



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

Implementation of Travellers' Accommodation Recommendations

June 2019

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Abbreviations

DfC	Department for Communities
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
ECNI	Equality Commission NI
HA	Housing Association
NI	Northern Ireland
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NIHRC	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
OFMDFM	Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
TEO	The Executive Office

Foreword

This is the one year on progress report on implementing recommendations from the investigation report 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Travellers' Accommodation in Northern Ireland'.

Progress has been mixed. On the positive side, the Department for Communities has published a draft updated design guide for Travellers' sites and the Department for Infrastructure is also consulting on an updated Model Conditions for site licences, covering minimum standards of safety requirements and provision. Both documents are over 20 years old and long needed to be brought into the 21st Century. Housing Associations and the NI Housing Executive have engaged actively with the report's recommendations, with some tangible improvements, though engagement with Travellers and their support groups remain a work in progress, particularly so for the NI Housing Executive. Department for Communities have provided funding for Housing Rights to commission research identifying the housing/accommodation advice needs of Travellers and we look forward to seeing the fruits of this work to enable Travellers to more readily deal with problems. Some additional funding has been provided for Traveller support groups yet, they remain unduly and unreasonable financially stretched. The active membership of all local Councils in the Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues is also welcome.

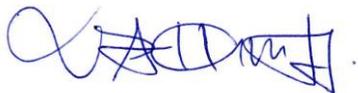
Elsewhere recommendations for legal reform remain stalled by the lack of a Northern Ireland Executive. Significant amounts of Housing Benefit is paid to private landlords providing sub-standard caravans and other accommodation to Travellers, with no legislative provision for the NI Housing Executive to either provide caravans themselves or exert a connection between the quality of housing and the money paid out. This is an inefficient and wasteful use of public monies. Moreover, the lack of sufficient sites to meet Travellers' needs remains outstanding.

Potentially significant strides have been made in developing the framework for Travellers' accommodation. Nonetheless, effective provision for Travellers' accommodation will only occur when sufficient decent serviced,

transit and emergency halting Travellers' sites are created. The Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment being conducted by the NI Housing Executive at present is essential to long term effective planning. The assessment must be accurate and then acted on.

There is a much greater focus on Travellers' accommodation and I pay tribute to housing providers, government departments, public authorities, Traveller support groups and Travellers themselves for their active participation in the Travellers' accommodation forum set up by the Commission. There is a need for the forum to continue, ideally through the Department for Communities, until a wider Travellers' forum is set up through The Executive Office, under its Racial Equality Strategy.

My fear remains that without a sharp and continuing focus on the issue, public authorities and government departments will again leave Travellers 'out of sight, out of mind'. We cannot afford that to occur once more.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Les Allamby', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Les Allamby
Chief Commissioner

Overview

Green	Effective implementation	3
Red	No steps to effectively implement	6
Orange/ Red	Limited steps that have had little effect in terms of implementation	10
Orange	Some steps that are assisting with implementation	18
Orange/ Green	Strides have been taken to effectively implement, but outstanding issues	8

Grey recommendations with a star (*) – five recommendations to be implemented within six months

Purple recommendations with no star – 40 recommendations to be implemented within 12 months

Green – Effective implementation

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xii: The NI Housing Executive should introduce a social housing application form that clearly sets out all accommodation options and offers applicants the express opportunity to specify their desire for Traveller-specific accommodation.

12 Month Update: NIHE has agreed inclusion of accommodation options specific to Travellers within the Housing Solutions and Support application form.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xxiii: The NI Housing Executive should ensure that reasonable steps are taken to return property promptly, when evictions take place or Travellers' sites are lawfully closed. The NI Housing Executive should ensure that onerous conditions to prove ownership (for example, a requirement to provide original receipts) are not applied, particularly if there is other suitable proof of ownership.

12 Month Update: NIHE states that to date no evictions have taken place from any Traveller site in NIHE ownership.

Local Councils Recommendation iv: All local Councils should be active members of the NI Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues and should give consideration to developing or strengthening Traveller Forums to consider issues relating to Travellers, including accommodation.

12 Month Update: All local Councils are now active members of the Partnership.

Red – No steps taken to effectively implement

Executive Office Recommendation i and Department for Communities Recommendation v:

The Department for Communities should liaise with the Executive Office to propose an amendment of the Housing (NI) Order 2003, Article 125(6), to enable the NI Housing Executive to provide nomadic housing structures (such as caravans, trailers and chalets), if there is a need. The rents for these structures should be set at an appropriate and affordable level.

12 Month Update: In the absence of a NI Executive, measures have not been taken. DfC has liaised with NIHE and asked it to complete an analysis to assist any policy review. NIHE examination of the issue and a formal request for legislative changes are required before any further consideration by DfC. NIHE is carrying out the analysis as part of the forthcoming Travellers' Accommodation Needs Assessment.

Executive Office Recommendation iv and Department for Communities Recommendation ix:

The Department for Communities should liaise with the Executive Office to propose an amendment of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, Article 67, to extend the duty contained within to all public authorities. This duty requires appropriate arrangements to be made with a view to securing that the various functions of the relevant public authority are carried out with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups.

12 Month Update: In the absence of a NI Executive measures have not been taken. DfC continues to liaise with TEO, timescales will be in line with TEO, should it establish a single or separate thematic working group on Roma and Travellers. Any proposed changes to legislation would be subject to the approval of an incoming Minister and NI Executive, and the agreement of the NI Assembly.

Department for Communities Recommendation vi: The Department for Communities should repeal the Unauthorised Encampments (NI) Order 2005.

12 Month Update: No NI Executive to bring this forward. DfC annually monitors impact of 2005 Order and believe it is applied sensitively, pragmatically, proportionately and is effective in balancing rights. DfC believes there is no existing evidence to support repealing the 2005 Order and is unable to conduct further research on the issue without Ministerial approval. DfC's response does not reflect the evidence provided in the investigation report that 2005 Order has a disproportionate impact on Travellers, given their nomadic lifestyle. It also ignores the investigation's finding that the actual use and threat of the 2005 Order may discourage Travellers from engaging in nomadism. PSNI has committed to engaging in any future consultation on the 2005 Order.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation vii: The NI Housing Executive should ensure the successor strategy to the 'Homelessness Strategy for NI: 2012-2017' makes specific provision for the cultural needs of Travellers.

12 Month Update: Updated strategy has been published and does not make specific provision for the cultural needs of Travellers. The NIHE believes its "person centred" approach is sufficient. NIHE continues to review its Travellers' Strategy. NIHE's Travellers' Accommodation Needs Assessment will form a major part of the Strategy, which is expected to be completed for consultation by 31 March 2020.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xv: The NI Housing Executive should monitor the use of Housing Benefit and take steps to ensure that the accommodation it pays for in the private sector (including caravan, chalets and trailers) are fit for human habitation, adequate and maintained to a suitable standard. This includes supporting the tenant to find suitable alternative accommodation that is safe, affordable and satisfies their cultural needs.

12 Month Update: NIHE does not have the powers to withhold Housing Benefit for sub-standard properties. No NI Executive to examine the case for legal reform on this issue.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xxv: The NI Housing Executive should take reasonable steps to ensure its staff are accessible on a daily basis to Travellers, particularly regarding transit and emergency halting Travellers' sites.

12 Month Update: NIHE is content that it is accessible on a daily basis for all Traveller sites and social housing where Travellers may choose to reside. This fails to address the investigation's findings that the existing system is ineffective in practice.

Orange/Red - Limited steps that have had little effect in terms of implementation

All Public Authorities Recommendation i: All public authorities should consider their obligations towards Travellers in the context of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the NI Act 1998, Section 75. All public authorities should ensure that all relevant staff members are educated on the existence, relevance and effective implementation of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the NI Act 1998, Section 75, as the legislation relate to Travellers and their accommodation.

12 Month Update: NIHE employed Craigavon Travellers Support Group to provide a pilot Traveller Cultural Awareness Training to its research staff in April 2019. NIHE are evaluating the training for future roll-out to other Regional and Housing Services staff involved with Travellers. NIHE are also considering developing an eLearning package for all its staff to raise awareness of Traveller communities. DfC and DfI offer equality training to all its staff that discusses issues in the context of Travellers, but is not specific to Travellers. Apex HA six sessions of Traveller Cultural Awareness Training were provided to 71 staff between April and September 2018. This training was provided to all frontline staff in its Housing, Development and Property Services. This training has been added to Apex's rolling training programme with a three-year refresher. Radius HA and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council referred to its Equality Scheme, but not particular training. Clanmil HA stated it provided training in the past and will continue to do so. Fermanagh and Omagh Council is rolling out training and awareness raising sessions in 2018/2019 and will provide more training as necessary. In December 2018, Belfast City Council hosted a Traveller-led Traveller awareness workshop for staff and the public as part of its DiverseCity programme. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council arrange appropriate training for relevant Council staff. The remaining public authorities have not informed us of specific steps. PSNI are reviewing their training to ensure it is effective. NIFRS has delivered diversity and equality educational training pertaining to Travellers to all relevant personnel in all Area Commands.

