



Date: 23rd September 2011

Welcome to Supporting Communities NI's 1st E-Zine, bringing you Best Practice from the Community Sector, Housing Community Network Updates, Funding and Training updates and Policy Developments in Northern Ireland.

CENTRAL HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK REPORT



housing community network

At the September meeting of the Central Housing Community Network, members received a number of presentations from N.I.H.E. staff on a number of key current issues. Copies of the minutes and presentation outlines are available on the S.C.N.I. website.

Adverse Weather Conditions Action Plan: Members received an outline of the Housing Executive Action Plan in response to last years severe weater and a number of key actions were noted, including:

- Review of weather conditions that trigger emergency responses
- Review of emergency Action Plans by N.I.H.E. and Contractors
- Dedicated webpage for emergency conditions
- Improved communications link between C.S.U. and District Offices
- Updating of telephone system to ensure all calls are answered
- Further use of community links and partnerships

In addition, members noted that an **Adverse Weather Conditions Joint N.I.H.E./ Community Group Action Plan** has been drafted for use; this should be agreed between all District Offices and local community groups in their respective district. A draft copy is available from our website.

N.I.H.E. Proposed New Structure.

Members received an outline of proposals for the restructuring of the delivery of N.I.H.E. services around a number of 'hub' offices and service 'outlet' centres to replace the existing structure of Area and District offices. It was noted that consultations with staff are ongoing and the broad thrust of the proposals was welcomed.

Members also considered the content of the proposals as part of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers Review of the Housing Executive. Members were in agreement that in any future structure, the expressed preference was for community representation on a 'shadow' board rather than non-executive status for community representatives on the board of the suggested 'social enterprise landlord' organisation.

PRICewaterhouseCOOPER'S STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE

A review of the delivery of housing services in N.I. was commissioned by the Minister for Social Development in the previous Assembly Mandate, Alex Attwood. PriceWaterhouseCoopers were commissioned to undertake that review and a first report was presented to the Social Development Committee in June 2011.

If implemented, a net benefit to the taxpayer of £585 million is anticipated. The key recommendations are outlined below:

- The creation of a new social enterprise enabling the N.I.H.E. to raise finance against the value of its stock. In addition to being responsible for maintaining their stock the N.I.H.E. would have landlord, Community Cohesion and safety responsibilities.
- The introduction of a new housing regulator with independent responsibility for inspection, governance and the economic performance of the above mentioned social enterprise, housing associations and other tenures.
- Creation of a new strategic housing authority with responsibility for public and private sector Housing Associations and policy delivery. The authority would also be responsible for monitoring need and the delivery of housing investment programmes.
- The enhanced co-ordination of all services provided to tenants throughout Northern Ireland, with some services that the Housing Executive provide being devolved to a network of jobs, housing and benefit offices. This would include a partnership approach between local government and authorities.

PriceWaterhouseCooper will continue to consult with key stakeholders from across the housing sector. Details of the full report are available by visiting www.niassembly.gov.uk/social/2011mandate/nihe_review.htm

In response to the recommendations, S.C.N.I. have been engaging with Housing Community Network members to gather their feedback and propose a new structure for the H.C.N. which will ensure continued tenant engagement with the N.I.H.E. In addition, S.C.N.I. staff and representatives from the Central Community Network met with those undertaking the review as part of the ongoing stakeholder consultations.

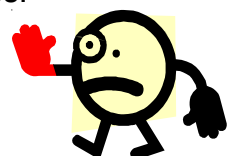
OTHER HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND....

Neighbourhood Resolution Panels

In England, expressions of interest are being welcomed from organisations, to set up Neighbourhood Resolution Panels as part of strategy on devolving justice to a local level. Already in operation in parts of England, the panels are intended to give victims and members of the Community a clearer and more consistent say in how justice is delivered.

Key Proposals:

- **A** panel would exist for resolving certain types of low level adult crime and youth crime, working in partnership with the relevant authorities.
- **P**anels will use a reparative and restorative approach by bringing offenders face to face with their victims. Consensus will be met within both the victim and offender deciding the outcome.
- **P**anels will be facilitated by a Community Volunteer.
- **P**anels would ensure more meaningful responses in quicker response times.
- **P**anels would only be suitable for non-prosecutable offences.



