

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Council Meeting</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>2 November 2021</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Information</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-2025)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>No</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

**2.0** The following are listed:

### **2.1 A McCullagh, Chief Executive, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council** (correspondence dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021)

At its Council meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council adopted a motion – Syringes for Cuba Campaign/End the Blockade and request Council also give due consideration to the motion.

Correspondence attached.

### **2.2 A McCullagh, Chief Executive, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council** (correspondence dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

At its Council meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council adopted a motion – Wealth Tax and request Council also give due consideration to the motion.

Correspondence attached.

### **2.3 W Massey, The Executive Office, Covid Recovery** (correspondence dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

Building Forward: Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan was approved by the Executive on 29 July 2021 and subsequently published on 2 August 2021. A link to the published Plan is available below:

- <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/executive-publishes-covid-recovery-plan>

### **2.4 Northern Ireland Housing Council** (correspondence dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

The Housing Council's October bulletin and copy of the September Housing Council minutes, which were ratified at the October Meeting, for Council information.

Copy attached.

### **2.5 The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland Secretariat** (Correspondence dated 20 October 2021)

*"The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland has today published its initial proposals for Parliamentary constituency boundaries, as part of the 2023 Review. The proposals and accompanying maps are here.*

- <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/2023-review-parliamentary-constituencies>

*We're grateful to you for agreeing to host a Public Display Point for the proposals within your council buildings.*

*Public consultation is an important part of the 2023 Review. The Commission has developed and published these proposals, in accordance with the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). Elected representatives and the wider public will now have an opportunity to submit written representations about these proposals, during an 8-week statutory consultation period. Further periods of public consultation will follow – you can find out more about these in the Guide to the Review.*

- <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/file/2188>

*You can respond to the consultation by post, email or using our online portal – further details can be found at the link above”.*

**3.0 It is recommended** that Council consider the correspondence.

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 20 September 2021

Email: Democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Alison McCullagh  
Chief Executive

To: All Council Chief Executives on the island of Ireland

Dear Chief Executive,

**Re: Motion – Syringes for Cuba Campaign/End the Blockade**

At the Council meeting held on 7 September 2021, the following Motion was approved by the majority of votes cast: -

**That this council states its' continued opposition to the illegal and inhumane blockade of Cuba by the USA. Notes that, prior to the pandemic, this blockade has prevented essential supplies such as fuel entering the country which has far-reaching consequences. Further notes, with increased concern, the impact that this blockade is having during the Covid-19 pandemic whereby essential medical supplies, needed to save lives, are being restricted;**

**That this council sends its' solidarity to all those in our district who have loved ones in the country. Further, that this council sends our solidarity to Cuba through the Cuban Ambassador to Ireland, Hugo Ramos, and that we invite the Ambassador to meet with our council to express this directly and hear about how this blockade is affecting citizens in our district; That this council notes, despite the pressures caused by the imposition of unjust sanctions, the positive role that Cuba has played in providing practical solidarity and support to so many countries in the global struggle against Covid-19;**

**That this council praises the efforts of the Cuban Solidarity Forum Ireland, supports their 'Syringes for Cuba' campaign, and highlights this campaign to the people of our district using any means available to us. Further, that this council invites representatives from the Cuban Solidarity Forum Ireland to meet with council to update us on the campaign and ongoing situation;**

**That this council writes to both Health Ministers on the island to request that they explore ways in which assistance could be provided to assist in medical supply provision to Cuba. Further, that this council requests that,**

on behalf of the people of our district, both Health Ministers advocate for the inclusion of any successful medications and treatments, including those developed in Cuba, in the fight against Covid-19;

That this council notes the most recent vote on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 by the UN General Assembly, and every vote since 1992, to demand the end of the US blockade by the international community;

That this council, on behalf of those in our district with loved ones in Cuba as well as everyone in our district who would benefit from Cuban Covid-19 medications, calls on the US government, via the US Ambassador to Ireland, to bring this blockade to an end, particularly due to the devastating effect it is having during the Covid-19 pandemic;

Finally, that this motion is circulated to all councils on the island of Ireland and that they are requested to adopt a similar position.

