	Applicant	47	29	13	16	76
	Stressed (30+ pts)	10	13	8	5	23
	Allocation	35	4	1	3	39
Large Adult	Applicant	7	6	2	4	13
	Stressed (30+ pts)	2	2	1	1	4
	Allocation	1	0	0	0	1
Large Family	Applicant	16	8	4	4	24
	Stressed (30+ pts)	4	3	2	1	7
	Allocation	6	0	0	0	6
Older Person	Applicant	74	18	10	8	92
	Stressed (30+ pts)	35	5	3	2	40
	Allocation	15	4	2	2	19
Total	Applicant	348	104	43	61	452
	Stressed (30+ pts)	126	42	19	23	168
	Allocation	123	14	8	6	137
Source: NIHE waiting list dataset						

**Table 5.8 NIHE Larne 5 year projected housing need**

		<b>Larne Town</b>	<b>Rural Larne</b>	<b>Larne Lough</b>	<b>Coast Road</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Total</b>	2014	10	17	3	14	27
	2013	0	14	0	14	14
	2012	0	10	0	10	10
Source: NIHE stock dataset						

**Table 5.9 Development Potential**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Potential units</b>
Land at Kintyre Road (ULS 608/9)	63
Land at Seacliff Road/ Channel View (ULS 608/6)	54
Land at Blackcave Road (ULS 608/8)	14
Land at Blackcave North Site 1 (ULS 608/1)	75
Land at Blackcave North Site 2 (ULS 608/2)	45
Total	251
Source: NIHE	

## 6. DUNGANNON AND LARNE: CONTRASTING EXPERIENCES

The Dungannon and Larne local government district areas share a semi-rural structure with a dominant town in each jurisdiction. In some other ways, they could hardly be more different. In this section, we reflect on these differences.

Turning first to Larne, the assembled evidence indicates neither the local economy nor the local housing system to be generally pressured. Over the recent period of large scale economic migration into various parts of the UK, Larne has essentially been by-passed. The presence of economic migrants is of such comparative rarity that, during the many local interviews conducted, repeated reference was made by name to 'the' Polish migrant working in the hotel sector in Carnlough. The reasons for this remarkable absence of economic migration are not entirely clear. Some interviewees put it down to continuing lack of economic prospects (with which we would generally concur), while others pointed to an 'undeserved' area reputation. Others still made reference to an unlucky accident of geographical positioning (peripherality).

In the case of Dungannon, there is clear evidence of a path dependence effect; initial active search by employers for workers from abroad initiated the establishment of communities that subsequently became self-feeding by means of reputation, word of mouth and family/friendship ties. Larne has never experienced that initial seeding process.

*"Larne Town is not a very attractive area for those looking to move from Belfast; it's not an attractive proposition. Antrim, Lisburn are closer and seen as better options. This won't change, even when the road upgrade is finished."*

In housing terms, Larne is relatively self-contained. Migration data and local interviews confirm that those born in Larne tend to stay in Larne, and in the absence of significant inward migration, a countervailing absence of significant outward migration is what continues to sustain the local housing system.

*"People from Larne stay in Larne"*

In overall terms, there is no general shortage of housing supply, and no generalised issue of housing need. Within Larne, people can generally find the type of housing they want – and in consequence, people are generally very picky about what they consider acceptable to them. Social housing offers are frequently refused and 'turn-key' standards of accommodation (in terms of pre-existing whiteware, furnishings etc) expected. However, Larne is not without housing related problems.

One set of problems reflects the continuing impact of sectarian territorial identities on the operation of the housing system. Recent high profile instances of social disturbance, and an apparent ability of sectarian elements to demarcate areas as 'open' or 'closed' to specific individuals and groups, attest to the ongoing existence of significant social problems. It was clear to us during the interviewing process that, having lived with these situational realities for many years, local communities, community representatives and those working for a wide range of organisations within Larne have collectively become conditioned to accepting them as part of 'normal' day to day existence.

Beyond this, the combined effects of large new retail parks and a concentration of flatted accommodation at both ends of and along Main Street catering to young single men, often with health, money, family, sociability and other problems, place a significant drag on the local retail offer and on possibilities for developing a meaningful tourist related night time economy offer within the town. From a community perspective, the problem is that the social housing allocation process is concentrating too many single young men with immature social skill sets into a limited geographic space.

Case studies of typical housing workload issues encountered provided by the Larne Citizens Advice Bureau (see appendix 2) relate to young single homeless issues and clearly have a housing dimension, but, from the perspective of the individuals involved, the main issue currently appears more to do with lack of effective joining up of housing, health and social care support than reflecting an absence of sufficient affordable housing within the borough.

*"There is a lack of support and care for those leaving care and/or with mental health and addiction problems but this is compounded by the lack of access to housing...It's one big bundle that traps people in poverty, debt and homelessness"*

*"It is more of a care solution than a housing solution that is needed for these young men. Where are social services? Why are they not assisting and working with the Simon Community locally?"*

Continued welfare reform has the potential to further aggravate this situation.

A further housing issue facing Larne is the ongoing effects of negative equity arising from owner occupier and private rental motivated transactions over (especially) the period from 2005 to 2007. While the Northern Ireland economy and housing system have both been slowly normalising in the wake of the 2007/8 'Global Financial Crisis' (GFC), some areas within the province have fared better than others. The ongoing softness of demand in the face of actual and potential supply available means that Larne is at the least fortunate end of the scale. For many of those affected by negative equity, the prospect of house price increases in the future resolving the problem is a dim one, and they are essentially stuck for the indefinite future in properties they can afford to pay mortgages on but not to eventually own. While the financial institutions that facilitated this state of affairs retain a moral responsibility to help resolve it, they are under no legal obligation to do so, and it is not obvious what policy levers might be used to help alleviate the situation.

In sum, Larne is, at best, a stable local housing system, facing some rather trenchant long term housing related issues (negative equity; effective linking of housing with care and welfare services in the context of continuing welfare change) - but economic migration has not been a force behind the emergence of these problems and does not look like being either a solution to them or the future source of new difficulties. Without meaningful action to address the long-standing social issues identified above, our expectation would be for stagnation over the coming decade.

By contrast, Dungannon has experienced considerable population growth since the millennium, with much of this being fuelled by migrant labour. At the beginning of this period, Dungannon was by no means considered vibrant in economic or housing terms, and

several interviewees reported considerable empty property in the local authority area at that time. What followed was, in some respects, a matter of considerable good fortune. A rapid ramping up of labour demand in the agri-business and engineering sectors in particular, coincided with a speculation driven housing boom. The conjunction of these two factors laid the basis for what now forms the current private renting sector in Dungannon. The rapid growth of employment was moderated somewhat for a few years by the GFC, particularly in the engineering sector, which led to some reverse migration back to Eastern Europe (from around Coalisland especially), but business prospects in the agri-business sector remained positive through the GFC, and the local economy is still expanding. The significant influx of migrant workers, from East Timor (via Portugal), and Eastern Europe in particular has had some powerful (and in some instances subtle) effects on housing and society in Dungannon.

First, while Dungannon has also had a problem with negative equity, this may perhaps not prove as serious an issue there as it is for Larne. Overall demand for housing has continued to remain high, and wider opportunities have remained for moving properties initially bought for owning into the private rental sector on a semi-permanent basis.

Second, the rapid growth in private renting occasioned by growing labour demand has created a significant HMO sector in Dungannon. Tables 6.1a and 6.1b compare and contrast the HMO situation in Larne and Dungannon as captured in HMO Regional Unit statistics. It is evident from these tables that HMO housing is a much more common phenomenon in Dungannon than Larne, but one also must anticipate these data to give a significant underestimate of the true position, as discovering HMO accommodation remains a largely hit and miss affair.

*“Landlords typically don’t present to us – we have to search for them. How do we find them? By knocking on doors; its hit and miss but it’s the only way. We do also get a lot of referrals from the District Housing Office. An occupant will get a DHO visit to assess eligibility for social housing and then make a referral to us.”*

*“Larne was one of the first areas where we rolled out the registration scheme. In Larne we found concentrations of HMOs in low wage areas (and physically close to the workplace). This has been the pattern in Dungannon also. For example, there is a meat processing factory in Dungannon and the estate next to it is basically 100 per cent HMO.”*

More pernicious yet is the way in which formal private rented accommodation (both HMO and non-HMO) shades off into an informal sector where there are few standards, controls or concerns on the part of landlords for the welfare of their tenants. Indeed the experience of the last decade or so appears to have generated a ‘dual’ housing system in Dungannon; a formal system, which mirrors other semi-rural local housing systems across the UK in terms of structure and operation, and an informal sector - where a significant proportion of the migrant labour force resides<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Aspects of an informal housing system may also now be growing, albeit to a lesser degree, in Larne, affecting younger and low income households and feeding off a process of collusive agent screening of the ‘acceptability’ of prospective private sector tenants seeking a home.

**Table 6.1a: HMO Statistics 2004-2014 – Larne Council Area**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Article 80 Notices (Fire &amp; Amenity Standards)</b>	<b>Article 79 Notices (Repairs &amp; Maintenance)</b>	<b>Article 76 Notices (Overcrowding)</b>	<b>Article 41 Notices (Fitness for Human Habitation)</b>	<b>Currently Registered Properties</b>	<b>Successful Prosecutions</b>
2004	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005	0	0	0	0	5	0
2006	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	6	2	0	0	0	0
2008	10	6	0	0	0	0
2009	2	6	1	0	0	0
2010	0	1	0	0	2	0
2011	3	9	0	0	7	0
2012	2	0	0	0	4	0
2013	1	2	0	0	2	1
2014	3	5	0	0	1	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>
Source: HMO Regional Unit						

**Table 6.1b: HMO Statistics 2004-2014 – Dungannon Council Area**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Article 80 Notices (Fire &amp; Amenity Standards)</b>	<b>Article 79 Notices (Repairs &amp; Maintenance)</b>	<b>Article 76 Notices (Overcrowding)</b>	<b>Article 41 Notices (Fitness for Human Habitation)</b>	<b>Currently Registered Properties</b>	<b>Successful Prosecutions</b>
2004	6	0	2	0	0	1
2005	12	1	0	0	4	1
2006	17	3	1	1	1	3
2007	13	1	3	6	1	10
2008	44	20	7	3	6	9
2009	23	11	10	1	15	2
2010	33	25	9	0	23	0
2011	11	5	3	0	1	3
2012	9	2	4	2	2	5
2013	11	10	1	1	2	1
2014	8	12	2	1	2	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>35</b>
Source: HMO Regional Unit						

*“We do come across really substandard properties being used as HMOs – old outhouses and sheds. Not that often, but it does happen”*

*“There are horror stories of people living in hovels on farms and being charged extortionate rent, hot bedding, and agencies holding passports –a form of serfdom.”*

*“There are still a lot of horror stories. The whole private rented sector needs more formal regulation for landlords to protect tenants’ rights. The attitude is: ‘Sure its only foreigners going into it anyway’. You need a licence for a dog and yet you don’t need a licence to house people!”*



*“Health visitors report babies being born in terrible housing conditions but these people don’t have anywhere to go.”*

In the ‘formal’ housing sector appears we have noted some issues with respect to negative equity and HMO provision, and there are reported problems arising from poor articulation of housing and care services that are similar to those found within Larne also present. There is in addition evidence of need reflected in official statistics and some localised poverty amongst those housed in the formal sector. Within the formal housing system, the increasing presence of migrant groups is beginning to influence the geographic distribution of the locally originating residents - with demand for housing in satellite villages around the main urban centres on the rise. The recognised distribution of need also reflects common understandings of where certain groups will and will not be welcomed and, although the housing system in Dungannon has no doubt benefited from strong positive local political leadership from all sides, there remain pockets of overt hostility, extending as far as explicit violence towards some ethnic groups.

By far the bigger problem though is the existence and operation of the informal housing system. Within this sector, there are migrant households living in circumstances probably unmatched elsewhere across the UK in terms of the squalor, degradation and level of exploitation involved.

It is intrinsically difficult to quantify the scale of this informal sector, but it may encompass numbers running into the hundreds. Part of the reason that the formal housing sector has continued to experience comparatively benign conditions, and to demonstrate few current issues, is the degree of insulation that exists between the formal and informal sectors; in essence, those living in the informal sector are not registering demand in the formal sector. This raises a key problem; if policy was to be developed to explicitly address the problems in the informal sector (and assuming that is possible – current HMO arrangements leave unscrupulous landlords with plenty of scope for avoiding compliance), this could potentially generate additional demands in the formal housing sector that it is unable to cope with. That is to say, there is a distinct possibility of administering a policy induced toxic shock to the broader Dungannon housing system.

*“Prosecution is a definite deterrent, but there are issues. Once you find an HMO a notice can be served requiring landlords to empty the property or do work and then register within a given time period. Landlords often continue to let till the end of the notice period and then make people leave. For example if the requirement is to put in a bath, landlords get 9 months to comply. They will often then keep the tenants for 8 months. We will then withdraw the notice and cannot prosecute. In principle we can take a landlord to court for not making an application to register, but this is not a deterrent as the case is normally thrown out. The courts want something more substantial in order to proceed.”*

*“When we find an HMO we serve a notice to register or desist letting; in 60-70 cases out of a hundred this results in tenants being told to leave.”*

*“There is a lack of emergency housing for people to move to quickly for their own safety. This has been a problem for a while. Deposits don’t come back.”*

*Landlords are not big landlords so they spend the deposits. They can't move to emergency accommodation in Belfast, it must be near work. "*

As prospective demand for migrant labour continues to grow, the scope for such undesirable housing outcomes grows commensurately.

*"Future HMO trends depend on local economic trends. We have heard a Dungannon meat processing firm is creating another 600 jobs in the near future. These will probably be taken up by migrant workers and there will be a consequent increase in the number of HMOs."*

*"Continued growth - how do we manage this? Policies in place don't allow us to cope in terms of services. The system failed to provide, not the migrants. It's easy for people to blame migrants but it's the system. Food processing is expanding so these issues are going to continue."*

Finally, it is worth noting that, as with many 'anti-' things, (anti-Catholic, anti-Unionist, anti-black etc); anti-migrant messages often masquerade as a simple appeal to 'common sense'. In this context, it is of concern that, in both Dungannon and Larne, the tenant/community representatives we spoke to repeatedly emphasised how hard they find it to communicate and promote the fairness of allocation policy to counteract 'common sense' myths because they do not themselves understand it. There is, accordingly, a real need for greater transparency in the allocation of social housing and for more careful thought about how the policy is communicated and explained to local communities, applicants, and the media.

## 7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary and Conclusions

The previous sections have shown that, while both areas are ‘semi-rural’, and both experienced housing boom and bust through the rollercoaster 2000s, the Dungannon and Larne local government district areas encompass very different local housing systems. In large part, this is because Dungannon has the more robust economy and the better immediate economic prospects. Dungannon has sizeable and now self-sustaining migrant communities, whereas the Larne housing system remains relatively self-contained.

The **Dungannon** local housing system:

- Is based on a dynamic local economy that is recovering well from the ‘Global Financial Crash and is still expanding.
- Has experienced very fast population growth, rapid household growth, and relatively fast growth of large household numbers.
- Continues to have to cope with significant foreign migrant workforces drawn to opportunities in food processing/packaging, light engineering and seasonal agricultural work.
- Has experienced rapid growth in private renting, much of which is geared towards accommodating the migrant workforce.
- Retains a relatively small social rented sector, which provides some accommodation support to the migrant workforce, but in no way disproportionately so.

