



Subject:	Department for Communities “Consultation on amendments to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014” Response to the Consultation
Date:	14 th April 2026
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director City Services
Contact Officer:	Claire O’Neill Principal Environmental Health Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The Department for Communities issued a consultation questionnaire on 2 nd March 2026 to seek views on the content on the proposals to amend the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.
1.2	The Department's consultation document, proposed regulations and equality assessment may be accessed via the following weblink paper: Consultation on Amendments to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 Department for Communities
1.3	The Committee is advised that responses to the Department for Communities on the proposals to amend the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 are to be received by the 27 th April 2026, however an extension was granted to the Council until 11 th May 2026.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report which provides an overview of proposals to amend the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014. • Agree that the proposed consultation response, provided at Appendix 1 to this report, be submitted to the Department for Communities by the consultation deadline by 11th May 2026.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Landlord Registration Scheme was introduced on the 25 th February 2014. This created a single database of private landlords in Northern Ireland, allowing relevant and up to date information to be held about the landlords and their properties. The Department for Communities (DfC) was responsible for the management of the current database until April 2025 when it was transferred to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) to act as the lead Council responsible for administering the landlord data base on behalf of all councils. https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s119848/Transfer%20of%20Landlord%20Registration%20Scheme%20to%20Local%20Councils%20-%20V1.pdf
3.2	The Department for Communities ("the Department") is consulting on changes to the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 ("the Regulations") to appoint Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council as Landlord Registrar (acting as host council on behalf of all councils in Northern Ireland).
3.3	Other proposed changes include requesting mandatory information on the standards of properties, allowing data from the register to be shared with public authorities for safety purposes and research and statistics to help inform policy. There are also a few minor technical amendments proposed to reflect the fact that the administration of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) is now operated by local councils.
3.4	The Department anticipates that these changes will make the Scheme a more effective tool for improving landlords' knowledge of, and compliance with, their legal duties. The response to the questionnaire is contained in Appendix 1, however the draft response is summarised as follows: Regulation 2 will be amended to formally appoint Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council as the landlord registrar.

Council Response

3.5

The Council welcomes this appointment.

Regulation 7 will be amended to reflect the policy intent that the landlord of a property defined as a licensed house in multiple occupation (“HMO”), be exempt from paying landlord registration fees. This exemption is because the Scheme is about the registration of landlords, not properties. Those individuals who hold a licence for an HMO would have already paid a fee to the HMO scheme

Council Response

3.6

This point is not covered in the consultation questionnaire, but the Council agrees with this policy decision.

Regulation 9 Regulation 9 will be amended to allow the registrar to share information with the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) to assist with enforcement of gas safety legislation in private tenancies. It is also proposed that Regulation 9 should be amended to allow data contained in the register to be shared with the Department for Communities for statistical and research purposes to assist with the formulation and development of policy and legislation related to the private rented sector.

Council Response

3.7

The Council welcomes this amendment as it works closely with HSENI in relation to enforcement of gas safety standards in the privately rented sector.

Schedule 1 The Department is proposing to request extra information from landlords about their properties at the point of registration. Landlords will be asked to confirm whether they are compliant with existing legislation relating to the safety and standards of their properties. These safety and standards requirements will be compliant with:

- the fitness for human habitation standards
- Energy Performance Certificate requirements (providing a valid EPC to a tenant or prospective tenant is a requirement under The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008).
- Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024
- Electrical Safety Standards for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.

Council Response

The Council is unsure what benefit this information will have in relation to improving standards in the privately rented sector. The Council is disappointed that a simple declaration of compliance to ensure that a rented property meets the regulatory standards without ensuring compliance through an inspection does not go far enough.

In the absence of more robust regime which would provide for an inspection framework with appropriate additional resources, this declaration alone is unlikely to improve standards in the privately rented sector. Whilst some certification can be requested by the Council to verify the validity of a declaration, some aspects of compliance such as assessing the fitness standards and the presence of alarms cannot be verified without

3.8	<p><i>inspecting the property. Any requirement for inspections to support compliance will need to be resourced as such additional regulatory work could not be undertaken within our existing resources.</i></p> <p><u>Schedule 2:</u></p> <p>The Department is proposing an amendment to reflect the established practice of allowing the public to carry out online searches to confirm if a particular property is on the landlord registration database.</p> <p><i>The Council welcomes the additional functionality to allow online searches by the public, as this is an important tool in detecting unregistered landlords and assisting tenants in selecting a tenancy with a compliant landlord.</i></p> <p>In response to any further comments:</p> <p><i>This proposed amendments and declaration will not improve fitness standards in the privately rented sector. The current statutory fitness standard is 45 years old and in our view is no longer fit for purpose. BCC has been advocating on many housing related consultations responses to DFC for a review of the fitness standard for many years, Council would ask the Department to prioritise the review of this standard to introduce a new standard commensurate with modern living standards which will drive improvements in the private rented sector housing stock.</i></p> <p><i>The Council is disappointed that the amendments are not directly linked to a more rigorous regime through an appropriately resourced inspection framework to ensure compliance with the current standards as the landlord’s simple declaration that the property meets the regulatory requirements does not go far enough.</i></p> <p><i>Currently, the Council does not have the resources to undertake any additional work to ensure compliance with the landlord registration scheme.</i></p> <p><i>The Department should also be prioritising the resourcing of the regulation of the private rented sector as Councils are being asked to enforce a range of new regulations without additional resources which have been incrementally introduced under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.</i></p>
4.0	
4.1	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Currently, the Council does not have the resources to undertake any additional work to ensure compliance with the landlord registration scheme.</p> <p>The Department should prioritise the resourcing of the regulation of the private rented sector as Councils are being asked to enforce a range of new regulations without additional resources which have been incrementally introduced under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.</p>
5.0	
5.1	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.</p>

6.0	Appendices - Documents Attached or None
	<p>Appendix 1- Consultation Questionnaire with responses:</p> <p>Appendix 2- Consultation paper: https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/dfc-amendments-to-landlord-registration-scheme-regs-ni-2014-consultation.pdf</p> <p>Appendix 3- Draft amended regulations:</p> <p>https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/dfc-landlord-registration-scheme-regulations-ni-2026.pdf</p>