

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD  
LIVING WITH THE TRAUMA OF THE TROUBLES ADVISORY  
PANEL

INTERAGENCY OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR  
FAMILIES DISPLACED AS A RESULT OF  
COMMUNITY CONFLICT

Homefirst Community Health and Social Services Trust  
United Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust  
Causeway Health and Social Services Trust  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
Social Security Agency  
Police Service of Northern Ireland  
North Eastern Education and Library Board  
Community Safety Partnerships

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the policy background and operational procedures adopted by the participating agencies to help families displaced as a result of community conflict.
- 1.2 In addition to offering guidance to staff who may come into contact with displaced families, the document also contains useful contact information including names, addresses and telephone numbers of key people in each of the agencies (**See Appendix 2**).
- 1.3 It is not intended that this document will supercede existing emergency plans or agency procedures but is intended to complement and strengthen existing policies and procedures.
- 1.4 This protocol will be used with sensitivity and awareness of the trauma experienced by families displaced as a result of community conflict and will adhere to current policy in relation to vulnerable adults.

## 2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Emergency Planning arrangements exists through the Emergency Planning Branch of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS) and the Northern Ireland Emergency Committee. Local agencies such as Trusts have Emergency and Major Incident Plans for dealing with large scale incidents and emergencies. Your agency should have a copy of these documents and they should be referred to in the event of a major incident. This document is primarily aimed at enhancing the response given to individual families or groups of families who are displaced as a result of community conflict.

2.2 In the absence of the initiation of major incident or emergency plans, statutory responsibility for dealing with displaced households is as follows:

- Northern Ireland Housing Executive under the Housing (NI) Order, 1988.
- Health and Social Services Trusts under the Health and Personal Social Services Order, 1972 and the Children (NI) Order, 1995.
- Social Security Agency under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (NI) Act, 1992.
- Education and Library Boards under the Education and Library Board (N.I.) Order, 1997.

2.3 In addition to these formal statutory responses, there are a number of other agencies which can offer assistance and provide resources if necessary. Many of these are listed in the Northern Health and Social Services Board's Trauma Support Services Directory.

Community Safety Partnerships also have a key role in promoting and co-ordinating local interagency co-operation as does the Northern Area Trauma Advisory Panel established under the auspices of the Northern Health and Social Services Board as a result of the Bloomfield report "We Will Remember Them" and the Social Services Inspectorate report "Living With the Trauma of the Troubles".

2.4 Existing contacts with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, particularly reliable information on the scale and location of disturbances and immediate assistance to families requiring relocation, will remain essential.

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### 3.0 OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 The operational arrangements are discussed in the sequence in which services are likely to be required.

- Temporary rehousing.
- Furniture removal/storage.
- Emergency Payments.
- Childcare arrangements.
- Educational needs.
- Homelessness assessment.
- Other support services.

#### Temporary Rehousing

3.2 The Housing Executive maintains a bed bureau of temporary accommodation which includes hostels (statutory and voluntary), bed and breakfasts, hotels and other forms of emergency accommodation to deal with emergency situations.

3.3 The Housing Executive through its Homeless Advice Centre is responsible for:

- securing temporary accommodation during normal working hours;
- offering transport to the accommodation (usually by taxi);
- updating its bed bureau daily to reflect available vacancies;
- reporting vacancies to the Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service.

3.4 The Health and Social Services Trusts through the Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Services are responsible for:

- securing temporary accommodation outside normal working hours;
- offering transport to the accommodation (usually by taxi);
- advising the Housing Executive Area Office daily of referrals from the previous evening/weekend.

These arrangements are likely to change as a result of implementation of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Strategic Plan for Homelessness.

### Furniture Removal and Storage

- 3.5 The Housing Executive maintains a list of certified furniture removal firms. In addition, it has contingency arrangements in the event that certified firms are unable to undertake the work. Those arrangements involve the use of the Executive's Direct Labour Organisation, Repair Contractors, Trust facilities and local community organisation support.

