

21 February 2025

**Our Ref: FOI 663**

## **Request**

We received your request on 29 January 2025 for the following information:

### *Workforce Composition*

*(a) A breakdown by category of those employed in each of the Western Section NIHE District and Grants Offices, including their community background composition.*

### *Recruitment Data*

*(b) The total number of staff recruited during each year and the community background composition of these recruits.*

### *Comparison with Previous Data*

*(c) A comparison of the figures above with the data supplied previously for the three years immediately preceding the December 2019 FOI request.*

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

## **Our response**

### **Workforce Composition**

(a) A breakdown by category of those employed in each of the Western Section NIHE District and Grants Offices, including their community background composition.

Please refer to Table 1. To provide consistency with our previous reply to you, dated 18 January 2021, information has been provided relevant to the areas of Londonderry, Enniskillen and Omagh.

### **Recruitment Data**

(b) The total number of staff recruited during each year and the community background composition of these recruits.

Please refer to Table 2. Similarly, for the purposes of continuity information has been provided relevant to the areas of Londonderry, Enniskillen and Omagh.

### **Comparison with Previous Data**

(c) A comparison of the figures above with the data supplied previously for the three years immediately preceding the December 2019 FOI request.

In response to the information outlined in Table(s) 1-3 and the data previously provided (December 2018 – December 2020), please note the following:-

The Housing Executives current workforce composition at 1 January 2025 is:-

Protestant – 39.3%  
Roman Catholic – 54.7%  
Other – 6.0%

As compared to the NI 2021 Census (Economically Active Persons aged 16+ yrs Religion and Religion Brought up in) reported as:-

Protestant – 44.1%  
Roman Catholic – 46.3%  
Other – 9.6%

Workforce composition in terms of community background differs between office locations, due to a number of factors including catchment areas.

Protestants are currently under-represented in the Western area, accounting for 17.9% of our workforce (refer to Table 3). Note: Table 1 and Table 2 - *information where there are less than 10 in any particular group has not been provided, to ensure the identities of any individual cannot be inferred from the data.*

The NI 2011 Census reported that the Protestant Economically Active 16-74 years in the West Constituency area was 31.8%, whilst the NI 2021 Census reported that this has decreased to 28.9%.

Conversely Roman Catholic representation has increased from 65.7% to 66.9%; whilst those identifying as Other has increased from 2.5% to 4.2% during the same period.

Note: the Western Area includes offices in Londonderry City locations, Cookstown, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Magherafelt, Omagh and Strabane offices.

The majority of our people in the Western Area are based within the Derry City & Strabane constituency area, The NI Labour Force Survey 2017 (Working Age Economically Active) local government district reported that Derry and Strabane was representative of 24% Protestant, 72% Roman Catholic and 4% Other.

You will note that some of our offices in the Western Area have small numbers of staff, and therefore any changes in our personnel can have a significant impact on the percentage reported e.g. Protestant representation has increased in Enniskillen from 26.3% to 30.0% since we last provided you with figures in 2021. At the same time there has been a decrease in the percentage of Protestants based in Omagh, decreasing from 22.6% to 19.0% over the same period.

### **Affirmative Action Plan and Outreach**

The Housing Executive has an affirmative action plan in place in order to try and address areas under-representation, including for those from the Protestant Community.

We are also conscious of the increasing proportion of people in our community and therefore applicants who are not declaring as being from either Community Background. Other is now representative of 9.6% in the 2021 NI Census (Economically Active Persons aged 16+ yrs Religion and Religion Brought up in).

We have been discussing this matter with the Equality Commission and have been conducting our own analysis to help us understand the impact of this growing trend on the composition of our workforce.

We have detailed below some specific actions that we have been taking to try and increase Protestant representation in our workforce.

1. Corporate Strategy – we have included specific reference to the need for our workforce to be reflective of the community we serve.
2. Appointment of a dedicated resource to lead outreach activity.
3. Increased engagement with the Protestant community including:-
  - a. Schools in the Controlled Sector, engagement with career events, work experience opportunities, interview and career development skills. We have attended career and job fair events across Northern Ireland, including Cookstown, Coleraine and Enniskillen. Events in Enniskillen and Londonderry are scheduled for March 2025.

- b. Regional Colleges within Protestant catchment areas, for example we recently attended (February 2025) a careers event in the Northern Regional College, Coleraine.
  - c. Princes Trust to promote pathways to employment;
  - d. Business in the Community, working in partnership to deliver a Work Inspiration Programme to school students aged 11+ from schools within the controlled sector.
4. Two large scale advertising campaigns focused in mainly Protestant areas (costing circa £70k) were delivered in 2023 and 2024. The campaigns included billboard advertisements, the use of digital boards at transport hubs and the NI Football Match at Windsor Park, Belfast. The campaigns reached 169 sites including Articlave, Coleraine, Cookstown, Londonderry, Fivemiletown, Omagh and Strabane via Telephone Kiosk advertising panels. These campaigns were simultaneously supported via Radio outreach and through a range of Social Media platforms within designated Postcode areas.
5. Partnership with DfC Employment Team to promote vacancies via JobApplyNI Website, meet the Employer Events and access to Career Fairs within areas of highest Protestant representation.

