

# 31st Annual Report

December 2018

*Dedicated to the memory of  
Amy Gordon*

## Shelter Northern Ireland's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Report, December 2018

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## CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

**The past year has been marked by the lack of a working Assembly. This has cast a long shadow over any positive housing activity by the Stormont Executive or beneficial housing legislation taking place.**

30 years after the enactment of the homeless legislation here, the current picture that emerges is one of ever concentrated housing need. Nearly 2 out of every 3 households who presented as homeless last year met the full duty criteria compared with an average of 50% for several years before. And for the third year running, it is disappointing to state, yet again, that a record number of people met the full homelessness statutory criteria. Why is this? The answer is simple. We are not providing enough affordable homes to rent. The fear is that with the end of the welfare mitigation in 2020, homelessness and housing stress will continue to set new peaks.

It doesn't have to be this way. The Government needs to get the message that expecting the private sector to be the main provider of housing to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable members of our Society is a pipe dream. More affordable housing is needed with the direct intervention of public funds. The 1500 new social homes delivered during this year by housing associations are welcome, but this number woefully fails to put a dent into the scale of homelessness and housing stress. The way social housing need is determined assumes that for every private home for sale or rent, there is a matching household who can afford the associated housing costs. This assumption fails for those households in poverty whether they are working or not. The calculation needs to be revised as it undercounts the real need for public and social housing.

The pilot scheme proposed by the NIHE next year, presents the hope that public housing provided by the NIHE could return to compliment the housing association supply. Housing associations are looking at providing private housing at an affordable rent. There are other community led and cooperative housing solutions that remain unsupported by any public agency here. Such initiatives could add to the supply of new homes as they have done right across the UK.

In addition, we need a portfolio of land assembled that can provide for an ongoing programme of affordable housing and we need to consider whether the existing public land bank can help with new housing supply.

After growing concern that the charging of upfront letting fees to prospective tenants remains a widespread practice by letting agents across Belfast, fees which undoubtedly represent a significant barrier to many accessing the private rented sector and to affordable housing, we joined with Housing Rights and QUBSU to support student Paul Loughran to bring joined test cases to Belfast County Court; the first of which ruled against Piney Rentals in December 2017, followed by a subsequent ruling against F5, ordering the fees in question to be refunded. In both cases the Court found that the fees charged to the Tenant were void under the provisions of the Commission on the Disposal of Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. In essence, the Court found that such charges as 'admin/application fees' levied by letting agents was in fact a contribution towards the costs of the services that the agents had been commissioned by the Landlord to do, and was therefore recoverable by the Tenant. We are pleased to see such positive rulings, but it seems clear we now have a lot of work ahead of us if we are to see an end to these practices across the sector.

Shelter proudly continues to campaign for decent, affordable, warm, safe and secure housing for all and to address any Government cuts that lie ahead by finding more sustainable services and funding sources into the future.

We have raised awareness of homelessness through our campaigning, our educational and promotional work and through the use of social media. We also advise the public about our services and the different projects with which we are working; SLATE which supports younger people and GABLE which supports older and/ or disabled people.

I would like to thank the Management Committee for all their effort and their personal support. Their commitment to Shelter NI is given wholly voluntarily and without this outstanding dedication, the Organisation could not hope to achieve its vision.

**Ray Cashell**  
**Chair**

**We have been very disappointed when, after protests about providing services for 9 years without any cost of living increase, the NIHE imposed a further 5% top slice off the Supporting People budget for the majority of projects.** The decision was taken at the last minute and caused major turmoil as there was no attempt to prioritise whether some projects were more crucial than others. Non-recurrent funds came through before the year was over to match the cuts, but the dire warning continues to be sounded for next year, despite the recognition of the value of this programme by all political parties.

We will continue to campaign for decent, affordable, secure housing for all and navigate the uncertain challenges around Government cuts that lie ahead and hope to find a more sustainable future.

Across the UK the Westminster government is promoting community and self-help housing development including cooperative and cohousing models. There is seeding funding and a range of other funds and professional support underpinned by the public purse. The Programme for Government from the most recent Stormont Executive gives support to the development of the social economy. There is no reference to cooperative developments which could include housing. We think this is a missed opportunity and we will work with the voluntary and community sector to provide a platform for self-help and collaborative development.

