

I am writing in response to your e-mail of 21 September 2010 requesting information about the number of council houses passed on to a successor tenant each year after the death of the original tenant.

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I confirm that Communities and Local Government holds some information on this topic but not the exact level of detail that you have requested. The data that we do hold was collected via the Survey of English Housing (up to 2007-08). In 2008 the Survey of English Housing was merged with the English House Condition Survey to form the English Housing Survey.

Survey respondents living in social housing were asked if they were already living in the accommodation when they took over the tenancy or if they acquired the tenancy because they were living with someone who was a tenant. Those who respond yes to either question are then asked their relationship to the previous tenant and the reason they took over/acquired the tenancy: death of previous tenant; tenant's move into residential care or other institution; divorce or separation; or other reason. They are also asked when they took over/acquired the tenancy. These questions were not asked in 2008-09 and so the most recent data currently available is from the 2007-08 survey.

We cannot provide the exact data that you require for the following reasons:

- our data only provides estimates of those who were still in that same council housing at the time of interview
- this would not include cases where there had been a succession but the new tenant had since died or moved out of the accommodation or bought the accommodation
- it would also not include cases where the property had since moved from Local Authority to Housing Association ownership.

Any estimate would therefore be an underestimate of the total number of cases each year.

The number of cases in our samples in recent years for such successions on death for council tenants was very small and it is not possible to provide any robust statistics for the number of cases that had occurred in each year since 1997, we can only provide a cumulative total.

Based on data from the Survey of English Housing it is estimated that in 2007-08 there was a cumulative total (regardless of date of succession) of around 90,000 council tenants who were successor tenants after the death of the original tenant and who were still living in the accommodation. Of these 90,000 council tenants, we estimate that around 50,000 took over the tenancy prior to 1997 and 40,000 from 1997 onwards. This would be an underestimate of the total number of such successions on death of previous tenant that had occurred during those periods as some successors would have since left or

bought the accommodation and some council properties with successor tenants would have transferred out of local authority ownership.