This concludes our response.

**Table 1 - NIHE Workforce based in Western Section by District and Grants Office locations by Community Background**

Office	Year	Community Background			
		Protestant	Roman Catholic	Other	Total
Waterloo Office	Dec 2021	11	35	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	39	#	*
	Dec 2023	12	46	#	*
	Dec 2024	12	49	#	*
Waterside Office	Dec 2021	#	10	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	#	#	*
	Dec 2023	#	#	#	*
	Dec 2024	#	#	#	*
Collon Terrace	Dec 2011	#	14	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	17	#	*
	Dec 2023	#	14	#	*
	Dec 2024	#	15	#	*
Richmond Chambers (excluding Grants)	Dec 2021	17	101	#	*
	Dec 2022	12	109	#	*
	Dec 2023	13	113	#	*
	Dec 2024	10	114	#	*
Grants (based within Richmond Chambers)	Dec 2021	#	11	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	11	#	*
	Dec 2023	#	10	#	*
	Dec 2024	#	#	#	*
Omagh (excluding Grants)	Dec 2021	12	37	#	*
	Dec 2022	12	36	#	*
	Dec 2023	13	42	#	*
	Dec 2024	10	38	#	*
Grants (based within Omagh District Office)	Dec 2021	#	11	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	10	#	*
	Dec 2023	#	10	#	*
	Dec 2024	#	12	#	*
Enniskillen (excluding Grants)	Dec 2021	#	23	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	20	#	*
	Dec 2023	#	19	#	*
	Dec 2024	#	17	#	*
Grants (based within Enniskillen District Office)	Dec 2021	#	#	#	*
	Dec 2022	#	#	#	*
	Dec 2023	#	#	#	*
	Dec 2024	#	#	#	*

**Please Note:**

\*Western Section locations identified by your Office in response to FOI – January 2018 – Londonderry – Richmond Chambers, Waterloo Place, Waterside and Collon Terrace; Enniskillen – Riverview House, Omagh – McAllister House.

Grants Departments are based within Richmond Chambers, Londonderry, Enniskillen and Omagh Office locations.

#Given the protocol that such information should not be disaggregated in circumstances where there are less than 10 in any particular group, to ensure that the identities of any individual cannot be inferred from the data, this information has not been provided.

#Similarly, in circumstances where identity may be inferred from the office location total, or the overall total, this information has also not been provided.

Excludes Agency Workers

**Table 2 - Total Number NIHE Employees recruited and the community background of those recruits**

Western Area	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Other	Total
2021 Newstarts/Promotions	#	28	#	#
2022 Newstarts/Promotions	#	26	#	#
2023 Newstarts/Promotions	12	30	#	#
2024 Newstarts/Promotions	#	20	#	#

**Please Note:**

'Recruited' was defined as 'external' and 'internal' appointments (made on a permanent, fixed term contract or secondment basis within 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 to the identified locations i.e. Londonderry – Richmond Chambers, Waterloo Place, Waterside and Collon Terrace; Enniskillen – Riverview House, Omagh – McAllister House and who were still in post at December in each of the years requested.

#Given the protocol that such information should not be disaggregated in circumstances where there are less than 10 in any particular group, to ensure that the identities of any individual cannot be inferred from the data, this information has not been provided.

#Similarly, in circumstances where identity may be inferred from the total, this information has also not been provided.

Excludes Agency Workers

**Table 3 - Comparative Data: 2021 NI Census Economically Activity (aged 16+) by Religion and or Religion Brought Up in for Local Government Districts - West Constituency Areas**

Source	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Other
2021 NI Census (Economically Active Persons aged 16+years) West constituency areas	28.9% [30.2%]	66.9% [69.8%]	4.2%
• Fermanagh & Omagh	31.9% {33.3%}	63.9% [66.7%]	4.2%
• Mid Ulster	30.5% [31.9%]	65.0% [68.1%]	4.5%
• Derry City & Strabane	24.7% [25.7%]	71.3% [74.3%]	4.0%
**NIHE Workforce composition West constituency areas at December 2024	17.9% [18.3%]	79.8% [81.7%]	2.3%

\*[%] – percentage of total Protestant and Roman Catholics only

\*\* - includes Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Strabane NIHE offices