



Department for

Communities

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Audit of Inequalities

2026



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In line with our equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department for Communities (DfC) is required by the Equality Commission to develop a Section 75 Equality Action Plan which sets out how the Department will undertake the promotion of equality and good relations.

This audit will set the framework for DfC to address inequalities impacting on Section 75 categories relevant to its functions and will enable the Department to identify areas where it can better promote equality of opportunity and good relations for our service users and those affected by our policies.

About the Department for Communities

DfC has strategic responsibility for equality, anti-poverty, sports, arts and culture, languages, finding employment, historic environment, housing, regeneration, benefits and pensions, community and voluntary sector development, social legislation and child support.

Strategic Priorities

In supporting and advising the Minister, the Department's main functions include:

- the promotion of healthy housing and the provision of decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support services
- a social welfare system including focused support to the most disadvantaged areas
- providing training and support to jobseekers and employers
- bringing divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace
- supporting local Government to deliver effective public services
- maximising public benefits from the culture, arts and leisure sectors
- tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity by reducing poverty, promoting and protecting the interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, and other socially excluded groups; addressing inequality and disadvantage.

Work and Health

The Work & Health Group is focused on helping people improve their lives by helping them into work, providing support to those who are unable to work and positively working with those people who won't work.

Labour Market Policy and Delivery

responsible for the design, development and delivery of labour market policy across 35 Jobs & Benefits offices. The primary purpose is to ensure that we have the appropriate pathways, and provision is in place, to help, support and encourage people to move them closer to work, into work and back to work. We also want to ensure people are retained in work and have opportunities for progression.

Social Security Policy and Legislation Division

responsible for the design and delivery of policy and legislation for social security benefits, state and private pensions and child maintenance, maintaining parity with the Department for Work and Pensions as required. Also responsible for the policy and legislation for Northern Ireland specific welfare schemes, including, Discretionary Support and Welfare Supplementary Payments.

Benefit Delivery

responsible for the delivery of Universal Credit (Service Centres – Belfast, Foyle and Newry), Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Finance Support (including Discretionary Support and Social Fund) Maternity Allowance and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit. The key focus at present is the continued delivery of strong performance while maintaining the progress to date in aiming to successfully deliver managed migration 'Move to UC' by March 2026.

Central Services

The new Directorate consolidates several functions that were previously dispersed across the Group. Its creation aims to streamline internal support mechanisms, improve alignment of operational and strategic functions and enhance efficiency in delivering services across the Group.

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Young people (18-24 year olds) have the lowest working age employment rates and the highest rates of unemployment and economic inactivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit Summary of Statistics, Department for Communities (DfC) • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2025 (DfC, November 2025) • Labour Market Report and the Labour Force Survey, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). • Epic Futures NI
<p>People with dependants or caring responsibilities may be more likely to be economically inactive and unable to access the labour market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey (NISRA) • Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland (Queens University, October 2023) • Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland (Department for the Economy) • Economic Inactivity, Who, What, Where, Why? (Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC), January 2024) • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2025 (DfC, November 2025) • Epic Futures NI
<p>People with a disability and/or health conditions may experience barriers of economic participation, social isolation and poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey (NISRA) • University of Ulster Economic Policy Centre Research Data • Annual Population Survey (ONS) • The employment of disabled people 2025 - GOV.UK (Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)) • Economic Inactivity, Who, What, Where, Why? (UUEPC, January 2024) • Labour Force Survey – Disability employment GAP in NI Disability Research conducted in conjunction with Analytics Division and Ulster University. • Disability Employment Rate Gap 2020 (NISRA, October 2021) • NI Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2023/24 (DfC, March 2025) • Individual Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2023/24 (NISRA, March 2025)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Britain Working White Paper (GOV.UK, November 2024) • Keep Britain Working: Final report (GOV.UK, November 2025) • Epic Futures NI
<p>Adults aged 50-64 are at higher risk of economic inactivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey (NISRA) • Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland (Queens University, October 2023) • Economic Inactivity, Who, What, Where, Why (UUEPC, January 2024) • JobStart 50+ Evaluation Report (Ulster University EPIC Futures NI). Prepared by the EPIC Futures NI team from Ulster University following conclusion of JobStart 50+ Pilot Scheme. • Epic Futures NI
<p>Women may experience barriers to employment and economic participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2025 (DfC, November 2025) • NI Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2023/24 (DfC, March 2025) • A Scoping Review of the Literature on Poverty in Northern Ireland (DfC, December 2021) • Northern Ireland Labour Market report (NISRA, December 2025)

Operational Delivery

The Operational Delivery Group manages the Child Maintenance Service and aspects of welfare delivered through Pensions, Disability & Benefit Security, including Fraud and Error Reduction.

The DWP Services Directorate

delivers a range of services on behalf of DWP to GB citizens and has key responsibility under Service Level Agreements to help people access and receive the benefits, supports, and services they are entitled to. These include Child Maintenance, Working Age and Disability-related benefits, Universal Credit, Retirement Services, Cost-of-Living payments, and Debt Management services.

The Pensions, Disability & Carers Directorate

delivers disability, pensions, bereavement services and welfare supplementary payments in Northern Ireland. It has responsibility for administering financial support for older people including those on low incomes; for those who have experienced a bereavement; and for children and adults impacted by the additional cost associated with a health condition or disability. The Directorate also delivers a programme of continuous improvement and modernisation of services through the implementation of digital functionality across all business areas.