Outside normal working hours the Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service can access certified furniture removal firms. **(see Appendix 3 for contact telephone number)**

- 3.6 Where contingency arrangements for storage are used, the certified firm will be requested at the earliest opportunity to store furniture and belongings in its facility, with the displaced family signing off the inventory.
- 3.7 In the Northern Health and Social Services Board's area the Housing Executive is responsible through its network of eleven District Offices and two Area Offices for: **(Appendix 3)**
- seeking confirmation during working hours from the certified removal firms of availability to undertake removal/storage;
  - activating contingency arrangements (where necessary);
  - arranging subsequent storage by certified firms;
  - advising the Housing Executive's Emergency Services Department to secure the property.
- 3.8 The Health and Social Services Trusts through the Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service are responsible for:
- advising (outside normal working hours) the Housing Executive's Emergency Services Department of the requirement for furniture removal/storage.

These arrangements are likely to change as a result of the

implementation of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Strategic Plan for Homelessness.

- 3.9 The Housing Executive's District and Area Offices and Emergency Services will liaise on furniture removal requests and the securing of property.

### **Emergency Payments**

- 3.10 While neither Housing Executive nor Trust staff are in a position to carry out a detailed assessment of the displaced household's financial circumstances, they are required to take a number of steps to assist the household.

**3.11 The Housing Executive is responsible for:**

- seeking the household's views on their financial circumstances;
- referring the household to the Social Security Agency Office;
- advising the Social Security Agency office of the referral;
- seeking confirmation from the Social Security Agency of the outcome of the referral;
- making emergency payments in respect of intimidation cases.

**3.12 The Health and Social Services Trust is responsible for:**

- assessing and where appropriate making emergency payments at weekends or holiday periods when access to Social Security Agency offices is not available.

**3.13 The Social Security Agency is responsible for:**

- assessing the household's claim for financial support (through the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (NI) Act 1992 (Appendix 10));
- confirming the outcome of the assessment to the Housing Executive.

- 3.14 In situations where the household cannot gain access to assistance through the Social Security Agency, Health and Social Services Trusts and the Housing Executive staff will determine if alternative sources of assistance could or should be explored.

### Childcare Arrangements

- 3.15 It is acknowledged that children of families who have been displaced are particularly vulnerable. The child/young person may not have an understanding of the circumstances which led to the family being forced to flee their home and this may cause further anxiety or distress. Parents will also be distressed and may require support to assist them in dealing with their children and their changed circumstances.
- 3.16 Priority should be given to the health and well being of individual children and young people. In recognition of the particular impact of displacement on children, arrangements may need to be made to provide:
- childminding, if no other arrangements can be put in place by parents;
  - provision of temporary play opportunities for children, eg through attendance at existing pre-school playgroups, nurseries or after school clubs.
- 3.17 The financial arrangements for the provision of these specific services will be made in accordance with this policy and in the context of the families circumstances and needs and the wider organisational financial position.
- 3.18 The relocation of displaced families to a wide variety of geographically dispersed accommodation presents particular challenges in attempting to make a positive contribution to the needs of this group. These include ensuring accessible locations, relevant play and school provision and effective communication between relevant organisations and the families themselves in respect of the places being offered.
- 3.19 Contact with community representatives involved with displaced families emphasises the need for choice for families in respect of children's participation in proposed provisions.
- 3.20 At the point where families have moved into temporary accommodation, they should be provided with all relevant information leaflets giving relevant details of any services which they are receiving or may need to access.

## Educational Needs

3.21 The relevant Education and Library Board is required to provide for the special educational needs of children in its area, including children temporarily domiciled in its area. Children displaced as a result of community conflict are deemed to be children with 'special circumstances'.

Education and Library Boards will make every effort in providing a speedy response to meet these needs when they arise and will try to obtain suitable placements within three weeks of any application. The provision of placement will be on the basis of availability subject to the enrolment situation in any particular school.

## Homelessness Assessment

3.22 In order to ensure the permanent rehousing needs of the displaced household are established speedily, the Housing Executive will assess their needs immediately following their placement in temporary accommodation (including where the household rehouses itself temporarily).

3.23 The assessment procedure will cover:

- interviewing the displaced household to determine the circumstances of their displacement;
- discussing permanent rehousing options;
- contacting other agencies (where necessary) to confirm circumstances;
- registering the household for rehousing.

## Other Support Services

- 3.24 Social Services have specially trained staff who may be available to those families who have experienced particular trauma in the context of Civil Disturbance. Referral to these staff will normally be made from Social Work staff, self referral, or through contact from others involved in supporting the families. Appropriate involvement of specialist and community based resources will be sought in respect of the presenting needs of families in need.

## **4.0 EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The primary contacts for services covered in this document are the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Duty Social Worker, the Housing Executive, supported by the Emergency Services Department, the Social Security Agency and the Education and Library Boards if relevant.
- 4.2 The collection and distribution of information on the scale and nature of intervention is the responsibility:
- in the Housing Executive of the Area Information Officer;
  - in the Health and Social Services Trusts of the Information Officer or Public Relations Officer.
- 4.3 In the context of large numbers of displaced families, Information Officers may be required to provide updated information on a daily basis. In such circumstances, this information should be despatched to the relevant Government Department under standing procedures.
- 4.4 The interagency group, chaired by a representative from the Social Services Directorate, Northern Health and Social Services Board and comprising of representatives from the Housing Executive, Health and Social Services Trusts, Education and Library Boards and the Northern Health and Social Services Board and other agencies, will meet on an ad hoc basis to re-evaluate the statutory response to any civil disturbance in the context of this

policy. In particular, they should determine if any special arrangements are required or if this policy should be amended.

## **5.0 INFORMAL CONTACTS**

- 5.1 Contact names and telephone numbers are appended to this document. **(See Appendix 2 and 3)**
- 5.2 It is acknowledged that Officers will have a wide range of informal contacts which they may wish to use to support them in carrying out their responsibilities.

## **6.0 COMMUNITY LIAISON**

- 6.1 Identified community leaders in areas where there has been or is likely to be multiple family displacement will need to be advised of this policy document and will need to have a clear understanding of the lines of communication within the relevant statutory organisations in order that assistance can be provided speedily.

## **7.0 ASSISTANCE FROM THE POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND**

- 7.1 Requests for Police Service of Northern Ireland assistance should in the first instance be made to the Sub-Divisional Commander for the area in question. In his/her absence, contact should be made with the relevant Duty Inspector for the area in question.
- 7.2 In cases of intimidation, full details of the incident should be given so that the necessary Police response can be formulated for the protection of life and property.
- 7.3 Police protection of persons/vehicles involved in the removal of displaced families will also be facilitated at the discretion of the Sub-Divisional Commander.

- 7.4 In the unlikely event that staff from other agencies are in attendance at the scene of an attack on a family prior to the arrival of the Police, they should be mindful that they are at a crime scene and care should be taken to minimise disruption or interference in the interests of gathering forensic and other evidence.

## APPENDIX 1

### THE SOCIAL FUND: GRANTS AND LOANS

All Social Security Office staff have been advised that should a customer, or their representative, request help from the Social Fund because of intimidation, all such requests must be dealt with urgently.

Staff will adopt a flexible and sympathetic approach, while adhering to all current legislation when considering requests for help.

The customer must decide which element of the fund they wish to apply to as an application is no longer treated as an application to the fund as a whole. An application will therefore be either for a Budgeting Loan (BL), or for a Community Care Grant (CCG) and/or a Crisis Loan (CL). There are separate application forms for each, the SF500, used solely for BLs, the SF300, which can be used for both CCGs and if necessary CLs and the SF400 and SF401 which are used solely for CLs.

In order to qualify for a CCG the applicant must, at the date of application, be in receipt of Income Support (IS), or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA(IB)). If a CCG is considered appropriate it will be in the form of a non-repayable award, if not, the Decision-maker (DM) may go on to consider a CL.

To qualify for BL the applicant must have been in receipt of either IS or JSA(IB) for 26 consecutive weeks. If an award is considered appropriate it will be in the form of an interest free loan, the repayment rate being agreed with the customer prior to the payment being issued.

The maximum amount of Social Fund debt any customer and their partner can have is £ 1000 in total.

There are no qualifying benefits required before a customer can be considered for a CL. However, assistance can only be given where the expense has arisen as a result of an emergency, or as a consequence of a disaster, providing any such assistance is the only means of avoiding serious risk/damage to the health/safety of the applicant, or any member of their family.

All DMs are aware of the need to obtain and consider all relevant information when determining individual applications. They are advised to always use their discretion, when appropriate, sensitively and with imagination, in order to avoid a rigid interpretation of the guidance. BL decisions are made using a set of predetermined factual criteria.

Should an applicant be dissatisfied with the decision given by the DM they can ask for a review to be carried out. The decision will be reviewed by a Review Officer, however, if the applicant is still not happy with the outcome they can have the decision reviewed by the Office of the Social Fund Commissioner (OSFC). The OSFC is independent of the Social Security Agency.

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

❖ Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

Mr Eric Woods  
Principal Officer North East  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
Twickenham House  
Mount Street  
BALLYMENA BT43 6BP

Tel: 028 25 645138

❖ North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB)

Mr Joe Dwyer  
Senior Educational Psychologist  
North Eastern Education and Library Board  
Coleraine Girls' Secondary School  
Carthall Road  
COLERAINE BT51 3LR

Tel: 028 703 28462

❖ Social Security Agency

Social Security Agency  
Corporation Street Social Security Office  
24-42 Corporation Street  
BELFAST BT1 3DR

Tel: 028 90 543355

❖ Homefirst Community Trust

Mr Eugene Hagan  
Social Work Emergency Response Manager  
Homefirst Community Trust  
The Cottage  
5 Greenmount Avenue  
BALLYMENA BT43 6DA

Tel: 028 25 633794

❖ United Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust

Mr Hugh Logue  
Nursing Services Manager  
United Hospitals Health & Social Services Trust  
Whiteabbey Hospital  
Doagh Road  
NEWTOWNABBEY BT37 9RH

Tel: 028 90 552649

❖ Causeway Health and Social Services Trust

Mr Sam Vallelly  
Assistant Director (Community Care)  
Causeway Health & Social Services Trust  
8e Coleraine Road  
BALLYMONEY BT53 6DP

Tel: 028 276 66600

❖ Police Service of Northern Ireland

Sergeant Colin Audley  
Police Service of Northern Ireland  
Galgorm Road  
BALLYMENA BT43 5EY

Tel: 028 25 653355

❖ Trauma Advisory Panel Co-ordinator

Ms Sheelagh Sheerin  
Trauma Advisory Panel Co-ordinator  
Rockfield Medical Centre  
73-75 Doury Road  
BALLYMENA BT43 6JD

Tel: 028 25 654170

- ❖ Further details can be obtained from the Northern Health and Social Services Board's Trauma Support Services Directory which is available from:

Social Services Directorate  
Northern Health and Social Services Board  
County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena BT42 IQB

Telephone No: 028 25 662218/028 25 662220

**APPENDIX 3**

**CONTACTS WITHIN THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE'S DISTRICT  
AND AREA OFFICES DISTRICT**

<b>NIHE Emergency Services</b>			028 90 246111
<b>Homeless Out of Hours &amp; Out of Hours Social Work Service</b>			028 94 468833
<b>Furniture Removal</b>	Pickfords Swift Shift		028 90 741199 028 94 468743
<b>North East Area Office</b>	Area Manager Principal Officer Information Officer	F O'Connor E Woods Y Montgomery	077 11 842508 028 25 631075 077 33 002739 028 25 882067
<b>West Area Office</b>	Area Manager Principal Officer Information Officer	S Mackie W Kirk H Faithfull	028 71 372000 028 71 372000 028 71 372000

