

Tenanted Sales Policy

Riverside Home Ownership

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

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1. Purpose

1.1 Riverside (TRG) offers a range of ways for tenants to purchase their home. Some sale schemes are statutory that TRG is legally required to promote and facilitate sales to eligible tenants, while other schemes are offered voluntarily by TRG. TRG aims for this policy to provide a set of principles and clarity for staff and stakeholders, on TRG's approach to the sale of properties to existing tenants ('tenanted sales').

A summary of the current sales schemes for existing tenants is provided at 3. This policy also applies to any future schemes that may be introduced.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all tenants within the Riverside Group who are eligible to purchase their home under the sales schemes listed at section 3.

The policy also applies to Home Ownership employees.

3. Principles

3.1 We will:

- Ensure that we provide a fair, transparent, responsive and efficient service to existing tenants
- Have a framework for establishing tenant and property eligibility for each sales scheme
- Make tenants aware of the sale schemes available to them and advise on eligibility
- Operate a sales service for each scheme that meets legislative and regulatory requirements, including the prescribed information, processes and timescales that apply to the statutory schemes
- Ensure homes are sold at values based on valid independent RICS valuation, less any discount required by the specific sales scheme. RICS valuations expire after 3 months unless stated. The pricing of the property should reflect the individual attributes of the property

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- For relevant sales schemes, use the Homes England sustainability calculator and guidance as the basis for assessing whether an applicant can afford and sustain homeownership
- Expect tenants to provide supporting information as evidence of what is stated in their application and to support the sustainability assessment, if applicable. In exceptional circumstances, tenants may make a statutory statement, but this would need to be supported by other corroboratory evidence
- Provide an accessible service to people with disabilities, by offering information in different formats; offering support and guidance to help customers complete the application process
- Carry out due diligence to verify the identity of tenants, request evidence of the origin of any funds being used to purchase and, investigate any suspicions of fraud and/or money laundering
- For voluntary schemes, provide tenants with clear timescales for application and sale progression
- For voluntary schemes, cancel applications if tenants do not provide documents within required timescales, if we do not consider the tenant has acted reasonably
- Operate a responsive and efficient post sales service that meets legislative and regulatory requirements in respect of discount repayment requirements and any right TRG has to buy back the property when the homeowner wishes to sell
- Deal with all complaints in line with the TRG complaints procedure ensuring all tenants are treated fairly and equally
- Monitor and report on sales for each scheme.

3.2 Tenant Sale Schemes

3.2.1 Right to Buy (RTB)

Statutory right that gives secure tenants of local authorities and some housing associations the right to buy the home they are living in at a discount. Some TRG tenants have a Preserved RTB because they were the tenant of a local authority when it transferred its stock to TRG.

3.2.2 Right to Acquire (RTA)

Statutory right that allows some secure and assured TRG tenants to buy their home with a discount. To qualify for the RTA their property must have either been built or bought by Riverside with public funds on or after 1st April 1997 or transferred from a local authority to a housing association that is now part of TRG, after 1st April 1997. Tenants with an assured shorthold tenancy granted after 2012 for a fixed term of two years or more may also qualify for the RTA subject to the property funding requirement.

3.2.3 Voluntary Right to Buy (VRTB)

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Voluntary scheme offered by TRG that gives some tenants living in certain regions the opportunity to buy their home at a discount. To be eligible tenants must have an assured tenancy or an assured shorthold tenancy granted after 2012 for a fixed term of two years or more. The discounts are at the same level as those for the statutory Right to Buy.

3.2.4 Social HomeBuy (SHB)

Voluntary scheme offered by TRG that gives tenants of houses only, the opportunity to buy either a share in their home or purchase the property outright at a discount

3.2.5 Home Ownership Scheme for Tenants (HOST)

Voluntary, non-discounted scheme offered by TRG that enables tenants of houses only in particular postcode areas to purchase their home.

3.2.6 Rent to HomeBuy (RTHB)

TRG has some properties that are let on assured shorthold tenancies at an intermediate rent (80 per cent market rent). The properties were let to people eligible to buy a shared ownership property but not in a position to do so at the time, as they did not have the required deposit. RTHB tenants may purchase their home on a shared ownership basis, although there is no requirement for them to do so. Any purchase must be at market value as no discounts are offered. TRG will not agree to sell the property if the difference between the current property market value and outstanding costs to Riverside (such as build costs) is greater than 10%.

3.2.7 Rent to Buy

This is a new scheme launched by TRG in 2021. It is delivered with grant funding from Homes England and provides newbuild homes on fixed term tenancies; tenants are offered tenancies of less than two years at a time, at a rent capped at 80% of the market rent for the property (inclusive of service charges). Tenancies can be renewed and once the home is five years old, the tenant is able to buy on an open market basis. Applicants must be planning to buy a home in the future but not be in a position to buy at the time the tenancy starts (i.e. insufficient deposit or access to mortgage finance). The tenant does not have to buy when the property is five years old; this is a minimum period to allow time for the tenant to save a sufficient deposit to buy.

4. Further Information & Support

- Home England Capital Funding Guide
- Affordable Housing Programme 2016-21 and 2021-26 Funding Agreements
- Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory standards
- Shared Ownership Sales Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Leasehold Management Policy

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- Rent Setting Policy
- Repairs Policy

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Director of Customer Service

- Responsible for the overall policy implementation
- Ensure adequate resources are available to enable the objectives to be met

Director of Riverside Home Ownership

- Responsible for the delivery of the key policy objectives as set out in the policy, including designing and implementing procedures.

Head of Sales

- Responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the operational effectiveness of the policy.
- Ensure all appointed individuals within the Sales, Resales and Housing Management have the appropriate level of skills, knowledge and training.

6. Risk Thresholds

N/A

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Riverside is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with Riverside's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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