

20 March 2025

Our Ref: FOI 703

Request

We received your request on 06 March 2025 for the following information:

I am conducting a university project and would be grateful if I could receive a response in relation to the below under the Freedom of Information Act.

a) Could you please outline NIHE's procedures in relation to addressing tenant's that accumulate possessions (such as hoarding) within their property?

b) Please outline if there are any proactive steps that NIHE takes to prevent tenant's from accumulating further possessions within the future (hoarding relapse) such as staff training or collaborative working with other agencies?

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

a) Current position

The Housing Executive do not at present have a dedicated Hoarding Policy, however, this is currently in development. - See response to b) below.

When Housing Executive staff encounter tenants that accumulate possessions, they will try to engage with them to identify extent of accumulation and any vulnerabilities, they may refer tenants to various floating or other externally provided support services, including multi-agency support hubs as available. They will also seek to engage with Social Services if applicable. They may also offer referrals including to the Environmental Health if there are Health & Safety risks, NIFRS for Home Safety Checks etc.

The Sustaining Tenancies Grant Funding Team provides funding to a number of projects specifically for the well-being and support of tenants living in **Housing Executive properties only**. Within this fund, there are currently two (2) active projects which address hoarding/related issues:

- Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (*Holistic Hoarding Helpers Project*). This project started 01/04/2024 and is due to end 31/03/2027. It covers the Ballymena area.

- Belfast Central Mission (*Housing Support for Older People Belfast Project*) - House to Home 2 – This project has received funding from 18/07/2022 to 31/03/25 and 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026. It covers the Belfast area. Only tenants aged over 55 are eligible for inclusion in this project.

Previously we have provided funding to the following project.

- Belfast Central Mission (*Refresh Project*). This project received funding from 11/07/2022 to 30/12/2024. The project operated across South Region (primarily Dungannon, Armagh, Lurgan, Portadown & Newry).

To date, where hoarding/related issues have been intractable following attempts to engage the tenant with support to reduce/address hoarding in the property, and the physical condition of the property is causing nuisance to neighbours, and/or has resulted in deterioration in the condition of the property owing due to waste/neglect our approach has been to seek possession of the property under the Housing (NI) Order 2003. This is a last resort.

- b) The Housing Executive recognises that hoarding is a complex mental health issue and is taking action to ensure trauma-informed hoarding support is available to all tenants affected by this condition.

We are currently carrying out a procurement process to appoint a contractor for the provision of a Hoarding Support Service. The competition is advertised on etendersni and Find a Tender Service portal. For details please see information provided at the following link: [T1679- Provision of a Hoarding Support Service - Find a Tender](#)

The Housing Executive's Hoarding Policy is currently in development and will be rolled out alongside the Hoarding Support Service once this contract is awarded. The policy will outline the process in relation to identification, use of the Clutter Image Rating scale, encouraging engagement, referrals and ongoing support, as well as an updated process for those who decline offers of support and do not take action to address health and safety hazards/property deterioration arising from accumulated items/materials.

We are unable to provide you with any further details at this point due to the live open tender exercise. We estimate the procurement process should be concluded in May 2025. If as result of this procurement a contract has been awarded, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss your project. If you feel this would be of benefit to you, you may arrange a meeting by contacting tenancysupport@nihe.gov.uk.

This concludes our response.