Dungannon experienced rapid growth in new supply in the early/mid 2000s. This largely serviced its expanding private renting sector, and Dungannon was fortunate to the extent its speculative boom coincided with rapid household growth.

Dungannon’s economic prospects suggest that, looking forward, no significant reduction in housing demand should be envisaged. Following the crash of 2007/8, the housing market is currently in a stabilising period, albeit with some negative equity overhang – especially involving purchases made between 2005 and 2007. Consequently, there is only limited growth in the number of existing properties coming on to the market. At present, availability is more of an issue than affordability in the owner occupier sector, in the sense that households with two people in work are typically able to afford purchase.

Foreign born nationals, especially those who arrived some time ago and have settled in the area, are entering owner occupation in increasing numbers, with a significant proportion choosing the co-ownership route. This is having some subtle knock-on effects on the locational choices of indigenous households.

There are significant issues in the private rented sector that merit policy attention. In particular, Dungannon has problems of overcrowding and significant unregulated HMO activity. There is a sizeable ‘informal’ private rented sector, essentially geared towards housing vulnerable foreign migrants who are being subjected to poor landlord practices.

Some landlords have become HMO providers inadvertently through tenants choosing to share or sub-let their homes and landlords are increasingly barring certain migrant group's access to their properties to avoid this problem. However, the bottom end of the private renting sector, which mainly accommodates foreign born tenants, offers very poor housing arrangements, with a significant problem of unscrupulous HMO landlordism.

More generally, demand for private renting exceeds supply. This has generated affordability issues, and these are being aggravated in Dungannon Town itself by Local Housing Allowance rates, which are set to reflect 'rental market' conditions over a much wider geographic area that includes Craigavon.

Reflecting these circumstances, the local housing system is showing signs of growing housing need in parts of the District, in particular the west side of Dungannon Town (Dungannon 1) and Coalisland and other parts of Torrent.

The number of applications for social renting and the numbers of households being assessed as in stress are on the increase. Pockets of community intolerance in areas where supply conditions are otherwise less difficult are exacerbating the problem. Moreover, there is growing concern within some local communities over a perceived lack of transparency of social renting allocation procedures. Left unaddressed, this has the potential to sour relations between indigenous and migrant groups.

The **Larne** local housing system:

- Is based on a diversified economy that was operating in the pre-2008 in a solid, but unspectacular fashion. In recent months, there has been some evidence of green shoots emerging, but no major transformation of Larne economic prospects is currently in sight. Although efforts to rejuvenate the economy are in place, the threat of slow decline remains a very real one.
- Has been required to cope with only modest rates of population growth, mainly arising from natural population change. Rates of net migration have remained very low and few people have moved to Larne Town from the rest of Northern Ireland or from further afield.
- Experienced high levels of, mainly private sector, new housing supply pre-2007, relative to household growth.
- Saw considerable growth in private renting and reduction in social renting over the period 2001-2011, with a particularly marked shift within Larne Town itself. This largely involved growth in private renting, facilitated by private house building, rendering areas of social rented stock low demand, and precipitated extensive demolition in the social rented sector. Even so, the total stock vacancy rate continued to rise over much of the 2000s.
- Is not experiencing generalised pressure arising from a shortage of housing supply.
- Continues to operate under a shadow of paramilitary activity within the unionist community, which affects both district reputation and the day to day operation of the

housing system (in terms of the perceived suitability of specific areas for specific households).

There is little prospect of a dramatic turnaround in the Larne housing market in the medium term. The owner occupier sector remains 'soft' and a significant negative equity overhang continues to act as a major drag on housing market recovery. Sizeable numbers of 'marginal' owners are thought to be 'hanging on'.

In the private rented sector continuing availability of rented accommodation is keeping rents from increasing much in general terms. There has been some recent increase in purchase for renting, but investor activity is concentrated on the cheaper stock. There is some evidence of bad landlord practices, but no widespread HMO activity.

Much of the privately rented stock is managed by letting agents, who collectively 'gatekeep' access to this stock, sometimes in ways that are not always obviously desirable or socially acceptable. While there is no general accessibility issue, 'gatekeeping' activities can pose particular access problems for young single people. These revolve around the need for deposits, a credible track record of being a responsible tenant, and proof of a sustained history of employment. Informal information sharing between letting agents and landlord concerns about welfare reform are adding to access barriers.

Although there is no evidence of a generalised need problem facing the Larne social rented sector, there is a lack of smaller units for single people, which is aggravated by the absence of generally well integrated housing/care services for vulnerable groups. Moreover, social housing allocation processes are combining with limited supply of small units to cause problems by concentrating vulnerable young single people within the town centre.

Thus, Larne is facing significant challenges insofar as:

- Young single people are being screened out of private renting and concentrated within social renting into the town centre
- Care and housing services remain insufficiently articulated when focused on vulnerable people (often young, male, single people with chaotic lifestyles or a lack of social skills).
- Negative equity continues to act as a significant drag on the owner occupier market in particular.

More generally, without policy interventions, prospects for the Larne housing system largely involve continuing stagnation.

