



Central Housing Forum/ Housing Community Network Manifesto

The Central Housing Forum is part of the Housing Executive's customer engagement structure i.e. the Housing Community Network. The Central Forum acts as a consultative panel to the Housing Executive and is made up from representatives from each of the Housing Executive's 13 Areas, as well as representation from 'hard to reach' groups including; young people, people with disabilities and people from rural areas.

The Central Housing Forum has a recognised and meaningful role in the monitoring and decision making process of the Housing Executive and influences decisions affecting tenants and communities. The Panel scrutinises policies and procedures and, moreover, act as a quality assurance to the Housing Executive's Board with whom they meet on a regular basis.

This Manifesto has been agreed by the Central Housing Forum which represents the Housing Community Network, the key forum for tenant engagement in Northern Ireland. The Housing Community Network is comprised of approximately 400 community groups across NI as well as representative tenant involvement panels in all and each of the Housing Executive Areas of housing management.

Key manifesto challenges for the Programme for Government 2016-2019

1. The Housing Executive should be retained in its current function as landlord and in its current size, retaining integrity of role and structure.
2. The Housing Executive should have the ability to resource the improvement and upgrading of its stock, and the power to increase and update the numbers of properties to rent.
3. There should be a single set of regulatory standards for Tenant Participation for all social landlords.
4. There should be a commitment to support a resourced NI wide Independent Body to support Social Housing Providers to meet the requirements of the Tenant Participation Strategy.
5. Social Housing remains the affordable tenure of choice.
6. Provide appropriate regulation and enforcement of the Private Rented Sector with agreed standards and quality of services.

The Housing Community Network are seeking a commitment from each government Department to creating sustainable communities which enshrines working together to ensure the best outcomes for social housing tenants.

Public Landlord Function

We believe that the public landlord function currently provided by the Housing Executive should be protected and supported in the Programme for Government. A number of key actions are required:

- Investment in the housing stock to bring all properties up to the highest standard
- The integrity of the public housing stock should be sustained and its quantity increased where required
- Public housing should be recognised as a tenure of choice with a valuable contribution to the housing market
- Introduction of regulatory standards and appropriate rent setting mechanisms for the social rented sector

Tenant Participation

The Department for Social Development should place a requirement on ALL social landlords to develop formal tenant participation strategies and to offer advice and guidance to landlords on standards for participation and involvement against which they will be measured.

We support proposals for:

- Regulatory Standards for Tenant Participation
- Defining the role and contribution made by social landlords
- An independent body to support tenant participation

Private Rented Sector

As the private rented sector continues to play an enhanced role in meeting urgent need and becomes the only tenure available to many households we believe that the sector should be appropriately regulated, with minimum standards in housing management agreed as a matter of course.

Digital Inclusion

A commitment to securing greater access for ALL sections of the community to public sector services, including enhanced accessibility to social landlords online and using social media.