

**From: Tracey Millar
NIHE Sponsor Team**

**Level 4
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

Barry Flynn

flynnbarry@belfastcity.gov.uk

Email:
DfCNIHESponsorTeam@communities-ni.gov.uk

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Dear Mr Flynn,

Thank you for your email to Gordon Lyons MLA, Minister for Communities, on 4 August 2026, in which you have advised of Belfast City Council's People and Communities Committee endorsement of a notice of motion relating to social housing tenancy successions. Your letter has been passed to me to respond to.

The Department supports the Housing Executive and Registered Housing Associations by providing the statutory and policy framework that underpins housing management decisions, including those relating to the succession of tenancies.

The decision to permit a tenancy succession rests with the landlord, whether that is the Housing Executive or a Housing Association. It is important to note that housing managers within these organisations assess each case individually. They consider property-specific and location factors and must balance the needs of the next applicant on the waiting list with the eligibility of the person seeking succession.

You will appreciate that this requires careful judgement and, at times, difficult decisions to ensure that the principle of objective housing need is upheld.

The general approach is that allocations should be based on an objective assessment of need. In most circumstances, it would not be appropriate to depart from this, particularly considering ongoing pressures on housing supply and the increased reliance on temporary accommodation. There are already additional flexibilities within the housing selection scheme.

The Selection Scheme rules play a crucial role in maintaining fairness and public confidence in the allocation process.

There are currently no plans to review the succession policy. The focus of the Department and Minister is on addressing growing levels of housing need through proper use of existing social housing stock and securing new supply through the Social Housing Development Programme.

Yours Sincerely

Tracey Millar

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