## **Recommendations**

Being so very different, the Dungannon and Larne local housing systems require for the most part different policy levers to be pulled. In what follows, we present in tabular form the types of policy intervention we feel would benefit the two areas, linking these back to the problems that they are intended to address.

We would emphasise that there is however no magic bullet for either area in terms of resolving current housing system issues. Individually, the types of policy response suggested

will, for the most part, address one or more problems to a modest degree only. Moreover, the policy responses will each have their own intrinsic timescale of operation. Thus, by picking and choosing from the recommendations offered according to resource availability and local priority it should be possible to develop for each area a portfolio of measures that interact and reinforce over the short, medium and long runs in such a way as to ameliorate the housing imbalances that have been identified.

**Table 7.1 Dungannon Policy Recommendations**

<b>System Imbalance</b>	<b>Policy Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Shortages of effective housing supply	Introduction of time limited planning permissions	<p>While there is land available for development, there is local frustration that it is not traded or is traded ‘strategically’, rather than with a genuine view to development.</p> <p>If planning permission on a particular parcel of land was awarded conditionally, on the basis that it must be developed, say, within 3 years, and if not would be ineligible for planning permission for a subsequent 3 year period, such behaviour would effectively carry a financial penalty.</p>
	Enhanced supply of social rented housing to address need	<p>Evidence of a build-up of social housing need in Dungannon is real and sustained. This is reflected within the latest NIHE Unmet Social Housing Need Prospectus (for the period 2014/15 – 2016/17) but there is a case for approaching the matter with increased urgency.</p> <p>New supply must be provided in a context where there has been some recent reluctance on the part of housing associations to respond effectively to unmet need. Housing Associations should be encouraged to explore flexible solutions to address the cost of land. A Ministerial Housing Supply Forum has been investigating causes of and solutions to limited housing supply responsiveness. The new Mid-Ulster Council would benefit from participating in recommendations that emerge from the Forum.</p> <p>There is also the possibility of seeking developer contributions in creative and mutually advantageous ways. One option</p>

System Imbalance	Policy Recommendation	Comments
		would be a NI version of the Scottish National Housing Trust scheme <sup>25</sup> , under which, developers contribute a third of the capital needed to build a site out, the housing is made available for renting for 5 years and subsequently sold onto the open market. Developers benefit from reduced risk and the public sector by recycling receipts for future housing investment.
	Increase the availability of temporary family accommodation	This is a big issue in terms of quantity and location; temporary housing available 30 miles from where people work is not a realistic proposition. Given the need for a rapid response to the lack of supply, one option might be to set up a private leasing scheme for this purpose.
Lack of Understanding of social housing allocations process	Preparation of Community information materials	<p>The problem is not so much the way in which allocations are made as a lack of clarity about how the process works and the fertile space this leaves for growth of myths and attendant community discord.</p> <p>Simple and clear expository material and pro-active public engagement are needed to address this. A local working group of NIHE and Local Government could take responsibility for this.</p>
Difficulties in accessing the private rented sector	Extension of 'Smartmove Housing' to Dungannon	Smartmove Housing is a private rented sector access scheme. It currently operates in Belfast and Derry. There is a strong case for its immediate extension to Dungannon.
	Review of LHA boundaries to address affordability issues in Dungannon Town	The broader rental market area rates currently applying are demonstrably inappropriate for Dungannon Town itself and this should be taken forward as a priority.
Poor quality of housing and landlord practices in the private rented sector	Establish a local working group including NIHE and the new Mid-Ulster Council, on private landlord standards	The HMO function will transfer to local government from April 2016. However, a general crackdown on HMO activity could deliver a toxic shock to the local housing system, creating more widespread issues than can be handled. As the new council will have few new resources, concerted

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/nht>

<b>System Imbalance</b>	<b>Policy Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	and legislation compliance. The NIHE has regulatory powers on HMOs and local government on the private rented sector so both could and should work together to address issues of poor practice among landlords	<p>action to deal with the worst landlords (not just HMO landlords) will need to involve staff from environmental health, police, fire service, housing benefit, trading standards, planning enforcement and the NIHE former HMO teams.</p> <p>The working group would be charged with developing ways to pool resources to seek out and investigate poor landlords, take appropriate action and publicise successful prosecutions (i.e. naming and shaming landlords as is done with people that commit benefit fraud).</p> <p>It should be noted that the DSD are currently conducting a review of Landlord standards and regulation across Northern Ireland that includes involvement from NIHE and Local government.</p>
	The Equality Commission should develop and publish a Code of Practice on Race and Accommodation.	This document could be marketed widely to ensure that all housing providers including the Housing Executive, Housing Associations, Estate Agents and Private Landlords are aware of the legislative protections under the Race Relations Order 1997 and also of the best practice approaches to letting accommodation to ethnic minority or foreign national families.
	Enhanced role for healthcare workers in 'problem spotting'	Currently health workers, especially those involved in home visits, are an important source of referrals to advice and housing professionals of problem housing situations, but health workers are not specifically charged with this role. In future, the role should be formally recognised, encouraged and resourced.
Growing prospective affordability/access problems for specific groups	Monitoring of the impact of welfare reform on the numbers of homeless without recourse to public assistance	This could be a responsibility of the local working group (NIHE and Local Government). Impending changes to housing benefit rules are likely to have a disproportionate effect on migrant workers.



