

Freedom of Information request for Housing Intimidation Data

1. ***Please provide details of how many incidents of housing intimidation have been dealt with by NIHE in the last 3 years – 2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23 to date?***

It should be noted that figures on homelessness presentations and acceptances, including those where intimidation is the reason for presentation/acceptance, are published on the DfC website and can be accessed via [this link](#). The numbers for homeless presenters and acceptances by the Housing Executive, based on intimidation, for the last 3 years are detailed in the table below.

Year	Number of Presentations	Number of Acceptances
2020/21	286	256
2021/22	180	171
2022/23	167	212

It should be noted that in some cases a household may present for one reason but upon completion of investigations be accepted for another reason i.e. a household may present for a reason other than intimidation such as neighbourhood harassment but upon conclusion of investigations may be accepted due to investigation.

2. ***How many properties has the NIHE had to buy from homeowners forced out of their property by paramilitary activity, sectarianism or because of their race, sexual orientation or disability during the same time period - 2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23 to date?***
3. ***How much has NIHE spent buying properties from homeowners forced out of their property by paramilitary activity, sectarianism or because of their race, sexual orientation or disability during the same time period - 2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23 to date?***

The Land Asset & Policy team have provided a collective response for questions 2 & 3 as it is difficult to ascertain the exact figures for the information requested.

The Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED) is operated by the Housing Executive under the provisions of Article 29 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988. The Order requires the Housing Executive to submit to the Department for Communities (DfC) a scheme to assist owner-occupiers who are forced to leave their homes because of attack or intimidation. Article 29 enables the Housing Executive to acquire such homes by agreement where their owners are unwilling or unable to occupy them in consequence of acts of violence, threats to commit such acts or other intimidation.

All of the following conditions must be satisfied before an application will be eligible for acceptance under SPED.

- i. The house must be owner-occupied and must be the applicant's only or principal home.
- ii. There must be evidence (substantiated by the PSNI) that it is unsafe for the applicant or a member of his/her household residing with him/her to continue to live in the house, because that person has been directly or specifically attacked or intimidated and as a result is at risk of serious injury or death. A certificate stating this clearly, signed by the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, or authorised signatory, must be provided to the Housing Executive.

Please note that the Housing Executive is not advised of the reasons for any decision made by the PSNI as to whether or not to issue a Chief Constable's Certificate, and is not therefore in a position to comment on whether those applications were due to paramilitary activity or sectarianism, or because of their race, sexual orientation or disability, or for any other reason.

Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2023, inclusive, the Housing Executive purchased 6 properties under SPED at a total purchase price of £856k excluding stamp duty. The table below shows the purchase costs by year.

Financial Year	Purchases	Total Purchase Price	Stamp Duty	Total
2020-21	5	691,000	25,730	716,730
2021-22	0	0	0	0
2022-23	1	165,000	4,950	169,950
Total	6	856,000	30,680	886,680

In addition to the purchase price and stamp duty, SPED purchases attract fees for valuations from Land & Property Services (LPS), legal professional fees and outlay, and annual rates liability for properties in the Housing

Executive's ownership. These costs do not necessarily directly relate to the 6 properties above. The table below shows these additional costs by year over the period.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Valuation Fees	575.00	16,553.50	7,118.50	24,247.00
Legal Costs	7,368.05	612.28	1,983.88	9,964.21
Rates Liability	4,894.14	6,027.08	1,925.58	12,846.80
Total	12,837.19	23,192.86	11,027.96	47,058.01

4. **What percentage of the total number of homelessness cases do intimidation cases account for?**

It should be noted that figures on homelessness presentations and acceptances, including those where intimidation is the reason for presentation/acceptance, are published on the DfC website and can be accessed via [this link](#).

The number of presentations due to intimidation are detailed as a percentage of overall acceptances in the table below.

Year	Presentations due to Intimidation	Total Number of Presentations	No of Acceptances as %
2020/21	286	15,991	1.8%
2021/22	180	15,758	1.1%
2022/23	167	15,965	1.0%

The number acceptances due to intimidation are detailed as a percentage of overall acceptances in the table below.

Year	Acceptances due to Intimidation	Total Number of Acceptances	No of Acceptances as %
2020/21	256	9,889	2.6%
2021/22	171	10,135	1.7%
2022/23	212	10,349	2.0%

5. How much has NIHE paid out in emergency grants and to how many householders who have had to move from their rented homes?

Applicants who meet the criteria for SPED are also eligible for an emergency grant to assist with the costs of moving home. Across the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2023 there was only one emergency grant payment of £754, in the financial year 2021-22.

6. Please provide details of locations for reported incidents of intimidation & whether they've been attributed to loyalist paramilitaries, drug gangs or republican affiliated groups?

The Housing Executive do not classify intimidation cases at this level and therefore cannot report on this information.