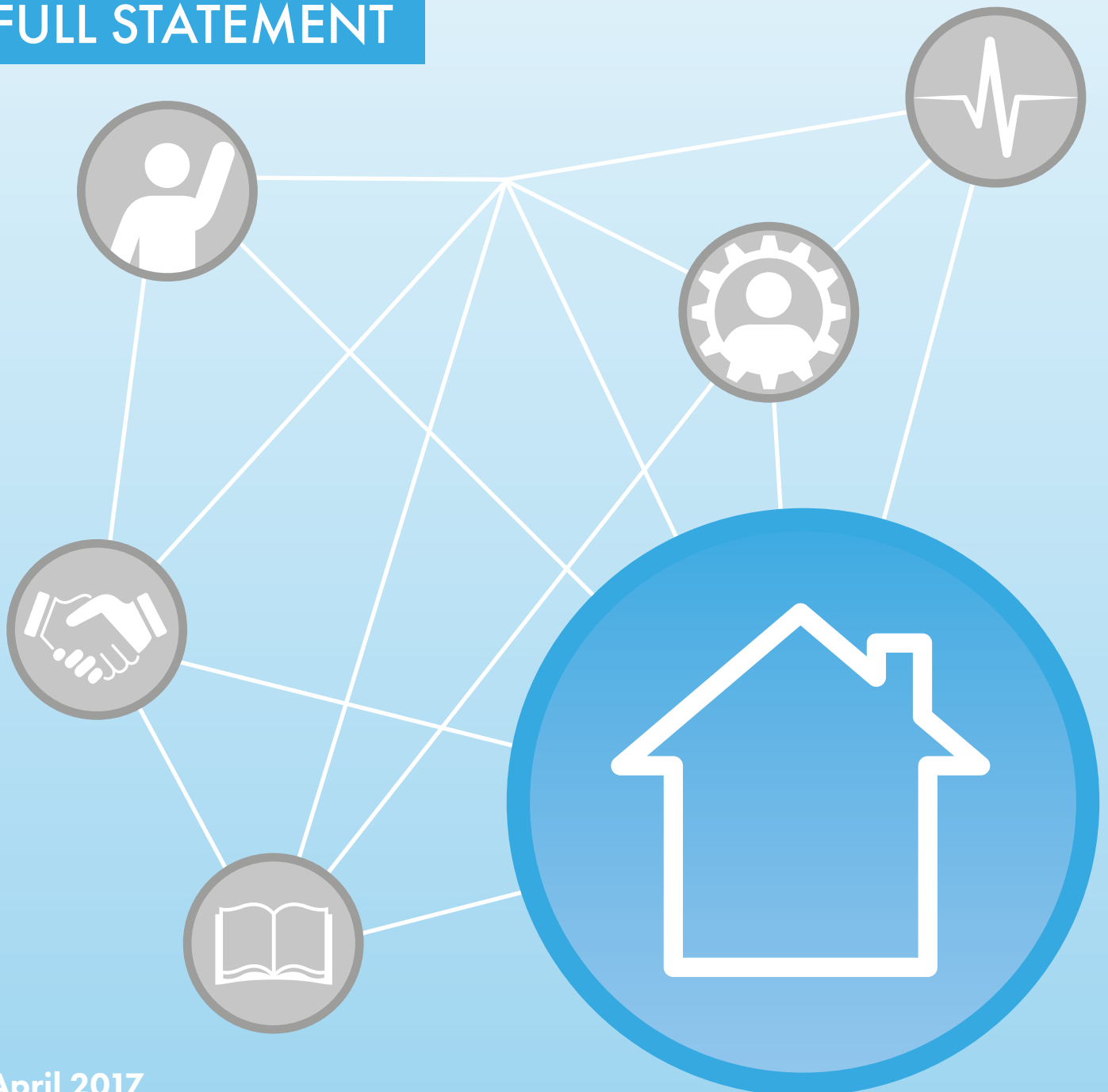




Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland

FULL STATEMENT



April 2017



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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The provision of housing faces new as well as existing and persistent challenges. This '*Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland*' highlights our assessment of inequalities and differences in housing experiences faced by equality groups across the Section 75 equality categories in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 To achieve an accessible, adequate and sustainable home may be something different for one person or family than to another's depending upon their characteristics or identities. Accordingly, this *Statement* highlights both differences and inequalities in housing outcomes across the equality categories, for the period 2007 to 2015. Where barriers to equality of opportunity have been identified they are also considered and reported.
- 1.3 In compiling this *Statement*, the Commission has drawn on a wide range of sources including research reports from Government departments; the community and voluntary sectors; academic research; and, the Commission's own research. The Commission also contracted independent research from The Centre for Housing Policy, University of York. The resultant research report '*Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland*'¹ and associated stakeholder engagement has played a key role in informing this *Statement*.
- 1.4 The Commission, in this *Statement*, does not seek to consider or evaluate the effectiveness of Government strategies, policies or practices. Rather, the Commission seeks to draw attention to persistent and/or emergent key inequalities so that actions can be developed, improved or re-affirmed to advance equality.
- 1.5 It is intended that the consideration of differences, inequalities and barriers set out within this *Statement*, will be utilised to inform the ongoing development of policy positions and associated interventions not only across the relevant Departments, agencies and functions of government, but by all those organisations who have responsibilities for, or an interest in, housing in Northern Ireland. Inequalities in **bold** in this summary are considered to be the most pressing, or key, inequalities.

1 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).





- 1.6 An important caveat is that there remain significant and specific data gaps across a number of themes in relation to a number of equality categories, specifically: gender; gender identity; religion; race; political opinion; and sexual orientation. In addition, there is a lack of data disaggregation in relation to: ethnicity; disability status; marital status; and, dependency status.
- 1.7 These shortfalls limit the Commission's ability to draw robust conclusions about inequalities, and/or progress in addressing the same, across the full range of equality categories and groups.
- 1.8 Differences and inequalities are considered under three broad headings:
- The **accessibility** of housing – the opportunities to secure housing;
 - The **adequacy** of housing – the housing meets cultural, physical or other needs and is safe; and,
 - The **sustainability** of housing – the tenure is secure and affordable in the long term.

Accessibility

- 1.9 **Catholic household reference person applicants for social housing continue to experience the longest waiting times.** An examination of Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) waiting list time data for social housing for the period 2004 to 2009 and for 2013/14 shows that Catholic household reference person applicants experienced the longest median waiting times for social housing at the point of allocation in Northern Ireland as a whole². Further, while median waiting times had increased for all groups, more substantive increases were noted for households with a 'Catholic' or 'Other' religion household reference person³.
- 1.10 It is also still the case that **access to appropriate accommodation for Irish Travellers is limited.** Whilst the NIHE Traveller Needs Assessment (2015)⁴ identified three council areas in 2014 that presented the most need for Traveller accommodation, the planning data supplied by the NIHE shows that, of the eight applications lodged between 2007 and 2015, none were in two (Belfast or Dungannon) of the three areas of identified need. A total of six of the eight applications were however in one of the areas of most need - the Craigavon area.

2 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

3 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

4 NIHE (2015) [Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2014](#).





- 1.11 Households with a younger household reference person (those aged under 35 years old) who are in receipt of the Local Housing Allowance, may find it more difficult to obtain private rented homes than households with a reference person aged 35 years old and older.
- 1.12 Single male reference person households are more likely than single female reference person households to present as homeless to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). This inequality was found consistently between 2009/10 and 2014/15, and is consistent with that previously highlighted in our 2007 Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland⁵.
- 1.13 There is a difference between male and female reference person households, whereby female reference person households are more likely to live in rented accommodation, including social housing, than male reference person households. However, as there is a lack of data regarding the housing preferences of household reference persons, it is not possible from this information alone to conclude if these differences represent an inequality.

Adequacy

- 1.14 Statistics show that **the homes of minority ethnic people and migrant groups may be vulnerable to racial attacks**. For example, Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime Statistics (2014)⁶ showed that while the number of ‘criminal damage to a dwelling crimes’ that had a racist motivation experienced a year on year decrease between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the most recent data (from 2013/14 to 2015/16) showed an increased number of incidences of criminal damage compared to 2012/13⁷.
- 1.15 Similarly, available evidence suggests that **Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people can feel harassed and unsafe in their own homes and neighbourhoods**. For example, O’Doherty (2009)⁸ found that around a fifth of homophobic incidents occurred in the LGB person’s home with nearly a quarter of these incidents involving a perpetrator who was a neighbour or lived locally. Police Service of Northern Ireland statistics show increases in both ‘violence against the person offences’ and ‘criminal damage to a dwelling’ offences during the period 2007/08 and 2013/14⁹.

5 See: ECNI (2007) [Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

6 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).

7 PSNI (2016) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2015/16](#).

8 O’Doherty, J. (2009) [Through Our Eyes](#).

9 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).





- 1.16 It was also found that Trans people are at high risk of being the victim of hate crimes, including crimes against the person and property related crimes^{10,11}.
- 1.17 **Migrant workers are vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation¹² with poor conditions and overcrowding.** For example, Allamby et al. (2011) reported that for migrant workers in Northern Ireland, ‘work and accommodation are often linked, [where] many cannot leave their job as this would also render them homeless, creating a vicious circle of working long hours and living in poor conditions’¹³. This accommodation can also be expensive, overcrowded, excessively controlled by landlords, and unsuitable for children¹⁴.
- 1.18 In considering the size of homes and the number of people living in them, it is found that, minority ethnic people, especially Roma, Irish Travellers, Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups, experience overcrowding more often than the general population and White people.
- 1.19 Despite Government commitments to resettle people with learning disabilities from hospital settings, **those with a learning disability are not always afforded an opportunity to live independently.** For example, The Bamford Review (2007) found that whilst the resettlement of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems away from hospital settings and into the community had taken place many people were resettled in similar institutional shared settings. Additionally, there was evidence of an overreliance on support from family carers to support those with learning disabilities¹⁵. Byrne et al., (2014) reported that the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015 committed £64 million to resettle long-stay patients not in need of treatment and that this was to be completed by 2015. In 2016, the resettlement programme was reportedly nearing completion. As of March 2017, the Commission has been unable to confirm if the resettlement programme has completed.

10 McBride (2013) [Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland](#).

11 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).

12 Accommodation that is provided as a part of a person’s continued employment.

13 Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) [Forced Labour in Northern Ireland: Exploiting vulnerability](#). Page 22.

14 Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) [Forced Labour in Northern Ireland: Exploiting vulnerability](#).

15 Bamford (2007) [Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability \(Northern Ireland\) Consultation](#).





- 1.20 In addition, **many people with disabilities live in homes that are not adequate to meet their disability related needs**. For example, the Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability (NISALD)¹⁶ found that nearly a fifth of those respondents who did not have modifications or adaptations to their homes did have a requirement for modifications or adaptations¹⁷. Although Lifetime Homes standards were adopted in 1998 for social housing, the same standards do not apply to the private sector. Further, in 2013 the Interdepartmental Review on Housing Adaptations called for specific wheelchair standards as coverage of these standards within Lifetime Homes was not considered adequate.
- 1.21 Households with an older reference person, those aged 60 years old or older, are more likely to live in non-decent homes and homes that require adaptations than households with a reference person aged under 60 years old.
- 1.22 With respect to the sector in which people live, it was found that, household reference persons without dependent children, living in the private rented sector, are more likely to live in non-decent homes.
- 1.23 Other differences noted in this *Statement* include that in social housing, households with single household reference persons are the most likely to live in non-decent housing. Although, overall, it is household reference persons who are separated or divorced who are more likely to live in non-decent homes. It should however be noted that findings for those of different marital status may be related to other characteristics (such as age and/or dependents), or to life trajectories.

Sustainability

- 1.24 Households with dependent children, particularly lone parent reference person households, who live in the private rented sector are more likely to experience relative poverty after housing costs have been deducted.
- 1.25 Similarly, a difference evident is that, in the private rented sector, households represented by a female reference person are at greater risk of relative poverty after housing costs have been deducted than those households with a male reference person.

16 Although becoming dated (2007) NISALD however remains the best available data source in this regard.

17 NISRA (2007) [The Prevalence of Disability and Activity Limitations amongst adults and children living in private households in Northern Ireland](#).





2 Introduction

- 2.1 This *Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland*¹⁸ seeks to highlight the nature and extent of inequalities across the nine equality grounds covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: gender; racial group; disability status; sexual orientation; religious belief; political opinion; age; marital status; and dependency status in respect to housing, accommodation and related matters¹⁹. Where possible, inequalities experienced by members of a particular equality group due to multiple identities are also highlighted.
- 2.2 This *Statement* updates the relevant component of the Commission's previous *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland* published in 2007²⁰. It will form part of a larger series of *Statements on Key Inequalities* that highlight key inequalities in areas such as employment; health and social care; participation in public life; education; and, social attitudes.

Focus

- 2.3 Housing requirements are unlikely to be the same for all people across all equality groups. To achieve an accessible, adequate and sustainable home may be something different for one person or family than to another's depending upon their characteristics or identities. Accordingly, this report highlights both differences and inequalities in housing outcomes across the equality categories, for the period 2007 to 2015. Where barriers to equality of opportunity have been identified they are also considered and reported. It is hoped that a consideration, in tandem, of key outcome inequalities and/or differences and associated barriers, may help inform the further development of public policies and associated interventions. Where possible, the identification of inequalities is supported by a range of information sources (including literature and data), and is informed by stakeholder engagement.

18 It is important to note that the term 'housing' referred to in this Statement is not restricted to housing in the traditional sense. Rather, the term encompasses any type of accommodation that individuals consider to be their home.

19 Equality grounds are those specified above, equality groups are the categories within those categories. E.g. gender is an equality ground, males and females are the groups within that ground.

