

Response ID ANON-3J4M-9N9S-H

Submitted to Housing (Amendment) Bill - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2026-08-17 12:32:42

Consent and introduction

What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

Email address box:

[REDACTED]

If you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation, please state its name.

Organisation name box:

Action for Children in NI

Please confirm you have read the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee privacy notice by clicking the button below.

I have read the privacy notice

Do you consent to your submission being published on the Committee's website and included in the Committee's report?

Yes, publish in full.

General views on the Bill

Do you support the overall purpose of the Housing (Amendment) Bill?

Yes

Please explain your answer, including any areas where you believe the Bill should be amended.:

At least 60 days would provide a more realistic and humane timeframe for people facing homelessness to access support, find alternative accommodation, and avoid falling into crisis. It would give Action for Children and similar organisations a chance to step in with meaningful help, rather than having to respond reactively in emergency situations. Ultimately, a longer notice period could lead to better outcomes for individuals and reduce pressure on emergency housing services.

Ideally we would like the time period to be extended further to 6 months. A longer prevention window allows for a more proactive, person centered approach to homelessness, focusing on early intervention rather than crisis management. For 16-18 year olds in care and approaching leaving care/moving to independent living, this would enable housing support to become engaged at a much earlier stage.

We also think ensuring the Housing Executive has a statutory duty to prevent homelessness would improve joint working between statutory bodies in relation to youth homelessness.

Current 28-day period

Do you consider that the current 28-day period provides adequate protection for people who are threatened with homelessness?

No

Please explain your answer, including any practical examples or evidence.:

Proposed 60-day period — Clause 1

Clause 1 would amend the definition of “threatened with homelessness” so that a person is included if they are likely to become homeless within 60 days rather than 28 days. Do you support this change?

Yes

What impact would this change have on homelessness prevention?

Text box for entering data:

A longer timeframe allows individuals and families at risk of homelessness to access support, advice and alternative housing options before they reach crisis point. It gives local services more time to intervene effectively and helps reduce the number of people who end up without a home simply because

the system didn't act quickly enough. Evidence from other regions shows that early intervention is key, and increasing the prevention window is a practical step toward achieving that. However a reduction in the number of people that fall into homelessness will also be dependent on other factors such as availability of alternative accommodation. Currently this is a big concern as there is simply not enough affordable accommodation for young people to move into.

Practical impact on people at risk of homelessness

Would extending the period to 60 days make it more likely that homelessness can be prevented before a person or household reaches crisis point?

Yes

Please explain your answer.:

[See previous comments](#)

Temporary accommodation and housing supply

Could the Bill increase demand for temporary accommodation, including non-standard accommodation such as hotels or B&Bs?

No

If so, how should this risk be addressed?:

Intervening earlier should allow longer term solutions to be found and less reliance on crisis/emergency accommodation such as non standard hotels or B&Bs.

Commencement — Clause 2

Clause 2 provides that the Act would come into operation 6 months after Royal Assent. Is this an appropriate period to allow for preparation and implementation?

Yes

Please explain your answer.:

Extending the time period may have some short term financial implications for NIHE, particularly in terms of additional staffing, case management and support services needed to manage a longer prevention window effectively. The 6 month window should allow time for preparation and implementation and to address such issues.

However, in the medium to long term, this approach could lead to cost savings for the NIHE by reducing the number of people who reach crisis point and require expensive emergency accommodation or intensive interventions. Early prevention is generally more cost effective than dealing with the consequences of homelessness once it occurs.

Suggested amendments

Please identify any specific amendments you would suggest, including the relevant clause where possible.

A textbox for adding comments: