



PRESS RELEASE

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€1.1m HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS INTEGRATION PROJECT (HAIP) LAUNCHES

-Over 1000 social housing residents from 40 neighbourhoods to take part-

The Housing Associations Integration Project (HAIP), a unique cross-border initiative aimed at promoting good relations across housing associations in Northern Ireland and the Border Regions, was recently launched at Girdwood Community Hub, Belfast. The launch event featured a special appearance by Clanmil Community Choir.

The €1.1m project, which is funded by the EU's Peace IV Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), will bring 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.

The aim of Housing Associations Integration Project is to build, improve and sustain positive relationships with local people and their neighbours from different cultures and countries.

Alan Shannon, Chairperson of the Project Steering Committee for the Housing Associations Integration Project, discusses: **"Peace IV funding has enabled us to secure €1.1m of funding to deliver a significant cross-border social housing project, The Housing Associations Integration Project (HAIP).**

"It is the first initiative of its kind to cover Northern Ireland and the border counties and aims to promote good relations within and across housing associations. The project will be delivered by a new partnership involving four of Northern Ireland's largest housing associations (Radius, Clanmil, Choice and Apex), TIDES Training, Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA), and the Irish Council for Social Housing.

The project partners have come together because of their combined scale, regional spread and their experience of promoting and working in good relations. We are



looking forward to working with our partners and communities to deliver this exciting project."

Richard Mealey, Project Coordinator, Housing Associations Integration Project (HAIP), **"The Housing Associations Integration Project aims to support the development of cohesive communities, where residents respect diversity and recognise the value of differing viewpoints in a multi-cultural society. The cross-border dimension of the project is unique, and we look forward to working with the project delivery team in the coming months."**

The roll out of the project in to neighbourhoods will be a staged process consisting of: (1) Community Audit; (2) Community Capacity Building; (3) Cross Community/Cross Border Community Skills Workshops; (4) Bringing the Learning Back and (5) Sharing Best Practice.

Discussing how the project is developing, Mr Mealey continues: **"Nine community audits across different housing developments have already been conducted, with many more scheduled for the coming months. A total of 40 audits will form the basis, understanding and rationale for all future cross community activity.**

"It is envisaged that over 1000 tenants from 40 neighbourhoods will take part in community building programmes and skills workshops by August 2020. A number of study visits are also scheduled, and we are looking to develop a range of new community-based partnerships which will provide an important channel for residents to meet regularly and share ideas."

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **"The EU's PEACE IV Programme has been designed to encourage positive relationships between people from all communities. Unfortunately this region has been left with deeply engrained issues associated with social segregation, as a result of the troubles/conflict. By improving cross-community relations in up to 40 different social housing areas across Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland this innovative project will help to reinforce peace and stability.**



The project will also deliver a bespoke good relations training programme for up to 200 people, on both sides of the border, with the hope that many of these individuals will go on to become ‘community champions’, delivering positive change in their local areas.”

Christine McCarron, a tenant with Clanmil Housing Association states: **“Having lived in a similar social housing environment, 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) 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.

- **Ends**

For further information please contact Public Relations Consultant Janet McKay on M: 07968 817514 or Sonya Cassidy on M: 07824 467897

Notes to Editors:

- The HAIP Project represents a significant investment of £925,000, supported by the EU’s Peace IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).
- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.



- It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu

Housing Associations Integration Project: Project Summary

The Housing Associations Integration Project is a Peace IV funded initiative that seeks to improve cross community relations in social housing. The project will be delivered by a new Partnership involving four of Northern Ireland's largest Housing Associations (Radius, Clanmil, Choice and Apex) Tides Training, NIFHA and the Irish Council for Social Housing. The project partners have come together because of their combined scale and regional spread and in their experience promoting and working in good relations.

The project will target 40 Housing Association developments giving a wide geographical spread across Northern Ireland and including a number in the eligible border areas of the Republic of Ireland. Participating neighbourhoods will generally be selected based on a number of criteria:

- Small developments
- Newer developments (under 10 yrs)
- Areas with weak community infrastructure
- Housing Association local knowledge
- Religious/National/Cultural identity balance

The Project will be delivered by 4 Good Relations Officers supported by Tides Training overseen by a Project Coordinator and a Finance Officer. Each Good Relations Officer will be responsible for 10 neighbourhoods and the roll out of the Project in those neighbourhoods as part of a staged process.

Stage 1 - Community Audit

Community audits completed in 40 housing developments. This activity shall form the basis, understanding and rationale for cross community activity. Quality understanding of communities engaged means that future activities shall be structurally meaningful and purposeful for all.

Stage 2 - Community Capacity Building

- 200 tenants involved in formal/informal local community workshops
- 1000 tenants taking part in community building activities
- 40 community building events

This builds community capacity for Protestant, Catholic, mixed and ethnic communities to engage on a cross community, cross border and inter-community basis. The capacity building activities will be tailored to meet the needs of the specific neighbourhood as identified through the community audits.

Stage 3 - Cross community/cross border community skills workshops

- 200 tenants taking part in non-accredited training days
- Activities to increase skills and abilities. E.g. Community Clean Up, Community Day etc. These are initially to develop bonding in a specific community but will also be used to develop linkages between communities)
- Visits to important historical locations to learn about shared histories and each other's cultures.
- 100 tenants taking part in accredited training days
- 24 cross border/cross/inter community visits
- 8 cross community/ inter-cultural events

Stage 4 – Bringing the learning back

- 12 neighbourhoods involved in Twinned Programmes

Strong outcomes shall bind relationships and working partnerships. Communities shall have travelled a significant journey at this stage and will be supported to embed the new community partnerships.



Stage 5 - Sharing Best Practice

- 8 Showcase events
- 200 people attending Showcase Events

The programme shall have a regional impact upon the housing sector and the showcase events shall provide a mechanism for the learning to be shared throughout the sector.