



Section 75 Screening Form

Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy: **NIHE rent increase (2026/27)**

The following screens a decision by the Department to respond to a request from the Housing Executive to increase rents for 2026/27 (to apply from 06 April 2026) and to provide a decision within the permitted constraints.

The Housing Executive has requested the Department's approval to increase rents by CPI+6% for a 3 year period covering 2025/26 to 2027/28 years (equivalent to a 9.8% increase in year one). Such requests are usually considered on an annual basis by the Department according to investment need, tenant affordability and public expenditure constraints. Following advice from the Department of Finance, DfC has been unable to approve a multi-year increase as requested by NIHE and therefore this screening relates only to the Departments approved increase of CPI +1% for the financial year 2026/27; based on September 2025 CPI of 3.8%.

Article 17 of the 1981 Housing Order allows "The Department" to permit amendments to the Rent Scheme, such as the annual uplift, "with or without modifications".

It is important to note that the Housing Executive's request considers both the immediate costs for the year ahead but is also set within the context of the next 25-30 years asset investment requirement and the Revitalisation Programme; the Department's decision is specifically related to the annual increase for 2026/27.

The NIHE rent scheme allocates points to properties according to the properties' attributes, with rent calculated, by multiplying those points by a value. The annual request for an "uplift" from the Housing Executive relates to an increase in that value and is principally to account for increased costs.

A decision by the Department to approve an increase is technical in nature, it does not alter the scheme itself or change how the scheme distributes effects and impacts, advantages or disadvantages across the NIHE tenant group. The annual uplift simply increases by a set percentage across all domestic dwellings, the total amount of rent that the NIHE may charge and collect.

Proportionately, the contribution that each NIHE household or Section 75 Group makes towards the total collectable rent of the NIHE does not change with an annual uplift.

In considering the Housing Executive request, it is important to reflect a significant constraint in relation to the public expenditure implications of a rent increase. As around 81% of NIHE tenants' rents are met from Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, the Department is obliged to engage with the Department of Finance to understand the impacts of a rental increase and any potential to impact on the NI Block Grant. Engagement with Department of Finance has consistently confirmed that Housing Executive rents are expected to increase within the limits set for social housing rent in England, which for 2026/27 allows a maximum increase of CPI +1% only.

As the Housing Executive request is beyond this CPI+1% limit, Dof have not provided approval of this level as it would potentially impact on the NI Block Grant and therefore have to be funded from public spending cuts elsewhere. This screening therefore relates to the Department's decision to respond to the NIHE's annual request for an uplift within the limits permitted. In essence, this means that the screening considers approval up to a ceiling of a CPI + 1% increase in rent.

Approval for a maximum rental increase of CPI + 1% across all properties equates to an increase in the average weekly Housing Executive rent from £82.04 to £85.98 per week (an average weekly increase of £3.94 per week).

This provides crucial additional investment of around £16.9 million in year 1 across the Housing Executive stock which will maximise the availability of funding for investment in tenants' homes when considered against the alternative of rejecting any uplift or approving a lesser increase (in effect a rent freeze or reduction would result in loss of income for NIHE landlord which is currently faced with significant investment pressures).

A decision to implement a CPI+1% increase, maximises the level of investment possible in homes without the requirement for public spending cuts elsewhere with NIHE tenants benefitting from the investment. The rental increase will be met mainly through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for those tenants on low incomes or who are entitled to support with housing costs (around 80% of tenants); with a smaller, remaining percentage (approximately 20%) collected via full payers or those with no entitlement to HB or UC.

NIHE average rents will continue to remain much lower than other tenure options such as the private rented sector and Housing Associations, remaining one of the most affordable housing options for those tenants with no or limited housing financial support.

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Existing – adjusted to take account of annual increase in costs.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

This aims to confirm a rent level which is calculated to ensure the Housing Executive can adequately fund its 2026/27 budget and to maintain, to the greatest extent possible, the current value of rents amidst rising costs across the construction sector where costs are continuing to rise significantly faster than rents are permitted to increase.

Rent levels are considered on an annual basis taking into account inflation, projected running costs, spending requirements and tenant affordability.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

Yes/No/NA (delete as applicable)

If Yes, explain how.

The decision to implement a rent increase within the limits set out, will be beneficial to Housing Executive tenants, as there will be £16.9 million in additional rental income available for investment in homes compared to the previous year. It will ensure that investment keeps pace with rising costs, as far as possible, so as to fund improvements which will positively impact the delivery of tenant services including the condition of housing stock.

Tenants will experience improvements from good maintenance and improvements to the stock through the application of the Asset Management strategy funded by rental income. This rent increase will ensure delivery of tenant services and ensure adequately funded programmes which will benefit tenants.

Some S75 groups may benefit more so than other tenants from this additional investment - no financial impact arises for HB/UC recipients, but there may be positive housing quality impacts which will include, the ability to invest in better design for households and families with children, older residents (and an aging society) and adaptations for disabled people.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The request for the rent increase and the rent scheme lies with the Housing Executive. The Department considers and provides a decision/approval.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Housing Executive owns and implements the Rent Scheme, they also recommend and implement the rent increase but must seek the Department's approval to do so, as set out in Article 17 of the 1981 Housing Order.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

If yes, are they

- X financial
- legislative
- other, please specify _____

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

- staff
- X service users
- other public sector organisations
- voluntary/community/trade unions
- other, please specify _____

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they and who owns them?

Asset Management Strategy, held by the Housing Executive and approved by the Department.

Housing Executive Revitalisation Programme, held by the Department, working in partnership with NIHE.

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for **each** of the Section 75 categories.

There are a range of sources that provide collectively an understanding of the Section 75 makeup of the Housing Executive's tenants.

This includes the Housing Management System, Census data, Continuous Tenants Omnibus Survey, a range of primary and secondary research which can be accessed here www.nihe.gov.uk, Waiting Lists and Allocations profiles and BME Mapping Reports but there are limitations of how this data identifies individuals and particularly the characteristics of those who have financial housing support to pay their rents and those who pay their full rent.

The NIHE have a total gross stock of domestic dwellings of 82,259 properties as at 30th September 2024.

Within the gross stock there are 80,536 domestic tenancies

Within the NIHE tenant population there is a high level of benefit dependency, including assistance with housing costs. Housing costs can be paid via Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and where applicable includes payments for Social Sector Size Criteria, Benefit Cap mitigated by Welfare Supplementary Payments.

The Table below details the tenant profile relative to Housing Costs payments at 28/09/25:

No. of Tenants (No Housing Costs)	No. of Tenants (Partial Housing Costs)	No. of Tenants (Full Housing Costs)	No. of Tenants (All Tenants)
14,938	21,373	44,020	80,331

As can be noted from the table above there are 21,373 current tenants receiving partial housing costs and 44,020 receiving full housing costs. This total of 65,393 represents 81.4% of current tenants and as such any rent increase to these tenants would result in the value of housing costs paid by benefit increasing by the same amount; therefore, there would be no impact to these current tenants of a rent increase.

Detailed in the above table there are 14,938 tenants that at 28/9/25 are recorded as not receiving any housing costs payment via benefits. This represents 18.6% of all domestic

current tenants. These are the tenants who would currently be impacted by the value of any rent increase, as they have no current housing costs entitlement paid through benefits.

It is important to note that the public policies that determine financial supports and benefits in relation to housing costs are developed and maintained by both the UK Government and (in respect of mitigations) the NI Executive. The Housing Executive does not in any way influence the range or scale of households who receive support for their housing costs. The Department's decision on rent ensures that the level of Housing Benefit or UC covers the increment in rent for tenants, who are supported with their housing costs, by remaining within public expenditure constraints (AME).

For those tenants who don't receive housing costs support, referred to as full payers, the Department has carefully considered the impact on these individuals in terms of affordability. Whilst individual data is not held on these full payers to identify how many might fall within one of the S75 categories; when considering affordability, the welfare system is designed to support people on low incomes.

Social security benefits vary depending on (among other factors) age and whether people have disabilities and /or have responsibility for dependents. Where income falls below a certain threshold, additional support in terms of housing costs will be initiated.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is required by section 150(1) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (as amended) to review the level of benefits each year. The Department for Communities in Northern Ireland is responsible for making uprating provision for Northern Ireland corresponding to the DWP order, subject to the agreement of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

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.

The NIHE affordability assessment has concluded & the Department agrees that a CPI+1% increase is affordable to tenants and preferable to any other alternative, which may see reduced investment across NIHE homes, regardless of whether tenants are full payers or not.

AFFORDABILITY

The following focuses on those tenants who are full payers, ie. don't receive housing costs support. This represents around 18.6% of NIHE tenants. It is important to note that the social security system takes account of tenants' income, particularly if they have disabilities or are caring for dependents. Where a tenant is a 'full payer' it is because their income brings them above the threshold for help with housing costs.

Therefore, a variance in personal financial circumstances already exists in respect of income, outgoings, affordability and any obligations to meet rental liabilities. Limited data is held on the characteristics (both financial and S75) of these tenants. It is therefore only possible to conclude on affordability in terms of full payers in their entirety. There are a number of areas which the Department took into consideration, to satisfy itself that a rental increase was affordable:

- The 2025 [UK Housing Review Compendium](#) states that average Housing Executive rents as a proportion of average earnings for 2023/24 were 10%;
- There is no universally accepted definition of rent affordability – various approaches can be used, such as, the rent to income ratio, a percentage of market rent comparison or a residual income test.
- However, internal work taken forward within Housing Division, DfC, in 22/23 with the support of NIHE and repeated in subsequent years by NIHE, modelled different scenarios to examine affordability within the context of Housing Executive tenants and their ability to pay rent according to income (ie. using a rent to income ratio, with a housing stress indicator considered as >30% using this ratio).
- The latest analysis for 26/27 analyses a number of scenarios in the absence of actual income data (which is not available) to model typical income scenarios which may exist for Housing Executive tenants who are required to pay their full rent without housing support.
- Based on a maximum of CPI+1% per week increase, in all scenarios tested, the rent to income ratio was less than 25% with almost half of the scenarios noting ratios of less than 20%. The maximum reduction in residual income is estimated to be £3.94 per week.
- The Department has also previously considered information from the Continuous Tenants Omnibus Survey (CTOS) which is conducted by NIHE (latest survey data available is 2024). The question asked tenants if they experienced '*any difficulty making your rent payment*'. Analysis was conducted specifically on the responses of those tenants who paid full rent (ie. without housing assistance). In 2023, 83.7% of these tenants stated that they did not experience any difficulty making their rent payment. In 2024, the figure remained consistent at 83.5%.
- Information was also sought on the level of arrears for full paying tenants, that is, those tenants who receive no support with their housing costs and pay the entire rent themselves – 18.6% of Housing Executive tenants fall within this category.
- It is important to note that while arrears may be an indicator that a tenant is having difficulty paying their rent, this can be due to a number of factors, which includes payment of Universal Credit in arrears; their current financial circumstances/ability to pay; and individual payment patterns with many tenants often paying in arrears.
- In all circumstances, NIHE must assume that all tenants have the financial means to pay their rent.
- While some tenants have financial issues / other financial commitments and may miss payments as a consequence of this, a smaller number of tenants have the financial means to pay their rent but choose not to do so.
- CTOS monitors the level of customer satisfaction with Housing Executive services and identifies areas for improvement and to allow collection of specific information for various client groups in the Housing Executive, to inform the formulation of future policy or programmes. Supporting CTOS data can be viewed at <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/2024-ctos-appendix-tables>
- Importantly, NIHE Financial Inclusion Managers are not reporting specific trends or complaints regarding the application of the 2025/26 rent increase of 2.7%.
- As at 06 April 2025 (prior to the approved 2025/26 2.7% rent increase) 23,694 current tenant rent accounts were in "net" arrears totalling £12,560k.
- As at 28 September 2025 (post 2025/26 2.7% rent increase) 26,884 current tenant rent accounts are in "net" arrears totalling £13,142K.