Debt Management, Benefit Security, Make the Call Wraparound Service & NI Child Maintenance Service

The division is made up of the following areas:

- Debt Management is responsible for effective and efficient recovery of Government debt, protecting public funds, and providing support to customers.
- Benefit Security (BS) takes the lead in counter fraud and error activity. Our teams work across DfC to prevent, detect, correct and investigate suspected fraud and error within the benefit system.
- Make the Call Wraparound's purpose is to connect with people to ensure they are receiving the benefits, supports and services to which they are entitled. The service is delivered through partnerships across a range of government Departments and the Voluntary and Community sector.
- The Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service is responsible for making sure parents living apart from their children contribute financially by paying child maintenance. For parents who can't make their own child maintenance arrangement, Child Maintenance Service can help them to set up an arrangement.

Digital, Security and Information Services

is responsible for a range of specialist services within the Department relating to the use and security of information and the management/transformation of its ICT. It also provides a range of advice and support services to business areas and assurance to the DfC Board on cyber security.

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Child Maintenance Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are more likely to be living in poverty (23% in relative poverty before housing costs, and 20% in absolute poverty before housing costs, compared to 17% and 15% respectively in the whole population in 2023/24). • Women may experience barriers to employment and economic participation. • People with dependants or caring responsibilities may be more likely to be economically inactive and unable to access the labour market. • 94% of CMS paying customers are male and 74% are aged between 30-49 years old as per the most recent Northern Ireland CMS published statistics (Data to June 2025). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loneliness, Social Isolation and COVID-19 (Local Government Association, 21/12/2020) • Pension Credit: Estimates of Benefit Take-up 2017/18 (DfC, 29/10/2020) • NI Benefits Statistics Summary August 2021 (DfC, 24/11/2021)
<p>Make the Call Wraparound Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people may experience social isolation and income poverty. • High levels of poverty are more likely to be experienced by people with disabilities (19% of people living with a disabled person compared to 17% without in relative poverty before housing costs in 2023/24), and people with dependants (18% of working-age adults with children compared to 13% of those without in relative poverty before housing costs in 2023/24). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Report on the Social Return on Investment of the Make the Call Wraparound Service (Ipsos, June 2021) • NISRA Data Portal • NI Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2023/24 (DfC, March 2025) • Health Inequalities Annual Report 2020 (Department of Health, March 2020)

Engaged Communities

The Engaged Communities Group protects and provides access to our historic environment and records of historical, social and cultural importance. Supports our libraries and museums, creative industries and arts sector. Promotes our language and cultural sectors. Promotes social inclusion. Provides strategic direction for our sports and physical activity sectors.

Active Communities

has responsibility for policy development and delivery; governance and accountability and operational management. It includes Sports and Lottery Branch, arms length body sponsor role for Sport NI, The Northern Ireland Football Fund (TNIFF), Casement Park Project Team and ECG Support Office.

Central Policy Division

has responsibility for the cross-divisional policy issues, equality and safeguarding. The Central Policy Division is also responsible for leading on the development, publication, monitoring and reporting of the Executive's Strategies for Poverty, Disability, Active Ageing, LGBTQI+ and Gender Equality. The Directorate also leads DfC preparations for the UK's future relationship with the EU.

Culture Division has responsibility for policy development and supporting knowledge, learning and participation across a range of areas within NI's Culture sector, including arts and creative industries, community festivals, museums & libraries. The division supports promotion and use of Irish language and culture, Ulster-Scots language and culture and sign language.

Historic Environment Division (HED)

surveys, records and maintains an archive about the historic environment and designates our most important features as: Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens. It also protects, maintains and provides access (where possible) to 187 State Care Monuments. The Division includes the following branches: Heritage Advice and Regulation; Heritage Buildings Designation; Heritage Development and Change; State Care Heritage; State Care Operations; Records and Designation; Central Admin and Projects.

Public Records Office (PRONI) receives, catalogues and preserves the public records of Government Departments, courts of law, public bodies and non-departmental Public Bodies. It also records material deposited by private individuals, churches, businesses and institutions.

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>ECG Support Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to arts, cultural, heritage and active recreation and venues and activities by people with disabilities and older people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Audits completed by Councils • Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey 2023/24 (NISRA) • The programme has been independently reviewed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Disability Sports NI (DSNI) between 2018 and 2020 – Disability Action 2022 and 2024 • An internal evaluation of the programme was carried out by 2020 and 2022
<p>Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in sport and physical activity. Data indicates less participation by females, older people (over 45), racial group, marital status, LGBT+, people with a disability and people with dependants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey 2024/25 (NISRA) • ‘Sport Matters - Beyond 2020’ a research document prepared by the Department for Communities Professional Services Unit • ‘Experience of sport by adults in Northern Ireland (Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2024/25) • Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport Review (TRARIIS) (UK Sport, June 2021) • The Children’s Sport Participation and Physical Activity study 2022 • Young People’s Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2022 • A review into National Sports Governing Bodies response to LGB&T inclusion. The National LGB&T Partnership 2016 • Research and outputs from engagement and consultation exercises to inform the Active Living strategy in particular insights into the experiences of Section 75 groups particularly those with no or little local data sources e.g. political opinion, sexual orientation (Active Living- Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland, DfC, March 2022)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of additional data and research has been provided by Sport NI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data survey – Sport NI EDI network event (October 2024). Survey of audience – Sport NI Sports System Investment Governing bodies (SSIGB) EDI report identifying the EDI focused investment for the 2025/26 programme, along with the membership data for the specific demographics of female and people with a disability
<p>Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data shows lower participation rates in the arts for men, Catholics, those living in the most deprived areas, and people with dependants. • Attendance at arts events decreases with age, and people with a disability are also less likely to attend an arts event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey – Experience of Culture, Arts & Heritage by adults 2024-25 • Arts Council NI’s Annual Investment Survey 2024-25 • Arts Council NI’s Audit of Inequalities 2017-2022 • The Equality Commission NI’s Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland Statement • The Good Work Review job quality in the Creative Industries report by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre
<p>Public Libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicates men and boys, adults aged 45 and older, adults without dependants and adults with disabilities were less likely to use a public library. • People living in the most deprived areas are also less likely to use a public library compared to those in the least deprived areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey – Experience of Culture, Arts & Heritage by adults 2024-25. • Main report for the Participation Survey (May 2023 to March 2024) (England only) • National Museums NI Annual Exit Surveys 2025-26

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Museums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicates adults from a Catholic background, adults aged over 45, heterosexual or straight adults, adults with disabilities and adults without dependants were less likely to visit museums. • Adults living in the most deprived or rural areas were also less likely to visit museums. • Exit survey data for April-September 2025 indicates adults whose day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months are less likely to visit museums. • Adults from NI whose ethnicity is not white and those of a Catholic background are less likely to visit museums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey – Experience of Culture, Arts & Heritage by adults 2024-25. • Main report for the Participation Survey (May 2023 to March 2024) (England only) • National Museums NI Annual Exit Surveys 2025-26
<p>Sign Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to information and services for Deaf British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language users. (Disability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous Household Survey (NISRA) • NI Census 2021 data (NISRA) • Review of Department for Communities Funded Sign Language Provision in Northern Ireland (Queens University Belfast, 2025) • Ongoing engagement with Deaf sector through meetings of Sign Language Partnership Group (DfC promoted ongoing engagement) • Post project evaluation reports from DfC funded Sign Language projects (DfC internal documents) • Sign Language Network: public talks on academic topics relating to Sign Language funded by the Department (Centre for Translation and Interpreting, Queen’s University Belfast)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024/25, 64% of adults in Northern Ireland had visited a place of historic interest. A higher proportion of adults from the Protestant community had visited a place of historic interest within the previous year (70%) than those from the Catholic community (57%). (Religious belief) In 2024/25, 64% of adults in Northern Ireland had visited a place of historic interest. Of those, adults with a disability were less likely to have visited a place of historic interest than those without a disability (56% and 67% respectively). (Disability) Older people and people with a disability are less likely to visit a place of historic interest in state care. (Disability) Regeneration of housing supports delivery in areas of high need, particularly smaller (single occupancy) and older households; accessibility is also a factor in relation to the latter. (Anti-Poverty Strategy) Buildings on the Heritage at Risk register NI are more likely to be within areas of deprivation (68%) than not (32%). (Anti-Poverty Strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NISRA Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey – Experience of Culture, Arts & Heritage by adults 2024-25. DfC Historic Environment: Wellbeing and Inclusion Pilot 2024/25 Architectural Heritage Fund NI Heritage Housing Strategic Outline Report, which references the 2021 Census. Ulster Architectural Heritage - Heritage at Risk NI (HARNI) Project End of Year Reports 23-24 and 24-25
<p>Irish Language Strategy and Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those aged 45 and over, Protestants, and adults with a disability are less likely to have knowledge of the Irish Language. Those aged under 45, females, Catholics and adults without a disability are less likely to have knowledge of the Ulster Scots Language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and use of Irish and Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland 2024/25 (Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey 2022/23) Profiling the Irish language in Northern Ireland (QUB - Shuttleworth, I., Hughes, J., Lowry, E., Ijpelaar, J., McAuley, R., & Lyness, D. (2022) <p>Language Sections within the following surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey NI Census
<p>Public Record Office of Northern Ireland</p>	<p>The 2023/24 Digest of Statistics recorded 41% of new registered visitors were aged 65 years or over. This was underpinned by the 2023/24 Continuous Household Survey which recorded that adults aged 45 and over were more likely to have used PRONI services than those under 45.</p>

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Executive Social Strategies</p> <p>Anti-Poverty Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are more likely to be living in poverty than the population as a whole (23% in relative poverty before housing costs (BHC) and 20% in absolute poverty BHC compared to 17% and 15% respectively for the whole population). • People with dependants are more likely to be in or at risk of falling into poverty (18% of working age adults with children in relative poverty BHC compared to 13% of those without in 2023/24). • Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s report on ‘Poverty in Northern Ireland 2022 highlighted that: In 2015-20, the poverty rate for people in households headed by someone from a minority ethnic group or of mixed ethnicity (32%) in Northern Ireland was almost double that of households headed by white people (18%). • Single working age adults were more likely to be in relative poverty when compared to couples in 2023/24. The percentage of single working adults in relative poverty (BHC) was 19% whereas the percentage of couples in relative poverty (BHC) was 12%. • The percentage of children in relative poverty for lone parent families was 35% (BHC), whereas the percentage of children in low income households for couples with children was 19% (BHC). • In 2023/24, adult females were more likely to be in relative poverty, at 17% compared to 15% of adult males (BHC). • In 2023/24, 16% of male pensioners were in relative poverty (BHC) compared to 21% of female pensioners. • Those living in families where someone has a disability experience higher levels of poverty (19% BHC) than those living in families where no-one has a disability (17% BHC). • In 2023-24, 18% of Catholics and 20% of Protestants lived in relative poverty Before Housing Costs (BHC). A lower proportion (14%) of those classified as “No religion” were in relative poverty (BHC). From 2002/03 to 2015/16, a higher proportion of Catholics than Protestants were in relative poverty (BHC), however since then this has fluctuated. 	<p>There is a wide range of data and research available on poverty in relation to NI. The following is not exhaustive, but a collection of key reports would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Scoping Review of the Literature on Poverty in Northern Ireland (DfC, December 2021) • Recommendations for an Anti-Poverty Strategy (DfC Expert Advisory Panel Report, December 2020) • NI Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2023/24 (DfC, March 2025) • Income dynamics: Income movements and the persistence of low income, 2010 to 2023 (DWP, March 2025). • Poverty in Northern Ireland 2025 (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2025) • Measuring Poverty 2024 Report (Social Metrics Commission, November 2024) • Destitution in the UK 2023 (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, October 2023) • Summary of Policy Positions Relating to Poverty and Socio-economic Disadvantage (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, November 2020)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>LGBTQI+ Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An estimated 2.1% of the population in NI identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual. The proportion who identified as LGB decreases with age, from 4.6% of 16–24-year olds to 0.3% of those aged 65+. • LGBTQI+ people are often under represented or there is a lack positive role models or imagery used. • The evidence base for an effective assessment of inequality and relative disadvantage by sexual orientation and gender identity is deficient and has major gaps. • Almost one in five LGBT people (18%) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity while trying to get a job. • One in eight LGBT people (12 per cent) avoid going to the gym or participating in sports groups because of fear of discrimination and harassment. • LGBT people face homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other barriers to participating in sport. • Almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. • Lack of LGBT safe emergency accommodation for LGBT people fleeing homophobia, transphobia, domestic abuse or sexual violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 Census in Northern Ireland • Promoting Positive Attitudes (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland) • Government Equalities Office – National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) review on LGBT inequalities • Expert Advisory Panel Report for LGBTQI+ Strategy 2020 • LGBT in Britain – Work Report (Stonewall, April 2018) • National LGBT Survey – Government Equalities Office (UK, 2018) • Out for Sport (Equality Network) • LGBT in Britain – Home and Communities (Stonewall) • Work is planned within the Department to collect further LGBTQI+ data, including on experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in NI and data on housing and homelessness.
<p>Gender Equality Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women especially those with dependants or caring responsibilities may be more likely to work part time or in temporary employment. • Women are more likely than men to have caring responsibilities. • Women are more likely to be economically inactive. • Women are likely to earn less than men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in Northern Ireland 2023 (NISRA, October 2024) • ICTU Childcare Report (Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee, October 2020) • “Insecure and Uncertain”: Precarious Work in the Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Winter 2017) • Will I Care? – The Likelihood of Being a Carer in Adult Life (CarersUK, November 2019) • Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency • Northern Ireland Labour Market Report (NISRA, November 2025)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Active Ageing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people experience relative poverty (after housing costs) and absolute poverty (after housing costs) at a lower level than the general population. • Older people experience difficulty in accessing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – services – appropriate accommodation – digital exclusion • Older people are more likely to feel events are influenced by outside factors, making it beyond an individual’s control to shape the events of their life. • Older people (state pension age) are more likely to be providing informal care than any individual (9% compared to 8% in 2023/24). As people age there is an increasing risk of long standing illnesses which can impact on mobility and independence (49% of state pension age adults have a disability compared to 25% of all individuals in 2023/24). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2023/24 (NISRA, March 2025) • NI Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2023/24 (DfC, March 2025) • Lived Experience 2021 Report (Age NI, September 2021) • The Family Resources Survey: Northern Ireland 2023/24 (DfC, May 2025) • Housing and Communities’ Inequalities in Northern Ireland (Centre for Housing Policy & University of York, June 2015) • The House Condition Survey 2016 (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, May 2018)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Disability Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households with a disabled adult are more likely to experience food insecurity (15% compared to 9% in 2023/24). • Disabled people have significantly lower personal wellbeing than people without disability. • Disabled people, people with learning disabilities and parents of disabled children have reported severe impacts relating to Covid-19 and the response to it. Impacts captured included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Less support from health professionals – Financial impacts – Less access to formal and informal support for disabled children – Decline in the mental health and wellbeing of disabled children. • Disabled adults are less likely to be employed than non-disabled adults. This Disability employment gap is higher in NI than elsewhere in the UK. The Disability employment gap is wider for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – disabled men – older (aged 50 to 64) disabled people – disabled people with no qualifications • Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – working in lower-skilled occupations – self-employed – working part-time (and subsequently less hours). • The ability of people with learning disabilities to live independently away from parents and/or congregated institution-like settings is a persistent inequality not experienced by non-disabled people. • Disabled people may need extra support to live independently. • Disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members. • Disabled people of all ages face delays in securing occupational therapists and funding to ensure their homes are adapted to meet their needs, especially in the private market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Family Resources Survey: Northern Ireland 2023-2024 (DfC, May 2025) • Individual Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2023/24 (NISRA, March 2025) • The Employment of Disabled People 2025 (Gov.uk Department for Work & Pensions, June 2025) • The Impact of Covid-19 on People with Learning / Intellectual Disabilities (Ulster University, December 2021) • Disability Employment Gap in Northern Ireland 2020 (NISRA October 2021) • Disability within the Northern Ireland Labour Market (DfC, June 2023) • The Impact of Coronavirus – A Year in the Life of Families Raising Disabled and Seriously Ill Children and Young People (Family Fund, April 2021) • The Impact of Covid-19 on Disabled People in NI (Disability Action, September 2020) • Disability Strategy (DfC Expert Advisory Panel, December 2020)

Housing and Sustainability

The Housing and Sustainability Group aims to deliver decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support, to tackle area-based deprivation and to create urban centres which help bring divided communities together. Housing and Sustainability Group plays a key role in the delivery of the Department for Communities common purpose of supporting people, building communities and shaping places. Key priorities for the Group's area include: Ensuring the provision of decent, affordable sustainable homes. Providing housing support. Leading on the Department's climate change agenda. Improving safety in residential buildings in Northern Ireland.

Social Housing Policy & Oversight

leads on social housing policy, the Housing Executive Revitalisation Programme, and sponsorship of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, including policy and oversight of delivery of the new build social housing programme and Supporting People Programme and the Affordable Warmth Programme.

Housing Supply Policy

leads on aspects of Housing Policy, the private rented sector, intermediate housing, homelessness policy and the development and implementation of a Housing Supply Strategy.

The Climate Change Division leads on the Residential Buildings Sector of the Climate Action Plan and is responsible for the wider Departmental Climate Action Plan, residential buildings decarbonisation and the development of a Warm Healthy Homes Strategy and the Warm Healthy Homes Scheme.

Moving Northern Ireland towards Net Zero by 2050 as stipulated by the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 is a hugely challenging target and will require a significant level of cross-departmental working and collaboration.

The Residential Building Safety Team

was established to implement the recommendations of the Improving Safety in High Rise Residential Buildings in Northern Ireland expert panel report.

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Supporting People Policy</p> <p>People with a disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need extra support to live independently. • Older People may need extra support to live independently. • Younger People may need extra support to live independently. • Survivors of Domestic Abuse may need extra support to live independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Accommodation Based Services Funded by Supporting People (RSM McClure Watters 2015) • Statistics, Perceptions and the Role of the Supporting People Programme (North Harbour Consulting 2014) • The Experience of Learning Disabled People Resettled from Long Stay Hospitals (North Harbour Consulting 2017) • Strategic Needs Assessment for the Supporting People Programme (DfC, DoH and DoJ 2017) • Campbell Tickell Research following 2015 Review of Supporting People

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Housing Strategy</p> <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentials in the housing outcomes of people of different gender were apparent in the following circumstances: Overall, households with female household reference persons have smaller homes and are more frequently in rented accommodation than households with male household reference persons. Single women that live alone, however, obtain larger homes and are more frequently in owner-occupation than single men living alone, suggesting that intersections with dependants, marital status or living arrangements and income is important to housing outcomes. Other households of female household reference persons are more frequently found in social housing than those of male household reference persons. Lone parents were overwhelmingly female and predominantly in either the private or social renting sector; and Older women more frequently experience poor housing conditions than older men in rural areas, while in urban areas the situation is reversed and older men experience poorer housing conditions than older women. Rates of relative poverty in the private rented sector increase once housing costs are taken into account less for women (20% to 25%) rather than men (15% to 21%); but the proportion of females in relative poverty was larger than for males for all tenure types both before and after housing costs. <p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing outcomes are influenced by age in early adulthood, or the transition to adulthood, and in later life; Indicators of inequalities for different age groups were found as follows: The prevalence of poor physical housing condition in Northern Ireland's stock has reduced but older people remain more likely to have inadequate non-decent housing conditions than younger age groups. Owner-occupiers constitute the largest pool of older people in poor housing conditions. Previous reports have highlighted this differential suggesting it is a persistent problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing and Communities' Inequalities in Northern Ireland (Alison Wallace, June 2015) Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence Report (DfC, December 2021) The Equality Commission NI 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland' (April 2017) NISRA Statistical Bulletin (June 2021) DFC Recommendations for an Anti-Poverty Strategy (Report of the Expert Advisory Panel, December 2020) NIHE Shared Housing Data The Equality Commission NI Equality Awareness Survey 2016 (ECNI, 2018) United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Jurisdictional 'Parallel' Report on Implementation in Northern Ireland Working Paper (August 2017) Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report & Recommendations, December 2020 (DfC, March 2021) Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin (April to September 2025) (DfC, December 2025) Through our Eyes – Housing and Homelessness experiences of LGBT people in NI (Rainbow Project & Council for the Homeless NI, 2015) LGBTQI+ Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report (DfC, December 2020) Analysis of Homelessness Presenters and Acceptance (NIHE, March 2020) UK Report (Poverty in the UK/Statistics) (House of Commons Library, October 2021) NI Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2023/24 (DfC, March 2025) The Equality Commission NI Gender Equality – Policies, Priorities and Recommendations (ECNI 2016) NISRA 2020 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland (NISRA, June 2021) NISRA Continuous Household Survey (NISRA) NI Life & Times Survey (ARK)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outright ownership is associated with a reduction in the incidence of relative poverty once housing costs are taken into account for older homeowners (20% of pensioners who owned their homes were in relative poverty before housing costs compared to 10% after housing costs in 2023/24). • Homeownership’s poverty reducing qualities in old age are well documented, a function of the front loading of housing costs in this tenure. • Private renting is associated with a similar increase in poverty after housing costs for people aged 16 to 24 years old (16% to 21%) compared to the whole population (22% to 28%), though a lower level of relative poverty than the general population <p>Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting demographics, spatial segregation in residential communities, not least in neighbourhoods dominated by social housing, and difficulties in delivering new housing supply make for significant inefficiencies in the local housing system. With limited descriptive data, this analysis observed the following community differentials: • Using data for all of Northern Ireland, Catholic households wait longer than Protestant households to be allocated social housing and are allocated proportionately fewer homes, despite comprising a greater proportion of the waiting list and a greater proportion of applicants in housing stress. • Earlier analysis suggests differentials existed in previous periods and therefore this is a persistent problem. Community differentials in terms of proportionate allocations may have narrowed over time for a variety of reasons, reflecting population shifts and changes in self-identification, but lengthening waiting times for social housing have been uneven, disproportionately affecting applicants from other religions and Catholics. • These patterns are complicated by the fact that dual housing markets exist with different pressures on housing demand and supply in different locations. In areas with the greatest shortages of new social housing supply, Catholic applicants wait the longest prior to being allocated a home; except in North Belfast, where people from other or unknown religions wait the longest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial Equality Policy Priorities & Recommendations • PSNI, Hate Motivation Statistics Financial Year update period ending 31 March 2025 providing figures for 2024/25 (PSNI, May 2025) • PSNI Data 2019/20 • 2016 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (NIHE, May 2018) • Housing Supply Strategy EQIA 2021 (DfC, December 2021) • Wallace Report 2016 (University of York, March 2016)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of housing conditions, people from other religions or no religion have the smallest homes in terms of square metres and experience the most overcrowding. • People from other religions, mixed religions or no religions are the most likely to live in non-decent homes, and Catholic households the least likely. <p>Race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data limitations constrain the precise understanding of how similar or divergent different ethnic groups' housing circumstances may be, but the data and literature review highlighted certain differentials as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lower proportions of Black residents and those from the EU Accession countries are in homeownership and among minority ethnic and migrant groups there is a higher prevalence of private renting. The main research report notes the positive aspects of the private rented sector, including that there are higher levels of satisfaction with the services provided by private landlords in Northern Ireland than in England. However, common weaknesses in the private rented sector include limited security of tenure, high housing costs, poor housing management, and for some but not all households there are poorer housing conditions. There is also some evidence that landlords attach additional terms to tenancies of minority ethnic groups and provide unsatisfactory information about tenant rights. – Access to social housing varies between different minority ethnic groups, with some minorities (African and households of mixed ethnicity) waiting longer than the White population, and some groups (Chinese, Irish Travellers and households of other ethnicity) a shorter length of time than White applicants before being allocated a home. It is uncertain whether these are persistent or newly emerging patterns as data is limited. – Tied accommodation for migrant workers remains a concern since it was identified in the 2007 report. Conditions are often poor, residents isolated and overcrowded and often have little general understanding of their rights. 	

