



CHAIR
Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald

The Housing Centre
2 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8P8

T: (028) 9598 2752
E: [REDACTED]
W: nihousingcouncil.org

21st November 2022

Dear Chief Executive

Members of the Northern Ireland Housing Council recently received an update on Lifetime Homes for Northern Ireland. I am writing to urge your Council when developing your Local Development Plan, that you prioritise the inclusion of Lifetime Homes within your Plans.

The Housing Council has always been a great advocate of the Lifetime Home standards which had been adopted in all new social housing in Northern Ireland since 1998. We would like the introduction of the same standards across the private new build housing sector and where possible, to existing social housing stock, especially where major renovations are undertaken.

Members recognise that cost is clearly a significant factor in adopting innovation and must be balanced against short and long-term benefits. Research has shown in the past that, based on the levels of expenditure for adaptations, the cost differential between building to Part R or increasing the standards to Lifetime Homes, could be recouped in 3-10 years. If private sector dwellings were all built to Lifetime Homes then this would provide similar standards across all tenures and sectors and ensure that public money was used more effectively both in the purchase of the higher standard of dwelling and in the money saved in future adaptation work.

Lifetime Homes deliver benefits across a number of departments and agencies.

They include:

- the costs of residential care that could otherwise be avoided;
- levels of social care that could be reduced or removed;
- impacts on independent living, employment and social life;
- falls and other accidents which can be life changing or fatal;
- mental health impacts; impacts on general health;
- avoidable hospital admissions; and
- Increased stays in hospital due to lack of accessible housing to return to ('bed blocking').



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Investment in Lifetime Homes also reduces the need for Disabled Facilities Grants provided by the Housing Executive, from public money, to adapt private sector homes to an accessible standard for ambulant disabled or independent wheelchair users.

The Housing Council feels it would be more valuable in the long-term to move towards a situation where all housing is universally usable and will benefit all users and visitors and would welcome the regulations to be brought in-line with the social developers of Lifetime Homes Standards.

Members would like you to consider this request, which feel would benefit everyone in the long-term.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Kelly Cameron (Secretary)
On behalf of
Anne Marie Fitzgerald (Chair)