All Public Authorities Recommendation ii and Executive Office Recommendation iii: The NI Executive and all relevant public authorities should ensure Traveller support groups are adequately resourced for the work they carry out.

12 Month Update: Apex Housing Association is funding a Good Relations Officer. This Officer is employed by the Migrant Centre NI and has a specific remit for Travellers, Craigavon Traveller Support Committee have had funding for a new role, and DfC have provided funding for Housing Rights to commission research into identifying the housing/accommodation advice needs of Travellers. NIHE's plans for resourcing Traveller support groups that assist the Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment process are unclear. Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council has a Financial Assistance Programme that support groups can apply to. The remaining public authorities did not provide specific steps. Fermanagh and Omagh Council referred to working with Travellers support groups as part of implementing its Action Plan for Black, Minority Ethnic and Travelling Communities, but did not refer to how it ensure such groups are adequately resourced for the work they carry out. Belfast City Council has delivered governance training to Tomé Anosha. The Belfast City Council's Traveller Liaison Officer provides support and advice to Travellers and Traveller support groups. DfI provides grant payments to Community Places, an organisation that provides independent advice and support to marginalised communities, including Travellers.

Department for Communities Recommendation ii: The Department for Communities should promptly publish the findings of its review on the 'Housing Health and Safety Rating System' and set out a reasonable timeframe for implementing its recommendations.

12 Month Update: DfC are considering the fitness standard as part of the review into the role and regulation of private sector. Changes to the fitness standards will require consideration by a Minister.

*** NI Housing Executive Recommendation iv and Housing Associations Recommendation iii:**

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should take immediate steps to ensure that Travellers on all types of Travellers' sites are provided with and sign an agreement attached to their pitch, clearly setting out their rights and responsibilities in an understandable language and format.

12 Month Update: NIHE are content that this was already implemented, but as the investigation found this was not the case in practice. In May 2018, Clanmil HA were endeavouring to reach agreement with NIHE and Belfast City Council to reinstate their services on Glen Road, Belfast. In June 2019, NIHRC understands that neither Clanmil or NIHE are taking responsibility for this site.

*** NI Housing Executive Recommendation v:** The NI Housing Executive should ensure that it submits a completed application for a site licence for all Travellers' sites currently operating unlicensed within six months of the publication of this report. The NI Housing Executive should continue to be required to obtain a site licence for Travellers' sites in NI.

12 Month Update: NIHE made applications to the relevant local Councils for site licences, but there have been significant delays due to the Councils finding the applications made by the NIHE are incomplete or the application does not reflect the actual use of the Travellers' site.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation viii: The NI Housing Executive should ensure that the application and allocation process for social housing requires sufficient consideration of the cultural adequacy of accommodation offered to Travellers, in particular its location, space, family groupings and available services.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xiii: The NI Housing Executive should introduce a waiting list for serviced Travellers' sites in NI. This waiting list should be used, in partnership with the Common Selection Scheme, to allocate pitches on serviced Travellers' sites in NI.

12 Month Update: NIHE met with NIHRC on two occasions to discuss this further. During these meetings clarity was provided as to what this meant and an example of good practice was offered. The NIHE committed to considering further, but there has been no update on the action taken.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xix and Housing Associations Recommendation vii:

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should make reasonable provision for children's play areas within Travellers' accommodation. They should also reasonably accommodate Travellers' non-domestic animals and equipment necessary for traditional trades, including through the provision of grazing land, within Travellers' accommodation.

12 Month Update: NIHE accepts that existing Travellers' sites do not currently provide play areas. A NIHE Consultant Report recommends provision for play areas where feasible, but states this will not be possible on all sites due to space constraints and the spatial requirements of the Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in NI. The Consultant Report seeks to accommodate space for grassed play areas on NIHE owned sites where feasible, however, the NIHE states the provision of designated play areas with play equipment are the responsibility of the local Councils. NIHE will give due consideration to the pending Design Guide for Travellers Sites when planning any new provision for Travellers. Radius HA has stated that where possible it provides play facilities. Radius HA did not comment on non-domestic animals and equipment. Apex HA to add to development guide to take into consideration if and when future schemes are at the planning stage. Clanmil HA stated it currently provides play areas and other open space in line with planning requirements. Any new build provided by Clanmil for grouped housing considered these requirements. Clanmil did not comment on non-domestic animals and equipment.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xvii and Local Councils Recommendation i: The NI Housing Executive, in conjunction with all relevant providers, should take steps to ensure that all required services are adequately available in practice within all Travellers' accommodation and that the provision of these services is sufficiently regulated. In particular, the NI Housing Executive should work with: the local Councils to ensure Travellers have regular refuse collections; with the electricity supplier to ensure Travellers have prompt and consistent access to electricity; and with Royal Mail to ensure Travellers have adequate access to adequate postal services.

12 Month Update: NIHE is content that this is being fulfilled, but as the investigation found when issues arise they are not always adequately dealt with. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council re-established the inter-agency forum to discuss Travellers' issues, including accommodation. Belfast City Council has a Traveller Liaison Officer and has developed a Belfast Interagency and Outcome Group on Travellers. This Outcome Group has adapted the EU's Common Basic Principles to apply specifically to Travellers, which are used to inform the Belfast City Council's integration Programmes. Belfast City Council has also established protocols to deal with emergency situations regarding waste management and infestations, which are reviewed and extensively communicated. Belfast City Council is exploring the formation of a specific sub-group on Travellers' accommodation to complement its Outcomes of Travellers in Belfast Interagency Group. Causeway Coast and Glens Council has a close relationship with local NIHE officers and ensures that all required services are adequately available in practice. Fermanagh and Omagh Council holds bi-monthly meetings with two Traveller Development Officers. Fermanagh and Omagh Council and Derry City and Strabane Council attend the WHSCT Steering Group on Travellers. Newry, Mourne and Down Council utilises the Newry, Mourne and Down Traveller Forum as a vehicle for addressing issues affecting local Travellers. Mid Ulster Council has established a Travellers' Working Group. Ards and Down Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and Mid and East Antrim Council provided no specific steps to ensure any Travellers living in their Council area are provided with adequate services.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xxiv: The NI Housing Executive should ensure Travellers are represented on its consultation forum and the Housing Community Network. It should also ensure consultations with Travellers are meaningful and effective when consulting on planning provision for new and when developing existing Travellers' accommodation.

12 Month Update: NIHE states that it consults at all times with all its customers with regard to upgrading existing provision or delivering new accommodation. This fails to address the investigation's findings that such consultations are often ineffective.

Orange – Some steps that are assisting with implementation

All Public Authorities Recommendation iii: All public authorities should take proactive reasonable steps to support Travellers through the complaints process. This includes ensuring Travellers are aware of the existence of such mechanisms, what their purposes are, how to make a complaint, and the different stages of the process.

12 Month Update: DfC provided funding for Housing Rights to commission research into identifying the housing/accommodation advice needs of Travellers and any barriers that may exist to accessing Housing Rights advice and advocacy services. This report is currently being considered by DfC. Apex HA is actively reviewing its complaints process and is considering how to make it more accessible, including potential for advocacy/additional support for Travellers. This work is being undertaken by the recently employed Good Relations Officer. Clanmil HA reviewed its complaints process in line with the investigation's recommendations. Belfast City Council has a designated Traveller Liaison Officer who works and liaises with Travellers and representative organisations to advise them on the Council's complaints process. Newry, Mourne and Down Council offers the additional option for Travellers to lodge complaints through the Newry, Mourne and Down Traveller Forum. Fermanagh and Omagh Council undertook an improvement project for complaints and participated in a regional review of complaints by NIPSO. DfC, DfI, NIHE, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Fermanagh and Omagh Council, Newry, Mourne and Down Council, Mid Ulster Council and NIFRS are content that their complaints processes are accessible. The remaining public authorities did not provide specific steps.

Executive Office Recommendation ii and Department for Communities Recommendation vii:

The Department for Communities should liaise with the Executive Office on establishing the proposed thematic working group on Roma and Travellers. The work of this group should have sufficient focus on Travellers' accommodation.

12 Month Update: TEO have organised a number of consultation events on this. This is welcome, but such events would not serve as an alternative for a formal working group.

Department for Communities Recommendation i: The Department for Communities should ensure landlords in the private rented sector are aware of their legal obligations to ensure that accommodation is accessible to Travellers without discrimination.

12 Month Update: DfC has issued the relevant information setting out landlords' responsibilities in its newsletter to private landlords. No evidence of a wider ongoing targeted approach.

Department for Communities Recommendation iv: The Department for Communities should promptly update, publish and adequately disseminate guidance on the security of tenure protections for Travellers living in caravans, as contained within the Caravans Act (NI) 2011.

12 Month Update: DfC reviewed Caravans Act 2011 in December 2016. DfC liaised with NIHE to see how to communicate information and guidance to Travellers. NIHE is considering this as part of a review of its Travellers' Accommodation Strategy, how the information provided to Traveller tenants is presented.

Department for Communities Recommendation viii: The Department for Communities should ensure regular, independent, effective, thorough and proactive monitoring of public spending in relation to the provision of Travellers' accommodation. Data relating to the provision of all Travellers' accommodation and financial data should be consistent, centralised, and effectively disaggregated. Data should be publicly available.

12 Month Update: Oversight arrangements with NIHE have been amended from April 2019, changing the monthly governance meetings between DfC and NIHE to quarterly performance meetings. This will still enable DfC to continue to monitor the rate of expenditure of Travellers' sites. DfC has not provided information on the steps it will take to improve financial data related to Travellers' accommodation and ensuring that this is publicly available.

Department for Communities Recommendation x and Department for Infrastructure Recommendation i: The Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure should liaise with the Executive Office in implementing the Racial Equality Strategy. The strategy should consider how to adequately promote tolerance and understanding between Travellers and the settled community in NI. It should also require all the relevant public authorities to report on such actions.

12 Month Update: TEO have run a number of consultation events on establishing a Racial Equality Sub-Group on Travellers. DfC highlighted it was working with TEO on establishing the planned Racial Equality Sub-group on Travellers. DfI stated it continues to work with TEO on implementing the Racial Equality Strategy, but provided no further information.

*** NI Housing Executive Recommendation i and Housing Associations Recommendation i:**

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should urgently review their existing practices and policies to ensure there is sufficient practical support for Travellers transitioning from Travellers' sites to bricks and mortar accommodation. For example, ensuring that Travellers transitioning know and understand the process for accessing electricity and heating, and the process for paying household bills.

12 Month Update: NIHE is content that the practice is already in place, but as the investigation found Travellers did not believe it was effective in practice. Radius HA is content that Housing Officers are engaging with all tenants and ensuring that relevant support is provided. Apex HA reviewed the support available to Travellers to ensure aware of and understand rights and responsibilities as tenants. As recommended by the Migrant Centre, that undertook the review, Apex are currently working to introduce a list of forms of identification to send with offer letter to Travellers to enable these to be available when signing for new tenancies and to assist with the benefit application process. Apex also employed a Good Relations Officer, which will consider how to further implement this recommendation. Clanmil HA reviewed the process to sign-up new tenancies. Clanmil approached the NI Federation of Housing Associations about establishing a Travellers Forum to share best practice.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation vi: The NI Housing Executive should ensure it offers the opportunity for Travellers to present their views on the cultural adequacy of their accommodation when conducting its Travellers' accommodation needs assessments.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation ix: The NI Housing Executive, following a robust assessment of need, should critically assess if there are sufficient serviced, transit and emergency halting Travellers' sites in NI. The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should ensure there are sufficient grouped housing schemes in NI.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation x: The NI Housing Executive should ensure the Travellers' accommodation needs assessments are sufficiently robust to provide a reliable assessment of the housing needs of Traveller communities. This includes providing all Travellers in NI with adequate and accessible opportunities to participate in the assessment. The questions posed should be thorough and impartial. The NI Housing Executive should ensure that the assessment is accurate.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xi: The NI Housing Executive should review its commitments to provide Travellers' site provision in NI (for example, any relevant development plans), to ensure that need is sufficiently met.

12 Month Update: Research Advisory Group was established, which includes NIHRC. NIHE has taken on board comments on the assessment and questionnaire in the planning stages, including those from Travellers. NIHE has appointed Perceptive Insight Market Research LTD to conduct the assessment and were provided with Traveller cultural awareness training. Work commenced in May 2019, with the report expected in Autumn 2019. NIHE has stated it will delay publication of the report, if deemed necessary to ensure the assessment is effective.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xviii: The NI Housing Executive should ensure that provision of services provided to Traveller's sites reflects the actual use of the site. The public authorities should re-categorise sites when there is a change of usage to ensure that all parties are aware of the provision that is required.

12 Month Update: NIHE is using the forthcoming Travellers' accommodation needs assessment to determine usage. However, more can be done in the interim to address this.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xxi and Housing Association Recommendation ix: The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should robustly implement processes that enable Travellers to live safely and securely in their homes without fear of intimidation. This includes conducting effective mediation and effectively implementing procedures set out in antisocial behaviour policies.

12 Month Update: All NIHE tenants are issued with general conditions of tenancy at sign up stage. They are also provided with details of the statutory obligations imposed by the anti-social behaviour provisions contained in the Housing (NI) Order 1983. The NIHE work with all communities to intervene at the earliest possible stage to avoid escalation of anti-social behaviour. Travellers' concerns continue that NIHE and other public authorities are not taking adequate proactive action. Radius HA operates a zero tolerance approach to intimidation involving any its tenants and adopts a cross-agency approach when dealing with intimidation. Radius HA has a detailed Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure and is content it is implemented. Apex HA is currently reviewing its Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure, including engaging with Travellers. Clanmil HA did not comment on this. Aware that there are currently ongoing issues in Clanmil HA properties lived in by Travellers, for example in Bessbrook. Clanmil is taking proactive steps with other relevant authorities to address these issues and enable Travellers to live safely and securely in their homes.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xxii: The NI Housing Executive should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate alternative accommodation is offered close to the original place of residence, when evictions occur or Travellers' sites are lawfully closed. Particular consideration should be given to distance from schools, doctors, family members and source of livelihood for those affected.

12 Month Update: NIHE states that to date no evictions have taken place from any Traveller site in NIHE ownership. The NIHE will always take cognisance of the needs of Traveller families should relocation be necessary. NIHE states that new Patch Manager role will ensure that services are tailored around the individual. In instances where Travellers have been offered alternative accommodation, for example with the closure of Greenbrae, Travellers remain concerned that NIHE is not giving enough consideration to whether the alternative accommodation offered is adequate.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xxvi: The NI Housing Executive should effectively manage Travellers' sites. Travellers should be required to sign a tenancy agreement before moving into Travellers' accommodation. This includes transit and emergency halting Travellers' sites. The NI Housing Executive should have mechanisms in place to ensure this is a speedy and efficient process. It should not subject Travellers to delays in accessing culturally adequate accommodation with adequate services and facilities.

12 Month Update: NIHE responded that all legal site users are required to sign the relevant licence as per the 2011 Caravans Act (NI). Where sites are fit for purpose Travellers can access the site and use all facilities accordingly. NIHE always endeavour to complete repairs within all agreed timescales. Steps have been taken to introduce new patch managers. However, there is no clear evidence that this issue has been fully and effectively addressed.

Local Councils Recommendation ii: Local Councils should take reasonable steps to prevent undue delays in the planning application process relating to Travellers' accommodation. They should also ensure that all planning decision-making processes are fair, impartial and transparent.

12 Month Update: Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council is making a concerted effort to meet statutory planning targets. Fermanagh and Omagh Council is content that it is taking all reasonable steps to ensure planning is processed promptly. Belfast City Council and Fermanagh and Omagh Council have made express provision for Traveller-specific accommodation in their Draft Plan Strategy. Mid Ulster Council is content that planning applications for Travellers' sites are dealt with in timely and transparent manner. It offers pre-application discussions and fully appraises needs and options to prevent delays. Newry, Mourne and Down Council officials have met with planning officers to advise of investigation's recommendations to prevent undue delays. Ards and Down Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Council, Derry City and Strabane Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Mid and East Antrim Council provided no specific steps for ensuring that all planning decision-making processes are fair, impartial and transparent.

Local Councils Recommendation iii: Local Councils should take proactive reasonable steps to ensure Travellers' sites are licenced when required. Local Councils should regularly monitor the licencing of Travellers' sites and be aware when sites require a licence, whether they are licenced and when the licence will expire. Local Councils should ensure all licences meet the minimum standard of provision and safety as required by the model licence, developed by the Department for Infrastructure.

12 Month Update: Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council is proactively engaging and advising NIHE. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council highlighted that the NIHE's application for Legahory Close did not reflect actual use. All Travellers' sites in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council area are to be licenced imminently and the Council plans to carry out, at minimum, annual revisits to the sites to assess compliance with the site licence. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council welcomed clarification from DfI on the applicability and scope of site licences, but raised concerns that Model Conditions are out-dated, do not meet needs of Travellers and inconsistent in terms of language, definitions and standards between legislation and guidance documents. It was also raised that the Design Guide for Travellers Sites in NI is basic, outdated and not fit for purpose. The NIFRS Fire Safety Guide for Caravan Site Owners was also welcomed. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council have also established a working group attended by NI Council representatives with Travellers sites in their area. Causeway Coast and Glens Council's Environmental Health team and Fermanagh and Omagh Council take reasonable steps to ensure Travellers' sites are licenced when required. Belfast City Council confirmed none of the sites in its area have a licence. The Belfast City Council's Traveller Liaison Officer has facilitated the development of a working group consisting of all relevant officers with internal expertise on licencing. Derry City and Strabane Council returned Daisyfield application for being incomplete and Ballyarnett application because it did not reflect actual use. Mid Ulster is seeking advice on how to proceed with licencing an existing Travellers' site in its area, as the site has changed in character over time. Mid Ulster Council will commence a site licencing process for future Travellers' sites. Newry, Mourne and Down Council are working with private owners to ensure Travellers' site is licenced. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council highlighted that if the NIHE are to comply with the conditions attached to a site licence, careful management of the site including provision and maintenance of the facilities/amenities will be a necessity.

Equality Commission NI Recommendation i: The Equality Commission NI should issue a code of practice on the elimination of discrimination in housing. This should include the private rented sector.

12 Month Update: ECNI submitted a draft Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing to the OFMDFM (now The Executive Office) on 27 October 2009. ECNI was advised in early 2010 that the approval process was delayed due to publication and consultation at the time on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy. The draft Code has not progressed. In light of ECNI's current and ongoing work to promote equality in housing and communities as a result of the publication of Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities and the associated policy recommendations, ECNI considers that the most effective use of its resources at present is to continue to liaise with NIHE and others to promote equality in provision. ECNI is also mindful of the absence of the NI Executive and the implication for approval processes for any code of practice with the Executive Office.

Orange/Green - Strides have been taken to effectively implement, but outstanding issues

Department for Communities Recommendation iii: The Department for Communities should carry out a prompt and thorough review of the 'Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in NI' and ensure the minimum standards are sufficiently prescriptive and reflective of human rights. It should ensure the updated guide includes the requirements that accommodation is accessible to persons with disabilities; children's play areas are provided; facilities necessary for a nomadic way of life are available; and traffic safety measures are in place. The updated guide should be published and be subject to a commitment to further periodic reviews within a reasonable timescale.

12 Month Update: DfC has issued an updated design guide for Travellers sites in NI for a targeted consultation, including Travellers. DfC aims to publish the new design guide by March 2020. DfC has been working with DfI and NIFRS to ensure that the new design guide complements any new Model Conditions for Site Licences in NI (currently out for consultation) and NIFRS published Fire Safety Guide for Caravan Site Operators.

Department for Infrastructure Recommendation i: The Department for Infrastructure should review the legal and policy framework concerning site licences. This should include the development of a model site licence setting out the minimum standard of provision and safety requirements for each type of Travellers site in NI, along with enforcement powers for any breach.

12 Month Update: DfI wrote to Councils and NIHE clarifying need for site licences and legislative requirements. DfI reviewed the legal and policy framework for site licences, including requirements and updating the model licence. DfI considers the legal framework to be satisfactory and broadly in line with the rest of UK. DfI is consulting on updated Model Conditions for site licencing in NI.

*** NI Housing Executive Recommendation ii:** The NI Housing Executive should immediately carry out health and safety assessments of all Travellers' sites and address the hazards identified. In addressing these hazards, the NI Housing Executive should ensure that washhouses on Travellers' sites are safe, fit for purpose and appropriate for NI's climate. The NI Housing Executive should conduct regular health and safety assessments of all Travellers' sites and ensure any identified hazards are adequately and promptly addressed in the future.

12 Month Update: Immediate health and safety assessments have been carried out, with some work undertaken. NIHE is in the process of appointing a consultant to look at option for the replacement of washhouse blocks at The Glen, Coalisland. NIHE will consult further with residents of the site when viable options have been identified. NIHE is working to appoint a consultant for the provision of amenity pods at Ballyarnett Park, Derry/Londonderry. NIHE states weekly management checks are being carried out of Traveller-specific accommodation.

*** NI Housing Executive Recommendation iii and Housing Associations Recommendation ii:**

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should ensure that adequate fire safety measures are in place and are adhered to within all Travellers' accommodation. This includes ensuring that all fire safety measures are functional, regularly checked and reviewed. In addition, they should ensure that all tenants within Travellers' accommodation are sufficiently aware of the fire safety measures in place and of actions to be taken in the event of a fire.

12 Month Update: NIHE and NIFRS confirmed that all its Travellers' sites have been fully inspected and comply with NIFRS' recommendations. Fire awareness visits, accompanied with representatives or responsible persons have been implemented and are ongoing across NI. Since 31 January 2019, NIFRS has had over 70 engagement activities with the Travellers communities in NI. NIFRS has developed and implemented a system and methodology to capture performance and evaluate fire safety engagement within Travellers' accommodation. NIFRS' Home Fire Safety Check pro forma has been amended to specifically record engagement with Travellers. NIFRS published a Fire Safety Guide for Caravan Site Operators on 6 November 2018, which includes fire safety recommendations for Travellers' sites. Some Travellers are still concerned at the lack of on-site fire safety measures. Radius HA is content that all statutory and regulatory fire safety measures are in place for all accommodation. Radius is working with NIFRS to offer awareness sessions on fire safety to tenants. Apex HA reviewed the support available to Travellers to ensure sufficiently aware of fire safety measures and actions. Apex employed a Good Relations Officer, which will consider how to further implement this recommendation. Clanmil HA is content that its homes are built to building control regulations and meet fire safety regulations, stating it had a complaints programme in place. NIFRS has developed and implemented a system and methodology to capture performance and evaluate fire safety engagement within Travellers' accommodation. NIFRS' Home Fire Safety Check pro forma has been amended to specifically record engagement with Travellers. Since 31 January 2019, NIFRS has had over 70 engagement activities with the Travellers communities in NI.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xiv and Housing Associations Recommendation v:

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should ensure all required maintenance is carried out effectively within a reasonable timeframe.

12 Month Update: NIHE is content that this is being fulfilled, but the investigation found this is not the always case in practice. Radius HA is content that tenants are adequately informed of maintenance services and timeframes – provided in tenant handbooks, at sign-up stage, at pre-tenancy class, at six week early tenancy counselling visit and at any stage where any tenant is reporting a repair. Apex HA continues to monitor its maintenance procedures and has reported its response rate to grouped housing schemes is between 86 and 91 per cent. Clanmil HA stated it currently provides maintenance service in line with Department for Communities recommended timelines.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xvi and Housing Associations Recommendation vi:

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should ensure that the accommodation needs of Travellers with disabilities are addressed in line with all legislative requirements, and that moving homes is a last resort. Travellers with disabilities should be made aware of their rights regarding accommodation adaptations. This information should be disseminated in an accessible and understandable format.

12 Month Update: NIHE is content that this is being fulfilled, but as the investigation found this is not always the case in practice, particularly concerning accessible information.

NI Housing Executive Recommendation xx and Housing Associations Recommendation viii:

The NI Housing Executive and relevant housing associations should take reasonable steps to ensure Travellers in standard social housing understand the tenancy agreement they are signing. This includes understanding their responsibilities as tenants and the landlord's responsibilities.

12 Month Update: All NIHE tenancy agreements are read out to new tenants and include roles and responsibilities of both landlord and tenant as part of the revised starter packs for all new tenants and new Patch Manager role. The additional step of ensuring understanding appears to be missing. Radius HA is content staff take all reasonable steps to ensure tenants understand rights and responsibilities – one to one interview with a dedicated Housing Officers and a pre-tenancy class. Apex HA reviewed the support available to Travellers to ensure aware of and understand rights and responsibilities as tenants. Apex employed a Good Relations Officer, which will consider how to further implement this recommendation. Clanmil HA is reviewing reasonable steps required for all social housing tenants so that they understand their tenancies.

Housing Associations Recommendation iv: The relevant housing associations should assess how accommodation in grouped housing schemes are allocated, to ensure they maximise the available resources. They should also review the utility of grouped housing schemes as an approach to addressing housing need within Traveller communities.

12 Month Update: Radius HA would be keen to participate in a review of grouped housing schemes. Apex HA reviewed DfC's approved allocation process for grouped housing to see if needs amending. Apex has made amendments including offering tenants the opportunity to preserve unique cultural identity and culture, offering appropriate assistance ensuring tenants' responsibilities arising from this transition are understood and tenants understand the tenancy agreement they are signing. Future meetings relating to Travellers are planned by Apex between select Housing Associations who have grouped housing schemes to share best practice and learning. Apex's final report is to be published in late 2019. Apex also employed a Good Relations Officer, which will consider how to further implement this recommendation. Clanmil HA stated it currently allocates grouped housing schemes on a DfC approved lettings policy for homes in grouped housing. This letting policy sits outside the Common Selection Scheme and should reflect the cultural needs of Traveller families.

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