

## A patron for CHNI, a voice for the sector

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*Sid McDowell, Patron of CHNI*

The Executive Committee & Directorship of CHNI are proud to announce that the organisation now has a Patron who will work at the highest level to forward our vision for the sector and the homeless in Northern Ireland. Sid McDowell, CBE, Hon FIAVI, Hon MCIH, has accepted the role, bringing to CHNI a wealth of experience. After serving an apprenticeship as a compositor Sid McDowell attended Ruskin College, Oxford from 1963 to 1965. He took up an appointment as a trade union official in 1965 and was Deputy General Secretary of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance from 1976 to 1994.

He became a member of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Board in 1986 and served as Chairman from 1995 to 2004. He was also Chairman of the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland, stepping down in November 2005. Mr McDowell was appointed as a Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioner in 1999. In March 2006 he was appointed Chairman of the Public Service Commission.

For 4 years, until 2006, he was Chairman of the Constructing Excellence Centre (NI). Mr McDowell is also a non-executive Director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. He is a member of the Lyric Theatre Board of Trustees with responsibility for over-seeing the construction of a new £12m theatre. He is currently over-seeing a 24 month project to promote Social Dialogue in Bulgaria. In 2006 he served as a member of the panel, which reviewed and reported on the planning agreement relating to Belfast City airport.

He is President of the Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Vice-President of the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (NI), President of Lisnagarvey Operatic Society and a member of the Management Board of Threshold, the mental health charity and Habinteg Housing Association. He was awarded the CBE in the 2000 New Years Honours List.

He will become Chairman of the National House Building Council (Northern Ireland) on 1st September, 2007.

On accepting the role, Sid wrote to CHNI: " I am greatly honoured to have been considered for this role and regard the opportunity to fill it as an enormous privilege. Given the volatility in the local housing market at present, and the attention being focused on it, the need for a persuasive voice as advocate on behalf of homeless people is greater than ever. I look forward to assisting the Council and its members in articulating the case for more effective action to be taken to address the needs of homeless people "

**CHNI's policy document regarding the role of Patron is available on request.**