

Northern Housing Consortium welcomes government pledges on housing

The Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) today welcomed the Government's announcements aimed at further improving social housing and countering the impact of the credit crunch on home owners.

Responding to the announcement of £200 million of funding being made available to purchase unsold new homes to support renting or shared equity first time buyers, John Moralee, NHC Chief Executive, commented, "We have already begun work with our members to understand and anticipate the potential impact of the credit crunch on housing organisations across the North, and to work with them to put in place imaginative and effective solutions. In the past 2 years we've seen the housing market across the North start to slow down – there's been a 50% increase in the average time it takes to sell a home. Given the wider market downturn, we expect this to increase, which inevitably has further knock-on impacts. The proposal to release funds to purchase unsold new homes to support social renting and first time buyers is a welcome step in the right direction."

"We are also working with our members to understand the likely scale of repossessions in the North. The latest government figures suggest a significant increase in the issuing of possession action – with the North East experiencing an 18% increase compared to the English average of 1%. The scale of people struggling with mortgage repayments across the North seems very significant – with Cumbria and Northumberland as two county areas reporting increases of 22% and 25% respectively. We're talking to our members to support them in understanding this picture and to ensure they have the resources they need to potentially support families who may be in severe housing difficulty."

"Whilst this is a difficult time, we are pleased the Government is taking steps to address this issue and continue to focus on the housing needs of our communities. We feel the North has an enviable track record of creating effective solutions for our communities and we look forward to working with government to progress our ideas."

For further information, contact Northern Housing Consortium on 0191 5661000 or visit www.northern-consortium.org.uk
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Notes to editors

1. The Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) is a non-political, not for profit, member based organisation, whose members between them

manage almost 90% of social housing in the North. Consortium Procurement is the commercial services team of the Northern Housing Consortium, responsible for the development and delivery of business solutions to meet the needs of its membership. These solutions are OJEU-compliant collaborative framework agreements, let under the Public Procurement Directive, and accessible by any current or existing Consortium member organisation.