

Annual Output Report 2016-2017



**Supporting
Communities™**
Empowering Society

Our Services



Community
Development



Social
Enterprise



Training



Funding
Support



Tenant
Participation



Business/Admin
Support



Digital Inclusion



Information Services



supportingcommunities.org



Group Work

We Promoted, Encouraged and Supported Meaningful Community Participation

41 New Referrals received

533 Active Groups supported

"Our Community Group could not survive without the help of Supporting Communities"
 Feedback from Customer Survey

Meetings we Attended: **228**
55
165

Inter-Agencies
 Housing Forums
 Housing Community Networks

How we performed

- Of the **228** Inter-Agency Meetings held – **566** external agencies and **117** MLAs/Cllrs were in attendance



152 meetings with Housing Executive Staff (including CLOs)

19 new groups assisted with registering online with Charity Commission NI in addition to ongoing assistance throughout the year

Prepared and carried out **78** Estate Inspections province-wide

"If it wasn't for Supporting Communities, we would find it very difficult to complete the procedures associated with job interviews and applications"
Carnlough Community Association

TOTAL OF 1,764 ENGAGEMENTS



Funding Services

We provided an effective Funding Support Service to Staff, Communities and other Stakeholders

FUNDING ENQUIRIES

76 formal and informal enquiries completed for funding assistance

6 Funding Workshops/Clinics organised in: Coleraine/Lisburn/Ballymena/Mid Ulster/Omagh/Antrim/Enniskillen benefiting **30** Groups with 1 to 1 Funding Advice

4 Funding Fairs

organised in: Ballymena, Fermanagh, Omagh and Coleraine



Supporting Communities Funding Bulletin available online, providing regular updates on Funding Opportunities

3 Housing Executive Area Offices have been provided with a quarterly Funding Bulletin namely; South, Lisburn & Castlereagh and North Down & Ards

FUNDING SECURED

by those groups who we helped
£754,216.21

One to One Funding Support

119 Groups throughout the province have been provided with one to one support from our Funding Officer/Liaison Officers

9 Funding Update Bulletins

provided on a monthly basis to the **Central Housing Forum Members** highlighting the most relevant and recent funding opportunities. They also hosted a presentation from the Big Lottery regarding their funding streams

12th April 2017

Funding Information



9th Edition of Central Housing Forum Funding Update

The Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) has opened its latest round of funding for Building the Community-Pharmacy Partnership (BCPP).

Two levels of funding are available:
Level 1 funding is for those interested in developing a local community-pharmacy partnership that will explore some locally identified issues with a group. You may have already established a relationship with your pharmacist and/or community but this funding can also help you establish a local partnership and develop a small project to begin to address local issues.

Grants of up to £2,000 will be awarded for projects that can last for a maximum of 6 months.
Level 2 funding is for those who will work in partnership on a project that will address a range of issues. There will be clear aims and objectives and a plan of work that will respond to locally identified needs and the needs of the target group. This community-pharmacy partnership will be core to the planning, delivery and evaluation of the project. This partnership will also seek to connect with other relevant organisations.

Grants of up to £10,000 will be awarded for projects that can last for 1 year. You do not have to complete a level 1 before applying for a level 2 project. Applications are made jointly by the pharmacy and community/voluntary partners.

Closing Dates:
Level 1: Thursday 14th September 2017 at 4:00pm
Level 2: Thursday 13th April 2017 at 4:00pm
Thursday 16th November 2017 at 4:00pm

For further information, visit: www.cdhn.org/bcpp-how-to-apply

Cash4Clubs is open!

This year, as always, you can apply for grants of £250, £500, £750 and £1000 for staff and/or volunteers to take part in training, gain qualifications and certifications related to your sport.

The fund will be open until Friday 26th May 2017 at 5:00pm. The winners will be informed by Friday 20th of July 2017 on the outcome of their application and the website will have all winners announced by Monday 7th of August.

If you require any support with your application or if you have any comments, concerns or questions please email Cash4Clubs@psd3powerbetfair.com

For further information, visit www.cash4clubs.com

For any further information please contact Supporting Communities Funding Officer, Roisin Hamilton on Tel: 028 77740722 or Email: roisin@supportingcommunities.org



How we performed

- Provided advice to Community Groups and Individuals around funding opportunities.
- Funding information incorporated within Supporting Communities E-Zine publication which is made available to **533** Community Groups fortnightly who we support.