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to quality transit and settled sites for Irish Travellers is limited and although they do not wait a long time for social housing, this is not always their first choice of home. Irish Travellers experience a serious lack of basic amenities on some sites, identified as a persistent theme. • People from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly Irish Traveller and Arab, experience significantly more overcrowding than other White people, in the social rented sector, in private rented sector properties this would be particularly the case for those from Roma and Black Other backgrounds. • A resurgence in racial attacks on people from minority ethnic communities' homes is a critical concern, with implications for the safety of the home. • The highest rates of overcrowding anywhere were found among Indian and African households in housing association accommodation. <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key indicators of inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people were found in the following circumstances: • The ability of people with learning disabilities to live independently away from parents and/or congregated institution-like settings is a persistent inequality not experienced by non-disabled people. • At the time the impact assessment was carried out no data was available to assess disabled people's experiences of social housing applications. An earlier assessment conducted by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in 2011, using data from 2004 to 2009, showed that wheelchair users waited a much longer time to be rehoused than applicants not in a wheelchair. In response to this, the NIHE adopted a case management approach for each applicant with special needs in order to address this differential. To date, no research has been undertaken to assess if this approach has indeed addressed the differential as intended; and • There is a strong association between older people and disability; disabled people are also more likely to live in poor housing conditions than households with no disabled members. 	

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled people of all ages face delays in securing occupational therapists and funding to ensure their homes are adapted to meet their needs, especially in the private market. <p>Sexual Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is limited data or evidence available that examined the relationship between housing outcomes and sexual orientation, but two themes emerged. • Anecdotal evidence identified an increased rate of family breakdown due to young people’s sexual orientation resulting in homelessness. • LGBTQ+ people feel harassed and fearful they will be a victim of hate crime and feel compelled to leave their home, and on occasions have experienced insensitive responses from frontline workers. <p>Marital Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital status is rarely a focus of housing studies but data resources do allow some examination of different people’s housing outcomes. The following differentials were observed: • Single, divorced and separated people experienced poorer housing conditions than married people, especially in the private rented sector, with divorced and separated people having the highest incidence of non-decent homes. • Age and cohort affects may influence some of these outcomes but the impact of relationship breakdown on housing outcomes is underexplored. <p>Dependants</p> <p>There is little literature that examined children’s housing circumstances specifically. Moreover, it was clear that there were interactions with other equality grounds, such as gender, marital status and/or ethnicity, which were associated with different housing outcomes. Differentials were found as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income families are increasingly found in private renting, where they lack security of tenure, rather than social housing (20% of those in relative poverty before housing costs live in private rented accommodation compared to 17% of those in social rented in 2023/24). 	

