

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department for Communities

UPDATE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF URGENT LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS THE DISPARITY OF LEGAL PROTECTION TO CITIZENS AFFECTED BY DEFECTIVE PREMISES

Published on Monday 29 April 2024.

Mr Lyons (Minister for Communities): On 15 April 2024, I announced to Members proposed legislation that I intend to bring forward to the Assembly as a matter of urgency. The proposed legislation would extend the limitation period for actions taken in relation to defective or damaged buildings from six years to 15 years prospectively, and from six years to 30 years retrospectively. This would achieve parity with the legislative position in England and Wales.

I subsequently wrote to the Executive to agree the development and introduction of a Defective Premises Bill. I also asked the Executive to agree that the bill should be introduced to the Assembly using the Accelerated Passage procedure.

I am pleased that Executive approval was given on 25 April 2024 and I welcome their support for the next steps of the bill. This legislation will bring Northern Ireland into line with England and Wales. It will be brought before the Assembly at the earliest opportunity, at which time I will seek agreement to take the bill through the Assembly under the accelerated passage procedure. I would also like to take the opportunity to record my thanks to the drafting team in the Office of Legislative Counsel for the timely and thorough work they put into the production of the Bill.

When I raised this matter in the Assembly chamber earlier this month, I said I recognised the importance of this legislation and its potential to impact many people right across Northern Ireland. I am confident that we can make the desired progress on this issue, but getting it done quickly is dependent on the continued support and consent of the Assembly and the Executive. As we move the Bill through the various stages, I hope that I can count on that support as we continue to take this forward.