



From: Director of Housing Supply Policy

Level 3

Causeway Exchange

1-7 Bedford Street

Belfast

BT2 7EG

Telephone: (028) 9051 5286

e-mail: david.polley@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: CORR 1752 2021

Date: 30 November 2021

Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer Via email:

DonnellyCarolyn@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Your reference CD 01.11.2021

RENT CONTROL SCHEME IN BELFAST

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 November to the First Minister and deputy First Minister. You raised a number of issues around increasing HMO numbers, increased Living Costs, stagnating wages and increased National Insurance contributions with the central issue raised in your letter a motion calling for a rent control scheme in the city. As this is a housing matter your correspondence has been passed to this Department for reply.

Minister Hargey has stated that the Private Rented Sector (PRS) is a priority and that she is committed to improving both standards and affordability in the PRS.

The Private Tenancies Bill which is currently progressing through the Assembly is the first phase in a legislative programme which, amongst other benefits, will bring forward improvements in safety and give tenants greater protection from eviction. The Bill also contains a clause to restrict rent increases to once in a twelve month period, therefore protecting tenants from unexpected rent increases.

Minister Hargey is also committed to looking at fair and affordable rents in the private and social sector and has asked that this work begin as soon as possible in the next mandate as part of a further phase of reform.

In addition to the Bill, Minister Hargey is committed to increasing affordable housing supply and expanding housing options, and on 18th October a consultation was launched on one such affordable housing product: Intermediate Rent.

Intermediate Rent, in terms of rental costs and length of tenancy offered, occupies the space between the social and private rented homes, and seeks to deliver a new supply of more affordable, good quality, well-managed homes providing an additional rental choice for lower income households. It may provide a suitable housing option



for people and families who are living in the Private Rented Sector and struggling with high rents and poor housing conditions.

The consultation closes on 14th January 2022 and a government response will be published in due course. Subject to approvals for a scheme and its funding, the first homes could be available during 2023.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

DAVID POLLEY