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of non-decent homes for families in the private and social rented sectors was the same in 2009, but households without dependants in the private rented sector experienced poor conditions, with the highest rate of non-decent homes; and Households with dependants are more likely to live in overcrowded social housing homes, especially lone parents and multi-adult households that may include dependant children, with the potential for adverse impacts on household members. 	
<p>Racial Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to appropriate accommodation for Irish travellers is limited. The homes of minority ethnic people and migrant groups may be vulnerable to becoming subject to tied accommodation with poor conditions and overcrowding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Equality Commission NI ‘Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland’ (ECNI, April 2017) Housing and Communities’ Inequalities in Northern Ireland (Alison Wallace, June 2015) Equality Impact Monitoring Report on Unauthorised Encampments in Northern Ireland (DfC internal documents)
<p>Warm Healthy Homes Strategy (inc Warm Healthy Homes Scheme)</p> <p>Age (older people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher prevalence of fuel poverty among older households; digital exclusion and capacity barriers; disproportionate winter mortality; health impacts from cold homes; current ‘before housing costs’ indicator may under identify working families with children vs. older outright owners. <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher, unavoidable energy needs (medical equipment; higher heating requirements); lower average earnings (disability pay gap); carers facing poverty due to extra costs; energy hardship lived experiences; capacity barriers to seeking help. <p>Racial group (minority ethnic & migrant communities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language and literacy barriers; complex systems and digital access challenges; fear/stigma in seeking help; limited ethnic monitoring/data. 	<p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NI House Condition Survey 2016 (NIHE, May 2018) NISRA Winter Mortality 2022/23 (NISRA, December 2023) NISRA Winter Mortality 2023/24 (NISRA, February 2025) Institute of Health Equity (IHE) – The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty (IHE, March 2011) Family Resources Survey: Northern Ireland 2023/24 (DfC, May 2025) Labour Force Survey Annual Tables 2024 (NISRA, July 2025) <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Resources Survey: Northern Ireland 2023/24 (DfC, May 2025) Disability Pay Gap 2024 (NISRA, February 2024) Energy Hardship – Consumer Lived Experience (Utility Regulator, July 2024)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Men and women generally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women (especially single mothers) more exposed to fuel poverty due to lower average earnings, higher economic inactivity, and part time work; lone parent predominance female. Capacity/time constraints to navigate support. <p>Marital status (lone parents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone parent households disproportionately in poverty; material deprivation; after housing costs pressures; time & digital barriers to accessing fragmented support. <p>Dependants (children)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative health and educational outcomes associated with poverty/fuel poverty; large share of households with children in fuel poverty; long term societal impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Experiences of Poverty among Unpaid Carers in NI (Carer Poverty Commission NI, August 2023) NISRA Winter Mortality 2022/23 (NISRA, December 2023) NISRA Winter Mortality 2023/24 (NISRA, February 2025) NI House Condition Survey 2016 (NIHE, May 2018) <p>Racial group (minority ethnic & migrant communities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of Brexit on Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in NI (ECNI, June 2023) Experiences of Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in NI (UK Parliament March 2022) <p>Men and women generally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in Northern Ireland 2023 (NISRA, November 2024) Census 2021 – CT0136 Lone parents by sex & dependants (NISRA, February 2025) NI Poverty & Income Inequality 2021/22 (DfC, March 2023) NI House Condition Survey 2016 (NIHE, May 2018) <p>Marital status (lone parents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households Below Average Income (HBAI) (DfC, 2021) NI Poverty & Income Inequality 2023/24 (NISRA, March 2025) NI Poverty & Income Inequality 2021/22 (NISRA, March 2023) <p>Dependants (children)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICCY Child Poverty Briefing (2017) (NICCY, October 2017) NI House Condition Survey 2016 (NIHE, May 2018)

Corporate Services Group

The Corporate Services Group aims to deliver high quality corporate and professional services to the Department. It plays an important role in creating a well-led, high performing and outcome-focused Department, unified by our common purpose of supporting people, building communities and shaping places.

Governance & Commercial Services

has overall responsibility for overseeing the Department's Corporate Governance Framework and ensuring the application of legislation and best practices across the Department in respect of programme, portfolio and project management, procurement, application of grant standards and contract management.

It is also responsible for the contract and service management of a number of key contracts in place to support business areas across the Department, including a centralised team to assist in the clinical and quality assurance of Health and Disability Assessments in Northern Ireland. Governance and Commercial Services have also established a Health Transformation Programme to transform the delivery of health assessment services in Northern Ireland.

Financial Management

Directorates are responsible for overall financial management of the Department's Budget as allocated by the Executive and

HM Treasury resources allocated to Social Security. They provide financial support services across the department including finance business partnering, statutory financial reporting requirements, treasury and payment management services. DfC FMD is also responsible for operating the Department's Business Travel Desk.

Analytics

has the overall responsibility for analytical services within the Department. Analytics Division provides the Department for Communities with evidence in the form of statistics, research and economic analysis to inform policy making and operational implementation within the Department.

People, Property & Resilience

has responsibility for Organisational Development, People Insight, Engagement & Strategy Branch, Property Management, Business Continuity, and Civil Contingencies.

Machinery of Government

has responsibility for the Departmental Co-Ordination Team; the Press Office; Corporate Communications; the Private Office & Permanent Secretary's Office and the COVID-19 Inquiry Team.

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Public Appointments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on current data, there is under representation of women, young people, people with a disability and ethnic minorities in public appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland: 2019/20; 2020/21; 2021/22 (Executive Office, March 2023) Publications issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland (CPANI), including Annual Reports & Business Plans Under-Representation and Lack of Diversity in Public Appointments in Northern Ireland (CPANI, January 2014)
<p>Health Transformation Project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with a disability and/or health condition may experience a disability employment gap, social isolation and have lower personal well being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper (Gov.uk Department for Work & Pensions, August 2021) Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables (NISRA, February 2022) Individual Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2023/24 (NISRA, March 2025) Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper (Gov.uk Department for Work & Pensions, March 2025)

Communities, Place and Local Government Group

The Communities, Place & Local Government Group aims to support communities, tackle area-based deprivation, create urban centres where people want to live, work and invest, and support local government.

Belfast Regeneration

manages strategies and programmes to regenerate the Central and Greater Belfast area. It includes planning, advising and programme direction, a Laganside unit, city centre Public Realm and Promotions and Physical Development.

