



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Our Ref: CSD/011/2011/CMC

Rt Hon John Robertson MP and
Rt Hon Andrew Turner MP
Chairs
Small Donations Bill Committee
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Sirs

Small Charitable Donations Bill

1. At its meeting of the 6 September 2012, the Department for Social Development briefed this Committee on plans to introduce a Legislative Consent Motion in the Northern Ireland Assembly associated with aspects of the Small Charitable Donations Bill.
2. The Legislative Consent Motion is seeking the Assembly's approval for the Small Charitable Donations Bill to be extended to Northern Ireland and for its operation to be made an excepted matter under the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
3. As part of its consideration of the Motion, the Committee discussed the new Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) which is provided for in the Bill. The Committee expressed a number of serious reservations in respect of the eligibility criteria for the new Scheme.
4. The Committee recognised that the new Gift Aid and Small Donations Scheme could be potentially beneficial to many charities in Northern Ireland but expressed disappointment that the excessive bureaucracy involved and the restrictive eligibility criteria may prevent many



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organisations from benefiting from the additional revenue that this scheme would generate.

5. The Committee expressed its support for revisions to the proposed new Scheme which would allow all organisations, both large and small, to quickly and easily access the Scheme.
6. In particular, the Committee expressed the view that consideration should be given to the following:
 - Relaxing the eligibility criteria to allow many new and smaller charities to access the Scheme; and
 - Simplifying the circumstances under which some charities can increase the maximum amount of small donations on which top-up payments can be claimed.
7. We would be grateful if you could take the Committee's views into consideration during the Committee stage of the Small Donations Bill.

Yours sincerely

Alex Maskey MLA
Chairperson

Mickey Brady MLA
Deputy Chairperson