

# Voluntary Right to Buy

**We have previously told you that the Government has announced the extension of the Right to Buy for housing association Tenants; this is a voluntary scheme for housing associations. However the national Voluntary Right to Buy scheme has not yet been launched and we are awaiting further details to be announced by the Government.**

There have been some pilots over the last year but the Government has confirmed that there will now be a new regional pilot of Voluntary Right to Buy; as yet we do not have any details about this.

## **Q. What is Voluntary Right to Buy?**

The Government committed in the last General Election to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. Housing associations offered to voluntarily work with the Government to make this happen and a pilot was set up.

## **Q. Why is the scheme called 'voluntary'?**

The Government made an election manifesto commitment to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. Housing associations agreed to work with the Government to deliver it voluntarily as this addresses concerns around supply and independence of the sector. For example, it will allow us to replace the homes sold and protects certain, hard-to-replace homes from being sold.

## **Q. When will Voluntary Right to Buy start?**

We do not know; the start date for the national Voluntary Right to Buy scheme has not yet been confirmed. The Government has confirmed that there will be a regional pilot of Voluntary Right to Buy during 2017/18 but we're awaiting further details from the Government on the location of the pilot and the eligibility criteria for tenants.

## **Q. Hasn't Voluntary Right to Buy already started in some places?**

The Government worked with five housing associations to pilot Voluntary Right to Buy in limited locations to help inform the design and implementation of the main scheme; Penge Churches HA was not one of these. This original pilot started in January and is now closed to applications. The Government has recently confirmed a new regional pilot, but we're awaiting further details on the location of the new the pilot and the eligibility criteria for tenants.

## **Q. Why is there another pilot?**

The new pilot will test two important parts of the scheme that weren't tested in the original pilot, one for one replacement and portability – that is, in the event that a tenant cannot purchase their current home, the option to transfer (port) their discount to an alternative property of their own or to another willing housing association. Testing these elements will enable a smooth experience for tenants once VRTB is rolled out nationally.

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## **Q. When will the new pilot start and end?**

It is likely that the pilot will run for one year in 2017/18. However, we're awaiting further details from the Government and will update on these details as soon as possible.

## **Q. What if I'm not in the region of the new pilot?**

The Government committed in the last General Election to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants across England in a national scheme. When the national scheme has launched, tenants across England can apply for a government Right to Buy discount.

## **Q. When the national scheme is launched, will I be eligible?**

We do not know yet as the eligibility criteria is being tested in the pilots.

## **Q. If I'm eligible, will I be able to buy the home I'm living in now?**

There will be some homes that PCHA will not sell. Once the details of the scheme are announced we will be publishing our own policy outlining which homes might be sold and which won't nearer the date of the scheme launch.

## **Q. Which homes won't you sell?**

Until the final details of the national scheme are confirmed, and we have published a policy on this agreed by our board, we do not know. We will publish our policy on this at some stage during 2017/18.

## **Q. How do I get my discount?**

The national Voluntary Right to Buy scheme has not yet launched. When it has launched, information on how to apply for a government discount be confirmed as part of the application process.

## **Q. Why do we still not know who will be eligible/when the scheme will start?**

We know this is frustrating but at the moment, the scheme is being tested through pilots and the detail is being worked through to make sure the new scheme works as well as possible. The Government will, in due course, finalise the tenant eligibility criteria and when the national scheme will start.

## **Q. How can I register my interest or ask any questions?**

You can register your interest on the Government's website, [righttobuy.gov.uk](http://righttobuy.gov.uk) or speak to one of the Government's Right to Buy Agents or sign up for emails.

