

28 August 2024



Mr. Gordon Lyons MLA  
Minister for Communities  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7EG

By email: [private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Dear Minister Lyons

**RE: TACKLING THE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS CRISIS – AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Housing Northern Ireland to share our latest report, *Tackling the housing and homelessness crisis: An agenda for change*. Our report outlines critical steps for addressing the housing crisis, including a focus on sustainability and achieving net-zero goals.

One of the most urgent issues facing Northern Ireland is the need for a dedicated fund for housing decarbonisation. Compared to the rest of the UK and Ireland, Northern Ireland is significantly behind in this area. Other regions have made substantial strides towards reducing carbon emissions and investing in energy-efficient homes, yet we are lagging without a dedicated fund or comprehensive strategy to guide our efforts.

We believe that tackling climate change through housing is essential not only for achieving environmental targets but also for enhancing the quality of life for residents by making homes warmer and more affordable to run. It is crucial to embed sustainability within our housing policy to drive economic growth and reduce fuel poverty.

With the current challenges, including a 38 per cent reduction in capital funding and the lowest home building numbers in a decade, we recognise the complexity of this issue. However, we also see it as an opportunity to lead transformative change by placing housing decarbonisation at the heart of policy-making.

Considering this, we kindly request information on how your office is prioritising this issue and what measures are being planned or implemented to bring Northern Ireland in line with UK and Irish standards for housing sustainability. We are eager to understand how the Department for Communities intends to support housing providers in reducing emissions and improving energy efficiency.

[www.cih.org](http://www.cih.org)

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Our report suggests several strategies that could be adopted, such as establishing a dedicated fund for decarbonisation, incentivising green building practices, and providing training for housing professionals on sustainable development. We would be keen to discuss these proposals further and explore how the Chartered Institute of Housing can support these initiatives.

We hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for action and encourage a collaborative approach to achieving our shared goals for housing and climate action. We are committed to working closely with your department and other stakeholders to address these challenges and build a sustainable future for Northern Ireland.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue. We look forward to your response and the opportunity to discuss how we can support your efforts to prioritise housing sustainability.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Cartwright', is positioned above the typed name.

**JUSTIN CARTWRIGHT CIHCM  
NATIONAL DIRECTOR  
CIH NORTHERN IRELAND**