## AREA OFFICES

### **ANTRIM**

District Manager	M Dallat	028 29 541114
Assistant District Manager	K Murphy	078 79 434455
District Maintenance Officer	J Francis	028 90 833468
Senior Officer (Housing)	L Montgomery	028 90 729828
		077 96 275834
		028 25 649896

### **Taxi**

### **Antrim Area Taxis**

**028 94 463800**  
**028 94 466999**

### **BALLYCASTLE**

District Manager	G McCloskey	078 08 589548
District Maintenance Officer	F McBride	078 79 435133

### **Taxi**

### **Castle Cabs**

**028 207 68884**

### **BALLYMENA**

District Manager	C Marks	028 25 821082
Assistant District Manager	J McMaster	028 92 619388
District Maintenance Officer	A Crowe	028 93 340851

Senior Officer (Housing)

D Greer  
028 90 840131

### **Taxi**

### **Bros Taxis**

**028 25 647272**  
**028 25 642727**

## BALLYMONEY

District Manager	M Myles-Davey	028 92 651578
Assistant District Manager	T Norris	028 20 762951
District Maintenance Officer	E O'Hara	028 70 355850
Senior Officer (Housing)	J Kinnear	077 47 764377
		028 90 849752

### Taxi

### A&E Taxis

**028 276 64665**

## CARRICKFERGUS

District Manager	D Curran	028 90 879528
		077 88 190917
Assistant District Manager	P Wightman	
District Maintenance Officer	E Ogibly	077 71 811602
Senior Officer (Housing)	A Glenn	028 90 945826

### Taxi

### Mahoods

**028 93 364777**

## COLERAINE

District Manager	J Baird	077 02 985205
Assistant District Manager	I Bratton	028 70 833938
District Maintenance Officer	S Moore	028 70 342581
Senior Officer (Housing)	A Devlin	077 89 272854
		028 70 824167

### Taxi

### Radio Taxis

**028 70 353709**

**COOKSTOWN**

District Manager	B Smith	028 86 762004
District Maintenance Officer	J McCrea	028 86 762004
Senior Officer (Housing)	M Bradley	028 86 762004

**Taxi**

<b>Pawds Taxis</b>	<b>028 86 766352</b>
<b>Fairways Taxis</b>	<b>028 86 761213</b>

**LARNE**

District Manager	P Craig	028 93 354928
Assistant District Manager	T Stitt	077 11 109267
District Maintenance Officer	B Browne	028 90 401258
Senior Officer (Housing)	A McAuley	078 18 075440
		028 28 270958
		077 74 158467
		028 28 272493

**Taxi**

<b>Dot's Taxis</b>	<b>028 28 260404</b>
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**MAGHERAFELT**

District Manager	H Patterson	028 79 631121
District Maintenance Officer	E Corbett	028 79 631121
Senior Officer (Housing)	Y Gordon	028 79 631121

**Taxi**

<b>E&amp;K Taxis</b>	<b>028 79 301249</b>
<b>McCusker Taxis</b>	<b>028 79 632393</b>
<b>Parkmore Taxis</b>	<b>028 79 300500</b>
<b>Westland Taxis</b>	<b>028 79 631640</b>

**NEWTOWNABBEEY (1)**

District Manager	K Irvine	077 66 442218
Assistant District Manager	G Espie	028 94 423395
District Maintenance Officer	T Boyd	077 59 309386
Senior Officer (Housing)	S Garvey	028 93 322154

**Taxi**

Heron Taxis	028 90 832572
Jock's Cabs	028 90 863333

**NEWTOWNABBEEY (2)**

District Manager	B Newman	077 47 837617
Assistant District Manager	A Marks	028 94 460508
District Maintenance Officer	S Sheehy	028 90 714109
Senior Officer (Housing)	J Turner	077 47 837616
		028 90 342101

**Taxi**

Heron Taxis	028 90 832572
Carnmoney Taxis	028 90 833333