



# Response to Consultation

**Date:** 27 November 2009  
**Consultation:** Public Benefit Test  
The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

## Introduction

The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) represents all 33 DSD-registered and 6 non-registered housing associations in Northern Ireland. Almost all of these housing associations are charities.

Collectively, our members provide 30,000 good quality, affordable homes for renting or equity sharing. Further information is available at [www.nifha.org](http://www.nifha.org)

## Background

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland launched a public consultation document entitled “Meeting the Charity Test – Demonstrating Public Benefit”, as draft guidance for public benefit in September 2009. The consultation document focussed on how organisations meet the charity test and how they provide public benefit in order to achieve their charitable purposes.

## General Comments

The Federation welcomes this consultation document and is pleased to endorse the contents.

As expressed in responses to previous consultation documents on the charity legislation for Northern Ireland, however, the Federation wishes to avoid duplication of regulation of housing associations.

NIFHA therefore is pleased to read (in section 7.6(c) of the consultation document on public benefit) “One of CCNI’s strategic objectives is to reduce the burden of regulation, with an emphasis on collaborating with other regulatory authorities.”

We look forward to CCNI swiftly concluding a protocol that designates the Housing Division of the Department for Social Development as the “principal regulator” of registered housing associations with charitable status.

**Submitted on behalf of NIFHA by:**

**Christopher Williamson**  
**Chief Executive**