"The one to one funding support was very useful in terms of identifying new sources of funding that we did not know existed. It provided our group with guidance on developing a funding strategy"

Chris Bowyer, Ballykeel

"The one to one funding support provided by Supporting Communities enabled our group to develop our funding proposal and identify sources of funding applicable for the project"

Chairperson DEGNI

"We have been supported by Supporting Communities Funding Officer to successfully achieve a 5 year funding package which has allowed us to employ 2 members of staff and secure programme funding for the period February 2017-2021"

Carnlough Community Association



Policy/Information Services

We provided an Efficient Information, Research and Policy Support Service to Staff, Communities and other Stakeholders

Support Services/Editorial Team
 Produced **22** Editions of our E-Zine publication circulated twice a month to a mail shot of **1,329** bringing Best Practice from the Community Sector; Funding and Training Updates and Policy Developments in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland.

2 Editions of SCENE circulated in June 2016 and January 2017 sharing information and best practice.

E-Zine
 31st October 2016
 Welcome to Supporting Communities 64th Edition of E-Zine, bringing you Best Practice from the Community Sector; Funding and Training Updates and Policy Developments in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland.

Double Award Success for Supporting Communities
 At the 20th World Congress and Conference of the International Union of Tenants held in Glasgow on the weekend of 14th October, Supporting Communities were recognised for 'great achievements and for working in the interests of tenants.'

SCENE
 ISSUE 3 Winter 2017
 A publication providing updates, news and information from Supporting Communities

Supporting Communities Chair, Lorraine Campbell Reflects on 2016 and the year ahead
 As part of the year-end review, we are delighted to welcome 2017 and to reflect on the achievements of 2016. Lorraine Campbell, who has extensive experience in the public sector, has been appointed Chair of the Board of Supporting Communities. She has a strong background in strategic planning, financial management and social enterprise. Lorraine will be working with the Board to ensure that we continue to deliver on our vision of being a leading provider of support and training to the community sector.

Policy Responses

Responded to consultations on the Homeless Strategy, the Strategy for Private Renting and the Programme for Government. We also undertook extended work on Models of Tenant Involvement in Governance involving **3** Regional Workshops and **120** participants and on the Housing Executive's Community Involvement Strategy at which **150** participants attended **5** Workshops.

Factsheets

459 'Customer Friendly' factsheets circulated through the year

Website

supportingcommunities.org
 A new improved website has been up and running over the last year and we have had an average of:

- **1,071** visits per month
- **2,370** page views per month
- **776** average audience size per month



Supporting Communities

Our Facebook page has been converted to an Organisational page as opposed to an individual page. As of April 2016 we had **668** 'likes' or people who are following the page.



SuppCommunities

We now have **1,117** twitter followers as of March 2017



Training Services

We provided a Tailored Training Service to Support Staff, Communities and Other Stakeholders



• Accredited Training

- 45 individuals graduated
- 30 groups participated
- 98% satisfaction rate for training delivered
- 3 graduates accessed university

• Individual Group Training

- 337 individuals participated
- 147 groups participated
- 97% satisfaction rate for training delivered

6 new half day courses were written and developed in-house:

Measuring Impact, Good Governance, Managing Charity Finances, Social Enterprise Awareness, Facilities Management and Treasurer Training were developed and added to the menu of courses.

Good Governance Training

The new Good Governance and Managing Charity Finances sessions have been delivered to Community Groups in each of the Housing Executives 13 Areas and has proven extremely popular among attendees desiring to keep up with new charity regulations.

Measuring Impact Pilot

The increasing importance of community groups being able to demonstrate the impact they are having led to the development and delivery of our Measuring Impact Awareness training piloted in Causeway, South Down and South & East Belfast.

"The programme of training that we completed through Supporting Communities has enhanced our education and provided us with the opportunity to attend University – It will be a challenge but we welcome it and are looking forward to utilising our new skills and knowledge to develop the community of Killynure and Carryduff as a whole.