### **Performance**

Against a challenging year, the organisation has performed well.

Both SLATE and GABLE staff have demonstrated their capability to deliver high quality services and to react to a changing environment; these projects' achievements are highlighted further in the report.

We would be unable to deliver the services without the support of our funders particularly the NIHE's Supporting People, which continues to underpin the services we offer and ultimately enables us to support our services users. We would urge the DfC and the NIHE to identify the funds so that full cost recovery can be restored.

I wish to thank the Management Committee for their direction, their time and commitment which they willingly give to the Organisation. I am also grateful for their personal support.

Finally, our dedicated staff deserve to be congratulated for the professional service which they provide; for their patience and spirited way they embrace this demanding work and for their enthusiasm to strive for excellence.

**Tony McQuillan**  
**Director**

## Key Objectives

1

### PROMOTING HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Promote multiple housing solutions and housing related services both temporary and permanent; innovate and self-develop housing.

2

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Effective awareness raising of the risk of homelessness, homelessness and its prevention by engaging with the public and seeking their support.

3

### CAMPAIGN READY

Provide evidence-based campaigns in support of strategic themes; research, evaluate and respond to proposed government legislation and policy.

4

### RESOURCE SOUND

Ensure financial/ fundraising action to underpin achievement of strategic objectives; create the most effective highly skilled and motivated staff resource, both paid and unpaid.

5

### REDUCING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Work with and support socially excluded people, and enable them to take action designed to create pathways out of poverty, and encourage greater choice and control over their housing and neighbourhood services

## 1. Promoting Housing Solutions

We remained an active member of and contributed to the Council for the Homeless NI, the Committee Representing Independent Supporting People Providers, Co-operative Alternatives and Co-Housing Northern Ireland. Our projects SLATE and GABLE provide and promote multiple temporary and permanent housing solutions and housing related services, including the Helping Hands Service and GABLE's Trusted Trader Scheme.



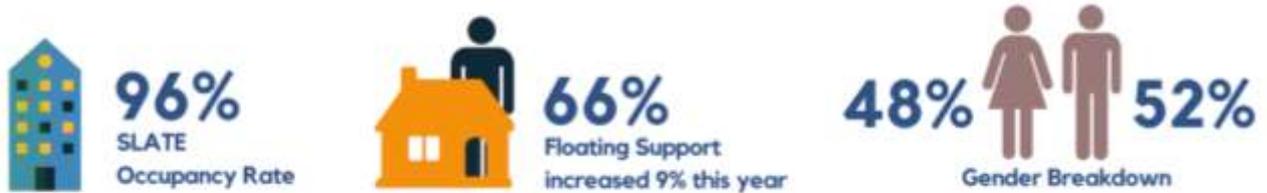
### ➤ Referrals

The SLATE Project has continued to offer an excellent level of support to residents and floating support service users.

Twenty one young people were referred to the programme this financial year.

Of the 21 young people referred, we were able to accommodate 15 service users in total over the year in both our Accommodation and Floating Support Services. We were also successful in supporting 8 service users to move on during the year.

Of the 6 remaining young people referred, all failed to attend the initial assessment and could not be contacted subsequently.



Referral Sources



➤ Move On

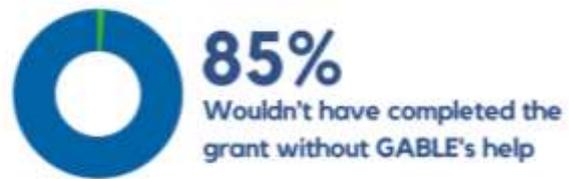




The GABLE project has grown as a progressive home improvement agency, providing an all-encompassing range of home maintenance and adaptation services within the local community, including the Trusted Trader Scheme, Helping Hands, and DFG case management. Monitoring our performance based on service user feedback is central to ongoing improvement and development. Here are our 2017-2018 results: -

➤ **DFG Applicant Satisfaction Survey Results**

From April 2017 – March 2018 we received responses from 102 service users.



➤ **NIHE Monitored Key Performance Indicators**

Referrals Received	252
Signed up to service	168
Schedules issued	244
Applications Comp	212
Approvals Received	222
Building Work Started	197
Building Work Comp	178



➤ **GABLE Helping Hands Statistics**



# Public Engagement

We have continued to raise Shelter NI's profile and consolidate our reputation in local communities. Online promotion through social media, as well as more direct forms of public engagement has enabled us to successfully promote both Shelter NI, and homelessness issues more broadly. Whilst it is difficult to quantify, increased public engagement generally leads to increased volunteer engagement and more successful fundraising, as well as contributing to a more aware and engaged public with an appetite for social change.

## Staff Engagement Events

### RADIUS HEALTH & HOUSING CONFERENCE

This conference explored how housing, health and social care can work together to deliver housing and health options for the future, to lessen the pressure on services and deliver positive outcomes. GABLE exhibited at the conference.

### THE ANNUAL RCOTSS-HOUSING CONFERENCE

"Health, Housing and Social Care: The key to independent living". – A 2-day programme filled with the latest innovative and transformational practice to deliver integrated services that people need and want.

Regional speakers presented on supporting the delivery of new and emerging housing, health and social care landscapes, integration in Northern Ireland, the growing role in social and affordable housing, meeting the care and support needs of individuals and investment in communities, Transformation within NIHE grants, the importance of service users' voice in coproduction of services, safety access and security and the housing advice charity.

International content was provided by Elizabeth Ainsworth, Occupational Therapist and PhD Candidate who presented on measuring home modification outcomes in Australia.



### OMAGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STALL

Shelter NI's Project SLATE exhibited in their local ASDA in Omagh on 16th November 2017. Alongside the NI Housing Executive, Action for Children and other organisations, the stall was aimed at raising awareness in the community about issues affecting local people, as well as showcasing the positive work being done to combat hardship.

### NICVA AUTUMN SOCIAL INNOVATION WORKSHOP

This workshop was an opportunity to try out one of the key methods involved in social innovation – Design Thinking – so groups and organizations could see for themselves whether it could help them find new solutions to whatever societal challenges they are passionate about. 'Design thinking' is a creative approach to problem solving that starts with the people you're designing for and ends with new solutions that are tailor made to suit their needs. The workshop confirmed we are moving forward in a socially innovative way.

## Social Media and Promotional Activities

### TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Shelter NI also delivered talks and presentations on homelessness and housing matters to a range of audiences in housing and health environments, these were at Belfast Boys' Model School, Wallace High School, QUB Freshers fair and Belfast MET Volunteer Fair, QUB RAG Charity.



### VIEWDIGITAL - HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

Shelter NI was at the launch of the Homelessness Crisis issue of VIEWdigital magazine on 27th November, guest edited by Jim Dennison of the Simon Community NI, and featuring an interview with our director Tony McQuillan.



### SUPPORTING PEOPLE (SP) ROADSHOW –

The GABLE Project hosted the Supporting People Roadshow, allowing some of those who have used our services to give their stories to some of our elected representatives Barry McElduff MP and Michaela Boyle, demonstrating the importance of SP funding and how it enables us to deliver vital services. Cuts to this programme will be devastating for many vulnerable people dependent on our support, particularly as demands on public services continue to rise.



### ASDA FARESHARE IN OMAGH

SLATE Project Manager was at the launching of the ASDA FareShare in Omagh.

## 2. Campaign Ready

The continued lack of a functioning Executive has stifled effective lobbying and opportunities for meaningful engagement at policy level, making it increasingly important to collaborate and engage with peer organisations on consultations and campaigns within local communities.

### SLATE STEERING GROUP

Meetings occur every quarter with representatives from SLATE, NIHE and Strathroy Community Association.

### SOUTH WEST HOMELESS PROVIDERS FORUM

The South West Homeless Providers Forum also meets every quarter.

### HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS

Shelter NI also continued its link to housing, health and homelessness through the inter-agency group convened for the purpose by the Public Health Agency.

