

PRESS RELEASE

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Northern Irish housing sector bodies urge government to review budget cuts

Warning of the devastating impact to local housing, communities and the most vulnerable people in Northern Ireland.

Four major Northern Irish housing sector bodies have today jointly written to DFC permanent secretary Colum Boyle warning of the devastating impact proposed budget cuts for the Department for Communities will have on some of the most vulnerable people in Northern Ireland.

In the letter the sector bodies, Housing Rights, Chartered Institute of Housing Northern Ireland (CIH NI), Homeless Connect and NIFHA stress the budget cuts will set back progression of the NI Executive's aim to promote wellbeing and will severely undercut the Department for Communities own strategic objectives.

The housing organisations outline several areas of concern which must be addressed as a matter of urgency. These include the huge impact on housing supply and homelessness of the capital budget shortfall and the resulting impact on potential cuts to the supporting people programme, which provides funding for almost two thirds of Northern Ireland's homelessness services, supporting around 20,000 vulnerable people in Northern Ireland. In addition, the bodies express concern about the impact of services to prioritise homelessness prevention, in line with the government Homelessness strategy.

Justin Cartwright, director of CIH Northern Ireland commented:

"We have deep concerns about the potential impacts of budget cuts on housing and communities. The proposed cuts to social housing and vital services will perpetuate inequalities and hinder progress.

"The waiting list for social housing is already significant, and reduced funding could lead to longer wait times. Discretionary support grants and employment support are underfunded, threatening vulnerable people.

"It is crucial that funding is allocated in a way that recognises the significance of housing as a key strategic priority. Our focus must also extend beyond providing affordable homes - we must also prioritise accessible social security that enables people to thrive in their homes and communities."

Kate McCauley, CEO at Housing Rights Northern Ireland further commented:

"Housing Rights has deep concerns that the proposed budget cuts will simultaneously increase the risk of homeless while weakening the support available to prevent and alleviate it. This will not only entrench inequalities at a time of increased need; it will undermine government policy to prevent homelessness."

Seamus Leheny, CEO at NI Federation of Housing Associations commented:

"Any cuts to funding for vital schemes such as the supply of new social housing and the Supporting People Programme would have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable in our society.

"At a time of economic pressures across all of society, we need to ensure that those most in need are not left behind."

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#)

About the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the professional body for people who work in housing, the independent voice for housing, and the home of professional standards. CIH has a diverse membership of people who work in both the public and private sector housing, in 20 countries on five continents across the world.

The organisation's goal is to support housing professionals to create a future in which everyone has a place to call home by providing housing professionals and their organisations with the advice, support, and knowledge they need.

CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation with any profit made put back into the organisation to fund the activities carried out to support the housing sector.

Further information can be found at www.cihorg, and on Twitter [@CIHousing](https://twitter.com/CIHousing)

About Housing Rights Housing Rights is the leading specialist provider of advice, information, and training on housing and homelessness issues. The charity was established in 1964 and works to improve lives by tackling homelessness and housing problems in Northern Ireland. Through policy work Housing Rights works to secure positive changes to housing policy practice, and legislation in Northern Ireland.

Further information can be found at www.housingrights.org.uk, Twitter [@HousingRightsNI](https://twitter.com/HousingRightsNI)

About The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations, formed in 1977, is the representative body for Northern Ireland's 20 registered housing associations. Our members are all not-for-profit organisations. Together, supported by the Department for Communities and the Housing Executive, they provide over 57,000 social and affordable homes.

Housing associations access private finance to effectively double the number of homes they could build with government housing association grant alone. Housing associations also deliver high quality care and support to help people stay as independent as possible. Working in partnership with other organisations, they also invest millions each year in community services and facilities.

Our sector employs more than 3,300 people and manages housing assets worth £4.4 bn. Further information can be found at www.nifha.org and on Twitter @NIFHA

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