As outlined in the Motion, the Council requests that your Council adopts a similar position with regard to the Syringes for Cuba Campaign/End the Blockade.

The Council will also be making representations to the other relevant stakeholders as mentioned above in the Motion.

The Council looks forward to receiving your response in due course.

Yours sincerely



**Alison McCullagh**  
Chief Executive



Our Ref: Democratic Services

Date: 8 October 2021

Email: [democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com)

Mr David Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council  
66 Portstewart Road  
COLERAINE  
BT52 1EY

Dear Mr Jackson

### **Re: Motion – Wealth Tax**

At the Council Meeting held on 5 October 2021, the following Motion was passed: -

**“This council calls on the Stormont Executive to oppose the 1.25% National Insurance rise and to instead request that the British Government implement a Wealth Tax. In turn we are calling on Boris Johnson and the Tory Government to scrap the recently announced 1.25% Tax increase and for it to be replaced by a Wealth Tax to cover the cost of the NHS and Social Care.**

**We believe that a Wealth Tax would be more suitable to raise the finance needed for the NHS. This Wealth Tax should be designed and implemented in such a way that rebalances the unfair Taxation of lower paid workers by closing the loopholes which are used by the super wealthy for example the Capital Gains Tax and the Non Domicile Status. The Capital Gains Tax loophole enables the super rich to pay tax rates which can be as low as 10% which is half the rate that the lowest earners pay and surely cannot and should not be acceptable in a democratic society.**

**With general Corporation Tax at 19% and certain listed exceptions as low as 10% again this is lower than the lowest earners which is 20%.**

**A Wealth Tax of just 1% on people earning £1 million a year or over would raise over £52 billion a year in contrast the new tax increase of 1.25% on national insurance will raise £13 billion.**

**This request is to be sent to the First and Deputy First Ministers in Stormont, Boris Johnson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and circulated for consideration to all other councils in the North of Ireland.”**

As outlined in the Motion, representations have been made to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First and deputy First Ministers and to the other 10 Councils in the North of Ireland for their consideration.

The Council trusts your Council will give due consideration to this Motion.

Yours sincerely



**Alison McCullagh**  
**Chief Executive**



**CHAIR**  
**Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald**

The Housing Centre  
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## **OCTOBER HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN**

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 10.00 am via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

### **Present by Video Conferencing**

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough

### **Apologies**

Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough Council
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

1. Update from the Department of Communities on the Housing Top Issues.

A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined **as follows**:-

- Social Newbuild starts
- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy
- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- NIHE Rent Increase
- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020
- Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax



- Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework
- Long term rent trajectory
- Affordability of social rents

Members received a Presentation by Andrew Shott, Director of Finance Co-Ownership on the work of the Organisation

Presentation was received by Maryann Dempsey, DFC on Intermediate Rent: Consultation on policy and model.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the October Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: [www.nihousingcouncil.org](http://www.nihousingcouncil.org)

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> November at 9.00 am via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

### **Contacts**

**Secretary**, Kelly Cameron

The Housing Centre,

2 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8PB

[Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk) Tel: 028 95982752



Minutes of the 483<sup>rd</sup> Meeting  
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 10.30 am via Webex

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**Present by Video Conferencing:**

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Nick Mathison	Ards & North Down Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
Mickey Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

**In Attendance:**

Paul Price	Department for Communities
David Polley	Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Housing Executive

**(For Item 7 on the Agenda – Joined the Meeting @10.45 am)**

Frank O'Connor	Regional Director, North
Leeann Vincent	Assistant Director Asset Management
Paul Kane	Senior Contract & Performance Manager (Programme / Planned)
Paul McCarthy	Senior Contract & Performance Manager (Response / M&E)
John Gillespie	Regional Project Delivery Manager (Belfast)
John McIntyre	Regional Project Delivery Manager (North)
Stephen Moore	Regional Project Delivery Manager (South)

