

1,200 benefiting from EU Peace IV Housing Associations Integration Project



Pictured are (l-r) Kate Laverty, CEO, Community Evaluation NI (CENI); Dr John McPeake, Chairperson of the HAIP Steering Group Committee and Richard Mealey, HAIP Project Coordinator

More than 1,200 people across 40 social housing schemes have been involved a ground breaking peace-building project.

The NIFHA-led Housing Associations Integration Project ([HAIP](#)) is a unique three-year initiative aimed at building good relations across social housing schemes in 40 areas in Northern Ireland and border counties of Republic of Ireland. The recently published interim independent project evaluation which shows the HAIP partnership is already exceeding its targets.

The report highlights that 1,200 tenants across 40 housing schemes have participated in community building events helping to bring communities together. The target for the 3-year project is 1,000. A further 253 tenants have completed capacity building workshops enabling tenants to acquire new skills, knowledge and confidence. The evaluators, Community Evaluation NI ([CENI](#)) note that HAIP “has produced some very good approaches to good relations work and identified some important lessons that can be drawn upon”.



Launched in July 2018, the €1.1m project, which is funded by the EU’s Peace IV Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body ([SEUPB](#)), brings together social housing residents from a range of religious and cultural backgrounds to share experiences, learn about differences and embrace diversity in the communities in which they live.

Delivered by four of Northern Ireland’s largest housing associations ([Apex](#), [Choice](#), [Clanmil](#) and [Radius](#)), [TIDES Training](#) and the [Irish Council for Social Housing](#), it is the first initiative of its kind to cover Northern Ireland and the border counties.



Ursula Toner and Anne McAllister, Choice Housing, with Richard Mealey, HAIP

Discussing the HAIP project and the findings of the interim evaluation Richard Mealey, HAIP Project Coordinator said:

“This interim evaluation was undertaken to enable us to take stock of how we were performing as a partnership and what impact we were making on the target communities in delivering this peace building initiative. The findings acknowledge that this was the first time this group of housing associations had been involved in a formal partnership project together and, despite the steep learning curve, the partnership has worked and is continuing to work very well.”

He added: “The report shows the significant progress that has been delivered to date. All 40 of the social housing schemes have now had community audits carried out with reports produced. The programme has also met its targets in terms of community engagement across Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland, with over 1,200 tenants participating in a wide range of community capacity building events and workshops, including flags and emblems workshops, cultural diversity sessions, environmental and family fun days. All providing opportunities for bringing a sense of positivity and community spirit to

these neighbourhoods.”

Ben Collins CEO from NIFHA, commented:

“It is clear from feedback that addressing needs as identified by tenants themselves has often been a key prerequisite for tenant participation. HAIP Good Relations Officers have been able to facilitate tenants to find practical solutions to identified local needs. For instance, arranging meetings with public agencies to help deal with issues like anti-social behaviour has encouraged tenants to engage with and participate in the wider good relations programme.”

“By going through this evaluation process, we recognise that we need additional data collection methods to evidence achievement against the agreed outcomes. So, in the next stages, we will be using a range of methodologies such as critical reflection sessions to capture social capital outcomes, along with structured case studies and survey tools. We need to measure the impact on the tenants and how the project is building a sense of community.”



Pictured are (l-r) Richard Mealey, Project Coordinator, Housing Associations Integration Project (HAIP); Jude Thompson Black, TIDES Training and Eamon Melaugh, a tenant with Apex Housing Association

Eamon Melaugh, a tenant with Apex Housing Association, stated:

“Having participated on this project, I completely relate to the aims of the Housing Associations Integration Project and I’m delighted to see that the team will be working with residents across Northern Ireland and the border counties. They are working to build a better society and I feel this initiative will have a huge impact on helping to bring communities together. It is important to be able to live and work well within any community.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Housing Associations Integration Project can contact Richard Mealey, NIFHA (Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations) on Tel: 028 90897 698 or rmealey@nifha.org or www.haiptogether.org.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the [Executive Office](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Department for Rural and Community Development](#) in Ireland. The partnership is managed and coordinated by the NI Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA). The project will run until 31st August 2020.