

# Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities

**The provision of housing faces new as well as existing and persistent challenges. This document highlights the 7 key inequalities set out in our 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland'.**

## **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. 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 person<sup>1</sup>.

## **Access to appropriate accommodation for Irish Travellers is limited.**

Whilst the NIHE Traveller Needs Assessment (2015)<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

Northern Ireland Police Recorded Crime Statistics (2014)<sup>3</sup> show 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 2012/13<sup>4</sup>.

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

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

3 '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](#).

4 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](#).

## **Migrant workers are vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation<sup>5</sup> with poor conditions and overcrowding.**

In 2011, Allamby et al. 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'<sup>6</sup>. This accommodation can also be expensive, overcrowded, excessively controlled by landlords, and unsuitable for children.

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

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<sup>7</sup>. Byrne et al., (2014) reported that the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015, which included a commitment to resettle long-stay patients not in need of treatment, was to be completed by 2015<sup>8</sup>. In January 2016, DSD advised that the resettlement programme was still ongoing but nearing completion<sup>9</sup>. As of March 2017, the Commission has been unable to confirm if the resettlement programme has completed.<sup>10</sup>

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

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 adaptations to their homes did have a requirement for modifications or adaptations<sup>11</sup>. The 'Lifetime Homes' standards do not apply to the private sector. Further, specific wheelchair standards have been called for as existing standards are not considered to be adequate<sup>12</sup>.

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

Research suggests that a fifth of homophobic incidents occur in the LGB person's home; and that nearly a quarter of incidents involved a perpetrator who was a neighbour or lived locally<sup>13</sup>. PSNI crime statistics show increased year-on-year 'Violence against the person offences' between 2007/08 and 2013/14<sup>14</sup>.



### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Including a 10 page summary and full version of our Statement - visit:

[www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Housing](http://www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Housing)

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

6 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.*

7 Bamford (2007) *Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (Northern Ireland) Consultation.*

8 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.*

9 DSD correspondence with the Commission, January 2016.

10 DfC correspondence with the Commission, March 2017

11 NISRA (2007) *The Prevalence of Disability and Activity Limitations amongst adults and children living in private households in Northern Ireland.*

12 NIHE (2013) *Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services.*

13 O'Doherty, J. (2009) *Through Our Eyes.*

14 Except for during 2009/10 and 2011/12 when decreases were evident. This increase saw the number of offences rise from 74 in 2007/08 to 133 in 2013/14.