



Homes
England

Making homes happen

Date: 11 February 2021

Our Ref: RFI3284

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

By Email Only

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

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: Request for Information – RFI3284

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

1. *As of 14th January – how many sales / properties under the current Help to Buy scheme are still to be completed – i.e. outstanding or in progress? (Your own build completion deadline is 28th February)*
2. *In previous correspondence you have mentioned the IMS system - how many reservations are on the Homes England's Information Management System (IMS) as of 14th January for the current Help to Buy Scheme?*
3. *Figures released by the government on 8th December suggest that the average construction delays are between 3 and 8 months <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-england-statistics-show-overall-housing-starts-down-reflecting-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-housebuilding> In previous correspondence you state that these figures relate to the first half of 2020, please provide updated figures relating to the second half of 2020 and the average construction delays for that period. I am looking for the average delays / construction delivery timescales across all builds, not just the Help to Buy Schemes*

Response

We can confirm that we do hold the requested information.

1. *As of 14th January – how many sales / properties under the current Help to Buy scheme are still to be completed – i.e. outstanding or in progress? (Your own build completion deadline is 28th February)*
And
2. *In previous correspondence you have mentioned the IMS system - how many reservations are on the Homes England's Information Management System (IMS) as of 14th January for the current Help to Buy Scheme?*

We can advise that the number of sales/properties yet to be completed and the number of reservations on the IMS system are the same. This is because the data that Homes England holds is the ATP (Authority to Proceed). As of the 31st of January 2021, there were 16,691 schemes in IMS which are still to complete for HTB1 scheme.

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Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA.

The current Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme ends on 31 March and is to be replaced by a new first-time buyer only scheme that will run from April 2021 until 2023. The new scheme is open for business with customers now placing reservations for purchases from 1st April 2021.

The current scheme closes on 31st March 2021 and every effort must be made to reach legal completion by that date. However in recognition of delays caused by Covid-19, Homes England announced on 15 January that it will not enforce the practical completion deadline of 28 February 2021 for the current [scheme](#).

Further to this, to ensure those buying a home through the scheme are not disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control, we will allow until 31st May 2021 for outstanding reservations to be completed. This measure provides certainty to developers to build out homes delayed and further protects customers whose purchases have been delayed by COVID 19.

This is also reflected in our latest FAQ's: [Information for Help to Buy: Equity Loan customers during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3. ***Figures released by the government on 8th December suggest that the average construction delays are between 3 and 8 months <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-england-statistics-show-overall-housing-starts-down-reflecting-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-housebuilding> In previous correspondence you state that these figures relate to the first half of 2020, please provide updated figures relating to the second half of 2020 and the average construction delays for that period. I am looking for the average delays / construction delivery timescales across all builds, not just the Help to Buy Schemes***

Section 44 – Prohibitions on Disclosure

Section 44 (1)(a) FOIA exempts information from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by other legislation. In this case, release of the information you are seeking is prohibited by the Statistics and Registration Services (SRS) Act 2007 and the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008.

Data for the next period (the second half of 2020-21) will form part of the 'Housing Statistics' National Statistics publication routinely published every six months and cannot be provided until the data has been formally approved and officially published.

We are required to consider your request in a manner compliant with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008 further to sections 11 and 13 of the (SRS Act 2007). These sections require producers of official statistics to ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access prior to publication.

Therefore, to disclose the information at this date would cause Homes England to violate the provisions of section 13 of the SRS Act and the Pre-Release Access Order to Official Statistics 2008 and as such engages the exemption under section 44(1)(a) of the FOIA.



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Section 44 is an absolute exemption which means that we do not have to consider the public interest in disclosure.

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. We can advise that the data will be published on the link provided in the text of your question in July 2021, as advised in the link.

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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