### NORTHERN IRELAND ADULT SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP (NIASP)

The Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary partnership. It brings together representatives from a range of statutory, community and voluntary organizations, who have a significant contribution to make to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Shelter NI is represented on the Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership (LASP) in the Western Trust.

### AWA CONSULTATION

The Affordable Warmth Scheme is the Department for Communities main programme for tackling the effects of fuel poverty in vulnerable low-income households in Northern Ireland. It is a targeted scheme which provides energy efficiency measures to eligible households to mitigate the effects of fuel poverty. Following on from a review of the Scheme after one full year of operations, several proposals for change were identified which are set out in a consultation document for comment. Shelter participated in this consultation.  
SP Sector Engagement Event

### FUTURE OF SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATION CONSULTATION

Shelter NI responded to consultations by the DFC on the NIHE's Homelessness Strategy and the Department for Communities consultation on the future of Social Housing Allocations. To meet the recommendations of the Supporting People Review, Shelter actively participated in a range of meetings and consultations to move the objectives forward.

### COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR NI

Shelter NI was invited by the Community Foundation for NI to participate in establishing a forum for looking at assisting homeless people without recourse to public funds and good progress has been made on an interim solution.

### ALL-PARTY WORKING GROUPS ON HOUSING AT STORMONT

Shelter NI attended the All-Party Working Groups on Housing at Stormont, the purpose of which is to provide a platform for discussion, research and events on the key policy issues in the housing sector, between MLAs, policy advisers, housing associations, statutory bodies, local representatives and other relevant organisations in the sector. The group has continued to run in the absence of the Assembly and has met at least 4 times so far.

### NORTH WEST AGEING WELL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

North West Ageing Well Strategic Partnership is a cross sectoral partnership whose aim is to deliver a range of services, aimed at improving health and well-being of vulnerable older people in Strabane and Derry council areas. Shelter NI has been involved with this partnership for many years and now that the Big Lottery funding has finished the partnership has plans to merge with Age Friendly communities to continue their work. Initial meetings have taken place to plan out this future collaboration.

### LETTING FEES

Following concern expressed at the growing prevalence of letting agent fees being charged in Belfast, we joined with QUB student groups and Housing Rights, to pursue a campaign challenging agents charging letting fees, which the Courts have ruled are illegal. This is an ongoing campaign.

### 3. Resource Sound

Our continued commitment to staff development and volunteer engagement helped our fundraising and promotional efforts grow significantly this year, which has been especially important as the funding environment continues to be strained.

#### **SLATE Development**

Efforts were made to consider alternative arrangements to SLATE's current office in Market Street, as its premises are not accessible. St Vincent De Paul have premises which Shelter NI may be able to use. An application to the LandAid Charitable Trust was submitted and subsequently accepted, which enabled us to avail of free professional property advice and form partnerships where possible, as well as the opportunity to apply for funding grants. We hope to be able to create more accommodation for young people in Omagh and facilitate a drop-in centre to offer advice and support.

#### **Staff Training**

- Working with young people and substance misuse –by ASCERT
- Staff First Aid at Work – by Global Horizons
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness - by Tara Centre, Omagh
- An Overview of Welfare Reform & The Mitigation Package – by Advice NI
- Crowdfunding Leve1/Level 2 – by Global Giving

#### **Fundraising**

**For every £1 received by Shelter NI**



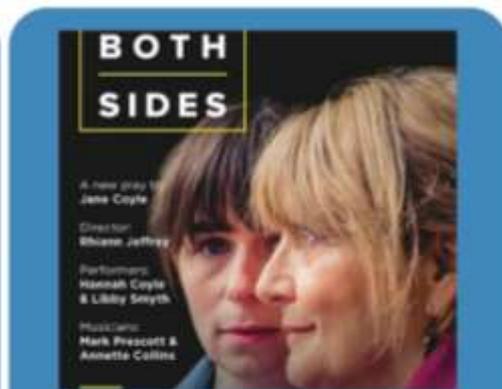
**Goes to Charitable Activities**



A huge thank you to one of our volunteer, Margaret McCormick, and friends for the success of their bingo night held in Markets Community Centre on 1st July 2017. The night raised a brilliant £305.00.



