

The Registered Rents (Increase) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee Clerk
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
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Date : 22 April 2026

Dear Emer

The Department for Communities proposes to make a Statutory Rule under powers conferred by The Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006. The Statutory Rule is subject to negative resolution procedure before the Assembly.

Purpose of the Statutory Rule

The Statutory Rule will allow for an increase of 4.8 percent to rents of protected and statutory tenancies for those properties that meet the housing fitness standard. This would represent an average weekly increase of £4.22, taking the average weekly rent to £92.24.

Background on protected and statutory tenancies

Under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 the Department exercises rent control for a small number of privately rented properties. These fall into two groups:

- unfit private tenancies that began after April 2007 in properties built before 1945; and
- protected and statutory tenancies.

The Statutory Rule covers those tenancies that are classed as protected and statutory tenancies.

A protected tenancy is a tenancy controlled by the Rent Officer for Northern Ireland (the Rent Officer). It is one where the original contract of tenancy was registered under the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 or the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and is still in operation. In most cases, this means the present tenant is the person who was granted the tenancy.

A statutory tenancy arises where the original tenant has died, and the tenancy has transferred to the tenant's successor (e.g. spouse or sibling).

A protected/statutory tenancy offers a high level of security against eviction, only under certain circumstances, by application to the courts, can a tenant be evicted.

Policy rationale

The proposed increase is intended to support landlords of fit protected/statutory tenancies to maintain their properties to the housing fitness standard.

This is designed to support fairness by helping landlords to meet the ongoing costs of keeping properties to the housing fitness standard, while keeping rents significantly below wider private market levels.

Previous Engagement with the Committee

Since the introduction of the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006, similar Statutory Rules has been brought forward annually (beginning in 2007) and the Committee informed as part of that process.

Financial Implications

No financial implications.

Consultation

There is no requirement to consult on this rule.

Compliance with Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

The Department has considered section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and is satisfied that the Rule—

- (a) is not incompatible with any of the Convention rights;
- (b) is not incompatible with Community law;
- (c) does not discriminate against a person or class of person on the ground of religious belief or political opinion; and
- (d) does not modify an enactment in breach of section 7 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Consideration by the Executive Consideration by the Executive is not required.

Equality Impact

In accordance with its duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department has conducted a screening exercise on the proposal, and concluded that it does not have significant implications for equality of opportunity or good relations. In light of this, the Department considers that an equality impact assessment is not necessary.

Regulatory Impact

A Regulatory Impact Assessment is not required as the Rule has no impact on costs on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

Rural Needs Impact

Affordability is the primary social and economic consideration relevant to the proposed rent increase.

The increase applies equally to tenants located in urban and rural locations. Under the proposal the average weekly rent would increase to £92.24, representing an increase of £4.22, which remains significantly below other private rented and many social rented tenancies.

Data Protection Impact

A data protection impact assessment has been completed.

These Regulations increase the amount of rent a landlord can charge for a fit, protected/statutory tenancy and do not require the Department to gather or process any personal information

Child Rights Impact

A Childs Rights Impact Assessment has been considered.

An increase in the rents of these properties acknowledges landlords have maintained them and allows them to continue to maintain them to the fitness standard. Maintaining property standards can have a positive impact on children's physical and mental health and wellbeing and set the context for them to thrive and make the most of education, training and future employment opportunities.

Position in Great Britain *(if appropriate)*.

There is no comparable legislation in Great Britain.

Any other information

There are currently 309 fit protected and statutory tenancies on the rent register.

Under Article 55 of The Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006, the Department directed the Rent Officer for NI to review registered rents for these fit properties, with a view to determining whether those rents should be increased.

In carrying out the review, the Rent Officer considers the general level of rents for dwelling houses let by the Housing Executive, the cost of repairs and any other matters he/she considers relevant. Traditionally, increases for fit protected/statutory tenancies align with the percentage increase applied to Housing Executive rents.

Tenant affordability

Approximately 43% of protected and statutory tenants receive housing cost support through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

As rents in protected and statutory tenancies are comparatively low, increases for benefit-supported tenants are highly likely to be met by corresponding increases in housing cost support.

Inflation-linked benefits and tax credits will rise by 3.8% from April 2026 and the basic and new State Pensions will be uprated by 4.8% from April 2026.

For tenants not in receipt of housing support, affordability has been assessed in the context that protected and statutory rents are broadly comparable to Housing Executive rent levels, which are set with affordability as a central consideration.

Cost of repairs

Protected and statutory tenancies relate to properties that pre-date 1945 and are therefore part of the older housing stock. As a result, these properties may require higher and more ongoing maintenance than newer homes to meet and retain the housing fitness standard.

Inflationary pressures, alongside additional safety requirements in the private rented sector relating to fire and electrical safety, may also require additional investment for landlords.

Proposed timing of consideration of the SL1

The Committee has requested that officials attend the meeting scheduled for 23rd April to brief members on the Statutory Rule.

Proposed Operational Date

It is proposed that the rule will come into operation on 6th July.

The draft of the proposed Statutory Rule and Explanatory Memorandum are attached, and you will wish to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee for Communities.