

Focus on influencing Northern Ireland

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Introduction

Focus on influencing - Northern Ireland is a triannual round-up of CIH Northern Ireland's influencing work, with information on related public policies.

Allocations

The Department for Communities (DfC) is proposing [changes to the way social homes are allocated](#). CIH Northern Ireland held an event where members heard an overview of the plans and shared their views with DfC officials. We subsequently polled the CIH membership of more than 400 people in Northern Ireland to gather their thoughts on the proposals. 11 per cent of members responded and the results indicated that members are broadly very supportive of the department's proposals. The poll helped to inform our [consultation response](#). Our policy and public affairs manager Justin Cartwright [blogged for Inside Housing](#) on the importance of abolishing intimidation points.

Welfare changes

Following the [publication](#) and [launch](#) of the CIH Northern Ireland report *Impact of welfare changes on rented housing*, we continued to talk over the report's recommendations with key stakeholders. We met with the DUP, who expressed concern about the proposals for supported housing funding. The Prime Minister's

subsequent announcement that housing benefit will no longer be capped at local housing allowance rates is a huge relief for social housebuilding.

CIH Northern Ireland will continue to raise awareness and help build consensus for action on the impact of other welfare changes on rented housing in Northern Ireland. We recently met with Lady Hermon MP about the impact of universal credit on housing across the UK, where we raised the need to slow down the rollout and abolish the seven day waiting period. The UK government's subsequent decision to introduce these changes is very welcome and will help address hardship experienced by some universal credit claimants.

Planning and housing

The CIH Northern Ireland planning and housing working group met in order to help identify blockages to housing delivery, and provide solutions through influencing in order to remove them. Chaired by CIH Northern Ireland board member David Little, the group's membership of primarily CIH members is drawn from social and private housing development, consulting, architecture and voluntary organisations. Our director Nicola McCrudden [spoke on BBC Radio Ulster](#) about the need to streamline the planning system.