- This reflects an increase of 3150 (3.9%) in the number of tenants in arrears and £582K (4.4%) in the value of “net” arrears. In the context of a domestic stock of circa 80,331 units, this modest increase is not considered material.
- Drawing all this information together, the Department has considered that the low levels of current NIHE rent (which are substantially lower than comparable rents in Housing Associations or within relevant levels in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)), NIHE rents are vastly more affordable than any alternative, and there is sufficient headroom, at a maximum CPI+1% per week increase, to retain rents well below Housing Association and Private Rented Sector levels.

For each Section 75 category there is very limited data available at the individual level that would allow for analysis across income groups or specifically those tenants who are full payers, ie. don't receive housing costs support. Instead, a breakdown of available data in S75 categories is provided where such data is available but must be caveated that is across all NIHE tenants.

Notwithstanding the limitations of this data, It is important to remember the rent increase does not alter the rent scheme or how it distributes effects and impacts, advantages and disadvantages across the NIHE tenant group.

The maximum increase of CPI+1% per week uplift increases the total amount of rent that the NIHE may collect by 4.8%. Proportionately, the contribution that each NIHE household or Section 75 Group will make towards the total collectable rent of the NIHE is unchanged by the annual uplift and it has been demonstrated that the increase is affordable.

It is important to restate that it is the UK Government and Social Welfare and Benefits system that determine the threshold for financial support in relation to housing costs; developed and maintained by both the UK Government and the NI Executive. This rent increase alone does not in any way influence the range or scale of households who receive or are entitled to support for their housing costs.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	Data not available at individual level. A breakdown of available & latest CTOS 2023 (3.11) data according to Religious Belief is as follows. Protestant = 41.3%, Catholic = 33.6%, Mixed religion = 3.7%, Other = 21.3%.
Political opinion	Data not available at individual level according to Political Opinion.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Racial group	Data not available at individual level. A breakdown of available CTOS data (3.5) according to Ethnicity Group is as follows. White = 97.7%, Other = 2.3%
Age	Data not available at individual level. A breakdown of available CTOS data (3.5) according to Age is as follows: 0-15yrs = 20% 16-24yrs = 9.8%, 25-44yrs = 20.9%, 45-59yrs = 20.3%, 60-64yrs = 7.6%, 65yrs +over = 20.3%. Refused = 1.1%
Marital status	Data not available at individual level according to Marital Status.
Sexual orientation	Data not available at individual level according to Sexual Orientation.
Men and women generally	Data not available at individual level. A breakdown of available CTOS data according to Men or Women generally is as follows: Men = 45%, Female = 55%.
Disability	Data not available at individual level. A breakdown of available CTOS (3.5) data according to Disability within a household is as follows: No health problems = 46.9%; A health problem/illness or disability or both that limits activities = 53.1%
Dependants	Data not available at individual level. A breakdown of available CTOS (3.3) data according to Dependants within a household is as follows: Household type: 'Adult' = 45.9%; lone parent/small family/large family = 22.6%; Older = 30.5%; Age not provided = 1%

Note to reader - If you are aware of and would like the Department to take into account any further evidence or information relevant to this policy, please send this to **[housingexecutiverevitalisation@communities-ni.gov.uk]**

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Specify details for **each** of the Section 75 categories

All tenants should expect to have a home which is maintained to a Decent Home Standard and is suitable to their needs. The decision by the Department to implement a CPI+1% increase is the maximum level it could implement within public expenditure constraints, specifically, with the support of AME to cover increases in rent which would be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (where a tenant is entitled to it).

For those tenants who pay for rent from their own income (full payers), the decision to implement a CPI+1% increase in rent is important to ensure continued maintenance in homes at a rent level which is fair, proportionate and affordable.