Local Government & Housing Regulation

supports local government including policy, legislation, finance and community planning. Housing Regulation Branch undertakes regulation activity of the Registered Housing Associations in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department. This area also includes DfC Estate Management and Accommodation.

The North West Development office

is responsible for physical regeneration schemes across Derry & Strabane, Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Causeway Coast & Glens Council areas. It is also responsible for the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and Built Environment (MAG).

Regional Development

manages strategies and programmes to create vibrant and viable areas and town centres in the north, south and eastern areas of the province.

Community Empowerment Division (CED)

has responsibility for policy development and implementation of a number of area based initiatives designed to address spatial concentrations of deprivation. These include People & Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal including Small Pockets of Deprivation and the Areas at Risk programme. CED also has responsibility for a number of actions under the Fresh Start Agreement 2015, specifically Tackling Paramilitarism.

Voluntary & Community Division (VCD)

supports a vibrant, effective & more sustainable Voluntary & Community Sector through a range of programmes & initiatives. It includes Engagement, Charity Legislation and Business Support, Policy and Innovation. VCD is the sponsor branch for the Charities Commission of Northern Ireland.

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Debt Advice</p> <p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older adults face barriers to accessing debt advice. <p>Younger people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people (16 to 24) on low incomes were more likely have had to borrow due to the pandemic. <p>Dependants/Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One in every four debt advice clients was a single parent, potential inequality for women, who are more likely to be single parents. <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple barriers to accessing services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) UK Financial Wellbeing Strategy Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) NI Delivery Plan for Financial Wellbeing Older People in Northern Ireland (NI Assembly, September 2024) Lending, Savings and Debt Research: Northern Ireland Consumers (Consumer Council, March 2021) The single parent debt trap (Gingerbread, February 2021) Challenges faced by people with disabilities (UK Parliament, May 2024)
<p>Volunteering</p> <p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lower proportion of those aged 16 volunteered compared with those aged 35 years+. <p>Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults from Protestant community more likely to volunteer than both those from the Catholic community and those of 'Other/No' religion. <p>Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults with dependants more likely to volunteer than those without dependants. <p>Marital Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who were married/cohabiting more likely to have volunteered than those of other marital status groups. <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults with a disability less likely to volunteer than those without a disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of volunteering by adults in Northern Ireland 2023/24 (DfC, November 2024)
<p>Advice Services</p> <p>Age: Older adults face barriers to accessing advice services.</p> <p>Disability: Multiple barriers to accessing services.</p> <p>Ethnicity: People from minority ethnic groups frequently experience poverty and racism, impacts their access to various support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancing Age-Friendly Practice in Northern Ireland, (COPNI, July 2025) Challenges faced by people with disabilities (UK Parliament, May 2024) Impact Report 2023-2024 (Women's Aid, September 2024) Poverty and ethnicity in Northern Ireland (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, February 2013)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Charities</p> <p>Age: Older adults face barriers to accessing services delivered by charities.</p> <p>Disability: Multiple barriers to accessing services delivered by charities.</p> <p>Gender: Women face multiple barriers when trying to access vital services provided by charities.</p> <p>Ethnicity: People from minority ethnic groups frequently experience poverty and racism, impacts their access to various support services, including those offered by charities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older People in NI • Challenges faced by people with disabilities • Women’s Aid Impact Report • Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland
<p>People and Place Strategy is delivered through the Neighbourhood Renewal, Areas at Risk and Small Pockets of Deprivation programmes.</p> <p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a disability and/or health conditions may experience barriers of economic participation, social isolation and poverty. <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women may experience barriers to employment and economic participation. <p>Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with dependants or caring responsibilities may be more likely to be economically inactive and unable to access the labour market. <p>Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People from an ethnic minority background may experience greater impacts associated with poverty as a result of less developed social and economic networks and poorer job security. <p>Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion is subject to geographical variation, as are patterns of deprivation. <p>Deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those living in areas of highest social deprivation are more likely than the rest of NI to suffer from: disability and/or long-term health inequalities; lower level of educational and skills attainment; and higher levels of economic inactivity. 	<p>The programmes are geographically defined interventions targeting areas of high deprivation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The areas targeted for intervention were identified using the indices of Multiple Deprivation – and interventions are informed by review of data (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NISRA)) • Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Resources (DfC)

Potential Inequality and S75 group impacted	Research
<p>Fresh Start</p> <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-representation of women in community development and leadership roles in public decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women Leading Peace (GIWPS September 2017)
<p>Financial Wellbeing</p> <p>Inequalities in the financial wellbeing of women and people with a disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship between disability, long-term illness and financial wellbeing (Money and Pension Service (MaPS), April 2024) UK Financial Wellbeing Strategy and the Department’s NI Delivery Plan for Financial Wellbeing (MaPS, February 2022) 2016 report by the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute Making Ends Meet – Women’s Access to Lending Research (Women’s Regional Consortium, February 2020) Women Living with Debt (Women’s Regional Consortium, March 2022) Financial Lives Survey 2024 (Financial Conduct Authority, May 2025)
<p>Community Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-representation of women in community development and leadership roles in public decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in Northern Ireland 2023 (NISRA, November 2024) Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland: 2019/20; 2020/21; 2021/22 (Executive Office, March 2023) Who Runs Northern Ireland? A Summary of Statistics Relating to Gender and Power in 2020 (NI Assembly, January 2020) The Executive appointed Panel Report on the Disbandment of Paramilitary Groups in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive, June 2016) Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) Annual Report (IRC/ Northern Ireland Office) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (Para 3.20 Panel Report) (Northern Ireland Executive, June 2016)

