

## Survey on Discretionary Support

### INFORMATION SHEET

We would like to explain what the survey on Discretionary Support is for and what it will mean for you to take part. We want to make sure that you are fully informed and are taking part willingly.

#### **Purpose of the survey**

An Independent Review Panel has been appointed to see if the Discretionary Support scheme is working for those who need it.

The aim of the survey is to help the panel understand the experiences of people who have been through the application process. This will help the panel identify what could be done to improve Discretionary Support.

None of the members of the panel work for the Department for Communities or have any authority to decide or influence whether or not an application for Discretionary Support would be successful.

#### **Who can take part?**

The survey is open to anyone who has applied to the Discretionary Support scheme, whether the application has been successful or not.

#### **Taking part in the survey**

Taking part in the survey is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire and to confirm that you understand what is being asked of you and that you agree to take part. The survey takes about 5-10 minutes to complete. If you decide you no longer want to take part, close the survey without submitting your responses. This will not affect any current or future claim to Discretionary Support.

#### **Data protection**

As part of the survey you will not be required to give any personal information about yourself. Personal information is defined as any details that will enable you to be identified, such as your National Insurance Number, telephone number, address, etc. No personal identification information will be used in the reporting of the survey results. This means that your rights are protected as required by the UK General Data Protection Regulations (the UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 1998. You should also be aware that Freedom of Information legislation allows access to certain non-personal or generalized data, and that the panel has a duty to report to the police any responses which reveals criminal behaviour likely to harm others.

## **Reporting**

The Independent review panel will prepare a report for the Minister for Communities. The report will also be published and available to the public on the [Department for Communities website](#). The panel intends to have the report completed by 1 October 2021.

## **Discretionary Support Independent Review Panel members**

The members of the Independent Review Panel are:

Professor Gráinne McKeever, Ulster University (Chair)

Jonny Currie, The Trussell Trust

Dr Ciara Fitzpatrick, Ulster University

Kevin Higgins, Advice NI

Gerry McConville, Falls Community Council

Ursula O'Hare, Law Centre NI

The panel can be contacted by email at [discretionarysupportreview@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:discretionarysupportreview@communities-ni.gov.uk)