20 ECNI (2007) [Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).





- 2.4 The Commission, in this *Statement*, does not seek to consider or evaluate the effectiveness of Government strategies, policies or practices. Rather, the Commission seeks to draw attention to persistent and/or emergent inequalities so that actions can be developed, improved or re-affirmed to advance equality.
- 2.5 The *Statement* reports key differences and inequalities in the equality outcomes, and where possible the barriers, faced by equality groups in Northern Ireland.
- 2.6 It is intended that the consideration of differences, inequalities and barriers contained within this *Statement*, will be utilised to inform the ongoing development of policy positions and associated interventions not only across the relevant Departments, agencies and functions of government, but by all those organisations who have responsibilities for, or an interest in, housing in Northern Ireland.

Approach and Methodology

- 2.7 In compiling this *Statement*, the Commission has drawn on a wide range of sources including research reports from government departments; the community and voluntary sectors; academic research; and, the Commission's own research archive.
- 2.8 The Commission also contracted independent research from The Centre for Housing Policy, University of York. The resultant research report '*Housing and Communities' Inequalities in Northern Ireland' - Wallace (2015)*²¹ has played a key role in informing this *Statement*.
- 2.9 Wallace (2015) analysed data from the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (2009); the Department for Social Development's analysis of the Family Resources Survey (2011/12); data supplied by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2004-2009 and 2013/14); data supplied by the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association (2009-2014); and from the results of the Census 2011. Wallace's research report also drew on attitudinal data from the *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS)*²², as well as from the Commission's most recent (2012) *Equality Awareness Survey*²³. The research also incorporated primary qualitative research in the form of focus groups, interviews and an expert seminar with key stakeholders.

21 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

22 2006, 2010 and 2012

23 ECNI (2012) [Equality Awareness Survey](#).





- 2.10 Differences and inequalities are considered under three broad headings:
- The **accessibility** of housing – the opportunities to secure housing;
 - The **adequacy** of housing – the housing meets cultural, physical or other needs and is safe; and,
 - The **sustainability** of housing – the tenure is secure and affordable in the long term.
- 2.11 In addition, the report outlined barriers and enablers experienced by each equality group in housing and communities, *including* the degree to which prejudicial attitudes were prevalent.

Challenges

- 2.12 As Wallace (2015) notes, the relevant authorities – the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Department for Social Development (DSD)²⁴ and health and social care providers - have instituted plans to improve housing situations, with the potential to narrow identified differentials.²⁵ For example, programmes such as DSD’s Social Housing Reform Programme²⁶ provides an opportunity to shape all areas of provision; the review of the private rented sector seeks to improve how this growing sector operates to the benefit of tenants²⁷; and, the Northern Ireland Housing Associations are on course to build 1,500 new social homes in 2016²⁸.
- 2.13 The Commission is mindful however that the complex relationships that exist between housing and other domains, such as labour markets, social security, health, immigration and public attitudes, will demand a co-ordinated approach, not only across a range of Departments, agencies and functions of government, but also by organisations who have responsibilities for, or an interest in, housing and communities in Northern Ireland, to develop long-term multi-faceted policy interventions.
- 2.14 This *Statement* highlights the fact that many inequalities remain persistent and hard to tackle, and that there are a number of new and emerging inequalities that are impacting on some of the equality groups across the equality grounds.

24 From 9 May 2016, DSD’s functions became those of the newly formed Department for Communities.

25 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#). Executive Summary

26 DSD ‘[Social Housing Reform Programme](#)’.

27 DSD ‘[Review of the Role and Regulation of the Private Rented Sector](#)’

28 Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2015) ‘Draft Corporate Plan – Regional Services 2015/16 – 17/18’





- 2.15 Further, whilst socio-economic disadvantage is not a specified ground under the equality legislation, the barriers and inequalities experienced by equality groups can be exacerbated by poverty and social exclusion. The Commission continues to highlight the link between poverty and social exclusion, and the inequalities faced by individuals protected under the equality legislation.

Data Limitations and Gaps

- 2.16 Despite the Commission's (2007)²⁹ monitoring guidance for public authorities, there remain significant and specific data gaps across a number of themes in relation to a number of equality categories, specifically: gender, gender identity; religion; race; political opinion; and sexual orientation. In addition, there is lack of data disaggregation in relation to: ethnicity; disability status; marital status; and, dependency status.
- 2.17 For example, key housing datasets offer limited detail with regard to data on minority ethnic groups and migrants. Instead, any analysis must rely on small scale surveys and qualitative data.
- 2.18 Finally, this statement seeks to make clear where it refers to 'Household Reference Person Households' (HRP Households), so the reader can consider the merits and limits of relevant data sources and associated inferences. The recording of HRP's characteristics is generally dependent upon the voluntary disclosure of those characteristics. In addition, the composition of the household as a whole may well be more diverse than the individual characteristics of the HRP^{30, 31, 32}. The HRP is often the person who completed the form³³, or the person who owns the house or pays the rent or mortgage, rather than any real consideration of all household members.

29 ECNI (2007) [Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities](#).

30 NIHE (2013) [Northern Ireland House Condition Survey, 2011: Main Report](#).

31 If this is more than one person then the HRP is taken as the person with the highest annual income.

32 It is also worth considering that the recorded characteristics of those designated as a household reference person may be different depending upon the age of the household reference person. For example, while males are more likely to be recorded as a household reference person regardless of age, females are more likely to be recorded where households have either a younger (aged 18 to 39 years old - 44.2%) or an older (60 years old or over - 40.0%), rather than a middle aged (40 to 59 years old - 29.3%) household reference person. Data quoted is from the [Northern Ireland House Condition Survey, 2009](#)

33 For example, in social housing administrative data the person who completes the form is the HRP regardless of whether the application is a single or joint application. Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).



3 Overall Context of Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland

- 3.1 The New Policy Institute (2014) found that, on almost all indicators the economic recession had a greater impact upon Northern Ireland residents than those in Great Britain. For example, the Institute's (2014) Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) research found that the median income after housing costs for people in Northern Ireland fell 10% between 2006/07 and 2011/12, compared to 7% for the United Kingdom as a whole; this fall was greatest amongst the lowest paid^{34, 35}.
- 3.2 The Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index (RPPI) figures show that from the peak of the market in Quarter 3 2007³⁶ house prices experienced a decline. The market reached its lowest point in Quarter 1 2013³⁷ when it experienced a decline of 56% compared to Quarter 3 2007³⁸.
- 3.3 Whilst property prices in Northern Ireland experienced increases after Quarter 1 2013, the difference between Quarter 3 2007 and Quarter 1 2015 was still substantial at 51%³⁹.
- 3.4 An upside to the economic recession was the return of house prices to more affordable levels. Whilst mortgage applications now require more stringent checks related to affordability, opportunities to become a homeowner have improved. In addition, those who do not have sufficient deposits may make use of the co-ownership scheme⁴⁰.
- 3.5 The private rented sector in Northern Ireland more than doubled between 2001/2002 and 2013/14, both in terms of its share of Northern Ireland's housing stock and the proportion of people living in this sector^{41, 42}.

34 New Policy Institute (2014) [Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland 2014](#).

35 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

36 July to September, 2007.

37 January to March, 2015.

38 LPS (2015). [Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index. January-March 2015 \(Quarter 1\)](#)

39 LPS (2015). [Northern Ireland Residential Property Price Index. January-March 2015 \(Quarter 1\)](#)

40 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

41 In 2001/2002 the private rented sector accounted for 6.6% of occupied housing stock, compared to 16.4% in 2013/14.

42 DSD (2014) [Northern Ireland Housing Statistics 2013-14](#).





- 3.6 Reductions in funding and allowances as a result of Government budgetary measures etc. have however impacted the social housing sector. For example, compared to 2011/12, 2014/15 saw a reduction of 31 percentage points in social housing financial investment⁴³.
- 3.7 While both Shuttleworth and Lloyd (2013)⁴⁴ and Nolan (2014)⁴⁵ note that residential segregation has declined since 2001, it remains the case that highly segregated residential housing patterns persist in Northern Ireland. In broad terms, Census 2011 data shows that, similar to 2001, Catholic communities dominate in the west of Northern Ireland and Protestants in the east. Overall, Belfast has experienced an increase in Catholic representation⁴⁶ and a decrease in Protestant representation⁴⁷ since the 2001 Census⁴⁸.
- 3.8 See Annex 1 for more detailed information on housing and communities in Northern Ireland.

43 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

44 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2013) [Moving apart or moving together? A snapshot of residential segregation from the 2011 Census](#).

45 Nolan, P. (2014) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Three](#).

46 44.2% in 2001 and 46.0%, respectively.

47 51.7% in 2001 and 45.1%, respectively.

48 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).





4 Gender

Summary

- 4.1 With regards to the *accessibility* of housing, evidence shows that single male reference person households are more likely than single female reference person households to present as homeless to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). This inequality was also highlighted in our 2007 Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland.
- 4.2 The main reasons that single male reference person households gave for presenting as homeless to the NIHE were: as a result of breakdown in sharing or family dispute; relationship breakdown; no accommodation in Northern Ireland; and the loss of rented accommodation.
- 4.3 Female reference person households are more likely to live in rented accommodation, including social housing, than male reference person households. However, as there is a lack of data regarding the housing preferences of household reference persons, it is not possible from this information alone to conclude if these differences represent an inequality for female reference person households.
- 4.4 In respect to the *adequacy* of housing the limited data available indicated that Trans people are at high risk of being the victim of hate crimes, including crimes against the person and property related crimes. This is an inequality which can lead to their becoming homeless.
- 4.5 In assessing whether or not a home is sustainable, in that the tenure is secure and affordable, it was found that female reference person households in the private rented sector are at greater risk of relative poverty. Given the noted absence of data regarding the housing preferences of household reference persons, the Commission considers this a difference worthy of further consideration.



Differences and Inequalities



INEQUALITY:

Single male reference person households are more likely than single female reference person households to present as homeless to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

- 4.6 The Commission's 2007 Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland reported that those who were homeless were disproportionately made up of single reference person households⁴⁹, usually men⁵⁰. A continuation of this inequality was identified through the Commission's analyses of data on homelessness presentations to the NIHE^{51, 52}.
- 4.7 For six consecutive years between 2009/10 and 2014/15, single male reference person households⁵³ accounted for over a third of homeless presentations to the NIHE, whilst single female reference person households accounted for less than a fifth⁵⁴. Similar to single male reference person households, households with dependents⁵⁵ also accounted for a third of those presenting as homeless to the NIHE in each year between 2009/10 and 2014/15⁵⁶.
- 4.8 Utilising NIHE data for 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15⁵⁷, it was found that, over a fifth of single male reference person households presented as homeless to the NIHE in each year between 2012/13 to 2014/15 as a result of a breakdown in sharing or family dispute⁵⁸.

49 According to the statistics provided by the NIHE, a single household contains only one member who is aged 16 to 59 years old.

50 ECNI (2007) [Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

51 Data supplied by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive upon request in May 2015.

52 The identification of single male households as an inequality is derived from a monitoring and recording process whereby households are categorised in the following groups: single households; couple households; family households (likely to include dependants); single parent households; and pensioner households.

53 Single male and single female households include those aged 16-59 years old.

54 The statistics for single males are: 35.1% in 2009/10; 35.6% in 2010/11; 34.5% in 2011/12; 36.0% in 2012/13; 35.9% in 2013/14 and, 35.0% in 2014/15, respectively. The statistics for single females are: 16.9% in 2009/10; 17.5% in 2010/11; 19.1% in 2011/12; 18.9% in 2012/13; 17.9% in 2013/14 and, 18.1% in 2014/15, respectively. Pensioner households for around a tenth, and couples for under five per cent for each year in the time period. The statistics for pensioners are: 11.0% in 2009/10; 10.4% in 2010/11; 10.0% in 2011/12; 9.7% in 2012/13; 10.4% in 2013/14 and, 10.9% in 2014/15, respectively. The statistics for couples are: 4.2% in 2009/10; 4.4% in 2010/11; 4.7% in 2011/12; 4.3% in 2012/13; 4.6% in 2013/14 and, 1.3% in 2014/15, respectively.

55 Households with dependents are made up of: family household (likely to contain dependants); and, single parent households.

56 The statistics for households with dependents are: 32.8% in 2009/10; 32.0% in 2010/11; 31.8% in 2011/12; 34.1% in 2012/13; 34.4% in 2013/14 and, 34.7%, respectively.

57 The NIHE advised the Commission that, due to a change in systems, data was only available for three time points: 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15.

58 The percentages for 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15 were: 22.6%; 23.9%; and, 24.2%, respectively.



- 4.9 Further main reasons given by single male reference person households for presenting as homeless were also similar for each year during the same period: relationship breakdown⁵⁹; no accommodation in Northern Ireland⁶⁰; and, the loss of rented accommodation^{61, 62}.



INEQUALITY:

Trans people are at high risk of being the victim of hate crimes, including crimes against the person and property related crimes, potentially impacting on their ability to secure sustainable housing.

- 4.10 Access to adequate and sustainable housing will be maximised where families and individuals from across the Section 75 categories are able to feel safe in their homes and communities.
- 4.11 McBride's (2013) research⁶³ reported that Trans people are at 'high risk of experiencing discrimination and harassment in their own homes'⁶⁴. Additionally, this research showed that Trans people have been made homeless after coming out as Trans due to threats made towards them or fears for their safety⁶⁵.
- 4.12 Between 2007/08 and 2014/15 a total of 116 incidents with a Transphobic motivation were reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland; 43 of which were recorded as crimes. Of the 43 recorded crimes, 24 were classified as violence against the person offences, and 13 as property offences⁶⁶. During the same time period only two sanction detections were recorded and these were both for violence against the person (one in 2008/09 and one in 2013/14)⁶⁷.

59 The percentages for 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15 were: 13.8%; 12.9%; and, 12.3%, respectively.

60 The percentages for 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15 were: 12.4%; 12.8%; and, 12.2%, respectively.

61 The percentages for 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15 were: 11.9%; 12.0%; and, 11.7%, respectively.

62 These statistics include single male pensioner households. Data supplied by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive upon request in May 2015.