CONSULTATION ON THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

The Charter will allow the Scottish Housing Regulator to monitor, assess and report on the performance of Social Landlords, ensuring that there is consistency in standards across the sector. Findings from the reports of the Scottish Housing Regulator will then provide the basis for delivering public investment. It will also give tenants vital guidance on how to hold social landlords to account. It is envisioned that the Charter will come into effect from 1st April 2012 and it can be summarised as follows:

1. The Customer/Landlord Relationship
 - Participation
 - Communication and customer service
2. Quality of Housing and the Environment
 - Housing quality
 - Repairs maintenance and improvements
 - Estate management
3. Access to Housing and Support
 - Housing options
 - Access to social housing
 - Homeless people
 - Tenancy sustainment
 - Anti-social behaviour neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes
4. Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges
 - Value for money
 - Rents and service charges
 - Transparency
5. Gypsies/Travellers and other customers
 - Services for Gypsies/Travellers
 - Other customers

The Charter will also assist in the effective and efficient resolution of Anti-Social Behaviour disputes.

If you are interested in finding out more, download the consultation document at:
<http://housingcharter.scotland.gov.uk/media/29618/draft%20charter%20and%20consultation%20document.pdf>

ASSEMBLY NEWS



In this section we aim to highlight areas of the work of the Assembly and its committees of interest to local community groups and local communities.

The full Assembly website is to be found at www.niassembly.gov.uk where proceedings can be watched and listened to as they happen. Of particular interest to local communities is the work of the Social Development Committee.

The work of the committee, including the formal record of meetings can be found at: www.niassembly.gov.uk/social/2011mandate/socialhome_11.htm

The forward work programme for the forthcoming period includes the scrutiny of a number of pieces of Primary Legislation, the proposed **Pensions Bill**, the **Welfare Reform Bill** and the **Charities (Amendment) Bill**.

The committee also has responsibility for the scrutiny of the work of the Department for Social Development and a number of committee inquiries are ongoing, including:

- Policy considerations on Collaborative Working in Disadvantaged Areas,
- Social Housing Development Strategic Guidelines,
- Fuel Poverty Strategy,
- Housing Benefit Reform and the outcome of consultations on the P.W.C.
- Review of the Housing Executive and the preliminary Consultation on the Housing Selection Scheme.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND CHARITY COMMISSION: AN UPDATE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS



Work is still under way to properly define the public benefit test deeming a group charitable in the eyes of the new Charity Commission.

A **Charities (Amendment) Bill** has been tabled before the Assembly and its passage will be scrutinised by the Social Development Committee during October and November.

A record of the proceedings of the committee is available on the Assembly website and meetings of the committee are normally open to the public.

For further information on the work of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland visit:
<http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/index.aspx>

If your group are interested in registering as a Charity with H.M.R. & C. please request the S.C.N.I. Factsheet **Charitable Status** from your Liaison Officer.



PAYMENT COUNCIL UPDATE ON CHEQUES

Many Community organisations will be pleased to hear that the Payments Council has revoked plans to scrap the cheque system by 2018, stating that cheques will remain in circulation for as long as customers need them.

Further information is available at www.paymentscouncil.org.uk

For general advice on Money Matters and Book-Keeping request our Factsheet **Records and Book-Keeping for Community Groups** from your Liaison Officer or visit our training section at www.supportingcommunitiesni.org to find out more about our training course '**Money Matters**'.



THE PRINCES TRUST PROGRAMMES

The Prince's Trust is a youth charity that helps change young lives. They give practical and financial support, developing key workplace skills such as confidence and motivation. The Trust works with 14 to 30-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law. Some of their programmes of support currently available include:

- **xl** – a team-based programme of personal development for young people aged 13-19 who do not hold the Key Stage 3 Level 5 qualification in Maths and English and/or face a range of difficulties at school or at home. The programme aims to improve key interpersonal and social skills, develop effective teamwork skills, raise self-esteem, confidence and motivation and achieve a qualification which rewards participation and commitment. For more information please contact Joanne Merron on 028 90758122 or email joanne.merron@princes-trust.org.uk.
- **TEAM** –helps unemployed 16-25 year olds develop confidence, motivation and skills through a 12 week personal development programme of team work in the community. TEAM is delivered in partnership with all 6 Further Education Colleges across Northern Ireland. For more information please contact Patrick Davidson on 028 90758101 or email patrick.davidson@princes-trust.org.uk.
- **Get Into**– short 'industry specific' vocational courses developed with employers that give unemployed young people aged 16-25 who are work-ready, but do not have vocational skills, the opportunity to gain relevant skills, qualifications and experience to enable them to move into training and employment. Examples include, Get Into Cooking, Catering and Hospitality, Retail and Construction. For more information please contact Aoife Gallagher on 028 90758108 or email aoife.gallagher@princes-trust.org.uk.
- **Get Started** – short courses that engage and develop young people aged 16-25 through sports or the arts to develop their skills, confidence and motivation. Courses are based on practical activities and usually include accreditation. Examples include, Get Started with Football, Digital Media and Film. For more information please contact Aoife Gallagher on 028 90758108 or email aoife.gallagher@princes-trust.org.uk.
- **Enterprise Programme** – supports unemployed young people aged 18-30 interested in self-employment to explore and test their ideas, write a business plan and start their own businesses or achieve alternative outcomes in education, training, volunteering or work. For more information please contact Patricia Mallon on 028 90758111 or email patricia.mallon@princes-trust.org.uk.
- **Development Awards** – small grants of up to £250 that enable young people to access education, training or work. Past awards have included helping young people to purchase a uniform or tools needed to start a job e.g. chef's whites, take a forklift driving test, or produce a portfolio for interview. For more information please contact Patricia Mallon on 028 90758111 or email patricia.mallon@princes-trust.org.uk.



- One to One – helps young offenders as they move from custody back into the community, providing a mentoring programme to support them through their transition from prison to community. This programme, which uses ex-offenders as mentors, has been operating for over two years in Northern Ireland. While the numbers of young people involved are relatively small, the success rate at reducing re-offending is dramatic. For more information please contact Rory Brown on 028 90758132 or email rory.brown@princes-trust.org.uk.

Princes Trust: Journey to Success

Get a job - Get a Career - Be your own Business



More than 3,000 young people across Northern Ireland will be helped towards employment, education or training over the next three years through The Prince's Trust's Journey to Success Programme. The main objectives of the new Journey to Success programme is to ensure that all young people have an opportunity to succeed regardless of their backgrounds.

Through the funding provided by the Department for Employment and Learning (D.E.L.) and the European Social Fund (E.S.F.), the Journey to Success programme will target disadvantaged 16-30 year olds who face significant barriers to entering the labour market. They include educational underachievers, ex-offenders and young people either in or about to leave residential care.

Journey to Success is made up of 3 programmes:

1. The Enterprise Programme supports unemployed young people aged 18-30 who are interested in business and self employment. It helps young people to understand what it means to be their own boss and works with them to develop a business plan. The Programme provides advice and support to the young person throughout their journey to self employment. A young person could be eligible for a grant or a loan from the Prince's Trust.
2. TEAM is a 12 week personal development programme suitable for 16 – 25 year olds. It is ideal for young people who want to improve their confidence and for those whose qualifications are holding them back. The TEAM programme is also available for employees who would like a chance to develop new interpersonal skills to improve long-term career prospects. Young people who complete the TEAM Programme have the chance to move into a job, education or training. They are provided with practical skills to help them into a job, they receive a nationally recognised qualification, career advice and the chance to make a difference in their community. The Programme is delivered by the regional colleges in Northern Ireland.
3. Get into Programme – is a 4 week vocational programme for young people aged 16- 25 who want to work but lack the necessary basic qualifications or work experience. Young people are given the chance to develop skills in specific sectors such as catering, retail and construction. They will get practical training and hands on experience to help gain those skills. The Prince's Trust supports the young person for 6 months after the Programme is completed.

The Prince's Trust will be holding regular information sessions across Northern Ireland to raise awareness of Journey to Success.
Contact telephone number: 028 90745454.



FUNDING NEWS

S.C.N.I.'s Funding Service aims to inform Community Groups of the most up to date and relevant sources of funding available and to provide guidance on the overall fundraising process.

The Funding Service includes:

- Two publications for Housing Community Network members including our fortnightly E-Biz highlighting the latest funding news and grants available to Community Groups from a variety of sources and our monthly Community Funding Bulletin which provides details of Charitable Trusts, Foundations, Statutory Organisations and European Sources and their regular funding programmes.
- A range of funding Factsheets including 'Preparation for Fundraising' and 'Local Fundraising Ideas' and a series of specialist Factsheets providing information on Accessing Business, Council, Trust and Lottery Support.
- Our Funding Enquiry Service enables groups to access information on a variety of funding sources for specific costs or projects and our enquiry form can be downloaded from our website.
- S.C.N.I. has also tailored a number of training courses to address the needs of groups and individuals so that they can plan their fundraising strategy and achieve success from Funders, including 'Successful Fundraising' and our two-day course 'Let's Fundraise Successfully'.

For further information, please contact Roisin Hamilton on (028) 777 67722 or email roisin.hamilton@supportingcommunitiesni.org.

*So far this year Supporting Communities NI has
successfully assisted groups to access
a total of £675,464.31 in funding!*

If you require any more information please contact:

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