



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Please use this form to submit written submissions in relation to the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Bill. Return to committee.socialdevelopment@niassembly.gov.uk by Tuesday 6 October.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Queen's University Belfast is a dynamic and diverse institution, in the top one per cent of global universities and a major employer and investor within the city of Belfast.

The University has supported the implementation of the policy on HMOs since the publication of the 2006 draft Subject Plan for Belfast, and has worked proactively with NIHE in relation to its properties, supporting the aim of the Plan to, positively shape the market for HMOs and to promote the development of purpose built student accommodation.

The University owns and operates a substantial portfolio of over 2240 student bedspaces and is unable to meet the current demand. With a substantial projected increase in student population by 2020, the University recognises that the availability of additional Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) within the city will be critical to success of realising its Vision.

2. SUPPORT REPRESENTATIONS

The University supports the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Bill 2015 and includes a number of matters for clarification and review in this response.

**Part 1 - Meaning of a House in Multiple Occupation
Clause 3 (2)**

The University is supportive of Clause 3.2 which defines the term-time address of a full-time FE or HE student as being their main residence.

**Part 2 - Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation
Clause 7 (2)**

The University supports of the aim of the Department to enhance HMOs by improving standards and revising the approach to regulation, based on proportionate risk.

**Schedule 1 - Buildings or Parts of Buildings which are not Houses in Multiple Occupation
Clause 5**

The University supports Schedule 1 Clause 5, which states that buildings occupied by full time students and managed by an educational establishment are not considered Houses in Multiple Occupation. In supporting this clause, it is recognised that this is the approach used for PBMSA in England and Wales, and therefore aligns the approach for this type of accommodation within the sector.

3. CLARIFICATION REPRESENTATIONS

**Part 2 - Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation
Clauses 20 and 28**

Clause 20, which notes that a renewal of a licence must be made before a licence ceases to exist and Clause 28, whereby the licence is not transferred with change of ownership of the property.

While the University has no concerns in relation to the clauses in principle, as occupants of the properties may be students studying at the University, in the event that an HMO property is sold and/or a licence not renewed, what is the impact on, or protection afforded to, a tenant with a current tenancy agreement?

**Part 5 - Supplementary
Clause 84 - Fees**

Clarification is sought on the refund of licence fees on currently licenced properties which will no longer be licenced HMOs following enactment of the Bill. The University has recently renewed the HMO licences for all properties for the next five years, at a considerable cost and would consider that a pro-rata refund would be appropriate.

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