**(For Item 8 on the Agenda)**

Catherine McFarland	Director of Finance, Audit & Assurance, NIHE
Andrew Barbour	Assistant Director, Housing Benefit, NIHE

**(For Item 9 on the Agenda)**

Ben Collins Chief Executive from NIFHA (joined @11.15 am)

Kelly Cameron	Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat)
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**Apologies:**

Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
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<p><b>1.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Welcome</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and David Polley from the Department for Communities and Grainia Long from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>She also welcomed the Presenters, as listed above.</p>	
<p><b>2.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 482<sup>nd</sup> Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021</u></b></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Amanda Grehan, seconded by Councillor Mark Cooper and resolved, that the Minutes of the 482nd Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p><b>4.0</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p> <p><b>4.2</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b></p> <p><b>Page 2 Item 4.2 – Co-ownership</b></p> <p>It was noted that a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive of Co-ownership inviting them to attend the October Meeting, a reply was awaited.</p> <p>Members requested that a Presentation by the Department on Intermediate Rents consultation, could coincide with the Co-ownership presentation.</p> <p><b>Information had been sent to Members, as requested throughout the Month</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation on the Housing Executive’s Housing Options team signposts the Co-ownership scheme to tenants.</li> <li>• Details regarding the number of co-ownership clients who were on the social housing waiting list.</li> </ul>	<p><b>D Polley Secretary</b></p>

<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><b>Members Queries</b></p> <p>Members had received responses to their queries, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alderman Nicholl - Latharna Tower Blocks</li> <li>• Alderman Speers – Catherine’s Court, Armagh</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Forward Workplan</u></b></p> <p>The Paper was noted.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Report by the Housing Executive’s Chief Executive, Grainia Long on Housing Executive Business</u></b></p> <p>Ms Long provided the Housing Council with an update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues were outlined under the headings as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of Business Plan 2021-22</li> <li>• 2021/22 Budget Bid submission</li> <li>• Revitalisation</li> <li>• Sustainable Development Plan</li> <li>• Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan</li> <li>• Social Housing Development Programme</li> <li>• Response and Planned Maintenance</li> <li>• Mice Infestation</li> <li>• Housing Investment Plans (HIPS) - Presentations to Councils</li> <li>• Other Emerging Issues: Bonfires &amp; Fire at Ulsterville Avenue Temporary Accommodation</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the Review of the Temporary Accommodation would be subject to a future Presentation.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Contractor Performance Management</u></b></p> <p>Members received with their papers the Presentation on the Housing Executive’s Contractor Performance Management.</p> <p>Members noted the challenges and severe impacts being faced the Housing Executive and Contractors, due to Brexit and Covid.</p>	

	<p>Members also recognised that this was a huge problem, throughout the whole of the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Concern was expressed by Members on the issue of Contractors being awarded schemes and due to the increase of prices for materials etc, the Contractors were not receiving enough to cover their costs and unable to fulfil the work commitments.</p> <p>It was explained that the Housing Executive are seeking to pay Contractors additional costs to deal with this spike in rising costs universally. The Housing Executive will bid for additional funds to the Department, may be successful but the money will have to be taken from other budgetary areas in order to meet these costs. Members noted that the Housing Executive Board have approved an uplift for Contractors.</p> <p>It was noted that this an issue throughout the Province and other bodies are experiencing the same pressures, the Northern Ireland Executive has issued guidance to all public sector organisations setting out how to deal with the current inflation in the industry. .</p> <p>Members felt that communication is the key between the Housing Executive and tenants, the need to being open and transparent, in particular ‘change of tenancy’.</p> <p>Members were assured that Contract Management and communication with tenants are being addressed by the Housing Executive as significant changes are having to be made as a result of the issues arising over the pandemic and Brexit.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all the Housing Executive Officers for their attendance and responding to Members questions.</p>	
<b>8.0</b>	<p><b><u>Update on Welfare Reform</u></b></p> <p>Catherine McFarland and Andrew Barbour from the Housing Executive gave Members an update on Welfare Reform (Copies of the slides are appended to these Minutes - Appendix A).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the on-line process for Welfare Reform claimants which often proves very difficult, particularly for the elderly and the most vulnerable in our society and it was felt that more collaborative work needs to be done to address this issue.</p>	

