

Press Release

3rd February 2020

Coalition Welcomes Community Minister's Commitment to Bedroom Tax Mitigation

The Cliff Edge Coalition NI is encouraged by Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey's commitment to extend and strengthen the 'bedroom tax' mitigation beyond March 2020.

The Northern Ireland Executive has approved the Minister bringing this legislation to the Assembly to protect vulnerable households affected by the bedroom tax, who are among those facing a welfare Cliff Edge in just under two months' time.

Speaking on behalf of the Coalition Kate McCauley from Housing Rights said: *"Minister Hargey has given a strong assurance that she and her officials are focussed on delivering an extended welfare mitigations package before the current package is due to end, and that new measures will be introduced to alleviate additional pressures as part of the review.*

"Without extending the bedroom tax mitigation some 38,000 affected households would lose an average of £50 per month.

"We look forward to working with the Minister to develop and introduce strengthened measures to take account of new challenges such as Universal Credit, including the Two- Child Limit, as well as cuts to housing benefits in the private rented sector."

Announcing her commitment to extend the Bedroom Tax mitigations beyond March Minister Hargey said: *"I'm committed to introducing new measures to address the serious challenges of poverty, and look forward to providing the coalition with an update in the near future."*

"We have a responsibility to protect the poorest and most vulnerable in society. In the coming weeks I will introduce new legislation to extend this essential mitigation, which will continue to safeguard more than 38,000 of the most vulnerable households in our society."

The Minister continued: *"A society is judged on how we protect the most disadvantaged. I am a Minister who will fight to protect those families living in poverty; low-income families, single-parent families, those with disabilities and children and young people. I am working hard to target resources towards those most in need."*

The Minister concluded: *“There are also other mitigations which need to be looked at as we review the mitigation measures we committed to in ‘New Decade, New Approach’. I will continue to work with stakeholders in moving forward with that important piece of work.”*

The Cliff Edge Coalition, a group of more than 100 organisations across NI is campaigning to extend and strengthen the welfare mitigations in the face of new challenges.

Ends

For further information or to request an interview please contact Weber Shandwick who are coordinating the campaign:

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Notes to Editors:

About Cliff Edge Coalition

- Group of more than 100 organisations campaigning on the potential impact of the cessation of the existing welfare reform mitigations at the end of March 2020
- The Coalition provided written evidence in response to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Work and Pensions Committee Joint Inquiry into Welfare Policy in NI – [Report Here](#)
- The Committee’s report is available [here](#)
- The NIO’s report is available [here](#)