

Response to Consultation

Date: 3rd November 2009
Consultation: Update of Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005.

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) represents 40 housing associations. This includes all 33 associations registered and regulated by the Department for Social Development (DSD). Collectively, these associations provide 30,000 good quality, affordable homes for renting or equity sharing. Further information is available at www.nifha.org

Background

NIFHA's members are responsible for about twenty five percent of all social housing stock in Northern Ireland. We are always interested in trends with regard to any aspect of housing and living conditions and the impact they may have on the social framework of society within Northern Ireland. It is from this viewpoint that we welcome the opportunity to respond to the update of Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005.

General Comments

Our response concentrates on the proposed changes to the Living Environment Domain questions as contained within the consultation document.

1. Should Central Heating Information from the 2001 Census and SOA level housing stress be replaced by the Decent Home Standard?

We agree that the 2001 Census information indicator relating to lack of central heating should be removed and the SOA level Decent Home Standard should be used as an indicator of the quality of housing within Northern Ireland. Census information has been overtaken by the more up to date information contained within the Decent Home Standard.

2. Should the Housing Health and Safety Rating System be included?

The limitations of the home accidents dataset are recognised and to gain information that is as complete and reliable as possible it is agreed that the SOA level Housing Health and Safety Rating System should be used as a more accurate measure of the impact that defects in dwellings have on the occupant's health and safety.

3. Should Household Overcrowding information from the 2001 Census be excluded?

It is acknowledged that the 2001 Census information may not accurately reflect the true extent of household overcrowding in

Northern Ireland. Changes in population levels brought about by the increase in the numbers of migrants coming to Northern Ireland may not be adequately reflected in the largely outdated 2001 Census. To use information gathered during the House Condition Survey 2006 would also not be suitable as a measure of Household Overcrowding as the survey did not capture what the Housing Executive considers to be a representative sample of migrant homes in Northern Ireland. NIFHA agrees that Household Overcrowding information should be excluded from the updated Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure.