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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Housing and communities key inequalities: Commission statement**

The Equality Commission today published a 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland', its assessment of inequalities and differences in experiences of housing faced by people from different equality categories.

The Statement draws on a wide range of sources and highlights seven areas where the Commission considers key inequalities persist. These are:

- longer waiting times for Catholic applicants for social housing;
- limited access to appropriate accommodation for Irish Travellers;
- vulnerability to racial attacks of the homes of minority ethnic and migrant groups;
- susceptibility of migrant workers to tied accommodation with poor conditions;
- limits on the opportunity for people with a learning disability to live independently;
- people with disabilities living in homes inadequate for their disability-related needs; and
- Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people who can feel harassed and unsafe in their homes and neighbourhoods.

Dr Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission, said: "We acknowledge that progress has been made to improve housing stock and develop access to suitable accommodation across Northern Ireland over the past decades, but there is compelling evidence that work still needs to be done to address enduring inequalities, which continue to affect people across our community.

"Ensuring that everyone has access to a sustainable, secure home and enjoys the right to independent living; that the specific housing needs of particular equality groups are addressed; and the development of shared, safe communities are essential building blocks to a successful, flourishing Northern Ireland.

"As a society we must not ignore inequalities in this crucial area. Unchallenged, they will continue to affect the lives of many people across Northern Ireland and the life chances of future generations. A revised Programme for Government should provide an opportunity to develop actions to address these inequalities. At its heart must be the aim of meeting objective need whilst ensuring equality of opportunity.

"Of course, we recognise that not all of these issues can be successfully addressed by housing policy changes alone. They need a focus from politicians and

policymakers across all Government departments and agencies, as well as organisations within the wider community, to prioritise actions and interventions to address these persistent inequalities.”

**Note to Editor:**

The statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities is part of a developing series of statements examining key issues across various areas, highlighting, where people in Northern Ireland face inequality. It is an update on the Commission’s work on key inequalities carried out in 2007.

**Downloads:**

1. [This place we call home?](#) - real life stories of housing need, met and unmet (*pdf, 1.6mb*)
2. [Key Point Briefing on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in NI](#) (*pdf, 181kb*)
3. [Summary Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in NI](#) (*pdf, 413kb*)
4. [Full Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in NI](#) (*pdf, 980kb*)
5. [Infographic](#) (*jpeg*)

Further information is available online: [www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Housing](http://www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Housing)