

# Response to Consultation

**Date:** 23 January 2009  
**Consultation:** Equity Sharing Amendment of the House Sales Scheme

## Introduction

The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) represents 40 housing associations. This includes 33 of the associations registered and regulated by the Department for Social Development (DSD). Collectively, these associations provide 30,000 good quality, affordable homes for renting or equity sharing. Further information is available at [www.nifha.org](http://www.nifha.org)

## Background

NIFHA's members are responsible for about twenty five percent of all social housing stock in Northern Ireland. We are conscious that the proposed document does not currently relate to social housing stock, but is specifically targeted at mortgage repossessions. However, along with our members, we would like to make the following comments.

## General Comments

1. We welcome any proactive approach to avoid any household at risk of losing their home. This clearly reduces any This document is not likely to have any impact on our area of business, unless there are proposals to introduce a similar protocol for social housing repossessions in relation to rent arrears.
2. Properties should also be excluded from the scheme if the landlord would not end up with enough sales proceeds to discharge its outstanding loan.
3. The DSD's decision to front load the discount so that applicants are entitled to receive the full eligible amount once they purchase 50% of the property does not create any incentive for tenants to purchase the remaining 50%. Furthermore, the requirement to have multiple valuations for stair casing have the potential to create significant additional administration duties and it is unlikely that the applicant will cover the cost.
4. There will be instances where Housing Associations may still own up to a 75% stake in the property and it is difficult to ensure that part-ownership fulfils maintenance obligations.

We trust that you will find these comments useful and our recommendations will be given due consideration.

**Submitted on behalf of NIFHA by:**



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