

Housing Rights

when everyone has a **home**

IMPACT REPORT 2017/18

At Housing Rights we believe that **PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS** is the best cure



Our advice prevented **1,227 households in Northern Ireland** from becoming homeless = Savings to the public purse of **£18.9m*** (cost of homelessness estimated at £15,470)

12,794 people contacted us for support via telephone, online or in person



46,904 housing issues responded to by our advisers

685 people accessed free legal representation



Before, I was in a panic, but after I spoke to them, I felt a lot better. I knew where I stood. They gave me information and confidence. They were amazing, really, really amazing - **Advice client**

After accessing our **ADVICE SERVICES**:



9 out of 10 clients had the information they needed to **make an informed decision**



8 out of 10 clients were able to **stay in their home**



9 out of 10 clients now **know where to go for help** in the future



8 out of 10 clients feel better able to **manage their housing costs**



9 out of 10 clients have a **better quality of life**



8 out of 10 clients felt **less stressed** about their housing situation

Successful strategic legal case on **LETTING FEES**



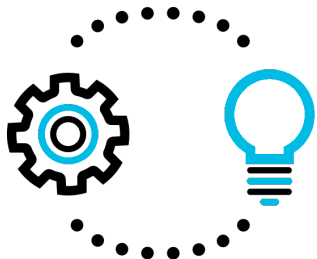
Housing Rights, with the support of the **PILS Project NI**, successfully challenged the charging of letting fees in the first case of its type in Northern Ireland.

The case of *Loughran v Piney Rentals Ltd [2016]* focused on the legality of charging letting fees to tenants/prospective tenants in the Private Rented Sector in NI. Housing Rights has been advocating for a number of years for the government to abolish letting fees. It is not uncommon for tenants to be faced with substantial upfront fees. In a time of housing stress, these fees can act as a barrier to accessing private rented accommodation and have a disproportionate impact on low income households.

In its judgment, the court ordered that a full refund of all fees paid be made to Mr Loughran. The judgment establishes an authority that many letting fees charged to tenants/prospective tenants in NI by letting agents are, most probably, unlawful.

It is hoped that the widespread practice of charging letting fees to prospective tenants should cease and that any tenant with evidence of having paid fees in the last 6 years will seek to have these refunded.

As a result of our **POLICY AND PRACTITIONER SUPPORT SERVICES:**



1,532 people received specialist training on housing issues



88% feel better equipped to give informed housing advice

99% of users have improved housing knowledge and skills



97 training participants achieved an accredited housing qualification

20 positive changes in policy secured



9/10 members feel better informed of relevant housing issues

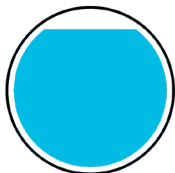
We delivered training on tenants' financial capability to **505 NI Housing Executive staff**



9/10 said their tenants will benefit from enhanced advice



9/10 said they will be able to perform their jobs better



96% said their skills had improved



If feedback is anything to go by I would say our staff fully enjoyed the training and we are confident that our customers will benefit from it - **Northern Ireland Housing Executive**