



Dear Colleagues

As you are aware NIFHA/CHNI has been fortunate to have secured funding for the Supporting People Officer position and its associated services since 2002.

It is with great regret that we hereby advise that with effect from 1 April 2009, the Supporting People project will not be funded in its current format.

Unfortunately, the shared Supporting People Officer post will come to an end at this time. We are sure you will agree that our Supporting People Officer, Malcolm Christy has been an invaluable asset to our members over the last five years. His dedication and enthusiasm for improvement to services as well as lobbying for increased resources will leave a huge gap that will be difficult to fill. Malcolm will return to his position at NI Co-ownership Housing on 1 April 2009.

Ultimately, the NIHE Supporting People team, as well as both our organisations, recognise the continuous changing needs and challenges in relation to supporting people within the sector. Therefore, NIFHA/CHNI have submitted a joint bid to NIHE, seeking funding for a new project which will meet a number of key objectives and in order to maintain the support for the sector. However, the concept of this project will probably be somewhat different to what has existed to date.

Having considered the needs of our members and discussed expectations with the NIHE Supporting People team, we plan the overall aim of the proposed project is to support the sector to be as strategically relevant and as efficient as possible by:

- Encouraging skills sharing
- Information sharing and networking
- Support members to meet financial accreditation and governance standards
- Encourage the development of new service models where appropriate
- Maintain diversity and user choice
- Provide an accredited trained programme tied to the QAF

The continuation of this funding will enable us to ensure that the needs of our members and objectives of NIHE Supporting People are met. We hope to be able to manage the process by making every effort to ensure that Supporting People providers meet their client needs. For the time being, it is anticipated that we will continue to co-operate and retain those working groups already in place and we will keep you informed regarding developments in relation to this proposed project as outlined above.

Yours sincerely

**Ricky Rowledge**

Director

CHNI

**Chris Williamson**

CEO

NIFHA