**Table 7.2 Larne Policy Recommendations**

<b>System Imbalance</b>	<b>Policy Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Market Stagnation	Portable Negative Equity initiative	While most of Northern Ireland continues to experience a significant negative equity problem, it is of particular concern in Larne. The ‘closed’ nature of the local market means that negative equity continues to hold back full market recovery. Several financial institutions have introduced portable negative equity products, but these are quite expensive and have not been offered on an explicit area based basis. Discussions with the Council of Mortgage Lenders should be held about establishing an area based portable negative equity pilot, with a view to re-energising the Larne housing market.
Emergent low demand for social renting	Choice Based Letting initiative	Choice based letting cannot resolve an underlying low demand issue where this is based on a general oversupply of accommodation, but it can slow down the rate at which social obsolescence progresses. Larne could be used as a location for further testing of the Choice Based Letting Initiative.
Access to housing for younger single people	Promotion of shared social tenancies amongst qualifying single people aged 25-35	It is acknowledged that shared housing and sharing tenancies between households is not part of local expectations or cultural practices. However, such an approach offers the possibility (through ‘buddying’) of transferring necessary life skills to immature adults while addressing the shortage of single person accommodation in Larne. Eligible people may be selected against pre-determined criteria, whilst those acting as more mature ‘buddies’ could be incentivised through reduced rents.
	Private rented leasing scheme	The principal purpose of this would be to ease access for younger households in a way that reduces their current spatial concentration within the town centre by offering alternatives in the surrounding areas of Larne Town.

<b>System Imbalance</b>	<b>Policy Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	Extension of 'Smartmove Housing to Larne	Smartmove Housing is a private rented sector access scheme. It currently operates in Belfast and Derry. There is a strong case for its immediate extension to Larne.
	Community Planning to prioritise tenancy support initiatives	The housing system within Larne Town is very closed and virtually all the young people experiencing problems in accessing housing originate from within Larne. A number of these young people have additional health/care needs, and these are contributing to tenancy sustainment problems even where access is achieved. Community planning therefore offers a very suitable forum for addressing the difficulties experienced by younger single people in accessing accommodation. In particular, there is a case for the community planning function to prioritise working relationships between health, care and housing providers in meeting the needs of this group.
Poor landlord behaviour	Landlord accreditation linked to Private Sector Grant for property maintenance	While the majority of private rental property is being let through letting agencies a sizeable rump is being let direct by small, sometimes unwilling, landlords with little knowledge of or interest in their responsibilities. Landlord accreditation would be a good place for the new local council to cut its teeth on the management of private rented policy issues after April 2015.  Accreditation would be voluntary, but it could be incentivised to a modest degree if it brought access to small grant assistance for property maintenance.
Inappropriate letting agent behaviour	Development of a voluntary local letting code	While letting agencies are for the most part acting in an appropriate manner, there is evidence that they are sharing information on applicants in such a way as to increase the barriers facing young single people wishing to access private renting at the start of their housing careers. There also appears to be issues with disproportionate or unclear letting agent fees being sought

System Imbalance	Policy Recommendation	Comments
		by some agents during the application process. A second useful initiative for the new council housing policy function might be to lead on the development of a voluntary letting code which embodies more appropriate ways of dealing with young households seeking private rented accommodation.

## Final Thoughts

Although Larne has been much less affected in this respect than Dungannon has to date, the role of migrant workers across the province of Northern Ireland is likely to remain significant and to create a myriad of impacts, some benign, others less so, on the various local housing systems involved. In general, there is an urgent need to improve information systems and to make it easier to differentiate more clearly between the distinct experiences of foreign nationals and their different socio-economic situations, cultural identities, countries of origin and length of time in Northern Ireland.

Reflecting its recent history, Northern Ireland remains sensitised to inter-community tensions and seeks to address these in a number of ways, including through the current draft racial equality strategy. There is room for further improvement. In particular, there is a strong case for introducing a specific statutory code of practice on race and accommodation, as provided for under the Race Relations Order 1997, or alternatively for clear guidance to be issued by a formal body such as the Equality Commission.

One policy option which we have chosen to discount however is that of rent control. Several local community interests in Dungannon expressed a strong desire for such a policy to be introduced but, while we understand the reasons behind this, rent control has consistently been shown to be extremely damaging to supply and unfair in the way in which its deleterious effects would impact groups of renters in the future (Bourne, 2014). In our view, while measures with an immediate impact are to be welcomed as part of an overall considered policy response, short term fixes that generate bigger long term problems are best avoided.

