

Ending of House Sales Scheme for Tenants of Registered Housing Associations

- The House Sales Scheme for Tenants of Registered Housing Associations is due to end from midnight on 27 August 2022
- From 28 August 2022, the scheme will be closed to applications and Housing Association tenants will no longer be able to buy their home
- Any eligible Registered Housing Association tenant who wishes to buy their home must make an application

through the existing House Sales Scheme before the deadline of midnight of the 27 August 2022

- Applications should be made by contacting the relevant Housing Association <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/housing-associations>

NOTE: This does not apply to Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants. The 'Right to Buy' scheme will continue at this time.

Frequently asked Questions

Why is the scheme ending?

The reasons for this change are complex.

The way Housing Associations are classified for public accounting purposes changed. This change would potentially result in significant detrimental impacts for the building of social homes here.

Social homes are hugely important in our society and the Executive decided that this classification issue needed to be addressed so that we could continue to deliver as much social housing as possible.

To secure the future of social housing, the legislation that had to be introduced meant the House Sales Scheme for Housing Association tenants must end.

Is the House Sales Scheme being ended for all social housing tenants?

No. The changes in legislation introduced last year will end the scheme for Housing Association tenants only.

Why are NI Housing Executive tenants not affected?

Although the two House Sales Schemes operate on similar criteria, they are separate. The Housing Executive scheme was not affected by the change in accounting rules and the legislation passed in August 2020 did not include the Housing Executive scheme. The Minister has outlined that she does intend to look at the future of the Housing Executive House Sales Scheme.

When does the Statutory House Sales Scheme end?

While ending the Housing Association House Sales Scheme the legislation allowed for a transitional period of 2 years from 28 August 2020. This gives time for eligible tenants to be aware of the closure and exercise their right within that timeframe. This means that the scheme will end at midnight on 27 August 2022.

Can I still apply to buy my house until that date?

Yes. Housing Associations will accept applications from tenants to buy their homes under the Statutory House Sales Scheme up until midnight on 27 August 2022. The rules of the scheme will continue to apply up until that date and the rules can either be obtained from your Housing Association or can be accessed on the Department's website at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/disposal-housing-association-property>

What will happen after the closing date?

If an application to purchase a house has been received by the relevant Housing Association before midnight on 27 August 2022 it will be dealt with in the usual manner. If the Housing Association requires further information from the proposed purchaser the application to purchase will remain valid.

Equity Scheme

What if I have bought equity in a Housing Association property and wish to buy more equity after 27 August 2022?

If you have previously entered into an agreement with your Housing Association under their equity sharing scheme you will still be able to purchase more equity after 27 August 2022 and avail of any remaining discount you are entitled to.

NOTE: The co-ownership scheme will continue to operate as normal. The co-ownership scheme is not covered by the statutory house sales scheme. It is operated by the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association.

Further information about the House Sales scheme can be accessed at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/disposal-housing-association-property>



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