Ciara and Tori did an incredible job at the Half Marathon in August 2017! Ciara ran a stunning time of 1:39:48 and Tori finished her first ever half marathon and even made it in to work for a 7 hour shift afterwards. Putting us all to shame! The pair raised an excellent total of £211.25.



Jane Coyle and Powershore Entertainment who kindly arranged a collection for us at 2 performances of Both Sides, a play by Jane herself, described by Irish News as having "insightful writing, sensitive performances". The collections raised a brilliant £236.32



We had a great time at the Smartphone Pub Quiz at The Botanic Inn in Belfast on 24th October 2017. Thank You to everyone who came and donated, you helped us to raise £157.20!



This year we have held four Street collections:  
 Belfast 26/10/17 raised £404.77;  
 Omagh 3/11/17 raised £302.75;  
 Strabane 8/12/17 raised £312.44 and £21.45 and  
 Belfast 18/12/17 raised £857.99



Stella Le Poidevin, a cheque £1054 and beautiful framed watercolour from architect Manus Deery. The Heritage Exhibition, Marks of Time Strabane was a watercolour exhibition held at the Alley Theatre in January and February.



Gemma McGarrigle accepting a cheque from ASDA representative. Our project GABLE was part of ASDA Strabane's Green Token Vote throughout September and we were pleased to accept a cheque for £200 as a result!



QUB RAG hosted a sleep out at Queens University in December and we raised an astonishing £4,000



Thank you to B&M Bargains in Strabane for hosting us for a bag pack on 2nd December 2017, helping us to raise £351.59 & £35.47!



We had a great time at Belfast Ukulele Jam's performance in Victoria Square, Belfast on Saturday 9th December 2017, who helped us to raise a stunning £721.87!



On Sunday 17th December The Bakery, opened to celebrate Christmas and to support Shelter NI for the fifth year running. The Bakery and their staff for giving up their day off and helping us to raise a fantastic £750.44!



Sainsbury's Forestside kindly hosted our volunteers for some bag packing on 22nd December 2017. The last Friday before Christmas, it was a very busy day, and shoppers were incredibly generous, helping us to raise a massive £1,500.38!

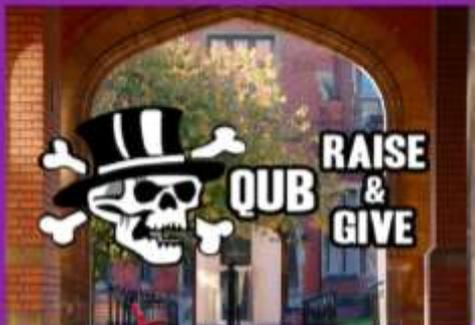


Harvey Norman staff across stores, warehouses and offices in Northern Ireland fundraised and together with their customers, they've raised over £5,000 for Shelter NI in a one month period

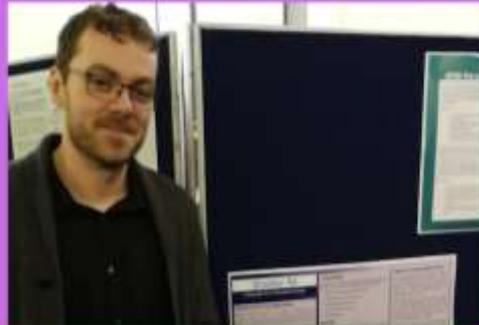


The money raised by the 41st annual Sit-out is donated to local charities and community groups who strive to make life better for others. Shelter NI was delighted to accept a cheque for £1000.

## Volunteering and Student Placements



Our volunteer engagement helped our fundraising and promotional efforts grow from strength to strength and Shelter NI was one of the selected QUB RAG Society charities.



We once again hosted a psychology placement student, Michael Stevenson, from the QUB Insight into Industry Programme, who completed much needed research on Negative Equity in NI.

## 4. Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion

With the ushering in of Welfare Reforms under Universal Credit, and the ongoing absence of the Assembly, it is now more vital than ever that we implement initiatives to tackle social exclusion and combat rising poverty levels.