Through Supporting Communities we've gained more qualifications than we ever did at school! We enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of adult learning and the networking opportunities we had with other groups we met through the courses and would recommend everyone to consider this as a way of developing themselves and their community group"

Aaron Thompson



Aaron Thompson and David McPhillips

"Our tutor was excellent – fair, funny, honest and easy to approach. I learned loads but never felt I was in a 'classroom' which was great as I was apprehensive about doing the course"

Course Graduate

"The course was clear and well delivered – the tutor made it easy for us to understand"

Course Graduate



Digital Inclusion

100% positive impact on the lives of participants who took part in the Digital Training



Within the Digital Champion Initiative we have:

- Trained over **1,110** Digital Champions in either an accredited or non accredited course
- Pilots were tailored to address the needs of various participants
- 'Spring Online Week' - 2nd May 2017



Training Locations since Sept 2012

38 Mi-Fi Routers distributed by Supporting Communities throughout N Ireland



"Having recently set up a new community group being able to share our work across Facebook and Twitter has been an enormous help. We were also able to create posters for our craft fair and advertise on Facebook"

M McCloskey, Regeneration Group

"Thank you so much for your help with using my ipad as a library. Excuse the pun but what an eye opener. You are saving a rural pensioner pounds. On a more general note can I say how much I am learning and enjoying your classes. It's one thing having technology but being able to exploit it is quite another. Your approach to all levels or learning in the class is so much appreciated. So keep up the good work, visiting people in rural areas and we hope to have another class with you again"

R Matthews, Cloughey

Digital Inclusion is a STAR for Supporting Communities



(left-right) Rosemary McCaw, Stephanie McKillop (SC Digital Inclusion Officer) Sally McDonald, Gina Ebner, EAEA and Marty Morrissey, RTE Sports Commentator

SC brought home the **Aontas Star Award** for Digital Inclusion from an All Ireland Awards Ceremony in Dublin, March 2017. The STAR Awards (Showcasing Teamwork, Awarding Recognition) are an awards initiative coordinated by AONTAS as part of the annual Adult Learners' Festival to acknowledge the fantastic work undertaken by adult learning initiatives throughout Ireland.

Stephanie McKillop, SC Digital Inclusion Officer, has been working to bring the benefits of going online to communities throughout Northern Ireland for over 5 years, and her hard work is showing some impressive results. Ever since partnering with the Department of Finance's Go On NI initiative in 2012, Supporting Communities have trained over **1200** people in basic digital skills.

'Digital 4 Communities' (D4C) Project



Housing
Executive

In 2016 the NI Housing Executive, in conjunction with Supporting Communities, launched a pilot project designed to make digital services accessible to those who previously have found it difficult to avail of these services. The project provides tenants with home broadband and a tablet as well as hardware. Supporting Communities facilitate training sessions to enable the participants to utilise online services and bring them into the digital age.



The project has completed 'Phase 1' in **4** areas of Northern Ireland; West Belfast, North Belfast, Newtownards and Fermanagh with **52** initial participants. The project training included basic online skills with all participants working with their own tablets and their own personal email/facebook/skype accounts.

Supporting Communities delivered the first phase of the developed training in an 8 week programme and enabled participants to access a variety of online services such as emailing, skypeing, accessing websites such as the Housing Executive website eg reporting repairs and maintenance issues to the Housing Executive. Practical help was also provided in completing tasks with participants such as; shopping and banking online and taxing their cars. As part of the project, networking opportunities have arisen and weekly interaction with each other means the participants have built a rapport with other users and by joining the dedicated Facebook Group. They also have a platform to communicate with each other for peer support and trainers can upload resources and tutorials in between formal training sessions.

Phase 2 of the project is about to begin and promises to bring with it more exciting opportunities for those involved.

"I'm delighted to be part of the group and learn about accessing online services. It's something I was not comfortable with. Everything nowadays is going digital so the more I can do, the better!"

West Belfast D4C Participant

Since the beginning of the project, I can see myself progressing on my tablet, I could not have turned it on before but now I'm shopping, reporting repairs and chatting with other people.

North Belfast Participant



Administrative Services

We provided a Comprehensive, Efficient Administrative Service to Staff, Communities and Other Stakeholders

PAYE Service

- Provided for **34** Groups
- **83** Individual Workers

Financial Assessments

- Carried out **131** assessments - saving Groups **££s**

Financial Management Support

- Assistance provided to various Groups with Projects under Restricted Funding eg Neighbourhood Renewal and SPOD

"We received a prompt and professional service in carrying out our independent financial assessment which was excellent value for money."

