

11 April 2022

Supporting People Team
Northern Ireland Housing Executive

By email only supporting.people@nihe.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam

Consultation response – Supporting People Three Year Draft Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan, 2022-2025

We welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Supporting People Three Year Draft Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025. We have previously recognised the importance of the Supporting People programme in supporting people to live independently¹.

We recognise the need for adequate resourcing to provide security for those delivery services to retain and develop expertise.

We support the priorities and objectives as set out in the draft strategic plan. We also support the four thematic areas, in particular those relating to older people, younger people and people with disabilities, and welcome the specific interventions to provide housing support to these groups.

The Commission has made a number of recommendations² of relevance to the plan, including in particular to:

- Ensure access to adequate, sustainable and long-term independent living provision, for all people with disabilities for whom it is a viable housing option.
- Ensure the availability of suitable accommodation and services for homeless single males; younger and older people; and refugees and unsuccessful asylum seekers.

We welcome the methodology, as set out at page 10, which notes that the Strategy was developed over two years with a significant amount of stakeholder engagement. We also welcome that Objective 4 will seek to strengthen relationships and achieve greater collaboration and sharing across sectors. We also welcome the undertaking to regular review and alignment across strategies.

¹ ECNI (2019) [Equality in Housing and Communities - full report](#), at para 5.22

² ECNI webpage www.equalityni.org/housing/policy

We raise a number of queries, consideration of which may be useful in the finalisation of the plan.

1. Whether the NIHE has noted any particular needs linked to the multiple equality identities within the groups in the four thematic areas. For example, this might relate to women from minority ethnic groups using services as a result of domestic violence, and impact upon how services should be delivered.
2. At page 17 we note that two of the actions require additional funding in order to proceed (to support Supporting People to develop capacity and resilience, and to run two annual competitions for providers to submit business proposals for COVID recovery). Is there a contingency in place should the additional funding not be available?
3. We welcome the undertaking to 'continue to consider new, emerging data sources, changes in trends and on-going engagement with providers as part of the decision-making process' (page 18). Comprehensive equality data is necessary to shape, refine and evaluate the impact of strategies, programme and policies. We recommend that data is sufficiently disaggregated to allow for meaningful equality analysis. We therefore recommend that the data referred to at page 18 is disaggregated to allow for meaningful analysis to better inform interventions.

I trust that this response is useful, and if discussion would be helpful please let me know. Further information on the Commission's recommendations on Equality in Housing and Communities can be found here: www.equalityni.org/housing/policy.

Yours faithfully



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