

Welsh Government
Summary of responses

Changes to the frequency of Help to Buy - Wales statistical outputs

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Produced by

**Housing and Environment Statistics Unit
Knowledge and Analytical Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ**

Tel: 0300 025 5055

E-mail: stats.housing@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Proposed Changes to the frequency of Help to Buy - Wales statistical outputs.

User Consultation - Results

Summary

A user consultation was conducted to seek user views on reducing the frequency of statistical updates relating to the Help to Buy -Wales Shared Equity Loan on the [Stats Wales website](#) from monthly to quarterly.

The evidence for the proposed changes was that it would reduce the burden on staff both within Welsh Government and Help to Buy - Wales Ltd without adversely impacting on the usefulness of the information available for monitoring the progress of the scheme. It would also bring the outputs in the line with other statistics published on Housing supply. It would free up resources both within Help to Buy - Wales Ltd and Welsh Government to enable more timely provision and more detailed analysis of the quarterly and annual data on Help to Buy - Wales.

Findings

There were 6 responses to this official consultation which ran from 1 March 2017 to 24 May 2017. This report includes a summary of responses as well as direct quotes where relevant.

Many thanks to all those who took the time to respond to this official user consultation.

The user consultation showed that all 6 respondents agreed with the proposed changes to the frequency of Help to Buy - Wales statistical outputs.

Decision

We will reduce the frequency of Help to Buy - Wales statistical outputs on [StatsWales](#) from monthly to quarterly with effect from July 2017 onwards.

Following implementation, the Welsh Government will continually monitor and review the impact of these changes to ensure that users' needs continue to be met and that the quality of information published is not adversely affected.

Introduction

A summary of the background to the consultation is provided in this report. The full background to the consultation is available in the [consultation document](#).

Currently, data relating to the Help to Buy - Wales Shared Equity Loan Scheme are published on StatsWales on a monthly basis, covering the activity at an individual local authority level for the previous month. The monthly information published consists of the number of properties purchased during the reporting period and also the cumulative total for the whole scheme, along with the average property purchase price and mean equity loan value.

The [latest annual release](#) covering 2016-17 and the latest quarterly headline covering January to March 2017 are available.

The full data set is available on [StatsWales](#).

The publication of monthly outputs is resource intensive both for staff within Help to Buy - Wales Ltd and for the Welsh Government data collection team. As the monthly updates can be subject to fluctuation they are only of limited use in assessing progress with the scheme compared with the information published quarterly and annually. Ceasing the monthly updates of Help to Buy information on the [StatsWales website](#) would bring the Help to Buy outputs in line with the publication of other statistics on Housing supply which are either quarterly, as in the case of New House Building, or annual, as in the case of Additional Affordable Housing Provision.

A Welsh Government consultation was then held, in accordance with the Official Statistics Code of Practice, to allow all users of the data to comment on these proposed changes to the frequency of the information on Help to Buy - Wales published on StatsWales from monthly to quarterly.

The consultation was open for a period of 12 weeks from 1 March to 24 May 2017.

The rationale for the proposed changes was included in the [consultation documents](#).

Methods

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposal to change the frequency of Help to Buy - Wales statistical outputs.

The questions used in the consultation are attached in [Annex A](#).

The consultation document and the response form were accessible via the Welsh Government consultations website. Potential users of Help to Buy - Wales data and known users of housing statistics were informed of the consultation and invited to respond. These included devolved and central government, local government, housing associations, third sector organisations, various housing bodies and housing networks.

Results

6 responses to the consultation were received, all using the Excel response form. 3 of the respondents were from local authorities, with the remaining 3 from the private sector. Of the 6 respondents, 5 stated that they were happy to be identified in this report and they are listed in [Annex B](#). All respondents supported the consultation proposal.

The following pages give more detail on the responses provided to each question.

Question 1

Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the frequency of the data published on Stats Wales covering the Help to Buy-Wales Shared Equity Loan scheme by ending the monthly update as outlined in Proposal 1 of the attached consultation paper ? What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

6 responses were received in relation to this question. Of these, all agreed with the proposal. The comments provided in these responses included the following:

- “We have absolutely no objection to the reporting to HtBW being amended to quarterly. Whilst we do utilise the figures produced to monitor our own performance as a Company and for the overall ongoing take up of the funding , this can very easily be analysed on a quarterly basis rather than monthly.”
- “Quarterly publication provides sufficiently robust evidence base for our needs.”
- “There will be no impact on the work of the council and the quarterly and annual outputs are in line with our reporting cycle.”
- “Quarterly reporting would fit well with other housing related statistics analysed”
- “Although the current regular updates are useful we understand the reason for the proposed change and do not consider it will be detrimental to the overall impact of the scheme.”
- “Quarterly publication of scheme statistics for Wales would provide useful and more meaningful information to lenders participating in the scheme than the current monthly reporting which can be subject to fluctuation. The proposed change would align the publication of HTB-Wales statistical outputs with the publication of other Welsh Government statistics on Housing Supply. Official statistics for the HTB equity loan scheme in England and Scotland are published on a quarterly basis. For these reasons we support the proposal to discontinue monthly reporting of statistical outputs for Help to But (Wales) from May 2017.”

Discussion

All of those who responded to this proposal were in favour of reducing the frequency of the data published on Stats Wales covering the Help to Buy - Wales Shared Equity Loan scheme from monthly to quarterly.

Conclusion

The decision has been made to carry out the proposed changes to the information published on the Help to Buy - Wales Shared Equity Loan Scheme.

With effect from July 2017 onwards we will no longer publish monthly updates of the data relating to the Help to Buy - Wales Shared Equity Loan Scheme on StatsWales.

On a quarterly basis, we will continue to publish a full data set at an individual local authority level of the information relating to Help to Buy - Wales on the [StatsWales website](#) along with summary headline information on the [Welsh Government website](#).

This will ensure that relevant and useful headline information continues to be publically available each quarter and can be used to assess the impact of the scheme. The headline information will continue to be available at an individual local authority level each quarter on Stats Wales. We will continue to publish a detailed statistical release in April each year which will provide a full analysis of the information collected in relation to the Help to Buy-Wales scheme over the previous financial year along with trend information from the start of the scheme in January 2014..

Annually a full data set at an individual local authority level will continue to be available on [StatsWales](#).

ANNEX A

Questions asked

Name

Organisation

Job Title

Email address

Do you wish to be identified as the author of your response? (mandatory question)

Q1. Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the frequency of the data published on Stats Wales covering the Help to Buy-Wales Shared Equity Loan scheme by ending the monthly update as outlined in Proposal 1 of the attached consultation paper?

What are your reasons for this, including any impact this change might have on your work?

ANNEX B

List of responders (who stated that they were happy to be identified)

Name	Organisation/Role
Timothy Grey	Sales Director -Llanmoor Development Co Limited
Terry Flynn	Housing Strategy Team Leader - Powys County Council
Rachel Richardson	Housing Strategy Officer - Research - Conwy County Borough Council
Mark Harris	Planning and Policy Advisor Wales - House Builders Federation
Melville Evans	Service Manager – Housing Programmes, Flintshire County Council.