



Housing Matters: CIH Northern Ireland's Agenda for Change **2016**



The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. Our goal is simple – to provide housing professionals and their organisations with the advice, support and knowledge they need to be brilliant. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation supporting the housing sector. We have a diverse membership of people who work in the public, voluntary and private sectors.

Further information is available at: www.cih.org or by contacting justin.cartwright@cih.org

DEVELOPING OUR AGENDA FOR CHANGE

The CIH mission is to act in the public interest rather than the interest of any one part of the housing industry. We use evidence and research to develop our views, including the experiences of housing professionals across the industry in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Britain and beyond. We recently surveyed our members in Northern Ireland on a number of issues. Drawing on the survey results and wider engagement with housing professionals, our Agenda for Change calls on the next NI government to adopt recommendations under five vital areas.





1. MORE NEW AND GOOD QUALITY HOMES

The demand for housing in Northern Ireland far outstrips supply. We need 11,177 new homes each year but build an average of 5,516. 20,000 households are in stress on the social housing waiting list. Too many homes are unfit, impacting on people's health. We ask the next NI government to:

- Introduce targets for house-building and the release of public land for new homes
- Continue to fund the delivery of social and affordable housing
- Improve health and wellbeing through better housing standards
- Implement the recommendations of the housing supply forum report



2. NEW SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPROACHES

The Housing Executive needs £6.7bn over the next 30 years to tackle the rising disrepair of homes. To create a fully functioning housing system, we also need to provide people with a range of housing options at a range of prices to meet different needs. We ask the next NI government for:

- A fit for purpose social housing sector with access to funding to build and regenerate stock
- An independent regulator with responsibility for rent setting
- More intermediate housing options to bridge the gap between social and market housing
- Promotion of joint ventures between housing associations and private developers



3. GREATER ACCESS TO RENTED HOUSING

NIHE has sold 119,000 homes under right to buy, making social housing harder to access. A housing benefit shared accommodation rate could put social housing out of reach for people aged under 35. Many people require support to access and maintain their homes. We ask the next NI government to:

- Introduce a duty to prevent homelessness and help find accommodation for everyone who needs assistance
- Modify the right to buy to protect social housing
- Adequately fund the Supporting People programme to promote independent living
- Monitor the impact of a housing benefit shared accommodation rate on social housing



4. SHARED AND MIXED HOUSING

Religious segregation of housing causes duplication of public services and inter-communal tensions that impact on mental health. Social segregation continues as a lack of integration between people living in different tenures and on different incomes. We ask the next NI government to:

- Promote where possible the strategic use of land supply to address segregation
- Introduce developer contributions for social and affordable housing to deliver mixed-tenure schemes through the planning system
- Support community cohesion work to build stronger, safer and inclusive communities



5. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN PRIVATE RENTALS

While standards in private rented housing are generally good, it's not the case throughout the sector and tenants at the lower end of the market live in unsatisfactory conditions. One-third of private tenants have no written record of responsibilities. We ask the next NI government to:

- Introduce a mandatory licensing system for all private landlords and letting agents
- Make written private tenancy agreements mandatory
- Implement a low-cost mediation and adjudication service for disputes arising from private tenancies