

1. Increase investment and deliver more housing

- **The long-term solution to address issues of housing stress, choice and affordability is to ensure a sustained supply of housing that meets needs across all tenures.**
- The next Executive must deliver the quota of new housing promised in the ambitious Housing Supply Strategy and introduce incentives to stimulate investment in the private rented sector.
- Home ownership must not be a distant dream - sufficiently flexible grants, funding and support for first time buyers are needed to make it more accessible to own a home.
- Incentives should be extended to the second hand housing market to allow more households to buy homes in the places they want to live.
- Incentives such as grant funding, rates premiums and rebates should be introduced to promote the sale and purchase of empty homes and derelict property to bring it back into usable housing stock.
- Opposing forms of controlling rent. Strict rent control measures constrain the supply of private rented property, hinder attempts to raise property standards and ultimately leave tenants in a worse financial position. Housing supply must meet needs to ensure stable market rents.

2. Elevate housing quality and standards

- **Northern Ireland has the most modern housing stock in the UK, but residential building still accounted for 13 per cent of emissions in 2016 and the average cost of elevating private rented property to a Band C rating is £6,000 per property.**
- Long-term funding must be made available for homeowners and private landlords to implement necessary energy efficiency improvements to ensure the housing stock supports zero carbon ambitions and homes are heated using renewable or zero emissions heating.
- An exemptions register should be drawn up to include property unable to meet regulatory standards.
- Regulations monitored ensuring the quality and standards of property in the private rented sector remains high, with guidance for letting agents and landlords on the expected standards regularly updated and made easily accessible.

3. Improve regulation and Professionalisation

- **The Private Tenancies Bill was a missed opportunity to regulate and professionalise the property sector.**
- The next Executive must ensure regulation governing property agents is introduced to raise professional standards, with the introduction of mandatory qualifications, fit and proper person tests and continuous professional development (CPD).
- Client Money Protection (CMP) and Public Indemnity (PI) insurance must become a mandatory requirement for all property professionals intending on carrying out letting agency work.
- A dedicated housing court or tribunal must be introduced to provide confidence to both landlords and tenants that the private sector is fair and balanced. This will also encourage investment in the sector.
- Property portals must be regulated to ensure minimum material information is provided on listings for the protection of consumers, best practice standards are met, and competition remains fair and equitable with no monopolies.

4. Support private sector landlords and tenants

- **The Private Tenancies Bill represents a step change in lettings practice and agents, landlords and tenants must be supported through the conversion to ensure compliance.**
- Guidance on landlords' obligations must be set out and regularly updated and a template written agreement must be provided to ensure that necessary prescribed wording, information and form are adhered to.
- Alongside a written tenancy agreement, simplified guidance on Private Tenancies should be available to ensure landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- To sustain tenancies and incentivise investment in the private rented sector the Executive must provide funding for councils to support and advise landlords and tenants.
- The next Executive must introduce an annual national housing survey to gather informative data to allow the future delivery of smart housing policies.