The decision by the Department to implement a maximum of CPI+1% per week increase, will produce up to £16.9million additional income, compared to last year, and is vital if investment in homes is going to keep pace, as far as possible, with rising costs across the construction sector where costs are continuing to rise significantly faster than rents are permitted to increase.

This investment will directly benefit tenants through investment in NIHE homes and may be more of a priority in terms of need for some S75 groups than others. The alternative of taking a decision to not increase rents would be of detriment to all tenants and all Section 75 categories due to the reduced investment they would receive in their homes.

The impact would have the potential to be particularly marked for older tenants, disabled people and tenants with young children who may be more adversely affected by living in housing which may potentially become unfit in the absence of continued investment. Tenants in these groups are expected to prioritise ensuring that NIHE can adequately invest in and maintain their homes.

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	There is no evidence of any differing needs, experience or priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Political opinion	There is no evidence of any differing needs, experience or priorities for this group in relation to this policy.

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Racial group	There is no evidence of any differing needs, experience or priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Age	Older people may have a greater need for improvements to ensure their home remains fit for their needs. They may be more likely to have access to help with housing costs, and less likely to be full payers. This group's overarching priority will be to have a safe, warm and well-maintained home. This can only be addressed if additional income is made available through rent which keeps, as far as possible, its value in line with rising costs/inflation.
Marital status	There is no evidence of any differing needs, experience or priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence of any differing needs, experience or priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence of any differing needs, experience or priorities for this group in relation to this policy.
Disability	This group may have a greater need for improvements or adaptations to ensure their home remains fit for their needs. They may be more likely to have access to help with housing costs, and less likely to be full payers. Their overarching priority will be to have a safe, warm and well-maintained home. This can only be addressed if additional income is made available through rent which keeps its value, as far as possible, in line with rising costs/inflation.
Dependants	This group may have a greater need for improvements or adaptations to ensure their home remains fit for their needs. They may be more likely to have access to help with housing costs, and less likely to be full payers. This group's overarching priority will be to have a safe, warm and well-maintained home. This can only be addressed if additional income is made available through

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
	rent which keeps its value, as far as possible, in line with rising costs/inflation.

Part 2. Screening questions

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;

- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none

All Housing Executive tenants will generally benefit from the Department's decision to implement this rent increase. The NIHE affordability assessment has concluded and the Department agrees that a maximum of CPI+1% per week increase, is affordable to tenants and preferable to any other alternative, which may see reduced investment across NIHE homes, regardless of whether tenants are full payers or not.

This increase is designed to ensure that investment can keep pace with rising costs, as far as possible and contribute to the backlog in investment whilst remaining affordable, so as to fund improvements which will positively impact the delivery of tenant services including the condition of housing stock. All tenants will experience improvements from good maintenance and improvements to the stock through the application of the Asset Management strategy funded by rental income, which fulfils these duties through the operational out-workings of the strategy by taking account of local issues and conditions, as, for example, when specific needs such as those related to disability or older people are identified.

This rent increase will ensure delivery of tenant services and ensure adequately funded programmes which will benefit all tenants. These benefits may be felt more acutely by certain S75 groups who may be more likely to receive help with housing costs or whose need for investment may be greater.

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	The policy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on people of different religious belief.	None
Political opinion	The policy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on people of different Political opinion.	None
Racial group	The policy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on people of different racial groups.	None

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Age	Maximising the amount of rental income available for investment may particularly benefit this category due to this category's potentially increased need for adaptations. Generally, investment can ensure homes remain fit for occupation as the tenant ages, enabling independent living for longer. Ensuring the home is safe, warm and well-maintained will particularly benefit older people.	Minor positive
Marital status	The policy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on people of different marital status.	None
Sexual orientation	The policy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on people of different sexual orientation.	None
Men and women generally	The policy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on men or women generally.	None
Disability	Maximising the amount of rental income available may particularly benefit this category due to this category's potentially greater need for improvements or adaptations to ensure homes remain fit for needs. This can ensure tenants are able to live independently in their home for longer. Ensuring the home is safe, warm and well-maintained will particularly benefit people with disabilities.	Minor positive
Dependants	Maximising the amount of rental income may particularly benefit this category due to this category's potentially greater need for	Minor positive

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
	improvements or adaptations to ensure homes remain fit for needs. Ensuring the home is safe, warm and well-maintained will particularly benefit dependants.	

1. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Officials have considered a range of indicators, and the Department is satisfied that this increase is fair, proportionate and remains affordable for tenants. Households within S75 categories most likely to be affected by an increase in rent are those who have no entitlement or a minimal entitlement to assistance with housing costs.

The Housing Executive is committed to supporting tenants and endeavour not to evict anyone as a result of financial hardship if they are engaging with NIHE staff to keep their tenancy on track. The Housing Executive have expanded their financial inclusion team to pro-actively identify tenants who may benefit from money and benefit advice.

In addition to this, the Department has directed the Housing Executive to ensure the appropriate monitoring and annual reporting to the Department of targeted support and assistance provided to NIHE tenants following the implementation of the 2026/27 NIHE rent increase with additional emphasis on any impacts on those who pay rent without housing assistance and those currently in rent arrears.

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts. 	
Political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Racial group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	
Marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	
Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	

Section 75 category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	
Dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE financial inclusion team will continue to monitor categories for any specific trends or potential impacts 	

2. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	<p>Whilst this policy has no specific bearing on good relations other than the direct link to funding the Landlord Services Community Cohesion Programme, it is likely that an annual increase in revenue will provide a more stable platform for these important programmes to continue. Any decision to direct funding is however for the NIHE to consider.</p>	
Political opinion		
Racial group		

3. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief	<p>Whilst this policy has no specific bearing on good relations other than the direct link to funding the Landlord Services Community Cohesion Programme, it is likely that an increase in revenue would provide a more stable platform for these important programmes to continue. Any decision to direct funding is however for the NIHE to consider.</p>	
Political opinion		
Racial group		

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Data is unavailable at this level in respect of the 18.6% of tenants who are full payers. It is more likely that households with multiple or combined section 75 categories (i.e age, disability, dependants etc) will see a minor positive impact as increased revenue for NIHE is directed into stock investment and improvements which continue to meet decent homes standards.

Part 3. Screening decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please underline one)

1. **Not be subject to an EQIA**

~~2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)~~

~~3. Be subject to an EQIA~~

If 1 or 2 (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

There are no significant equality issues in relation to this policy. An annual increase in rent which is affordable to all tenants and results in an additional £16.9 million in rental income which is delivered back to tenants through investment in homes and continued customer service is positive for all tenants, particularly for certain S75 categories whose need for adequate housing is more acute.

If 3. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

N/A

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, **give the reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

The minor impacts identified are generally positive in all cases. In respect of the decision to increase rents, no alternatives have been identified which would better promote equality of opportunity and / or good relations. The NIHE has however expanded its financial inclusion team to pro-actively identify those who may benefit from financial support/advice and the Department has directed that the NIHE develop metrics to assist in the monitoring and reporting of support, including S75 groups.

Part 4. Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

You should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

The Department considers a rental uplift on an annual basis, when requested by the NIHE. Monitoring will take the form of requesting an equality screening of the NIHE's annual rental uplift request for the Department's consideration, before the decision is made. This will ensure that the Department has up to date information to inform its decision.

The Department has directed the Housing Executive to ensure the appropriate monitoring and annual reporting to the Department of targeted support and assistance provided to NIHE tenants following the implementation of the 2026/27 NIHE rent increase with additional emphasis on any impacts on those who pay rent without housing assistance and those currently in rent arrears.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Chris Henderson	Deputy Principal – Social Housing Policy & Oversight.	26 February 2026
Approved by:		
John Delaney	Grade 7 – Social Housing Policy & Oversight.	31 March 2026

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority’s website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.