	<p>Members commended the Housing Executive staff in the Welfare Team for their hard work, especially through Covid and the collaborative working between the Housing Executive and the Department for Communities.</p> <p>In response to the question, in relation to an influx of claimants once furlough ends, Mr Barbour assured Members that the Housing Executive are prepared and planning for the eventualities and will be able to manage any significant increases.</p> <p>In relation to wrap around services, it was explained that there is a lot of partnership working internally and range of close networks between community groups to give people as much help, support and advice as possible and signpost tenants to support services.</p> <p>Members welcomed the additional help of 13 week protection via Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for Universal Credit customers. It was noted that DHP was a stop gap to allow those in Private Rented Sector (PRS) time to find alternative means to meet the shortfall, it was explained this is now not the case, the Housing Executive appreciate the need to sustain tenancy. It was also noted that the average DHP is £13 per week, which has increased significantly.</p> <p>Members expressed concern at the shortfall of rents that claimants are facing in the PRS and asked was there any scope for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to be increased as it was extremely low and as a result pushing people into poverty.</p> <p>It was noted that the LHA is determined by the 30 percentile of the rents and changes would be require legislation changes by DWP. Mr Polley explained that there is lobbying at Westminster for LHA to be increase to 50 percentile again.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mrs McFarland and Mr Barbour for a very comprehensive presentation.</p>	
<p>9.0</p>	<p><b><u>Ben Collins Chief Executive from the Northern Ireland Federation for Northern Ireland (NIFHA)</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that Ben Collins had been invited to explore how NIFHA and the Housing Council can develop a closer partnership on housing matters.</p>	

	<p>The Chair explained that Members currently receive alternate bi-monthly updates from both the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and felt it would be beneficial if they could also receive quarterly updates from the Housing Associations.</p> <p>At the request of Members, Mr Collins undertook to provide Members with a list of contacts for each of the Housing Associations, in order for Members to build up a working relationship with Housing Association staff, similar to that build up with the staff in the Housing Executive.</p> <p>Mr Collins also accepted the invite to attend Housing Council Meetings on a quarterly basis to give an update on Housing Associations activities.</p>	<p><b>B Collins</b></p> <p><b>B Collins</b></p>
<p><b>10.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Social Housing Development Programme Progress Quarterly Report</u></b></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
<p><b>11.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Housing Executive’s Scheme Starts August 2021</u></b></p> <p>Members noted the report as circulated.</p>	
<p><b>12.0</b></p>	<p><b><u>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 10.00 am via Zoom</u></b></p>	

The Meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.

Appendix A



## **Welfare Reform Update**

### Housing Council September 2021

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)



## **Introduction and overview of the Housing Benefit Service**

The response during Covid

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)



## **Housing Benefit Facts and Figures 2020/21**



- **Caseload 117,676**
- **HB Expenditure £532.7m**
- **DHP Awards 18,025**
- **DHP Expenditure £4.16m**

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## **Housing Benefit Facts and Figures 2020/21**



- **New Claims Processed 18,023**
- **Change of Circumstances 241,449**
- **ATLAS transactions 4.1m**
- **Telephony managed approx. 135k calls**

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)