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## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### Local Development

Core questions
What are the main characteristics and sub-divisions of the local housing market as you understand them?
How are patterns of housing demand and supply in the area changing over time (especially over past decade)?
In what ways have changing land use planning policies influenced new housing developments in the local area?
How much demand for your products currently originates from outside the local area?
In what ways have migrant workers impacted on the local housing market?
Are you aware of any patterns of (spatial) residential segregation present or developing over the past 10-20 years?
Is there an ample land supply to meet housing need/demand over the next 5 to 10 years?
What main factors are likely to pose a risk for housing development over the next 5 to 10 years?
Are there any changes needed to make the housing market and housing system function better?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

### NIHE District Management

Core questions
How would you describe the profile of social rented housing stock in the local area and how it has changed over the last decade?
What do the main spatial sub-divisions in the social rented sector across the local area look like?
Who is the social rented sector catering for?
In what ways have residential segregation patterns within social housing changed over the past 10 years and why?
In what ways has the scale and nature of housing 'need' changed over the last decade and why?
What 'coping strategies' have prospective first time buyers (FTBs) and those unable to access social housing adopted?
What has been happening to lettings over the last decade and what factors have contributed to this?
How significant is the problem of homelessness in the local area?
What roles do resales play in the local housing system?
How are welfare changes affecting the supply of and demand for social housing in the local area?
What challenges is social housing likely to face in the coming years and what interventions might help the sector to meet these?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

### Private Sector Housing Grants

Core questions
Could you describe the profile of private housing stock in the case study area and how it has changed over the last decade?
What has happened to the numbers and profile of vacant and occupied private housing stock over the past decade across the case study area?
How has "demand" for assistance to improve private properties changed in the past decade?
What households are most likely to live in private housing that is in disrepair and apply for grant assistance?
How has the demand for assistance to carry out adaptations changed over the past decade?
What households are most likely to apply for adaptations assistance?
What changes to the advice and assistance available to property owners might be beneficial?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## NIHE Area Planning

Core questions
What are the main characteristics and sub-divisions of the local housing system and market? How have these changed over time?
How much demand/need for housing in the private and social sectors originate from inside and outside the local area?
In what ways have migrant workers impacted on the local housing market?
How are patterns of housing demand and supply in the local area changing over time (especially over past decade)?
In what ways have changing land use planning policies influenced new housing developments in the case study area, particularly in the countryside?
How have patterns of residential segregation changed over the past 10 years and how do these patterns currently shape the housing market?
Is there an ample land supply to meet housing need/demand over the next 5 to 10 years at both the housing market wide and local level?
What main factors are likely to pose a risk for housing development over the next 5 to 10 years?
What influence is migration having on planning for housing and the orientation of local housing policies and plans?
Are there any changes needed to make the housing market and housing system function better?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## Housing Associations

Core questions
Could you describe the profile of social rented housing stock in the local area and how it has changed over the last decade?
Where does the housing association sector own stock and which areas are most and least popular?
Who is the housing association sector providing accommodation for in the local area?
In what ways has residential segregation changed over the past 10 years?
In what ways has the scale and nature of housing 'need' changed over the last decade and why?
What 'coping strategies' have prospective first time buyers (FTBs) and those unable to access social housing adopted?
What are the most important constraints to the effective delivery of new housing?
How do you expect the housing market to develop in the coming months and years?
What are the biggest challenges housing association and (more generally) the social rented sector likely to face in coming years?
What interventions would help the sector meet these challenges?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## Solicitors & Estate Agents

Core questions
Which settlements and surrounding countryside do you operate in?
Which areas are the most and least popular?
How is the housing market in the local area performing?
What can you tell us about the changing profile of homebuyers over the past decade?
Who has been buying in small settlements and the countryside?
How has the private rental market changed in the past decade?
What is the profile of private renters - who are they, and where do they come from?
In what ways are LHA changes and the welfare reform programme likely to shape the demand for and supply of private renting?
When and how do you expect the housing market to recover in the coming years?
In what ways has residential segregation changed over the past one or two decades?
Is there anything else you'd like to add?

## Citizens Advice

Core questions
Could you please outline the settlements you serve and the type of service provided?
Can you please outline the profile of your client base and the proportion that typically seek advice or support in connection with housing or homelessness?
What housing related problems do CAB clients typically experience in the local area?
Has there been any marked change in the numbers of housing enquiries in the last 2-3 years?
Are there any particular private landlords that seem to trigger a high number of enquiries?
What housing problems do clients from an ethnic minority background, including economic migrants from Europe and gypsy/travellers encounter locally?
What have clients tended to do, if anything, to try and resolve their problem before seeking advice?
Do you think there will be any increase in the numbers of clients presenting with specific housing problems in the next 2-3 years?
Is there anything else that we have not discussed that you would like to mention?

## Police

Core questions
How would you characterise the local area?
What do the main spatial sub-divisions across the local area look like?
Is the prevalence and nature of sectarianism, ASB and hate crime a major concern?
What can you tell us about the locales where above average levels of or hate related ASB/violence exist?
To what extent do you believe changing patterns of residential segregation reflect inter-community group tensions?
What can you tell us about the prevalence and nature of ASB and crime in relation to people with an ethnic minority background, including economic migrants and travellers?
What factors facilitate and limit the ability of the police to respond to community safety and related crime issues?
What local initiatives have been pursued to reduce sectarianism, racism and hate related crime?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## Community Involvement

Core questions
How would you characterise the local area?
Can various forms of segregated behaviour be routinely observed in the local area?
In what ways have patterns of residential segregation changed over the past 10 years and why?
How would you describe community relations across the different case study settlements?
Are there any groups within the wider community that feel excluded from the process of improving community relations?
In your experience, have people from an ethnic minority background, including European economic migrants and travellers, faced any specific housing related problems locally?
What local initiatives have been pursued to reduce racism and hate related crime?
In your opinion, is the promotion of residential integration central to improving community relations, or not so? Why do you say that?
What role, if any, do you think housing providers have, or should have, in improving community relations?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## Community Support

Core questions
How would you characterise the local area?
In what ways has residential segregation changed over the past 10 years?
What is the attitude of local communities towards new development?
In what ways has housing 'need' changed over the last decade and why?
Are there any groups within the wider community that feel excluded from the process of improving community relations?
In your experience, have people from an ethnic minority background, including European economic migrants and travellers faced any specific housing related problems locally?
What challenges is the housing system likely to face in the coming years and what interventions would help the sector meet these?
What role, if any, do you think housing providers have, or should have, in improving community relations?
Is there anything else you'd like to add?

## Local Economic Development

Core questions
How would you characterise the local area?
What are the main defining features of the local economy in the area?
What attracts migrant workers to this area (or otherwise)?
Does residential segregation and community division influence the operation of the local economy?
How well did the local economy fare through the 'great financial crash'?
What effect did the 'great financial crash' have on migrant worker activity in the local labour market?
What local policy changes did the 'great financial crash' generate?
What do you expect the local drivers of economic growth to be over the next 5-10 years?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## Elected Members

Core questions
How would you characterise the local area?
What are your thoughts on the migrant worker question?
What have the effects of migrant workers been on the local housing system?
In what ways have residential segregation patterns changed over the 10 years?
In your work, which housing problems do you most frequently meet and do different sections of the community encounter different or similar housing problems?
What are the biggest challenges that the local housing system and housing market are likely to face in the coming years?
Would more migrant workers arriving in future be good or bad for the local economy and/or for the local housing system?
What role do you think housing providers have, or should have, in improving community relations?
Is there anything else you'd like to add?

## National Support Bodies (Political)

Core Questions
How much of your time is taken up with the issue of migrant workers looking to locate within Northern Ireland?
Are you aware of any specific efforts made by employers to attract foreign nationals into Northern Ireland?
How attractive do you think Northern Ireland is to people from your country/the EU generally, relative to other potential destinations?
Do you receive much contact from migrant workers who have located in Northern Ireland?
Do you think worker migration to Northern Ireland will generally increase or decrease in future?
Do you have any views on or experience relating to migrant worker experience in Larne?
Do you have any views on or experience relating to migrant worker experience in Dungannon?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## National Policy Bodies

Core Questions
How much of your time is taken up with the issue of migrant workers looking to locate within Northern Ireland?
Are you aware of any specific efforts made by employers to attract foreign nationals into Northern Ireland?
What Northern Ireland Executive policies do you think encourage migrant workers to come to Northern Ireland?
What Northern Ireland Executive policies do you think discourage migrant workers to come to Northern Ireland?
Are UK policies more or less important than Northern Ireland Executive policies in determining migrant worker numbers?
Looking forward, do you think migrant worker numbers will increase or decrease in the next 5-10 years?
What policy changes would you like to see introduced given the Northern Ireland experience of migrant working to date?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## National Advice & Information Bodies

Core Questions
What is your organisation's experience of dealing with migrant worker issues?
Do you think migrant workers face specific problems in choosing Northern Ireland as a place to work?
How big an issue is housing in the queries you receive from migrant workers?
By and large, how easy have you found it to resolve housing issues raised by migrant workers contacting you?
Do you perceive local community acceptance of migrant workers in Northern Ireland to be a problem?
To what extent is language a specific source of difficulty in the migrant worker issues you have to deal with?
Is there anything in your view that national housing organisations (NIHE/CHINI/NIFHA) should be doing to improve the housing or employment experiences of migrant workers in Northern Ireland?
Is there anything in your view that the Northern Ireland Executive (DSD/DRD/DARD/DETI/other) should be doing to improve the housing or employment experiences of migrant workers in Northern Ireland?
Is there anything in your view that local government should be doing to improve the housing or employment experiences of migrant workers in Northern Ireland?
Are there any other factors we should take into account or anything else you'd like to add?

## **APPENDIX 2: LARNE CITIZENS ADVICE CASE STUDIES**

### **Case Study 1**

A 19 year old male client unable to live at home due to the loss of his mother's Severe Disability Premium (SDP), Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Child Benefit (CB) when he turned 18 and became eligible for Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA). He was unable to obtain employment or training and was sofa surfing for many months before becoming homeless. Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) helped the client to secure a hostel place in Downpatrick as there were no hostel places available in Larne or Ballymena and he did not know anyone with whom he could share accommodation in Larne or surrounding areas. The client had addiction problems that he appeared to have overcome. However, his mother called CAB to say she has lost touch with him; family and friends had not heard from him and concern was growing that he had started 'using' again as he has no support network in Downpatrick.

### **Case Study 2**

A female client's 20 year old son gained full time employment at the same time as her 18 year old son started university. As a result she lost the majority of previously awarded Housing Benefit through non-dependent deduction as well as CTC and CB. She now relies solely on the eldest son to meet the rent shortfall and feels that 'the tables have turned'; she is now 'the lodger', she doesn't know how to resolve the situation and is very distressed. Although in full time employment her older son earns very little and is not in a position to rent a property himself.