Customer Survey Feedback

"When our group needs help, Supporting Communities is always there for us."

Customer Survey Feedback

Other Administrative Services

Keep updated database of Mailing Lists which comprise of **1,612** individuals

Analysing and compiling **10** Community Surveys with **652** respondents

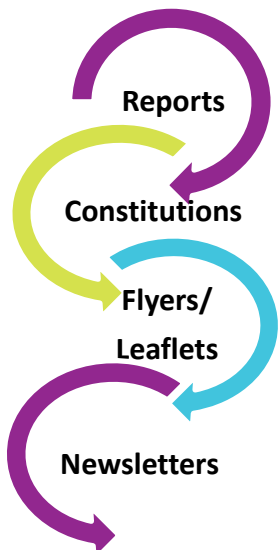


Table below shows figures per Region for Period April 2016 - March 2017

REGION	MINS		MEMOS/AGENDAS	
	Sets Typed	Mail Shot Figure	Number Typed	Mail Shot Figure
BELFAST	106	1,216	42	871
NORTH	102	1,549	69	1,786
SOUTH	218	3,856	227	4,872
GENERAL	16	270	5	88

Community Participation in Housing

We have acted as a 'Champion' for Community Participation in Housing

Service Level Agreements

- **13** Area SLAs signed with Housing Executive Area Managers
- **1** SLA signed with Housing Centre for 2016/17

How we performed

- Tenant Participation in Governance Research commissioned by the NIHE
 - **3** Regional sessions held
 - **120** participants involved in Regional Events
- We supported the NIHE in facilitating **5** engagement sessions across NI in relation to the review of their **Community Involvement Strategy**

Terms of Reference

- **249** Group T of R in place
- Supporting Communities facilitated process

Supported the Community Chair and Vice-Chair and provided administrative support to **10** Central HF Meetings held during the year



COMMUNITY CONFERENCE 2016 FEEDBACK

- Well presented
- Good range of projects
- Great to see the level out there
- Minute wall great idea
- Improved my enthusiasm and prompted ideas and networking
- The conference gets better every year
- Brilliant information
- A well thought out conference
- Very inspirational day
- Men's Shed brilliant

AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE MET

The following were the aims we had for the conference with the table showing the percentage of respondents who felt we achieved them:

- Empower and Inspire **96%**
- Networking Opportunities **98%**
- Showing the difference and impact that these projects have made **97%**
- Giving relevant information and signposting **100%**



Minute Wall



John O'Wheellie,
Omagh Mens Shed



Members of the Community
Conference Working Group



Housing Association Engagement

➤ Mystery Shopping

4 Mystery Shopping Exercises developed, delivered and reports compiled. One of the Exercises was conducted over a 12 month period and reported on quarterly

➤ Tenant Participation Strategies

2 Housing Associations provided with response to their Draft Tenant Participation Strategies

➤ Advice and Support

12 Housing Associations provided with advice and support on Tenant and Customer Involvement

➤ Survey

Completed **1** TBUC Survey for a Housing Association

Good Practice Visit and Networking Opportunity

Hosted a good practice visit for Tenant Participation Practitioners from Scotland including a networking event with Practitioners from Northern Ireland

➤ Review of Tenant Engagement and Governance in 2016/2017 involving:

- Tenant Questionnaires
- Tenant Focus Groups x **10** sessions
- Staff Focus Groups x **6** sessions

➤ Networking Conferences/Events

- Facilitated workshops at conferences
- Provided keynote presentations
- Chaired panel discussions
- Provided information stands

➤ Training

- Tenant Participation and Community Development Accredited
 - **1** Housing Association completed x **12** Staff Members including SMT
- Tenant Participation and Community Development (Non Accredited)
 - **2** Housing Associations completed x **57** Staff Members
- Scrutiny Awareness
 - **1** Housing Association completed x **25** Staff Members and Area Panel Reps
- Good Governance
 - **2** Housing Associations completed x **65** Tenant Forum Members and Staff
- Tenant Participation and the Role of Tenant Representatives
 - **5** Housing Associations x **155** Tenants and Staff Members
- Digital Awareness Course
 - **2** Housing Associations (joint training) x **7** Staff Members
- Stage 2 Complaints Process
 - **1** Housing Association x **12** Central Tenant Forum Members

