

# **We are Housing Rights**

**We believe that prevention of homelessness is the best cure. We work tirelessly to keep people in their homes and help them with their housing problems.**

**We believe that everyone should have a  home**

# Our Values

Our values guide the work of the organisation. They shape the standards of our conduct and behaviour, not only in our interaction with clients and external stakeholders, but also with each other.

## **Independence**

we are a charity accountable to an independent Board

## **Equality**

we treat people fairly and challenge inequality

## **Co-operation**

we work together and with others to achieve shared goals

## **Quality**

we strive for excellence in everything we do

## **Respect**

we treat people with dignity

# HOUSING RIGHTS

## Organisational Background

Established in 1964 Housing Rights is the leading provider of independent specialist housing advice services in Northern Ireland. We believe that prevention of homelessness is the best cure. We work tirelessly to keep people in their homes and help them with their housing problems. We believe that everyone should have a home.

All our services are delivered throughout Northern Ireland. They include:

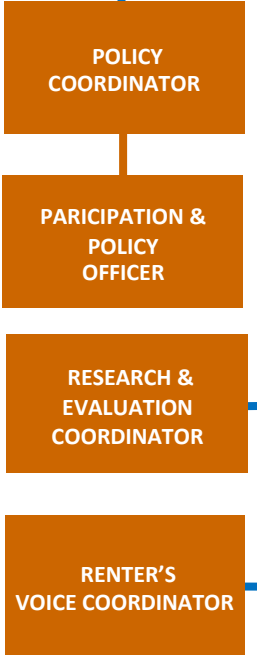
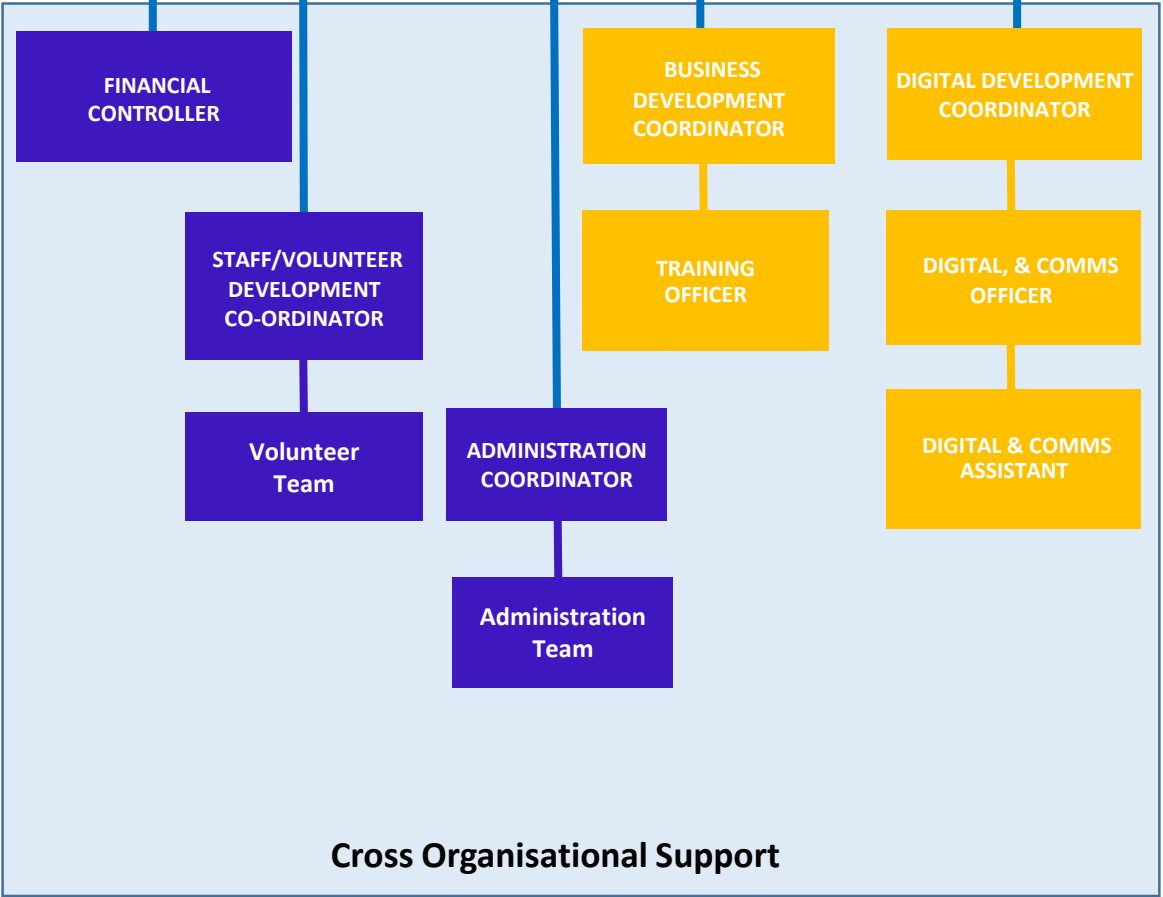
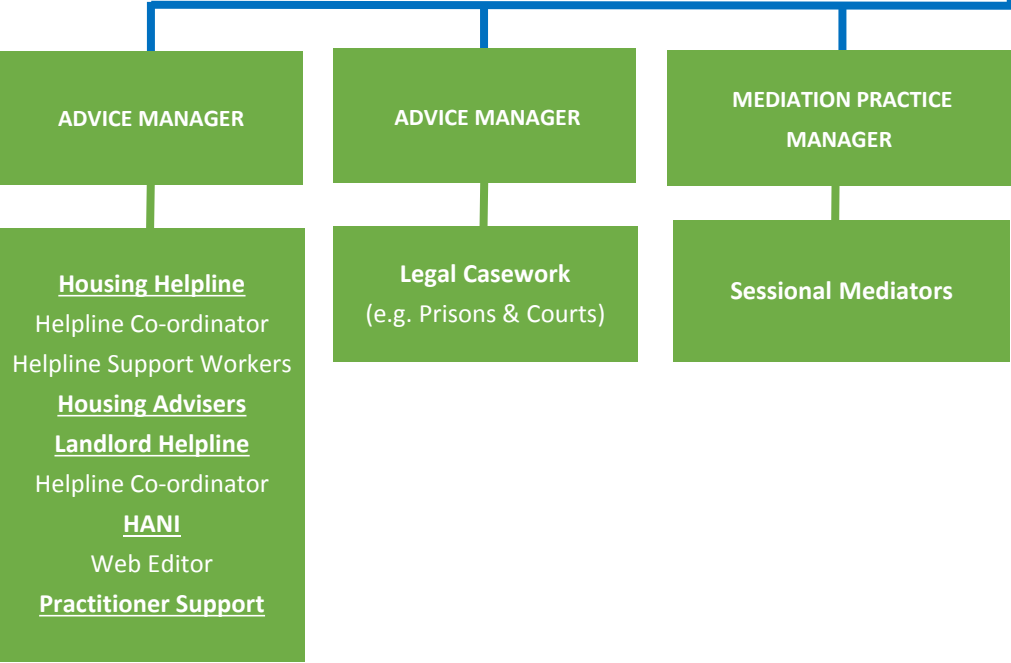
- A daily housing helpline
- Undertaking advocacy and legal representation on behalf of people with housing problems.
- An in situ court representation service for people facing possession as a consequence of debt.
- Online and email advice via [www.housingadviceNI.org](http://www.housingadviceNI.org)
- Housing advice for private renters in NI, through the [www.smartrenter.org](http://www.smartrenter.org) website
- A free confidential advice service for landlords in N
- Specialist housing advice service within the prisons in NI.
- Intensive short term support for the most vulnerable prisoners on release to ensure they are connected with appropriate support services within the community.
- Specialised advocacy and mediation for Young People in NI.
- Specialised advice, advocacy and guidance for Black Ethnic Minorities through our Housing Champions Project.
- Supporting generalist advice agencies to deliver high quality housing in their local communities
- A skills and knowledge based training programme.
- Producing information resource materials on housing law and practice.
- Providing client based comment to influence the development of relevant public policy and legislation.
- A Renters Voice forum to strengthen the voice of private renters in NI.

BOARD COMMITTEES

CEO

HEAD OF SERVICES & SUPPORT

HEAD OF POLICY & DEVELOPMENT



# HOUSING RIGHTS

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

### Our Commitment

Housing Rights is **committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons** in relation to the delivery of our services. We recognise a clear moral obligation to promote fairness and equality. We value all individuals (clients, staff and volunteers), **their diversity, unique identity and backgrounds**. These include (but are not exclusive to) the established equality grounds of religious belief; political opinion; community background; ethnic and national origin; sex; sexual orientation; disability or age.

### WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

This policy applies to Housing Rights:

- clients
- staff and volunteers
- instruction of counsel, commissioning research etc.
- all other visitors to the organisation

### APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to every aspect of our work including the recruitment & selection and progression of staff and volunteers, training of staff and volunteers, conditions of service for staff and volunteers.

In addition this policy encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity in our relationship with our clients. We therefore aim to maximise accessibility to our services for example by:

- making reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled clients / staff are not disadvantaged compared to those who are not disabled.
- ensuring people whose first language is not English have equal access to our services
- regularly reviewing our methods of delivery e.g. texting services, virtual adviser

### YOUR RIGHTS

All clients, staff, volunteers, who work for or engage with our services shall do so in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All clients, staff, volunteers have the right to complain about discrimination, harassment and victimisation; should it occur and this organisation has established an internal grievance procedure to deal with such complaints. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

# HOUSING RIGHTS

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

We require all clients, staff and volunteers to comply with this policy. We expect all clients, staff volunteers to treat others with dignity and respect and ensure that their behaviour does not amount to discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Clients, staff, volunteers are expected to challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation by making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable and by supporting victims of such treatment. Anyone who is aware of an incident of discrimination, harassment or victimisation should alert a manager to enable the organisation to deal with it.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The organisation will:

- Publicly promote this policy
- Ensure each member of staff /volunteer is aware and understands our equality & diversity policy
- Ensure all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially
- Set good examples by treating staff, volunteers and clients with fairness, dignity and respect.
- Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and will take appropriate action in accordance with this policy

## **MONITORING & REVIEW**

Monitor all incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Head of Operations in conjunction with the management team shall review the effectiveness of this policy at least annually.