



Homes
England

Date: 22 January 2021

Our Ref: RFI3255

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Making homes happen

██████████
By Email Only

Windsor House
Homes England – 6th Floor
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI3255

Thank you for your recent email, which was processed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). You requested the following information:

- 1. How many homes have been sold through the entire period specifically through the Help to Buy scheme?*
- 2. How many loans have been provided through the Help to Buy scheme?*
- 3. How many have now been repaid and how many made a profit or a loss for the government (providing key figures where possible)?*
- 4. From the data you have gathered, is there evidence of a premium paid for properties that are sold through Help to Buy against other properties sold through normal transactions on the same developments? Please provide data where possible.*
- 5. Could you provide data regarding equity loans repaid in the following format or in raw data format. There would be 5 main table headings, Local Authority or Postcode, Number of loans repaid, original loan size, amount repaid, profit/loss on loan.*
- 6. Are there any specific developments that the Help to Buy properties have fallen in value more than the average?*
- 7. Have any developers had any warnings about pricing or their broader use of Help to Buy to generate sales?*

Response

We can confirm that we do hold some of the requested information. We will address each of your points in turn.

- 1. How many homes have been sold through the entire period specifically through the Help to Buy scheme?
And***
- 2. How many loans have been provided through the Help to Buy scheme?***

We are able to inform you that we do hold the information that you have requested. However, we rely on section 21, exemption where information is available to the applicant elsewhere.

The full text of the legislation can be found on the following link and we have quoted section 21 below for ease.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/21>

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21 – Information accessible to applicant by other means.

(1) Information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant otherwise than under section 1 is exempt information.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)—

(a) information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment, and

(b) information is to be taken to be reasonably accessible to the applicant if it is information which the public authority or any other person is obliged by or under any enactment to communicate (otherwise than by making the information available for inspection) to members of the public on request, whether free of charge or on payment.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (1), information which is held by a public authority and does not fall within subsection (2)(b) is not to be regarded as reasonably accessible to the applicant merely because the information is available from the public authority itself on request, unless the information is made available in accordance with the authority's publication scheme and any payment required is specified in, or determined in accordance with, the scheme.

Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. As such we can advise that the number of homes sold/loans provided under the help to buy scheme can be found on the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/help-to-buy-equity-loan-and-newbuy-statistics>. The help to buy scheme offers a loan towards a house purchase so the number of loans and the number of homes sold are the same.

3. How many have now been repaid and how many made a profit or a loss for the government (providing key figures where possible)?

We are able to inform you that we do hold the information that you have requested. However, we rely on section 21, exemption where information is available to the applicant elsewhere.

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. As such we can advise that repayment data is published on the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/help-to-buy-equity-loan-repayment-statistics-1-april-2013-31-march-2019>.

This includes comparison of the loan advanced with the amount repaid receipt.

4. From the data you have gathered, is there evidence of a premium paid for properties that are sold through Help to Buy against other properties sold through normal transactions on the same developments? Please provide data where possible.

We are able to inform you that we do hold information that falls in the scope of your request. However, we rely on section 21, exemption where information is available to the applicant elsewhere.



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We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. As such we can advise that there is published data on Help to Buy new build premium and associated analysis in the National Audit Office report available on the following link: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Help-to-Buy-Equity-Loan-scheme-progress-review.pdf>.

- 5. Could you provide data regarding equity loans repaid in the following format or in raw data format. There would be 5 main table headings, Local Authority or Postcode, Number of loans repaid, original loan size, amount repaid, profit/loss on loan.**

We are able to inform you that we do hold information that falls within the scope of your request. Information regarding repaid equity loans is available in our annual report, which can be found on the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-annual-report-financial-statements-201920>.

The information relating to HTB equity loan repayment can be found on page 36 of this report.

- 6. Are there any specific developments that the Help to Buy properties have fallen in value more than the average?**

We are able to confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request. This is because Homes England do not collect data on non HTB property values. We therefore do not hold information that would enable us to compare the performance (value) of HTB vs non-HTB properties.

In order to conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Help to Buy Reporting and Finance teams who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1>

We would advise that the National Audit Office report linked in our response to question 4 contains information on this point.

- 7. Have any developers had any warnings about pricing or their broader use of Help to Buy to generate sales?**

We are able to confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request. This is because there is no legal or business reason to do so.

In order to conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Help to Buy Developer and Relationship Management teams who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.



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The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1>

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. As such, we can advise that Help to Buy house builders have contractual obligations not to sell homes at greater than the Market Value assessed by an independent surveyor before purchase. No notices of default have been served to any Help to Buy developers regarding purchase prices.

The contractual terms for the 2013-21 scheme are published on the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/help-to-buy-equity-loan-funding-administration-agreement>

Right to Appeal

If you are not happy with the information that has been provided or the way in which your request has been handled you may request an internal review by writing to;

The Information Governance Team
Homes England – 6th Floor
Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Or by email to infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner however, the Information Commissioner does usually expect the internal review procedure to be exhausted in the first instance.

The Information Commissioner's details can be found via the following link

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Please note that the contents of your request and this response are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Homes England may be required to disclose your request and our response accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

The Information Governance Team
For Homes England

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