63 Ten young trans people contributed to the empirical research. To put this in context, McBride (2013) estimates that there are 40 to 50 young trans people (aged 25 years old or younger) who live in Northern Ireland. In addition, the research increased its validity and generalisability by consulting other relevant stakeholders in both professional and non-professional capacities.

64 McBride (2013) [Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland](#). Page 23.

65 McBride (2013) [Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland](#). Page 25.

66 Property offences include: theft including domestic or non-domestic burglary; offences against vehicles; theft from the person; and, criminal damage including arson.

67 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).





- 4.13 McBride (2013) cautions that the crime statistics are very likely subject to underreporting as trans people have reported experiencing inappropriate responses from police officers when reporting a crime.⁶⁸ These inappropriate responses, coupled with the low sanction detection rate, result in the Trans community being less willing to report crimes to the police⁶⁹. In McBride's (2013) research, participants believed that inappropriate responses were due to police officers' 'limited awareness and understanding of Trans issues'⁷⁰.
- 4.14 As noted at the outset of this *Statement*, complex relationships often exist across social policy domains that will demand long-term multi-faceted policy interventions across a range of functions of government, and relevant organisations. Efforts to identify key barriers and enablers aligned to the above, as relevant to the provision of adequate, accessible and sustainable housing and communities across Northern Ireland, and in specific areas, may suggest specific interventions to advance equality of opportunity.



DIFFERENCE:

Female reference person households in the private rented sector are at greater risk of relative poverty.

- 4.15 In 2013 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation stated that 'housing costs constitute the most important and most direct impact of housing on poverty and material deprivation'... leading to 'housing cost induced poverty (not poor before housing costs but poor once they are taken into account)⁷¹. In addition, the Foundation believes that by not taking account of housing costs the risk of relative poverty and material deprivation is therefore underestimated^{72, 73, 74}.

68 McBride (2013) [Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland](#).

69 McBride (2013) [Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland](#)

70 McBride (2013) [Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland](#) Page 25.

71 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) [The Links Between Housing and Poverty](#).

72 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) [The Links Between Housing and Poverty](#).

73 In the United Kingdom, the most widely used definition of what constitutes relative poverty is when the household income is less than 60% of the United Kingdom median income for the relevant year. Those who fall below this income are, across Europe, said to be 'at risk of poverty' [Authors emphasis]. The Poverty Site (Date unknown) [Poverty and Inequality in the European Union](#)

74 This Statement takes into account the Joseph Rowntree's advice and considers rates of relative poverty both before and after housing costs have been deducted.





- 4.16 Wallace (2015) utilised Family Resources Survey data (2011/12 data) to explore differences in rates of relative poverty for households with male household reference persons and those with female household reference persons both before and after the deduction of housing costs; this analysis considered all housing sectors^{75, 76}.
- 4.17 Wallace (2015) found that in the *owner-occupied sector*, rates of relative poverty (after housing costs had been considered) lowered, rather than increased, for both male and female reference person households; with male reference person households retaining lower rates of poverty than female reference person households⁷⁷.
- 4.18 When the *social housing sector* was considered slight increases in relative poverty were evidenced for both male and female reference person households⁷⁸. The difference between rates of relative poverty (after housing costs have been considered) for male and female reference person households in the social housing sector was just three percentage points.
- 4.19 However, when Wallace (2015) considered the *private rented sector* she found that relative poverty (after housing costs had been considered) increased by a notably greater proportion for households with a female reference person than for households with a male household reference person; a difference in male and female reference persons households of eight percentage points^{79, 80}.
- 4.20 It is therefore clear that households with a female reference person experience, in each housing sector, greater rates of relative poverty (after housing costs have been considered) than male reference person households. However, it is in the private rented sector that female reference person households are at the greatest risk of relative poverty (after housing costs have been considered).

75 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities' Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#)

76 DSD (2013) [Family Resources Survey Northern Ireland 2011/12](#).

77 For those in homes that were owned outright relative poverty after housing costs were deducted was lower than before housing costs were considered for both male (by 7 percentage points) and female (by 12 percentage points) reference person households. For those in mortgaged properties after housing costs was at the same level as before housing costs: 13% for male reference person households and 16% for female reference person households.

78 For those in social housing, relative poverty after housing costs were deducted was slightly higher than before housing costs were considered for both male (by 3 percentage points) and female (by 6 percentage points) reference person households.

79 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities' Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

80 Percentage point increases were 18 and 10, respectively. The rates of relative poverty before housing costs for male reference person households was 31% compared to 32% for females. After housing costs the rate for male reference person households was 41% compared to 50% for females.





DIFFERENCE:

Female reference person households are more likely to live in rented accommodation, including social housing, than male reference person households.

- 4.21 The Census 2011, shows that a much larger proportion of households with a female reference person lived in rented accommodation compared to those with a male reference person; a difference of 13.5 percentage points⁸¹.
- 4.22 When the type of rented accommodation was considered, slightly under half of those female reference person households who lived in rented accommodation lived in social housing. This was compared to two fifths of male reference person households who lived in rented accommodation⁸².
- 4.23 In addition, the Census 2011 also showed that female reference person households accounted for more than half of those who lived in the social rented sector⁸³.
- 4.24 However, as no evidence is available on the housing preferences of household reference persons, it is not possible from this information alone to conclude if these differences represent an inequality for female reference person households. For example, living in rented accommodation, including social housing, may be a personal preference to owning a home.

81 41.0% of female reference person households compared to 27.5% of male reference person households lived in rented accommodation at the time of the Census 2011.

82 Census 2011 data showed that 48.4% of households with a female reference person lived in social housing compared to 40.1% of households with a male reference person; a difference of 8.3 percentage points.

83 55.0% of those who lived in the social housing sector were female reference person households in 2011.





5 Age

Summary

- 5.1 Housing requirements may often be different for different age groups, for example, housing that may be considered as adequate and sustainable for someone aged under 35 years old may not be so considered for someone aged over 75 years old with age related health problems or mobility issues.
- 5.2 With regards to *access*, households with a younger reference person (those aged under 35 years old) who are in receipt of the Local Housing Allowance, may find it more difficult to obtain private rented homes than households with a reference person aged 35 years old and older. Whilst the private rented sector is important for this age group, changes to the Local Housing Allowance, which meant that those aged under 35 years old are only entitled to the shared accommodation rate, provides a barrier to accessing private rented accommodation. Evidence suggests that many private landlords are now less willing to let to this age group than previously.
- 5.3 In respect to the *adequacy* of housing, households with an older reference person, those aged 60 years old or older, are more likely to live in non-decent homes and homes that require adaptations, than households with reference persons aged under 60 years old. The tenure which contains the largest pool of those households with an older reference person is the owner-occupied sector. It is this sector in which households with older reference persons are most at risk of living in a non-decent home.
- 5.4 It is recognised that difficulties in maintaining a home may be due to age related disability or impairment and that households with an older reference person may also face difficulties in adapting homes to meet their needs. Funding for home adaptations is limited whilst equity release is not a viable option for many households with an older reference person nor does it provide the best solution.





Inequalities



INEQUALITY:

Households with a younger reference person, those aged under 35 years old, who are in receipt of the Local Housing Allowance, find it more difficult to obtain private rented homes than households with a reference person aged 35 years old and older.

- 5.5 Wallace (2015) reported that the private rented sector is important for households with younger reference persons⁸⁴. However, in 2012 changes were made to the Housing Benefit system which affected the Local Housing Allowance⁸⁵ for those aged 25 to 34 years old. This change meant that, from 1 January 2012, those aged 25 to 34 years old were only entitled to a shared accommodation rate⁸⁶. Previous to this only those aged under 25 years old were subject to the shared accommodation rate⁸⁷.
- 5.6 Beatty et al. (2014) report that, since tenants are responsible for making up any shortfall between their Local Housing Allowance and the cost of private rent⁸⁸ many private landlords are less willing to let to this age group than did so previously⁸⁹.
- 5.7 Additionally, Wallace (2015) reported that a barrier for this age group in obtaining private rented homes may be the lack of an effective rent deposit or bond scheme^{90, 91}. While April 2013 saw the introduction of a Tenancy Deposit Scheme in Northern Ireland, pre-existing tenancies (as at 1 April 2013) were not covered⁹² and it thus will take time for the full benefits of the scheme to be realised.

84 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

85 This is a rent assessment scheme for tenants in private rented housing. The allowance received is based upon the rent levels in the area concerned and who the tenant lives with. For more information click [here](#).

86 This means that claimants can only claim the standard rate for a room in shared accommodation. For more information click [here](#).

87 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

88 For more information click [here](#).

89 Beatty, C., Cole, I., Green, S., Kemp, P., Powell, R. and Sanderson, E. (2014). [Monitoring the Impact of recent measures affecting Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowances in the private rented sector in Northern Ireland: Final report](#).

90 These schemes ensure that the tenant receives their deposit on leaving the property, if the terms of the tenancy agreement have been met. This was introduced into Northern Ireland in April 2013. For more information click [here](#).

91 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

92 NI Direct. [Tenancy Deposit Scheme](#).





INEQUALITY:

Households with an older reference person, those aged 60 years old or older, are more likely to live in non-decent homes.

- 5.8 The 2011 House Conditions Survey, showed that, in 2011, 7.7% of household reference persons lived in non-decent homes⁹³. Of those living in non-decent homes, households with a reference person aged 60 years old or older accounted for nearly half⁹⁴.
- 5.9 This equates to over a tenth of household reference persons aged 60 years old or older living in non-decent homes in 2011, nearly double the proportion of household reference persons aged 17-59 years old who lived in non-decent homes⁹⁵.
- 5.10 Whilst an analysis by tenure type was not possible for the 2011 House Conditions Survey⁹⁶, Wallace (2015) found, in her analysis of the 2009 House Conditions Survey that, in 2009, household reference persons aged 60 years old or older who lived in private rented sector housing were twice as likely to live in non-decent homes than those of the same age who lived in social housing^{97, 98}.
- 5.11 Wallace (2015) reported that, since owner-occupation is the dominant tenure for those aged 60 years old or older, it is this sector which contains the largest pool of those aged 60 years old or older in non-decent homes. According to Wallace (2015) this is estimated to be in the region of 32,000 homeowners⁹⁹.
- 5.12 Households with a household reference person aged 60 years old or older¹⁰⁰ accounted for around a tenth of homelessness presentations to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) during 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15¹⁰¹.

93 NIHE (2013) [2011 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

94 49.9% NIHE (2013) [2011 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

95 The [2011 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#) found that 11.3% of those aged 60 years old or older lived in non-decent homes, compared to 5.9% of those aged 17 -59 years old. Caution may need to be applied here as the corresponding numbers were deemed low for those aged 17-24 years old and those aged 25-39 years old.

96 Due to small sample sizes.

97 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

98 The [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#) reports rates for those aged 60 years old or older of: 13.7% for social housing sector; 18.1% for the owner-occupied sector; and, 27.7% for the private rented sector.

99 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

100 Those aged 60 years and older are considered pensioners in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive statistics.

101 The percentage were: 9.7%; 10.4%; and, 10.9%, respectively.





However, when accommodation was considered as unreasonable,¹⁰² households with older household reference persons accounted for half of those households who presented as homeless during the same time periods^{103, 104}.

- 5.13 In 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15, around three quarters of households with a household reference person aged 60 years old or older who presented as homeless to the NIHE due to accommodation being unreasonable were accepted as having Full Duty Applicant Status¹⁰⁵ (to be provided temporary and/or permanent accommodation).
- 5.14 The NIHE's Homelessness Strategy (2012) reports the likelihood of living in non-decent homes is 'due principally to the ageing population and difficulties older people have in continuing to maintain properties'¹⁰⁶. Wallace (2015) reported that difficulties maintaining homes may be due to a disability or impairment that is age related¹⁰⁷.



INEQUALITY:

Older people, those aged 60 years old or older, are more likely to live in homes that require adaptations.

- 5.15 Wallace (2015) reported that the age of the occupant, and their likelihood of living in non-decent homes, has long been linked to homes where people may require adaptations¹⁰⁸.
- 5.16 Research by the NIHE (2013) into the housing aspirations of people as they age has shown that the measures deemed most important to assist people to stay in their own homes as they age are: practical help with repairs; advice/information on available support; assistance with day to day household tasks; and, grants to help with repairs / welfare adaptations¹⁰⁹.

102 The NIHE define unreasonable accommodation as being unsuitable to a person's needs and the onus is on the person to demonstrate that their house cannot be adapted to meet their needs. See: <http://www.housingadviceni.org/homelessness-test> for details.

103 The percentages were: 55.5%; 53.8%; and, 52.0%, respectively.

104 Data is only available for the years: 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15.

105 The percentages were: 72.5%; 73.0%; and, 71.4%, respectively.

106 Housing Executive (2012) [Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017](#). Page 12.

107 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

108 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

109 NIHE (2013) [Research on the Future Housing Aspirations of Older People](#).





- 5.17 For those who wish to remain in their own homes rather than enter residential care, Oldman (2014) reported the average cost of a home adaptation to be in the region of £6,000 – much lower than the average cost of residential care (£26,000)¹¹⁰.
- 5.18 Despite this lower relative cost, funding for home adaptations, for those wishing to remain in their own homes, is limited and is a barrier to older people living in homes that are fit for purpose. Only the disabled facilities grant is available for home adaptations, but this grant is dependent upon someone in the home having a disability and a recommendation by an Occupational Therapist that the work be undertaken¹¹¹.
- 5.19 Wallace (2015) reported that equity release products have been suggested as a solution to housing problems, such as home adaptations or contributing toward care costs, for those in older age¹¹². However, Age UK¹¹³ report that, for many older people, equity release is not a viable option nor does it provide the best solution. Age UK call for improvements to be made to the availability of independent information and advice for older people in this area¹¹⁴.

