



Housing Association Voluntary Right to Buy Scheme

Press statement, 25th November 2015

In the Spending Review the Chancellor has announced that eligible tenants will be able to register for a pilot of the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme (RTB) that will enable them to purchase their housing association home with the help of a Government funded discount. Successful applications will be able to progress up to the point of sale, but would not be able to complete until the Housing and Planning Bill becomes law. The pilot will be limited to five housing associations and to 24 local authority areas in London, the South of England, East Anglia and the North West.

The Government had already made a commitment to enable housing association tenants to buy their homes on terms similar to those available to council tenants under the Right to Buy. In October it announced the deal with housing associations to develop a Voluntary RTB scheme. As part of the deal, Government would provide full compensation to associations for the discounts received by tenants, whilst reviewing aspects of existing regulation to support housing associations in helping provide the new homes that are badly needed across the country.

Legislation is passing through Parliament that will enable the Government to deliver on the agreement with housing associations, and will make voluntary sales available across the sector.

Prior to this, the pilot aims to test the Voluntary RTB scheme, and in particular the nature and level of demand in different areas of the country, the values at which homes will be sold and the design and implementation of the full scheme. Sales will be restricted to customers of the participating housing associations in the selected local authority areas who have been public sector tenants for 10 years or more, and who live in an eligible home.

Tenants who are interested in taking part should go to <https://righttobuy.communities.gov.uk/am-i-eligible/housing-association-tenants/>

where they can find more information, and register for the scheme. Formal applications will be invited from January 2016.

Carol Matthews, Group Chief Executive of Riverside, said “now that the voluntary agreement is in place it is essential that we work closely with Government, the regulator and the National Housing Federation, to test the design of the scheme. Riverside is one of five housing associations who are committed to supporting tenants’ aspiration into home ownership through this pilot, whilst ensuring through Government funded discounts, that the supply of affordable housing is not diminished.”

Ann Santry, Chief Executive of Sovereign, added, “along with most other housing associations Sovereign signed up to Voluntary RTB. We’re now keen to work with others to understand and shape the pilot so that we can achieve the optimum outcome both for tenants and for housing associations.”

The pilot will be delivered by the following housing associations in the local authority areas listed:

L&Q – Croydon LBC, Enfield LBC, Greenwich LBC, Haringey LBC, Lambeth LBC, Lewisham LBC, Newham LBC, Southwark LBC

Riverside – Liverpool CC, Halton BC, Knowsley MBC, Sefton MBC, St Helens MBC, Wirral MBC

Saffron Housing – South Norfolk DC

Sovereign – Cherwell DC, West Oxfordshire DC, Vale of White Horse DC, South Oxfordshire DC

Thames Valley Housing – Guildford BC, Hart DC, Runnymede BC, Rushmoor BC, Woking BC

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