### ACCESS TO LEISURE

This programme continued to give all SLATE service users access to Omagh Leisure Centre, providing affordable health and fitness opportunities, thus promoting positive lifestyle choices.



### SERVICE USER TRAINING

As part of the Princes Trust Programme Ailish successfully completed a work Placement with a local logistics employer, pictured alongside Will, Ailish's support worker.



### SERVICE USER TRAINING

Service users with Rodney from Ascort - Those pictured successfully completed the 6-week course on self-development and were awarded certificates. Feedback was most positive from Rodney and all service users who took part. Future sessions will be planned in future.



### SERVICE USER TRAINING

Service Users attended Going Places Programme  
Joinery Level 1  
Childcare  
Also attended Youth Programme



### SERVICE USER EDUCATION

One Service User to University in Liverpool to study BSc (Hons) Marketing



### SERVICE USER EMPLOYMENT

One Service User gained employment with CFM construction



### TRUSTED TRADER SCHEME

After a successful application and pitch to Innovate NI, Shelter won a place on the 'Techies in Residence' programme. This is a 10 year funded Big Lottery programme in its final year, which seeks to pair up voluntary and community sector organisations with digital and technical expertise to generate innovative solutions to social challenges. Our GABLE Trusted Trader Scheme (TTS) won 50 days of technical support to develop a bespoke website and Shelter NI staff are working alongside our designated website developers, Zoocreative, to pull together a digitally improved TTS.

- **Belfast**

Tony McQuillan	Director
Donna Booker	Bookkeeping
Ânia Gonçalves	Administrator (maternity leave from June 2017)
Jennifer Hughes	Apprentice Promotion and Events (left July 2017)
Ellie Evans	Administrator (started July 2017)

- **Omagh**

Nigel McAllister	Project Manager
Debbie McCusker	Support Worker
Joy McFarland	Support Worker (left in November 2017)
Shauna Ellison	Support Worker (maternity leave from July 2017)
William Burke	Support Worker
Louise Slavin	Support Worker

- **Strabane**

Stella LePoidevin	Operations Manager
Noeleen Gallagher	Senior Case Worker
Lisa Wallace	Case Worker
Eileen McGuinness	Case Worker (maternity leave from October 2017)
Heather Black	Case Worker (maternity leave from August 2017)
Christine Patton	Administrator
Allan Bradley	Helping Hands Technician (left in September 2017)
Adam Foster	Helping Hands Technician (started in September 2017; left in January 2018 )
Francis Devine	Helping Hands Technician (started in March 2018)

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2017-2018

The Shelter NI Management Committee met ten times in the year; including three times in subcommittee and seven full Management Committee meetings.

Ray Cashell (Chairperson)

David McCallum (Treasurer)

Tony McQuillan (Company Secretary)

Michael Fenton (Vice-Chair)

Richard Walker

Austin Herron

Hugh Cox

Catriona Holmes (resigned 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018)

Robert Mahaffy

Sarah Laverty (resigned 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018)

Jude Whyte

## Treasurer's Report 2017-2018

The financial statements year ended 31 March 2018 are prepared under FRS102 – the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. **During the reporting period I am pleased to report that Shelter continues to remain in a healthy financial position. The year ended with less than a £1k deficit.** Overall the net effect on the balance sheet was that the reserves dropped by the same amount. We still maintained sufficient reserves to cover any unexpected liabilities.

This year, we managed to almost double the amount of money raised through donations and fundraising which is an outstanding achievement, considering the current financial uncertainty there is globally.

Income in the period has seen a slight increase overall which is welcomed, going forward with increasing pressures on departmental budgets we need to continue to seek funding from other sources. This will become increasingly more challenging in the current economic climate  
Costs for the year have overall remained fairly static with reductions in some administration functions being noted.

It is encouraging to see increased income from the Helping Hands scheme and rental income. Increases no matter how small will be always put to good use improving the services Shelter NI provides.

Thanks to all the staff for all their hard work during the year and contribution in preparing the financial statements for the year.

**David McCallum**  
**Treasurer**

## Where our income comes from



Total Income **£429,768**

## Where our income goes



Total Expenditure **£430,715**