110 Oldman, J. (2014) [Housing in later life](#).

111 Disabled Facilities Grant information can be found at: www.nihe.gov.uk

112 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

113 Age UK works closely with their partners: Age Scotland; Age NI; Age Cymru; including local Age UKs and older people's groups.

114 Oldman, J. (2014) [Housing in later life](#).





6 Religion / Community Background

Summary

- 6.1 **Catholic household reference person applicants for social housing continue to experience the longest waiting times.** An examination of Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) waiting list time data for social housing for the period 2004 to 2009 and for 2013/14 shows that Catholic household reference person applicants experienced the longest median waiting times for social housing at the point of allocation in Northern Ireland as a whole.
- 6.2 A comparison of aggregated figures for 2004 - 2009 with data for the year 2013/14 showed that while median waiting times had increased for all groups, more substantive increases were noted for households with a 'Catholic' or 'Other' religion household reference person.
- 6.3 Aligned to this, Wallace (2015) found that compared to households with a Protestant reference person, both Catholic and Other religion reference person households consistently waited longer to be allocated social housing in each of eight areas she identified as experiencing most social housing shortage: north, east, west and south Belfast; Lisburn Dairyfarm; Ballymena; Coleraine; and Newry.
- 6.4 Although Northern Ireland saw a decrease in residential segregation, across all sectors, between 2001 and 2011, the existence of segregated residential housing patterns can have the effect of fragmenting and limiting the operation of wider housing markets. This adds complexities when stock availability (supply side factors) differ from individual housing needs and preferences (demand side factors) - meaning that lack of stock relative to demand for social housing in sometimes narrowly defined geographical areas may not easily be met by excess supply in other nearby areas.





Inequalities



KEY INEQUALITY:

Catholic household reference person applicants for social housing continue to experience the longest waiting times.

Waiting Times - Social Housing Across Northern Ireland

- 6.5 In broad terms, after an applicant submits an application for social housing in Northern Ireland, points are allocated to each applicant according to their needs¹¹⁵, as per the 'Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme'¹¹⁶. As accommodation suitable to particular needs becomes available in their chosen area(s), applicants are then considered in ranked order (according to their total number of allocated points).
- 6.6 The NIHE waiting list time data for the period 2004 to 2009¹¹⁷ presents median waiting list times at the point of allocation for household reference persons who are: Catholics, Protestants and those of Other and unknown religions¹¹⁸. From this data it is evident that, between 2004 and 2009, Catholic household reference persons waited the longest to be allocated social housing¹¹⁹.
- 6.7 An analysis of 2013/14 data revealed that Catholic household reference person applicants for social housing continued to experience the longest waiting times at the point of allocation in Northern Ireland as a whole. This was when waiting times for Catholic household reference persons were compared to household reference persons that were: Protestants; Mixed; Other; and, No religions^{120, 121}.

115 Points are awarded to under four main categories: intimidation; insecurity of tenure (includes homelessness); housing conditions; and, health and social wellbeing. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (nd) '[How We Allocate Accommodation: The Housing Selection Scheme](#)'.

116 NIHE (2014) [Housing Selection Scheme Rules](#).

117 This is based upon aggregated data between 2004 to 2009.

118 An Other religion is a religion that does not fall into one of the following groups: Catholic; Protestant; Mixed; None; Refused; or, Unknown. Unknown households are not included in this analysis.

119 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

120 Catholic applicants waited an average of 8 months between 2004 to 2009 and an average of 15 months in 2013/14. Whilst applicants of an Unknown religion waited slightly longer (17 months) during 2013/14 the composition of this group is unknown and is likely to be made up of multiple religious backgrounds.

121 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).



- 6.8 With regards to changes over time - waiting times at the point of allocation for NIHE social housing in 2013/14 had increased for Catholic, Protestant and those of Other religion household reference persons compared to aggregated figures for 2004 -2009¹²².
- 6.9 However, for household reference persons who were Catholics and those of Other religions, by 2013/14 the median waiting time at the point of allocation had roughly doubled compared to aggregated figures for 2004 -2009; while for households with Protestant reference persons the waiting times had showed a more modest increase¹²³.

Waiting Times in Eight Areas with Most Social Housing Shortage

- 6.10 Wallace (2015)¹²⁴ identified eight areas that she considered to experience the greatest amounts of social housing shortage in Northern Ireland^{125, 126}: north, east, west and south Belfast; Lisburn Dairyfarm; Ballymena; Coleraine; and Newry. She then investigated data on waiting times for Catholics, Protestants and Other religions in each of these eight areas¹²⁷.
- 6.11 Wallace (2015) found that in 2013/14, when compared to households with a Protestant reference person, households with a Catholic and those of 'Other' religion reference person consistently waited longer to be allocated social housing in each of the eight areas she identified as experiencing most social housing shortage¹²⁸. Catholic household reference persons waited the longest¹²⁹ of the three religious groups in: east Belfast (15 months); west Belfast (28 months); south Belfast (27 months); and, Ballymena (22 months)¹³⁰, whilst those of 'Other religion' waited the longest in: north Belfast (25 months); Ballymena (22 months)¹³¹, Coleraine (29 months); and, Newry (22.5 months)¹³².

122 Between 2004 to 2009 and 2013/14 median waiting list times at the point of allocation for Catholic household reference persons increased from 8.0 to 15.0 months, respectively; the increases for Other religion household reference persons was from 6.0 to 13.0 months, respectively; compared to an increase from 6.0 to 9.0 months for Protestant household reference persons.

123 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

124 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

125 The areas defined are according to District Offices. For example, north Belfast contains District Office numbers 4 and 6. Applicants however cannot apply to these areas as a whole, but rather must apply in either one General Housing Area (GHA) or two Common Landlord Areas (CLAs). There are 300 General Housing Areas and 800 Common Landlord Areas in Northern Ireland.

126 Areas of shortage are identified by Wallace (2015) using the Strategic Guidelines Target (SGT) and the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP). A shortage is a shortfall in absolute numbers of 50 units or more; calculated by the target figure in the SGT minus the units forecast to be built in the SHDP. In this assessment there is no differentiation between new builds that 'add stock' and those that 'replace stock'.

127 Wallace investigated waiting list times for those in housing stress.

128 It should be noted here that there were no Protestant applicants to social housing in Lisburn Dairyfarm during 2013/14.

129 Catholic applicants in housing stress also waited the longest in Lisburn Dairyfarm. However, too few applicants from any of the other religions were identified to enable a robust comparison to other religious backgrounds to be made for this geographical area.

130 Applicants of an Other religion also waited the longest in Ballymena: 22 months.

131 Joint longest with Catholic applicants

132 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).



Key Barriers and Enablers

- 6.12 With regards to housing supply, Gibb et al. (2013) note that the supply of new social housing faces budgetary constraints across all areas of the United Kingdom which may reduce new supply and compound increased demand¹³³. With regards to housing demand, residential preferences can also be driven by a sense of belonging to the local area¹³⁴ or by feeling safe in a neighbourhood¹³⁵.
- 6.13 In Northern Ireland it is generally accepted that the ‘segregation of communities is common... even where there aren’t any Peace Lines’^{136, 137}. The Together: Building a United Community Strategy (2013) states that *‘the concept of interfaces and contested spaces is by no means confined to housing estates, working class areas or rural locations’*, instead it is also observed in *‘some town centres [which] have become divided or contested’*¹³⁸.
- 6.14 Data from the 2001 Census, analysed by Shuttleworth and Lloyd (2007), showed that the majority (91%) of the NIHE’s estates in Belfast were highly polarised¹³⁹. In later research Shuttleworth and Lloyd (2009) considered housing estates outside Belfast and found that *‘between a third and a half of people and households ... live[d] in estates that could be considered as highly polarised’*¹⁴⁰.
- 6.15 Although residential segregation persists in Northern Ireland, both Shuttleworth and Lloyd (2013)¹⁴¹ and Nolan (2014)¹⁴² note that residential segregation has declined since 2001. Nolan (2014) reported that, since 2001, segregation in housing¹⁴³ experienced a *‘steep decline in the proportion of “single identity” wards’*¹⁴⁴. Nolan (2014) however cautions that assumptions cannot be made that mixed local government wards are actually integrated, highlighting that we know little about how much sharing goes on in mixed communities¹⁴⁵.

133 Gibb, K., Leishman, C., Young, G. and O’Sullivan, T. (2013) [The Impact of the Housing Benefit Reforms on the Social Rented Sector](#).

134 Young, G., O’Sullivan, T., Redmond, D., Blair, N., Cave, S. and Gibb, K. (2012) [Crossing Borders](#).

135 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

136 This was the view of 78% of the general public in Northern Ireland in 2012.

137 Byrne, J., Gormley Heenan, C. and Robinson, G. (2012) [Attitudes to Peace Walls](#).

138 OFMdFM (2013) [Together: Building a United Community](#). Page 55.

139 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2007) [Mapping Segregation on Belfast NIHE Estates](#).

140 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2009) [Mapping Segregation in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Housing Executive Estates Outside Belfast](#). Page 10.

141 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2013) [Moving apart or moving together? A snapshot of residential segregation from the 2011 Census](#).

142 Nolan, P. (2014) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Three](#).

143 Census 2011, Analysed at Ward level.

144 Nolan, P. (2014) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Three](#). Page 115.

145 Nolan, P. (2014) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Three](#).



- 6.16 The existence of segregated residential housing patterns can have the effect of fragmenting and limiting the operation of wider housing markets. This adds complexities when stock availability (supply side factors) differ from individual housing needs and preferences (demand side factors) - meaning that lack of stock relative to demand for social housing in sometimes narrowly defined geographical areas may not easily be met by excess supply in other nearby areas¹⁴⁶.
- 6.17 For example, Nolan (2013) reported that, although there is a huge demand for additional housing for Catholics in north Belfast¹⁴⁷, the properties left vacant by Protestants moving out of the area cannot be filled by Catholic applicants as the “*peace line*” is *not transgressed*¹⁴⁸. This echoes the 2004 finding of the Select Committee on Northern Ireland who noted, that when viewing north Belfast as having a Catholic side and a Protestant side, there is ‘*a recognition that... there is intense pressure for more housing on the Catholic side*’¹⁴⁹ and the 2012 Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) report which calculated that the Protestant side of north Belfast has a surplus of social housing, whilst on the Catholic side large deficits in stock are evident¹⁵⁰.
- 6.18 That there is ‘*intense pressure for more housing on the Catholic side*’¹⁵¹ was also evidenced in the Department for Social Development’s (DSD) 2010 Equality Impact Assessment for Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park¹⁵². This assessment found that the majority of housing need in north Belfast was perceived to be Catholic need¹⁵³. Wallace 2015 noted that, in north Belfast, households with a ‘Catholic’ or ‘Other’ religion reference person consistently waited longer¹⁵⁴ than Protestants to be allocated social housing¹⁵⁵. Wallace also highlighted that ‘*dual markets operate in close proximity and yet properties may not be substitutable for each other*’¹⁵⁶.

146 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

147 North Belfast contains District Office numbers 4 and 6. Applicants however cannot apply to these areas as a whole, but rather must apply in either one General Housing Area (GHA) or two Common Landlord Areas (CLAs).

148 Nolan, P. (2013) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Two](#). Page 115.

149 House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, (2004), [Social Housing Provision in Northern Ireland](#) Sixth Report of 2003-04 Session, Volume 1, HC 493-1, para 21.

150 PPR (2012) [Equality Can't Wait](#). The Right to Housing Campaign.

151 House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, (2004), [Social Housing Provision in Northern Ireland](#) Sixth Report of 2003-04 Session, Volume 1, HC 493-1, para 21.

152 DSD (2010) [Final Equality Impact Assessment Report which has informed a revised layout for the Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park. Draft Masterplan](#).

153 94.8% of social housing need was reported to be on the Catholic side. DSD (2010) [Final Equality Impact Assessment Report which has informed a revised layout for the Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park. Draft Masterplan](#).

154 In 2013/14 median waiting list times at the point of allocation in north Belfast for Catholic household reference persons was 15.0 months; for Protestant household reference persons it was 8.0 months; and, for Other religion household reference persons it was 25.0 months.

155 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

156 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#). Page 83.





- 6.19 While the Housing Selection Scheme is focussed on assessing and addressing objective housing need, ranking applications so as to prioritise housing offers to those with the highest assessed objective housing need, it is also the case that the cumulative effect of the range of supply and demand factors, including those described above, is such that across Northern Ireland as a whole, Catholic household reference persons continue to experience the longest waiting times for social housing.
- 6.20 In working to maximise and secure the accessibility of social housing to those in objective need in localised areas, and across Northern Ireland as a whole, there are a range of factors to be considered. For example, on the supply side, research by Darby and Knox (2004) has shown that the acquisition of land may be viewed differently by those of different backgrounds. One group may see the acquisition of land as meeting housing need whilst another group might see it as encroaching upon their community¹⁵⁷. On the demand side, the Together: Building a United Community Strategy (2013) noted that *'when people are given the choice, the vast majority will choose to go on a waiting list in a single identity area in keeping with their own perceived identity'*¹⁵⁸.
- 6.21 Further, whilst most respondents to the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2014) would prefer much or a bit more mixing¹⁵⁹ between people of different religions in the areas where people live, a quarter of respondents would prefer to live in a neighbourhood where everyone is of the same religion (whilst there is little difference between Catholics and Protestants in this belief, the proportion of those aged 18-24 years old who held this view was higher than for those aged 25 years and older)^{160, 161}.
- 6.22 The range of barriers noted above suggests that effectively addressing objective need in the immediate and longer term is likely to be maximised by taking a range of steps to address both supply and demand factors. For example, on the supply side - how appropriate stock can best be made available to meet objective housing need. On the demand side - taking key steps which might widen areas of housing preference, thereby expanding housing markets and increasing the range of opportunities available for objective housing need to be met.

157 Darby, J. And Knox, C. (2004) ['A Shared Future': A Consultation Paper on Improving Relations in Northern Ireland](#).

158 OFMdfM (2013) [Together: Building a United Community](#). Page 71.

159 45% would prefer much more mixing and 33% a bit more mixing.

160 Proportions are: 40% for 18-24 year olds; 24% for 25-34 year olds; 25% for 35-44 year olds; 21% for 45-54 year olds; 19% for 55-64 year olds; and, 24% for those aged 65 years old or older.

161 ARK (2014) [Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey](#).



7 Political Opinion

- 7.1 Whilst Section 75 determines political opinion as a separate equality ground there is an absence of literature or data in this area with regard to housing. Also, since religion, community background and political opinion are often conflated in the research literature any inequalities that relate to solely political opinion are not discernible¹⁶².
- 7.2 Available data does not allow for findings to be made in respect to political opinion as currently no data is collected on this topic with regard to the accessibility, adequacy or sustainability of housing.
- 7.3 The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) does however collect data on those presenting as homeless due to the following forms of intimidation: anti-social behaviour; paramilitary; racial; sectarian; and, sexual orientation.
- 7.4 From this data, it can be found that paramilitary intimidation accounted for the majority of those presenting as homeless due to intimidation to the NIHE in 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15^{163, 164}. However, the data does not report whether the intimidation was carried out by someone from the same or another political background; in addition, the specific motivations of the intimidation are also not known.
- 7.5 Additionally, the Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED)¹⁶⁵ provides for a private home to be bought from the owner by the NIHE, so the owner may move and escape serious intimidation. However, data from this scheme does not apply solely to those types of intimidation related to political opinion; and again data on the motivation and perpetrator are not reported. Additionally, the numbers making use of the scheme are low; the NIHE purchased just 24 dwellings during 2012/13¹⁶⁶.
- 7.6 Therefore, no inequalities with regard to political opinion were robustly identifiable for inclusion in this *Statement*.

162 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

163 The respective percentages were: 65.9%; 69.8%; and, 73.5%. Data supplied by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive upon request in July 2015.

164 Only data for the years 2012/13; 2013/14; and, 2014/15 was available.

165 For more information see [Housing Rights: Help for intimidated people \(retrieved October 2016\)](#).

166 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).





8 Ethnicity

Summary

- 8.1 In respect to access to housing a key inequality is that **access to appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of Irish Travellers is limited.**
- 8.2 The Travellers Needs Assessments (2002, 2008, 2014) record that around one-fifth to one-third of all Irish Traveller households travelled. Further, those who travel are spread across a range of accommodation types and tenures.
- 8.3 The provision of Traveller accommodation must therefore be such that it continues to cater for those with a nomadic lifestyle. As noted in Wallace (2015), for some Irish Travellers, ‘bricks and mortar’/ ‘settled’ accommodation may be inappropriate where it does not accord with their nomadic lifestyle.
- 8.4 Whilst the NIHE Traveller Needs Assessment (2015) identified three council areas in 2014 that presented the most need for Traveller accommodation, the planning data supplied by the NIHE shows that, of the eight applications lodged between 2007 and 2015, none were in two (Belfast or Dungannon) of the three areas of identified need. A total of six of the eight applications were however in one of the areas of most need - the Craigavon area.
- 8.5 Additionally, the 2010 All Ireland Traveller Health Study reported poor housing conditions for Irish Travellers on sites. The Commission has however not been able to identify up-to-date information with regards to the general levels of adequacy of specific types of sites. Consideration should therefore be given to the extent to which such factors persist and any prevalence within certain types of accommodation and/or tenures etc.
- 8.6 Adequacy was also an issue for migrant workers; it was found that **migrant workers are vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation¹⁶⁷ with poor conditions and overcrowding.** Allamby et al. (2011) found that migrant workers have little general understanding of their rights and entitlements which provides a barrier to attaining adequate accommodation.

¹⁶⁷ Accommodation that is provided as a part of a person's continued employment.





- 8.7 A further inequality with respect to the adequacy of housing was found where, minority ethnic people, especially Roma, Irish Travellers, Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups, respectively, experience overcrowding at the household level more often than the general population and White people. Irish Travellers, Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups were each two to three times more likely than the general population or people from the White ethnic group, to experience overcrowding.
- 8.8 With regards to sustainable housing and communities, **the homes of minority ethnic people, and migrant groups may be vulnerable to racial attacks.** Whilst the number of 'criminal damage to a dwelling crimes' that had a racist motivation experienced a year on year decrease between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the most recent data (from 2013/14 to 2015/16) showed an increased number of incidences of criminal damage compared to 2012/13.
- 8.9 A study by McVeigh (2013) found that whilst good relationships between the Police Service of Northern Ireland and people from minority ethnic groups do exist, poor responses from frontline police, who failed to show understanding of the impact of harassment, were also presenting a barrier to those from minority ethnic groups when reporting such crimes.

Inequalities



KEY INEQUALITY:

Access to appropriate accommodation for Irish Travellers is limited.

- 8.10 The Travellers Needs Assessments (2002, 2008, 2014)¹⁶⁸ record that around one-fifth to one-third of all Irish Traveller households travelled at the time of the assessment. The provision of Traveller accommodation must therefore be such that it continues to cater for those with a nomadic lifestyle.
- 8.11 The most recent (2014) data from the Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments suggests¹⁶⁹ that, relative to 2008, proportionally more Travellers are now residing in

168 In 2014, 18% (69 out of 384 respondents) of Traveller households travelled. In 2002 - 20% ([62 out of 316 respondents](#)) and in 2008 - 29% ([130 out of 449 respondents](#)) of respondents said that they travelled. See: NIHE Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessments (2002; 2008; 2015).

169 Given the numbers of respondents involved, caution must be taken with interpretation.



'settled' accommodation^{170,171}; with potential decreases¹⁷² in the proportion of Travellers living in a 'mobile caravan', 'chalet' or 'trailer'. However, those who travelled were spread across a range of accommodation types and tenures^{173,174}.

- 8.12 Accommodation provisions for Travellers must thus be such that they facilitate travelling for those that wish it. As noted in Wallace (2015), for some Irish Travellers 'bricks and mortar' / 'settled' accommodation may be inappropriate where it does not accord with their nomadic lifestyle¹⁷⁵.
- 8.13 In 2007¹⁷⁶, the Commission highlighted a *'lack of adequate housing and accommodation for Travellers'* as a key inequality. In 2009, in research conducted for the Commission, the Chartered Institute for Housing and the University of Ulster expressed its concerns regarding the *'severe undersupply of decent, culturally sensitive accommodation for Travellers, which provides meaningful choice for households regarding their way of life'*.¹⁷⁷
- 8.14 Data from the NIHE with regard to the number of planning applications the NIHE made for Traveller sites during 2007 to 2015 showed that, of eight planning applications lodged within the time period: three were granted permission^{178, 179}; two were refused permission (one of which had previously been granted)¹⁸⁰; the land was withdrawn by the owner for two applications; and, the Department for Social Development asked the NIHE to withdraw one application¹⁸¹.

170 'Settled accommodation' refers to the following categories listed in Table 18 of the 2008 and Table 20 of the 2014 Needs Assessments: 'Social Housing'; 'Grouped Accommodation'; 'Privately Owned'; and, 'Privately Rented'.

171 In 2014 71% (n=342) of Irish Traveller respondents to the 2014 Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment lived in 'settled accommodation', an increase from the 2008 figure of 59% (n=314) of Irish Traveller respondents. See: NIHE Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessments (2008; 2015)

172 In 2014 28% (n=133) of Irish Traveller respondents lived in a 'mobile caravan', 'chalet' or 'trailer'; lower, but broadly similar to the 2008 figure of 35% (n=188) of Irish Traveller respondents to the 2008 Travellers' Accommodation Needs Assessment lived in a 'mobile caravan', 'chalet' or 'trailer'. See: NIHE Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessments (2002; 2008; 2015)

173 In 2014, of those who travelled, 30% (21 out of 69 respondents) lived in social housing; 20% (14 out of 69 respondents) lived in privately rented or owned accommodation; 16% (11 out of 69 respondents) lived on serviced and transit sites; and 13% (9 out of 69 respondents) lived in grouped accommodation. NIHE (2015) [Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2014](#).

174 '**Grouped Accommodation**' refers to residential housing developments with additional facilities and amenities specifically designed to accommodate extended families of Travellers on a permanent basis. 'Serviced sites' are managed accommodation where Traveller families have a permanent base to park their caravan or erect timber framed sectional buildings). '**Transit Sites**' are permanently operational sites that provide temporary accommodation for Travellers; '**Tolerated**' / '**Co-operated**' and '**Side-Of-The-Road**' sites are unauthorised. The Co-Operation Policy, managed by the NIHE allows camping on a temporary basis. Chartered Institute of Housing/University of Ulster (2009) [Outlining minimum standards in Traveller accommodation](#). Published by ECNI.

175 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

176 Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2007), [Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#)

177 Chartered Institute of Housing/University of Ulster (2009) [Outlining minimum standards in Traveller accommodation](#). Published by ECNI. Page 9.

178 Of the three: one was a site extension made in 2008; one was for 12 new pitched service sites made in 2011; and, a further application to extend a site was also made in 2011.

179 All three applications were in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area.

180 The NIHE advised that it had appealed the application that was at first accepted, then later withdrawn; this appeal was dismissed on 4 October 2016.

181 NIHE (24 August 2016) Email Communication in response to ECNI request.



- 8.15 Whilst the NIHE Traveller Needs Assessment (2015)¹⁸² identified three council areas in 2014 that presented the most need for Traveller accommodation (Belfast¹⁸³; Dungannon¹⁸⁴; and, Craigavon¹⁸⁵) the planning data supplied by the NIHE shows that, of the eight applications, none were in two (the Belfast or Dungannon council areas) of the three areas of identified need. A total of six of the eight applications (75%) were however in one of the areas of most need - the Craigavon area¹⁸⁶.
- 8.16 The Chartered Institute of Housing and the University of Ulster (2009) set out that *'decisions at Council level regarding planning permission remained a key stumbling block to site development'*¹⁸⁷. There was also considered to be *'a fragmented approach to the provision of accommodation for Travellers across a range of departments and agencies, which had strongly influenced the effectiveness of measures to meet housing need'*¹⁸⁸. Consideration should be given to whether such factors persist and/or any wider barriers to ensuring the full and effective provision of appropriate accommodation.
- 8.17 With regards to the *adequacy* of provision, the 2014 Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2014 conveyed that around two-thirds of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied¹⁸⁹ with their current accommodation¹⁹⁰, an increase from 2008 figures¹⁹¹. However, around one quarter of respondents reported that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their current accommodation (down however from almost two-fifths in 2008)¹⁹². The top two reasons for dissatisfaction in 2014 were 'poor living conditions' and that respondents who were dissatisfied would 'prefer to live in alternative accommodation'^{193 194}.

182 NIHE (2015) [Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2014](#).

183 Now the Belfast District Council areas.

184 Now the Mid Ulster District Council areas.

185 The Craigavon area is now part of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

186 The other two applications were in: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; and, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

187 Chartered Institute of Housing/University of Ulster (2009) [Outlining minimum standards in Traveller accommodation](#). Published by ECNI. Page 10.

188 Chartered Institute of Housing/University of Ulster (2009) [Outlining minimum standards in Traveller accommodation](#). Published by ECNI. Page 45.

189 In the 2014 Assessment 68% (260 out of 384 respondents) of respondents were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their current accommodation

190 The Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, 2014 does not specify which type of accommodation the person lived in and was therefore happy with.

191 In the 2008 Assessment 52% (235 out of 449 respondents) of respondents were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their current accommodation.

192 In the 2008 Assessment 37% (166 out of 449 respondents) of respondents were either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their current accommodation, this was compared to 23% (87 out of 384 respondents) in 2014.

193 In 2014, of those 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied', 33% (29 out of 87 respondents) cited 'poor living conditions' in their current accommodation, 23% (20 out of 87 respondents) would 'prefer to live in alternative accommodation', whilst 16% (14 out of 87 respondents) cited that the 'accommodation [was] too small'.

194 In 2008, of those 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied', 55% (91 out of 166 respondents) cited 'poor living conditions' in their current accommodation, whilst 16% (26 out of 166 respondents) cited 'overcrowding'.





- 8.18 The 2010 All Ireland Traveller Health Study¹⁹⁵ reported poor housing conditions for Irish Travellers on sites. It found that nearly a quarter¹⁹⁶ of Irish Travellers in Northern Ireland lived in a trailer, mobile home, caravan or chalet. Of these, nearly a third did not have running water¹⁹⁷ and nearly a fifth¹⁹⁸ never had their rubbish collected¹⁹⁹. In addition, problems of flooding, sewage, damp and water ingress were reported²⁰⁰.
- 8.19 In 2017, the NIHE confirmed that all sites under its management have individual electricity supplies, running water and waste removal provision; that it conducts regular inspections of sites; and that it has a response maintenance regime in place that is akin to their services for mainstream social housing²⁰¹. Beyond the 2010 research noted above, the Commission has not been able to identify up-to-date information with regards to the general levels of adequacy of specific types of sites - including for those beyond the management of the NIHE. Consideration should be given to the extent to which such factors persist and any prevalence within certain types of accommodation and/or tenures etc.



KEY INEQUALITY:

The homes of minority ethnic people and migrant groups may be vulnerable to racial attacks.

- 8.20 Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime Statistics (2014)²⁰² show that while the number of 'criminal damage to a dwelling crimes' that had a racist motivation²⁰³ experienced a year on year decrease between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the most recent data (from 2013/14 to 2015/16) showed an increased number of incidences of criminal damage compared to 2012/13²⁰⁴.

195 Abdella, S. (with 24 others) (2010) [Our Geels: All Ireland Traveller Health Study. Technical Report 1: Health Survey Findings.](#)

196 23.8%

197 31.8%

198 17.2%

199 Abdella, S. (with 24 others) (2010) [Our Geels: All Ireland Traveller Health Study. Technical Report 1: Health Survey Findings.](#)

200 Abdella, S. (with 24 others) (2010) [Our Geels: All Ireland Traveller Health Study. Technical Report 1: Health Survey Findings.](#)

201 NIHE (February, 2017), Written correspondence.

202 'Recorded crime data are based on an aggregated count of each crime within the notifiable offence list'. PSNI (2014) [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland.](#)

203 The definition of a racist motivated crime includes 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. A racial group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins' [PSNI \(2015\) Incidents with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland: Quarterly Update to 30 September 2015.](#)

204 Increase was 65 crimes; from 110 crimes in 2012/13 to 175 crimes in 2013/14, 258 crimes in 2014/15 and 197 crimes in 2015/16. PSNI (2016) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2015/16.](#)



- 8.21 Whilst a study by McVeigh (2013) found that good relationships between the Police Service of Northern Ireland and people from minority ethnic groups do exist, poor responses from frontline police, who failed to show an understanding of the impact of harassment, were also presenting a barrier to those from minority ethnic groups when reporting such crimes^{205, 206}.
- 8.22 Additionally, whilst research indicates that minority ethnic and migrant groups are not interested in becoming involved in sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland²⁰⁷, Shimada (2010) found that they are nonetheless impacted by the challenges of navigating contested space^{208, 209}.
- 8.23 Wallace (2015) argues that this has implications with regard to their housing choices and experiences²¹⁰. Access to adequate and sustainable accommodation will clearly be maximised where families and individuals from across the Section 75 categories are able to feel safe in their homes and communities.



KEY INEQUALITY:

Migrant workers are vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation²¹¹ with poor conditions and overcrowding.

- 8.24 The Commission highlighted this as an inequality in its 2007 Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland where it reported that migrant workers are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination in housing. The Commission indicated that tying accommodation to employment creates the conditions in which exploitation is probable²¹².
- 8.25 Allamby et al. (2011) reported that for migrant workers in Northern Ireland, 'work and accommodation are often linked, [where] many cannot leave their job as this would also render them homeless, creating a vicious circle of working long hours and living in poor conditions'²¹³. This accommodation can also be expensive, overcrowded, excessively controlled by landlords, and unsuitable for children²¹⁴.

205 McVeigh, R. (2013) [Race and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland](#).

206 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

207 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

208 Shimada, L.D. (2010) [Transforming Earth and Fire: New Narratives of Identity and Place in Northern Ireland Peace Process](#).

209 Bell et al. (2010) define contested space as a 'situation where there is tension over access to public space in a largely segregated community'. Bell, J., Jarman, N. and Harvey, B. (2010) [Beyond Belfast: Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings](#).

210 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

211 Accommodation that is provided as a part of a person's continued employment.

212 ECNI (2007) [Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

213 Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) [Forced Labour in Northern Ireland: Exploiting vulnerability](#). Page 22.

214 Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) [Forced Labour in Northern Ireland: Exploiting vulnerability](#).



- 8.26 In addition, Allamby et al., (2011) report that migrant workers in tied accommodation have little general understanding of their rights and entitlements, and they lack security of tenure since their home is dependent upon their employment²¹⁵.



INEQUALITY:

Minority ethnic people, especially Roma, Irish Travellers, Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups, respectively, experience overcrowding more often than the general population and White people.

- 8.27 According to the Northern Ireland Census 2011, around a tenth of the general population experienced overcrowding in 2011; there was little difference between rates of overcrowding for the general²¹⁶ and White populations²¹⁷.
- 8.28 Perry (2012) reported that, in the United Kingdom, ‘overcrowded or unsuitable private lettings include the use of attics, shipping containers and garden sheds as accommodation’²¹⁸. Additionally, Perry (2012) cites that rooms can be used in shifts, where at the extreme end of the spectrum, shift workers take turns to sleep in a bed²¹⁹. Although Perry’s (2012) research refers to the UK as a whole, no evidence specific to Northern Ireland was found and so some caution must be applied in applying these findings directly to a Northern Ireland specific context²²⁰.
- 8.29 Data from the 2011 Census in Northern Ireland shows that Irish Travellers, Asian, Black and Other²²¹ ethnic groups were two to three times more likely than the general population or people from the White ethnic group²²², to experience overcrowding²²³.

215 Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) [Forced Labour in Northern Ireland: Exploiting vulnerability](#).

216 The general population includes all ethnic groups.

217 Census Table DC2403NI: Tenure by occupancy rating (rooms) by ethnic group shows that 9.5% of the general population and 9.3% of the white population (excluding Irish Travellers) experienced overcrowding in 2011.

218 Perry, J. (2012) [UK migrants and the private rented sector. A policy and practice report from the Housing and Migration Network](#). Page 17.

219 Perry, J. (2012) [UK migrants and the private rented sector. A policy and practice report from the Housing and Migration Network](#). Page 18.

220 Perry, J. (2012) [UK migrants and the private rented sector. A policy and practice report from the Housing and Migration Network](#).

221 The respected percentages are: 29.7%; 24.3%; 29.7%; and, 18.9%.

222 Excluding Irish Travellers.

223 Census Table DC2403NI: Tenure by occupancy rating (rooms) by ethnic group.





- 8.30 When only owner-occupied homes were considered Irish Travellers were around five times more likely, and Asian and Black ethnic groups were two times more likely, to live in overcrowded homes compared to the general or White ethnic populations²²⁴. Irish Travellers, Asian and Black ethnic groups are one and a half to two times more likely to live in overcrowded NIHE homes than those in the general or White ethnic population²²⁵. Additionally, Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups are one and a half to two times more likely to live in overcrowded Housing Association or Charitable Trust homes than those in the general or White ethnic population²²⁶.
- 8.31 Overcrowding was also evidenced in the private rented sector for Irish Travellers, Asian, Black and Other ethnic groups in 2011. People in these four ethnic groups who lived in the private rented sector were twice as likely to live in overcrowded homes as general or White ethnic populations²²⁷.

224 Census Table DC2403NI: Tenure by occupancy rating (rooms) by ethnic group shows that overcrowding for owner-occupied homes was: 30.7% (n=88) for Irish Travellers; 13.8% (n=1,261) for Asian ethnic groups; and, 14.7% (n=107) for Black ethnic groups, compared to 6.3% of the general and 6.2% (n=78,699) of the White ethnic populations.

225 Census Table DC2403NI: Tenure by occupancy rating (rooms) by ethnic group shows that overcrowding for Northern Ireland Housing Executive homes was: 31.6% for Irish Travellers; 34.0% for Asian ethnic groups; and, 37.7% for Black ethnic groups, compared to 19.5% of the general and 19.4% of the White ethnic populations.

226 Census Table DC2403NI: Tenure by occupancy rating (rooms) by ethnic group shows that overcrowding for Housing Association or Charitable Trust homes was: 38.8% for Asian ethnic groups; 51.2% for Black ethnic groups; and, 47.1% for Other ethnic groups, compared to 24.7% of the general and 24.5% of the White ethnic populations.

227 Census Table DC2403NI: Tenure by occupancy rating (rooms) by ethnic group shows that overcrowding for owner-occupied homes was: 30.6% for Irish Travellers; 34.4% for Asian ethnic groups; 30.0% for Black ethnic groups; and, 30.1% for Other ethnic groups, compared to 15.8% of the general and 15.1% of the White ethnic populations.





9 Disability Status

Summary

- 9.1 Considerations in this area are hindered by the fact that many definitions of disability exist and not all surveys utilise the same definition in their data collection process.
- 9.2 The inequalities identified with regard to disability status are inequalities concerned with the adequacy of housing. The first of these is that **those with a learning disability are not always afforded an opportunity to live independently.**
- 9.3 The Bamford Review (2007) found that whilst the resettlement of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems away from hospital settings and into the community had taken place many people were resettled in similar institutional shared settings. Additionally, there was evidence of an overreliance on support from family carers to support those with learning disabilities.
- 9.4 Byrne et al., (2014) reported that the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015 committed £64 million to resettle long-stay patients not in need of treatment and that this was to be completed by 2015. In January 2016, the resettlement programme was reportedly nearing completion. As of March 2017, the Commission has been unable to confirm if the resettlement programme has completed.
- 9.5 **Many people with disabilities live in homes that are not adequate to meet their disability related needs.** The Northern Ireland Survey of people with Activity Limitations and Disabilities (NISALD), conducted in 2006/07, found that whilst most respondents did not have any modifications or adaptations to their homes, a fifth of those did require them.
- 9.6 The rate of grant applications is affected by a lack of knowledge that grants are available. Over half of NISALD respondents were unaware of either private sector or public sector grants.
- 9.7 Although Lifetime Homes standards were adopted in 1998 for social housing, which ensures that, in the future, minimal adaptations are required to enable people to live at home longer, the same standards do not apply to the local building regulations for the private sector. Further, in 2013 the Interdepartmental Review on Housing Adaptations (2013) called for specific wheelchair standards as coverage of these standards within Lifetime Homes was not considered adequate.





KEY INEQUALITY:

Those with a learning disability are not always afforded an opportunity to live independently.

- 9.8 The Bamford Review (2007) found that whilst the resettlement of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems away from hospital settings and into the community had taken place many people were resettled in similar institutional shared settings. Additionally, there was evidence of an overreliance on support from family carers to support those with learning disabilities^{228, 229}.
- 9.9 The resettling of people with learning disabilities from hospital settings should have been completed by the Government in 2002^{230, 231}. However, Wallace (2015) reported that the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO, 2009) had raised continuing concerns about Government progress - a process that should have been completed by 2002 had been repeatedly pushed back to 2013²³². Reasons for delays were reported as a lack of resources^{233, 234, 235}.
- 9.10 Byrne et al., (2014) reported that the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015 committed £64 million to resettle long-stay patients not in need of treatment; this was to be completed by 2015^{236, 237}. In January 2016, the Commission was advised by the Department for Social Development that the resettlement programme was still ongoing but nearing completion²³⁸. As of March 2017, the Commission has been unable to confirm if the resettlement programme has completed.²³⁹

228 Bamford (2007) [Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability \(Northern Ireland\) Consultation](#).

229 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

230 NIAO (2009) [Resettlement of long-stay patients from learning disability hospitals](#).

231 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

232 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

233 IMNI Joint Response Paper 'Evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights: Inquiry into the implementation of the right of disabled people to independent living as guaranteed by Article 19, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. Pages 3-4. and DHSSPS (2012) 'Delivering the Bamford Vision: The Response of the Northern Ireland Executive to the Bamford Review of Mental

[Health and Learning Disability Action Plan 2012-2015](#)' Page 56.

234 Bamford (2007) [Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability \(Northern Ireland\) Consultation](#).

235 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

236 DHSSPS (2012) 'Delivering the Bamford Vision: The Response of the Northern Ireland Executive to the Bamford Review of Mental [Health and Learning Disability Action Plan 2012-2015](#)'.

237 Byrne, B, Harper, C., Shea Irvine, R., Russell, H. and Fitzpatrick, B. (2014) [UNCRPD: Shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the Articles of the UNCRPD. Final Report](#).

238 DSD correspondence with the Commission, January 2016.

239 DfC (March 2017) – email correspondence from DfC included: 'DoH are finalising an evaluation of the Bamford Action Plan. That evaluation is expected to conclude that the actions within the Bamford Action Plan are largely complete However, there is still more to do, and the DoH evaluation will be useful in identifying the needs and gaps that need to be addressed...'



- 9.11 A potential barrier to achieving resettlement has been cited by Byrne et al., (2014) as a lack of joint working, particularly between the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Social Development, which limits the potential for many people with disabilities to live independently in the community²⁴⁰.



KEY INEQUALITY:

Many people with disabilities live in homes that are not adequate to meet their disability related needs.

- 9.12 Although becoming dated²⁴¹, the Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability (NISALD), conducted in 2006/07, found that nearly a fifth of those respondents who did not have modifications or adaptations to their homes did have a requirement for modifications or adaptations^{242, 243}.
- 9.13 Wallace (2015) highlights that *'the intersection between an individual's disability and their residential environment is critical'*²⁴⁴. For example, a disabled person's home must meet mobility and/or sensory needs and must be affordable, taking into account the prospect of reduced incomes.
- 9.14 The 2011 Census for Northern Ireland shows that, at the time of the census, social rented homes had the greatest proportion of adapted homes^{245, 246}.
- 9.15 Heywood and Turner's (2007) research, conducted in Great Britain, reported that adaptations to homes are not only cost effective²⁴⁷, but also afford disabled people more dignity. However, Heywood and Turner (2007) found wasteful expenditure and long waits for adaptations due to funds²⁴⁸.
- 9.16 In addition, the NISALD showed that most of those eligible for a private sector Disabled Facilities Grant, or a public sector Disabled Adaptations Grant, to make necessary

240 Byrne, B, Harper, C., Shea Irvine, R., Russell, H. and Fitzpatrick, B. (2014) [UNCRPD: Shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the Articles of the UNCRPD. Final Report](#). Page 108.

241 NISALD however remains the best available data source in this regard as Government have not produced any update to the information contained therein.

242 71% did not have any modifications or adaptations, of these 18% needed a modification or adaptation.

243 NISRA (2007) [The Prevalence of Disability and Activity Limitations amongst adults and children living in private households in Northern Ireland](#).

244 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#). Page 136.

245 11.8% for wheelchair users and 13.7% for other mobility difficulties

246 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

247 For example, by helping to save public money by reducing the costs associated with accidents.

248 Heywood, F and Turner, L (2007) Better outcomes, lower costs: implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: a review of the evidence. London, Office of Disability Issues.



modifications or adaptations to their homes had never applied for one²⁴⁹. Of those NISALD respondents who did apply for a grant around three quarters were aged 55 years old or older^{250, 251}.

- 9.17 The rate of grant applications was affected by a lack of knowledge that grants are available. Over half of NISALD respondents were unaware of either private sector or public sector grants^{252, 253}.
- 9.18 The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) reported to the Northern Ireland Assembly that its Capital Extensions budget for 2015/16 for adaptations of homes due to a household member's disability²⁵⁴ is £4 million. A further minor adaptation budget was set at £2.7 million²⁵⁵. With regard to the Disabled Facilities Grant for Northern Ireland, available to owner occupiers, tenants and private landlords to enable them to make adaptations to homes, the NIHE reported an indicative budget of £10 million for 2015/16²⁵⁶.
- 9.19 However, during 2013/14 and 2014/15 the number of approved grants fell short of the number available, despite it being reported in 2013/14 that *'the majority of [applications] will lead to approvals'*²⁵⁷. Action may thus be required to increase general awareness of the support available.
- 9.20 The design standard of Lifetime Homes²⁵⁸ exists to ensure that, in the future, minimal adaptations are required to enable people to live at home longer. However, as stakeholders in Wallace's (2015) research report note, this design standard is not applied across all building regulations in Northern Ireland²⁵⁹. For example, Part R of the local building regulations lack the Lifetime Homes standard, meaning that the standard is not applicable to private sector homes. This is despite representing minimal costs at the building stage²⁶⁰.
- 9.21 More widely, the Interdepartmental Review on Housing Adaptations (2013)²⁶¹ has called for specific wheelchair standards as coverage of these standards within Lifetime Homes is not considered to be adequate.

249 84% of those eligible for a private sector grant and 78% of those eligible for a public sector grant.

250 77% of private sector grants and 71% of public sector grants, respectively.

251 NISRA (2007) [The Prevalence of Disability and Activity Limitations amongst adults and children living in private households in Northern Ireland](#).

252 The respective percentages are 58% and 57%.

253 NISRA (2007) [The Prevalence of Disability and Activity Limitations amongst adults and children living in private households in Northern Ireland](#).

254 I.e. the Disabled Adaptations Grant funding.

255 [NI Assembly. Written Answers. 22 May 2015](#).

256 [NI Assembly. Written Answers. 22 May 2015](#).

257 NIHE (2015). [44th Annual Report](#). 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015. Page 21.

258 For more information click [here](#).

259 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

260 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

261 NIHE (2013) [Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services](#).





10 Sexual Orientation

Summary

- 10.1 Whilst there is a limited evidence base with regard to sexual orientation and housing and communities, existent evidence shows that the adequacy of housing for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people presents a key inequality. **Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people can feel harassed and unsafe in their own homes and neighbourhoods.**
- 10.2 Northern Ireland based research found that around a fifth of homophobic incidents, including both physical and psychological, occur in the LGB person's home. Additionally, nearly a quarter of these incidents involved a perpetrator who was a neighbour or lived locally.
- 10.3 Police Service of Northern Ireland statistics show increases in both 'violence against the person offences' and 'criminal damage to a dwelling' offences during the period 2007/08 and 2013/14.

Inequalities



KEY INEQUALITY:

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people can feel harassed and unsafe in their own homes and neighbourhoods.

- 10.4 Whilst there is a limited evidence base with regard to sexual orientation and housing and communities, 2009 research²⁶² found that around a fifth of homophobic incidents occurred in the LGB person's home. The incidents themselves were reported as ranging from physical to psychological. O'Doherty (2009) also found that, for those who suffer homophobia in their homes, many suffer on an ongoing basis²⁶³.

262 O'Doherty, J. (2009) [Through Our Eyes](#).

263 O'Doherty, J. (2009) [Through Our Eyes](#).





- 10.5 It was found, in O'Doherty's (2009) study, that nearly a quarter of homophobic incidents involved a perpetrator who was a neighbour or lived locally. Nearly half of those who were victim to homophobic incidents were living with their partner and/or in civil partnerships²⁶⁴.
- 10.6 Police Service of Northern Ireland crime statistics show increased year-on-year 'Violence against the person offences' between 2007/08 and 2013/14, reaching its highest level in 2013/14^{265, 266}.
- 10.7 In addition, this type of crime continually accounted for the majority of crimes with a homophobic motivation between 2007/08 and 2013/14²⁶⁷.
- 10.8 Police Service of Northern Ireland crime statistics also show that the number of 'criminal damage to a dwelling' offences increased between 2007/08 and 2013/14, although the increase was less substantial. However, this type of crime still accounted for around a tenth to a fifth of all crimes with a homophobic motivation between 2007/08 and 2013/14²⁶⁸.
- 10.9 It is important to note that both the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland recognise that the under-reporting of homophobic hate crimes is an issue²⁶⁹.
- 10.10 Consideration of these issues across Government Departments may identify multi-faceted policy interventions that can work to maximise equality of opportunity in the provision of adequate, accessible and sustainable housing and communities across Northern Ireland, and in specific areas.

264 O'Doherty, J. (2009) [Through Our Eyes](#).

265 Between 2007/08 and 2013/14 crimes ranged from 112 at the lowest point in 2009/10 to 179 at the highest in 2013/14.

266 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).

267 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).

268 PSNI (2014) [Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2013/14](#).

269 O'Doherty, J. (2009) [Through Our Eyes](#).





11 Marital Status

Summary

- 11.1 The findings for those of different marital status may be related to other characteristics (such as age and/or dependents), or to life trajectories (with different phases of life bringing different opportunities or expectations with regards to accessing different housing tenures or types). Further, much of the housing data available refers to a household reference person which makes it difficult to determine the full characteristics of a household i.e. if people are cohabiting.
- 11.2 It is therefore difficult to consider inequalities in accessibility, adequacy or sustainability in housing solely on the basis of marital status. As a result, no inequalities were identified in the drawing up of this *Statement*. However, some differences concerning the adequacy of housing for those of different marital status were identified.
- 11.3 In social housing, households with single household reference persons are the most likely to live in non-decent homes. The 2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey indicated that around a fifth of single and have never married people in social housing lived in non-decent homes in 2009. This was compared to around a tenth for each of the other marital status groups.
- 11.4 When housing tenure was removed from the analysis, the 2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey indicated that compared to other marital status groups, those household reference persons who are separated or divorced are more likely to live in non-decent homes.





Differences



DIFFERENCE:

In social housing, households with single household reference persons are the most likely to live in non-decent homes.

- 11.5 The 2011 Census for Northern Ireland indicates that, at the time of the Census nearly a third of those living in Northern Ireland aged 16 years old or over were single and not living as part of a couple^{270, 271}.
- 11.6 Whilst the main type of tenure in 2011 for this group was the owner occupied sector, a little under a quarter lived in the social housing sector^{272, 273}.
- 11.7 The 2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey showed that around a fifth of single and have never married household reference persons in social housing lived in non-decent homes in 2009. This was compared to around a tenth for household reference persons in each of the other marital status groups^{274, 275}.



DIFFERENCE:

Compared to other marital status groups, household reference persons who are separated or divorced are more likely to live in non-decent homes.

- 11.8 The 2011 Census for Northern Ireland indicates that, at the time of the census under a tenth of those living in Northern Ireland aged 16 years old or over were either separated or divorced. This marital status group accounted for 15.9% of household reference persons in 2011^{276, 277}.

270 31.5% were single and had never been married.

271 Northern Ireland census 2011 Table CT0078NI.

272 23.2% lived in the social housing sector at the time of the 2011 Census.

273 Northern Ireland census 2011 Table CT0078NI.

274 20.8% of single people; 13.1% of those who were divorced or separated; 11.8% of those who were married; and, 8.5% of those who were widowed.

275 NIHE (2011) [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

276 7.9% were either separated or divorced.

277 Northern Ireland census 2011 Table CT0078NI.





- 11.9 Like all marital status groups the main type of tenure at the time of the 2011 Census was owner occupied; around a half of those who were separated or divorced lived in the owner-occupied sector whilst over a quarter lived in the social housing sector, and over a fifth in the private rented sector^{278, 279}.
- 11.10 The 2009 House Condition Survey²⁸⁰ showed that over a fifth of separated or divorced household reference persons lived in non-decent homes, regardless of housing tenure. This was compared to a little under a fifth for single and widowed household reference persons, respectively and under a tenth of married or remarried household reference persons. Therefore, separated or divorced household reference persons were twice as likely to live in non-decent homes as married or remarried household reference persons^{281, 282}.
- 11.11 When housing tenure was considered, separated or divorced household reference persons experienced much higher rates of non-decent homes than any other marital status group in the private rented sector. Whilst around a third of separated or divorced household reference persons lived in non-decent homes in the private rented sector in 2009, under half that proportion lived in the private rented sector for each of the other marital status groups^{283, 284}.
- 11.12 The type of tenure where separated or divorced household reference persons were least likely to live in non-decent homes in 2009 was the social rented sector^{285, 286}.

278 49.0% lived in the owner occupied sector; 26.6% lived in the social housing sector; 21.6% lived in the private rented sector; and, 2.8% lived rent free.

279 Northern Ireland Census 2011 Table CT0078NI.

280 NIHE (2011) [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

281 The statistics are: 21.6% for those separated or divorced; 18.7% for those who were single; 17.6% for those who were widowed; and, 7.5% for those who were married or remarried.

282 NIHE (2011) [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

283 The statistics are: 30.3% for those separated or divorced; 16.2% for those who were single; 14.0% for those who were widowed; and, 11.4% for those who were married or remarried.

284 NIHE (2011) [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

285 13.1% of separate or divorced household reference persons lived in the social rented sector.

286 NIHE (2011) [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).





12 Dependency Status

Summary

- 12.1 The inequalities experienced by those of different dependency status may be related to other characteristics (such as gender, age and/or marital status), or to life trajectories (with different phases of life bringing different opportunities or expectations with regards to accessing different housing tenures or types).
- 12.2 Only data which considered dependent children was available, whereas a person might have dependants other than children such as elderly parents, siblings or non-family members. For example, the 2011 Census for Northern Ireland reported that nearly a fifth of those in employment aged 16 years old or over provided some unpaid care.
- 12.3 In respect to the adequacy of housing, household reference persons without dependent children, living in the private rented sector, are more likely to live in non-decent homes.
- 12.4 With regard to sustainability, in that the tenure is secure and affordable, it was found that households with dependent children, particularly lone parent reference person households, who live in the private rented sector are more likely to experience relative poverty after housing costs have been deducted, than those in either the owner occupied or social rented sectors.
- 12.5 The private rented sector provides a home to around a third of lone parents with dependent children. In addition, it is also the tenure with the highest proportion of children living in relative poverty after housing costs have been deducted.





Inequalities



INEQUALITY:

Household reference persons without dependent children, living in the private rented sector, are more likely to live in non-decent homes.

- 12.6 The House Condition Survey showed that, in 2009, a fifth of household reference persons without dependent children who lived in the private rented sector lived in non-decent homes, compared to just over a tenth of household reference persons with dependent children²⁸⁷.
- 12.7 The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2014) report an improvement compared to 2009 through its analysis of the 2011 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey. The 2014 report found that the proportion of non-decent private rented sector homes occupied by household reference persons without dependent children was nearly half that of the proportion in 2009^{288, 289}.
- 12.8 However, whilst the proportion of household reference persons without dependent children in non-decent homes in the private rented sector showed a decrease between 2009 and 2011 it was still more than double the proportion of household reference persons with children in the same type of tenure^{290, 291}.

287 20.3% and 11.6%, respectively. NIHE (2011) [2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

288 The rate in 2011 was 12.3% for those without; this is made up of 'adult households' and 'older households'.

289 NIHE (2014) [Private Rented Sector. Stock Profile, Physical Condition & Key Government Indicators Report](#).

290 The proportion of those with children was 5.5%.

291 Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2014) [Private Rented Sector. Stock Profile, Physical Condition & Key Government Indicators Report](#).



INEQUALITY:

Households with dependent children, particularly lone parent reference person households, who live in the private rented sector are more likely to experience relative poverty after housing costs have been deducted.

- 12.9 According to the Census 2011, lone parents with dependent children accounted for a little under a fifth of those who lived in the private rented sector^{292, 293}. Similarly, household reference persons with dependent children²⁹⁴ also accounted for around a fifth of those who lived in the private rented sector²⁹⁵.
- 12.10 Russell (2013) notes that both the 2001 and 2011 censuses show that, in Northern Ireland, lone parents are overwhelmingly female²⁹⁶. Therefore, this inequality must also be considered under multiple equality categories: dependency status; marital status; and, gender.
- 12.11 Wallace's (2015) analysis of the Family Resources Survey (2011/12) found that over half of household reference persons with dependent children who lived in the private rented sector in 2011/12 experienced relative poverty after housing costs were considered^{297, 298}; compared to a third before housing costs were considered^{299, 300}.
- 12.12 Wallace (2015) also found that the increase in relative poverty for those in the private rented sector was three times that experienced by household reference persons with dependent children in the social housing sector^{301, 302}.

292 The respective percentages were: 16.9% and 32.5%.

293 Census 2011 for Northern Ireland. Table [DC4409NI](#).

294 The make-up of households with dependent children is not known. However, it is known that these households do not contain lone parents with dependent children.

295 Parents with dependent children accounted for 18.5% of the private rented sector.

296 92% in 2001 and 91% in 2011. Russell, R. (2013) [Census 2011: Key Statistics at Northern Ireland and LGD level](#).

297 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) states that 'housing costs constitute the most important and most direct impact of housing on poverty and material deprivation'... leading to 'housing cost induced poverty (not poor before housing costs but poor once they are taken into account)'. In addition, the Foundation believes that by not taking account of housing costs the risk of poverty and material deprivation is therefore underestimated. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) [The Links Between Housing and Poverty](#).

298 In the United Kingdom, the most widely used definition of what constitutes relative poverty is when the household income is less than 60% of the United Kingdom median income for the relevant year. Those who fall below this income are, across Europe, said to be 'at risk of poverty'. [Author's emphasis] The Poverty Site (Date unknown) [Poverty and Inequality in the European Union](#).

299 60.0% of household reference persons with dependent children were in relative poverty after housing costs were considered, compared to 33% before housing costs were considered.

300 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

301 The increase in the private rented sector was 27 percentage points, compared to 8 percentage points in the social housing sector.

302 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).



- 12.13 The Department for Social Development (DSD) found that, at the level of the child, in 2012/13 the private rented sector was the tenure with the highest proportion of children living in relative poverty after housing costs were considered^{303, 304}.
- 12.14 In addition, the Commission found that when housing costs³⁰⁵ were considered the social housing data showed that, for both 2007-10 and 2010-13, the cost of living in the private rented sector³⁰⁶ increased the proportion of those who experienced relative poverty to a greater degree than those in the social housing sector³⁰⁷.
- 12.15 In addition, the Commission also found that, during the periods 2007-2010 and 2010-13, the rate of relative poverty for those in the private rented sector increased by a greater proportion for lone parent households than for households composed of a couple with dependent children^{308, 309}.

303 42% of children were reported to live in poverty in the private rented sector in 2012/13.

304 DSD (2014) [Households Below Average Income. Northern Ireland 2012-13. Full Report](#).

305 Including rent, mortgage payments, buildings insurance, ground rent and service charges.

306 I.e. after housing costs were considered.

307 Proportionate increases for those in social housing were 4 and 6 percentage points during 2007-10 and 2010-13, respectively.

308 The percentage point difference before and after housing costs was twice that for lone parents (18 percentage points) than couples with children (9 percentage points) in 2007-10. In 2010-13 the percentage point difference increased greatly for lone parents (30 percentage points) and reduced slightly for couples with dependent children (8 percentage points). Family Resources Survey data supplied by DSD upon request in July 2015.

309 Family Resources Survey data for those who owned their house outright or were repaying a mortgage was not available over the time period due to small sample sizes.





13 Conclusions

- 13.1 This *Statement* reflects identified inequalities in housing and communities, and brings to the fore seven key inequalities:
- Catholic household reference person applicants for social housing continue to experience the longest waiting times.
 - Access to appropriate accommodation for Irish Travellers is limited.
 - The homes of minority ethnic people and migrant groups may be vulnerable to racial attacks.
 - Migrant workers are vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation with poor conditions and overcrowding.
 - Those with a learning disability are not always afforded an opportunity to live independently.
 - Many people with disabilities live in homes that are not adequate to meet their disability related needs.
 - Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) people can feel harassed and unsafe in their own homes and neighbourhoods.
- 13.2 The Commission recognises the on-going work of a wide range of stakeholders to highlight and tackle both inequalities and more general issues in relation to housing and communities, and the potential offered by initiatives such as the Department for Communities' Social Housing Reform Programme³¹⁰.
- 13.3 Complex relationships exist between housing and other domains that will demand long-term multi-faceted policy interventions from across Government, and it is clear from the evidence supporting the *Statement* that significant challenges still remain.

310 Department for Communities. ['What is the social housing reform programme?'](#)





- 13.4 It is intended that the consideration of differences, inequalities, and barriers contained within this *Statement*, will be utilised to inform the ongoing development of policy positions and associated interventions not only across the relevant Departments, agencies and functions of government, but by all those organisations who have responsibilities for, or an interest in, housing in Northern Ireland.
- 13.5 The *Statement* also makes clear that there is a lack of robust data on housing and communities relating to a number of equality groups including: Trans people; people's political opinion; asylum seekers and refugees; minority ethnic groups; LGB people; and those with and without dependents.
- 13.6 This lack of data significantly impacts *not only the degree* to which overall inequalities in housing and communities are assessed and monitored, but also impacts on the ability to monitor and evaluate individual actions taken by Government Departments and others to address these inequalities.
- 13.7 We also recognise the key role we play in highlighting and addressing these challenges through effectively using our full range of powers and duties in terms of promotion, advice and enforcement, research and working with housing providers across all sectors to highlight and adopt good practice so as to improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups.
- 13.8 We recommend that Government, public bodies and others use this *Statement* to develop and implement appropriate actions to address identified inequalities; including those pursuant to their equality and good relations duties under Section 75.





14 Annex 1: Further Information on the Overall Context of Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland

Homeownership

- 14.1 In 2014 the number of first time buyers was at its highest since 2006. First-time buyers made up 42.4% of all mortgage lending in 2014; home movers accounted for 31.1% of loans and re-mortgage lending for 26.6%.³¹¹
- 14.2 Compared to 2007, first-time buyers in 2014 were able to enter the housing market on a lower income (£35,000 in 2007 compared to £29,590 in 2014).³¹²
- 14.3 It is estimated that up to 40% of those who purchased a property from 2005 onwards are in negative equity. Northern Ireland also has the highest rate of 'mortgage prisoners' – those unable to transfer their mortgage product to a better deal – than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. However, the Northern Ireland housing market showed some improvements in 2014 with some increases in house prices, this should reduce the incidence of negative equity.³¹³

311 Council for Mortgage Lenders (2015) 25% more first-time buyers in Northern Ireland in 2014. Available [here](#).

312 Council for Mortgage Lenders (2015) 25% more first-time buyers in Northern Ireland in 2014. Available [here](#)

313 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).





- 14.4 According to the Northern Ireland Census 2011, and the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2011, the main type of tenancy for household reference persons aged 25 years old or over is owner-occupied homes.^{314 315} Northern Ireland Census 2011 figures show that, for household reference persons aged 16 to 24 years old the main type of tenancy is homes in the private rented sector (59.4%); the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey reported a similar proportion of 57.5% of household reference persons aged 17-24 years old living in the private rented sector.
- 14.5 When the tenancy of all usual residents³¹⁶ is considered a somewhat different picture emerges from the 2011 Census. At the usual residents level owner-occupied homes are the largest tenure type for all age groups.³¹⁷
- 14.6 Owner occupied housing has consistently made up over half of Northern Ireland's housing stock and is the largest occupied tenure.³¹⁸ In 2011, 8.4% of owner-occupied homes in Northern Ireland were deemed to be non-decent.³¹⁹

The Private Rented Sector

- 14.7 This sector is able to suit the housing needs of a wide range of people, for example, young professionals, asylum seekers, students and those receiving housing benefits. However, rents are approximately 50% more expensive in this sector than in the social rented sector.³²⁰
- 14.8 The standard of accommodations, tenancy management, lack of legislative awareness of landlords and security of tenure in the private rented sector remain problematic. However, from April, 2013 Northern Ireland landlords are required to lodge deposits in an approved tenancy scheme. This scheme will, for a small fee, provide advice and support to landlords with the aim of making the private rented sector a more attractive option to those in need of rented accommodation.³²¹

314 Census figures are: 47.9% for those aged 25-34 years old; 68.4% for those aged 35-44 years old; 74.1% for those aged 45-54 years old; 76.5% for those aged 55-64 years old; and, 75.2% for those aged 65-74 years old.

315 House Condition Survey figures are: 54.1% for those aged 25-39 years old; 73.4% for those aged 40-49 years old; 75.5% for those aged 60-74 years old; and, 72.6% for those aged 75 years old or older.

316 I.e. data collected on individuals rather than on the household reference person.

317 Census Table DC4301NI (data calculated from table): 68.0% for 0-15 year olds; 66.1% for 16-24 year olds; 61.6% for 25-34 year olds; 74.3% for 35-44 year olds; 78.8% for 45-54 year olds; 80.4 for 55-64 year olds; 79.3 for 65-74 year olds; and, 73.5% for those aged 75 years old or older.

318 As evidenced in [Northern Ireland Housing Statistics 2013-14](#).

319 As measured by the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey, 2011.

320 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

321 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).



- 14.9 In 2011, the highest proportion of non-decent homes³²² in Northern Ireland was in the private rented sector (10.2%).
- 14.10 This sector is important to those on lower incomes. However, changes to housing benefit since 2010 have resulted in an increased shortfall between private rents charged and housing benefit received. This has led to more recovery actions being taken by private landlords against tenants.³²³
- 14.11 The loss of rented accommodation was consistently the third largest recorded reason for presenting as homeless from 2010/11 to 2013/14.^{324 325}
- 14.12 Of all homeless presentations, the loss of rented accommodation was provided as a reason by 13.1% of homeless presentations in 2010/11; 11.0% of homeless presentations in 2011/12; 13.5% of homeless presentations in 2012/13; and 13.6% of homeless presentations in 2013/14.³²⁶

The Social Housing Sector

- 14.13 In 2011, the lowest proportion of non-decent homes³²⁷ in Northern Ireland was in the social rented sector (3.7%).³²⁸
- 14.14 Between 2001/02 and 2013/14 social housing stock's share of the housing market, and the proportion of people living in social housing, has consistently reduced.³²⁹
- 14.15 The social rented sector showed contraction between 2001 and 2011. However, the waiting list for social housing increased between 2004/05 and March 2014.³³⁰ The average waiting time for a home was 12 months for all applicants.³³¹
- 14.16 In March 2014, over half (54%) of those who applied for social housing were in housing stress³³²; remaining fairly constant during the last decade.³³³

322 As measured by the [2011 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey](#).

323 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

324 The first two largest recorded causes, in order, were: sharing breakdown/family dispute and accommodation not reasonable.

325 DSD (2015) [Northern Ireland Housing Bulletin 1st July – 30th September 2014](#).

326 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

327 As measured by the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey, 2011.

328 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

329 As evidenced in [Northern Ireland Housing Statistics 2013-14](#).

330 Although it must be noted here that the waiting list is not considered to be an accurate reflection of housing need. For further information see Gray, P., Keenan, P., McNulty, U., Clarke, A., Monk, S. and Tang, C. (2013) [Research to inform a fundamental review of social housing allocations policy. Final Report: Conclusions and Recommendations](#).

331 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

332 A person is considered to be in housing stress if they have 30 or more points allocated to them.

333 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

- 14.17 Groups that are most reliant on the social housing sector include: those on low incomes; people from minority ethnic backgrounds; people with dependants; disabled people; and, younger age groups.³³⁴

Residential Segregation

- 14.18 Russell (2013), notes that, in absolute numbers, Belfast's demographic changes are even more pronounced, than when simply comparing the proportionate share of Catholics and Protestants in Belfast. Russell's (2013) research found that there was a 4.3 percentage point increase in the numbers identifying as Catholic and a decline of almost 12 percentage points in the number of those identifying as Protestant between the 2001 and 2011 censuses.^{335 336}
- 14.19 Shuttleworth and Lloyd (2007) analysed the level of segregation within Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) residential estates in Belfast using Census 2001 data. The results of the analysis were that 'in general, 91% of estates [in Belfast] fall into a "very polarised category"'.^{337 338}
- 14.20 Shuttleworth and Lloyd (2009) undertook further research, also utilising Census 2001 data, to ascertain what the level of segregation was in NIHE residential estates outside Belfast. Their research found that segregation reduced dramatically outside Belfast, to between a third and a half of people and households.³³⁹
- 14.21 The finding of Shuttleworth and Lloyd outlined above highlight that 'analyses that concentrate only on Belfast therefore miss much diversity and evidence' when other areas in Northern Ireland are considered.³⁴⁰
- 14.22 Nolan's (2014) analysis of 2011 Census data considered the religious composition of all 582 local government wards. The analysis found 'a steep decline in the proportion of "single identity" wards'³⁴¹ compared to data from the 2001 Census. In 2011 there were 61 wards with a Catholic majority compared to 2 wards with a Protestant majority; 28 wards had become a Catholic majority in the intervening period between censuses. An increase in the Catholic population may explain this finding.³⁴²

334 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

335 Russell, R. (2013) [Census 2011: Key Statistics at Northern Ireland and LGD level](#).

336 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

337 Defined as having more than 80% of one community or less than 20% of that community using community background.

338 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2007) [Mapping Segregation on Belfast NIHE Estates](#). Page 6.

339 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2009) [Mapping Segregation in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Housing Executive Estates Outside Belfast](#).

340 Shuttleworth, I. and Lloyd, C. (2009) [Mapping Segregation in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Housing Executive Estates Outside Belfast](#). Page 16.

341 From 55% to 37%.

342 Nolan, P. (2014) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Three](#). Page 115.



- 14.23 However, Wallace (2015) warns that the extent of Protestant decline may be exaggerated by an increase in the numbers who chose to declare 'no religion' in the 2011 Census.³⁴³ Additionally, Wallace (2015) and Nolan (2014) point out that migration may have bolstered the number of Catholic residents in formerly Protestant wards.^{344 345}
- 14.24 Lastly, Nolan (2014) warns against *assuming that mixed wards are integrated*. For example, research undertaken by the School of Planning at Queen's University, Belfast, has found that *wards that appear mixed overall can still be self-segregating at street level*.³⁴⁶

Non-decent Homes

- 14.25 The House Condition Survey defines decent homes as: meeting current minimum standards for housing i.e. the Fitness Standard in Schedule 5 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1992; being in a reasonable state of repair; having reasonably modern facilities and services; and, having a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.³⁴⁷
- 14.26 It is through the House Condition Survey that the NIHE provides a measure of decent homes. The 2011 House Condition Survey results report that the majority of homes are decent, regardless of housing sector. However, if ranked in order of decency social housing would be first, followed by owner-occupied housing and private rented housing.³⁴⁸

Housing Discrimination Enquiries

- 14.27 Between April 2007 and March 2015³⁴⁹ the Commission received approximately 277 enquiries that concerned housing in Northern Ireland; this accounted for 1.2% of all enquiries made to the Commission during this time. With regard to each individual year enquiries related to housing were in the range of 28-44 per year.
- 14.28 The most common areas of legislation which enquiries fell under were disability followed by race for each year between 2007 and 2015. Often it is the case that an enquiry might fall under more than one legislative area. When this is taken into account disability remains the most common legislative area that housing enquiries fall under.

343 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

344 Wallace, A. (2015) [Housing and Communities Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#).

345 Nolan, P. (2014) [Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report. Number Three](#).

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349 1st April 2007 and 31 March 2015.



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April 2017