"It was great working with you as you brought a practical outcome based approach that I really appreciate and it helped us finally set up our new Forum structure"
Chris Symington, Head of Choice Housing



Staff from Fold North West Office receiving Tenant Participation & Community Development Training



Newington Housing Association staff and tenants at information meeting facilitated by Supporting Communities looking at benefits of establishing Tenants Forum

Partnership Working and Award Recognition

We maximised Opportunities for Partnership Working

Neighbourhood Renewal

- Continued to support and be represented on 6 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships across Northern Ireland, including Chair of Omagh NRP
- Provided support to a number of groups in relation to SPOD Projects

Supporting Communities continued to be represented at Board Level in a number of organisations including:

Housing Rights
Community Places

Choice Tenant & Client Services Committee
NIEL

At the Annual Ballymena Business Awards held on Thursday 20th October 2016 Supporting Communities were announced 'Winners in the Social Enterprise of the Year Category'



Pictured above are the members of Supporting Communities Staff at the event accompanied by Board Member, Jim Whitten

Runners up in the Cross-Sector Collaboration Award section at the Digital Leaders Annual Conference held in London on 15th June 2016



Stephanie, Healy and Colm delighted to meet one of our partners in person (2nd left) Jeh Kazimi

Chartered Institute of Housing NI Awards held on Friday 24th February 2017



John Leatham (pictured centre), Divis Residents Association being recognised as a Housing Hero for his contribution to his community. John is a member of the West Belfast HCN and the Belfast Regional Housing Forum facilitated by SC

At the 20th World Congress and Conference of the International Union of Tenants held in Glasgow, October 2016

Supporting Communities were recognised for 'great achievements and for working in the interests of tenants'



Colm with IUT President Sven Bergenstrahle

'Handover of Award' at CIH Awards Night



Supporting Communities were delighted to sponsor the Promoting Integration Award which was won by Hosford House, a homeless project based in the Skainos Centre and managed by East Belfast Mission. (pictured left receiving their award from Lorraine Campbell, SC Chair)

Empowering Communities Enterprise Ltd

Supporting Communities Board, at their meeting of 24th November 2016 agreed to proceed to form a new company.

In January 2017, Empowering Communities Enterprise Ltd was registered with Companies House as a Company Ltd by Shares. The Company has been established to support and diversify on the work of its sole shareholder, Supporting Communities and to be a vehicle for Supporting Communities to deliver the requirements of the Independent Tenant Organisation role for Social Landlords.

Independent Tenant Organisation (ITO)

In February 2017 Supporting Communities were named as the ITO following a procurement exercise carried out by the Dept for Communities. The ITO will be tasked with the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Tenant Participation Strategy for NI 2015-2020 and to support all Social Housing tenants and staff to develop the skills needed for effective participation.



In welcoming the news, Supporting Communities Chair - Lorraine Campbell (pictured left with Colm) said; "Supporting Communities has a long tradition of promoting, developing and sustaining effective tenant participation for the social housing sector in NI. We look forward to continuing to provide that support to all social landlords in the future.

We know that involving tenants not only helps landlords deliver a better service but also helps provide better value for the money. Supporting Communities looks forward to playing our part as the Independent Tenant Organisation in achieving these benefits for all social landlords."

Measuring Impact

Over the last year and following our impressive Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio of 8:1 as highlighted in the Impact Report by Gauge NI, we at Supporting Communities have not rested on our laurels. Since last year, we have set up an Impact Working Group to begin looking at measuring our own Impact. Due to the wide range of services provided by Supporting Communities, we felt it was practical to look in the first instance at our Funding and Digital Inclusion Services. This is a work in progress but the indications are that this area of work alone is generating a significant impact for the communities which we serve. Measuring our impact also allows us to adapt and improve our services further where required.

We aim to extend this work to ultimately look at assessing our impact across the full range of services provided by Supporting Communities. To help us achieve this, we are currently looking at utilising some suitable software. In the future, we may also engage an outside independent organisation to qualify our findings.

At Supporting Communities, we believe very strongly in the ability to look critically at our work and to engage with stakeholders to measure our Impact and gauge how we are making a difference to people's lives. As mentioned earlier in this year's report, this is what led us to develop our own inhouse Impact Awareness Course which has been piloted and has proven useful so far in helping Community Groups get on to the 'Path to Impact.'