



Department for
Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

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Via e-mail democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk

Dear *Henry*

WELFARE MITIGATION SCHEMES

Thank you for your letter of 19 July in which you detail the Motion that was passed by Belfast City Council on 1 July regarding the welfare mitigation schemes.

Mitigation schemes post 31 March 2020

The legislation made following the Fresh Start Agreement which provides authority to make welfare supplementary mitigation payments will end from 31 March 2020. Similarly there is no funding for welfare mitigations allocated beyond this date. In the continued absence of the Assembly the Department is not able to make amendments to the existing welfare supplementary mitigations legislation (to enable the Department to continue the mitigation schemes beyond March 2020) as such regulations would be subject to Affirmative Resolution.

In line with the Fresh Start Agreement the Department completed a Review into the Welfare Mitigation Schemes that was published on 25 March 2019. This can be found on the Department's website at www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/review-welfare-mitigation-schemes.

Following on from this the Department held a series of public engagement events with key stakeholders, primarily the Advice Sector, voluntary/community groups and Housing Associations, to gain feedback on the review into the mitigation schemes.

The Department is aware of the challenges likely to arise from the termination of the welfare mitigation package and is currently considering all the evidence of the potential impact from the schemes ending.

I trust you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



**TRACY MEHARG
PERMANENT SECRETARY**