## Managing Welfare Reform

- Universal Credit*
- Social Sector Size Criteria*
- Benefit Cap*
- Discretionary Housing Payments*
- Northern Ireland flexibilities, bespoke solutions and lessons learned*

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)



## Universal Credit

### *Current position*

- **Roll out commenced in NI Sep 2017**
- **Working age customers naturally migrate to UC if they have a significant change in their circumstances which ends entitlement to legacy benefits (including HB)**
- **Customer may choose to move to UC at any time**
- **Transition to UC much slower than anticipated**
  - At the end of May 2021, there were 134,070 UC claimants in NI
  - Of these, 20,336 were HE tenants
  - 78,401 working age customers still receiving HB

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## Universal Credit



### *Move to UC*

- The next phase of UC ('Move to UC') will require those claimants who continue to receive any of the 6 legacy benefits UC is replacing to be managed across to UC.
- The Move to UC phase was temporarily paused in March 2020 in response to Covid-19
- Anticipated Start date of Jan 2022 is unlikely and best estimate is early 2023
- End date moves from Sep to Dec 2024
- HE is a trusted partner in Move to UC
- GB approach on voluntary Move to UC

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## Social Sector Size Criteria

### (Bedroom Tax)



- This continues to affect 23,891 (17,869 HE; 6,022 HA) customers of working age who are deemed to have a greater number of bedrooms than their family requires
- Vast majority affected receive mitigation from DfC via Welfare Supplementary Payments
- 205 HE and 41 HA tenants have lost mitigation where they have moved to accommodation with the same or greater number of bedrooms
- Mitigation payments have continued beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 deadline through the budget act

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## Benefit Cap



- The Benefit Cap rules restricts the total amount of benefits customers can receive and is administered through Housing Benefit
- Benefit Cap per week is £384.62 for a family or £257.69 for single claimants
- At the end of May 2021, a total of 1,830 households had their benefits capped
- Of these, 1,210 were UC capped households and 620 were HB capped households
- Customers affected receive mitigation from DfC via Welfare Supplementary Payment but can be reduced as circumstances change
- Discretionary Housing Payments may be awarded to meet shortfall
- Mitigation payments have continued via budget act

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## Discretionary Housing Payments



- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are mostly paid where a private tenant has a shortfall in rent
- DHP's can be awarded to customers on UC or HB
- Additional help via DHP introduced in 2020 for UC customers previously able to afford rent – 13 week protection
- 8,336 HB and 4,032 UC claimants have received a DHP award in current year
- 257 Ben Cap affected claimants receiving DHP

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## **NI flexibilities, bespoke solutions & lessons learned**



- **Partnership approach with DfC on Welfare Reform has been acknowledged as best practice in collaborative working throughout the NI Civil Service network**
- **This collaborative working has resulted in a number of significant improvements for our customers.**
  - UC housing costs are designed by default to be paid to the claimant. Default changed to Landlord for NI
  - Change of address in NI does not trigger transition to UC
  - Additional 2 week HB run on process changed to fit with NI practice

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## **NI flexibilities, bespoke solutions & lessons learned**



- Ex Stat approval at start of UC roll out to allow Housing costs for temporary accommodation to be met by HB
- Development of a bespoke UC Housing Costs report to help manage tenants rent accounts and arrears
- Housing Executive 1<sup>st</sup> major Local Authority in UK to pilot new UC payment process reducing delay in Housing costs payments and eliminating issues on technical residual debt
- Fully utilised a new Landlord Portal which streamlines the verification of tenants rent details and enables a bulk upload of rent increases to be made rather than relying on individual customer notifications which simplifies the process for claimants

[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## **NI flexibilities and bespoke solutions**



- **An issue regarding a UC design problem in which an additional weeks rent is not eligible in a 53 week annual cycle has now been resolved in collaboration with DfC**
- **Development of systems and processes to ensure the accurate and timely payments of Welfare Supplementary Payments for those claimants potentially impacted by Bedroom Tax**