Report for the Isle of Man Government

Housing Needs Study

July 2013
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study Brief

The David Tolson Partnership (DTP) was appointed by the Isle of Man Government in October 2012 to undertake a programme of work to carry forward the recommendations of the review of the Housing System completed by the team in February 2012. This draft report sets out findings and recommendations of the study of Housing Need which formed part of that programme of work.

The brief for the work was to provide:

- A projection of net need for additional affordable housing over 10 years;
- An assessment of the potential role of alternative forms of affordable housing;
- Information on particular needs – especially those of older people.

The second and third items on this list have been the subject of specific pieces of work which are being reported separately. However, the main issues and findings relating to those topics are incorporated in this report.

1.2 Scope of the Report

This Report presents the findings of the work on housing need.

The report is set out as follows:

- Section 3 explains the approach taken to the study and the information analysed;
- Section 4 provides an overview of the housing system and of the concept of housing need;
- Section 5 details the findings of an assessment of housing need derived from data contained in the Housing Waiting Lists;
- Section 6 sets out the analysis of data collected from surveys of people who had applied for publicly provided or assisted housing and from in depth discussions with ‘Focus Groups’ made up of such applicants;
- Section 7 reviews the key points arising from consultations with housing bodies on the Island;
- Section 8 draws together the evidence and findings to provide an assessment of the need for publicly funded or publicly supported ‘affordable’ housing at present and over the next ten years;
- Section 9 identifies policy issues thrown up by the study and sets out the key conclusions of the study.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The analysis of housing need has been based on the following main sources of information:

- The analysis of data obtained from the local authority and Department of Social Care (DSC) waiting lists;
- Demographic data;
- Analysis of housing market data;
- A survey sent to all applicants on the general and sheltered housing waiting lists and people on the First time Buyer register;
- Focus group discussions with applicants for public housing and for the House Purchase Assistance Scheme and with clients of the housing assistance organisation Kemmyrk;
- Consultations with housing public providers and with other bodies involved in helping or advising people in housing need.

2.2 The waiting list for general needs public rented housing on the Isle of Man stands at around 1200 – almost the same as a decade ago. This is despite evidence that owner occupied housing has become less affordable, especially for new buyers. The analysis of existing housing need, specifically the survey work, indicates that around half of the people on the rented housing waiting list and possibly more on the first time buyers list are not in urgent or immediate need of housing.

2.3 At the same time, about half the people on the list have been there more than two years and 30% have been on the list for four years. There is some evidence that households whose characteristics ‘fit’ with the allocations system (long term residence, low income and two adults) will be housed fairly quickly while others, who may have pressing housing needs, will wait much longer.

2.4 Unmet housing need is not growing strongly but it is also the case that need is not falling and there may be a substantial element of need which is not being met and is not likely to be met. The analysis indicates that on existing trends there could be a net unmet need for 200 affordable homes to rent over the next decade to keep need levels stable.

2.5 To tackle the existing backlog of need would, we consider involve reducing the waiting list by around 500 by housing those in most need. We consider a waiting list of 500 – 600 to equate to the necessary turnover in the system with need being met promptly. To achieve this over 10 years would add a requirement for around 50 houses per annum.

2.6 These calculations assume that existing policies remain largely unaltered but, as discussed below, it may be possible to manage that need/demand balance in other ways.

2.7 With a gross need over the decade of around 4,000 households, it would be necessary to divert under 25% of that need to alternatives to eliminate any requirement for construction of public sector rented homes even under existing policies: that amounts to 70 ‘alternative tenure’ units per annum. If the more modest aim of stabilising the waiting list was met then as few as 20 units a year would be needed.

2.8 A policy of selective sales could increase funds available for provision of new affordable housing, address the issue of relatively high income households living in public sector housing and help in restructuring the public sector stock to meet changing needs. More prosperous households would ‘move on’ and while they would take their houses with them, the value of that asset would largely be returned to the affordable housing system.

2.9 Demand might also be managed by changing allocation criteria. It is, likely that if policy made clear that allocation priority would strongly favour people in urgent need and in poor or stressful living conditions then demand from people who are presently
adequately housed might be reduced. Certainly people would see little point in joining the list if their household circumstances were not sufficiently problematic.

2.10 With regard to investment in new housing, it is proposed that future investment in new affordable housing should be largely confined to a programme of development of Mid Rent (i.e. rents of around £500 per month) and Rent to Buy housing of up to 50 units per annum over the next decade.

2.11 So far as allocation is concerned we consider that in the interests of focusing public rented housing on those most in need the pointing system should be altered so as to:

- reduce or eliminate the points for Manx born;
- eliminate or at least cap waiting points;
- eliminate points for couples;
- remove the cap on points for unfit housing, overcrowding and health/welfare issues.

2.12 In addition, there is a case for simplifying the definition of overcrowding so that an EHO assessment is not needed and accepting that housing can be physically unsuitable or unacceptable without being unfit for habitation.

2.13 Finally, the creation of a single Waiting List and the abolition of points for local residency would allow a more efficient and equitable allocation process.

3 STUDY APPROACH AND METHOD

3.1 Introduction and context

The Housing Review completed in 2012 provided an overview and assessment of the housing system and provided a preliminary assessment of the need for affordable housing on the Isle of Man. The overall findings of that work are considered still to be valid, though the study report recognised that the estimates made in relation to affordable housing need were tentative.

The study conducted as part of the previous housing review found that the Isle of Man has a dynamic economy which has experienced a quarter of century of strong growth. The benefits of this growth are reflected in gross incomes which are above the UK average, a low tax regime and levels of unemployment which are low by UK and European standards. The tenure structure of housing, the level of house prices and private sector rents in the Isle of Man are all comparable with those in the South East of England, an area with a similar level of prosperity.

In contrast, public sector rents were shown to be below those in most parts of the United Kingdom. The large gap between public and private rents, the quality of the housing on offer and the existence of an allocation system which is driven by residential eligibility and willingness to wait rather than by measures of household need have had the result that public housing on the Isle of Man remains in strong demand and the tenure has not become the ‘welfare housing’ occupied exclusively by low income groups and people on benefits which is characteristic of Great Britain.

However, the Isle of Man Government recognises that in what is likely to be a long term context of constrained public spending it is essential that funds provided for public housing (and for support to people buying their homes) are focussed on meeting need and involve the commitment of no greater level of resources than will be required to meet need. That provides the context and rationale for the study reported here which
aims to identify and analyse the level of need and so enable decisions to be made about the resources required for housing.

The study has thus been concerned not simply with quantifying the level of need but with seeking to understand the nature of that need and the level of support which people in need will require in order to secure adequate housing.

3.2 Housing Need

The study has focused on the demand and need for affordable housing – defined as housing which requires some form of subsidy and is provided at a below market rate to households who cannot meet their needs in the open market.

In analysing housing need we distinguish between existing need, households who are presently unable to obtain suitable or adequate housing, and the net flow of new need which is the annual addition to need from new households and people whose circumstances change less the number of households who for one reason or another are able to resolve their housing needs. Over a period we can compare need with the supply of affordable housing (comprising houses which become available through turnover and any additions to the stock less losses to the stock).

The assessment of the need for housing distinguishes between different groups – principally but not only between general and special needs.

The practical assessment of housing need is also affected by policy considerations. There is an inescapable issue of policy and, indeed, value judgment, in determining what needs are to be met. For example, in some jurisdictions the housing requirements of households without children are not regarded as needs which policy must take into account. On the Isle of Man it is established policy that households which do not have a residential qualification (i.e. 10 years of Island residence) cannot constitute part of the recognised need for housing: we have not considered the implications of abolishing this requirement.

The other salient aspects of the definition of need on the Isle of Man are:

- That access to public sector housing is fundamentally based on residential eligibility and a concept of ability to pay, in that there is an limit on household income (at time of application) above which applicants will not be allowed to be accepted on or remain on the waiting list for public rented housing (the same principle applies to the House Purchase Assistance Scheme);
- That once a household is allocated a house income considerations (and indeed, other ‘need’ criteria) play no part in the right to remain a tenant – this implies that need is only assessed for households prior to their being allocated a house;
- That account is taken of other ‘need’ factors such as health factors and house condition in determining priority but not basic eligibility for public sector housing though, as argued below, the degree of priority so conferred is open to debate.

Changing the need criteria would almost certainly affect the measured level of need. For example, increasing or lowering the maximum income limit. Such considerations are matters for policy makers though it should be said that we see no evidence based justification for lowering the maximum income limit. Shifting priorities for housing (i.e. the points system) might affect the level of ‘expressed’ need in that it could affect the willingness of people to join the waiting list.
In this report we do not challenge the basic principles of housing need as reflected in policy – i.e. that access to public housing should be based fundamentally on inability to afford market sector housing (in practice income) and should be open to all qualifying adult residents. However, in considering the balance between supply and need we do consider the relevance of degrees of need and in Section 8 discuss how changing allocation priorities and other policies might enable the balance between need and supply of housing to be managed.

3.3 Methodological approach

In carrying out the study we have relied on a mixture of secondary (i.e. existing) data and targeted survey work and consultations.

Existing need comprises eligible households who are unable to afford suitable housing and thus includes:

- Homeless persons and people living in a house where they are not the owner or tenant and where the other adults living there are not family members;
- Households living in insecure accommodation;
- Households living in housing which is unfit or in poor condition;
- Overcrowded households;
- Households living in housing which they cannot afford;
- Households containing people with mobility impairment or other specific support needs living in unsuitable dwellings.

This list is a fairly narrow or rigorous definition of need. The guidance provided by the UK Department of Communities and Local Government implies that persons who are parents and who are living with family members (e.g. a couple with children or single parent living with parents or relatives) and single adults over 25 living with other family members should be regarded as households who, if they cannot afford to secure suitable housing of their own, are to be regarded as in need. In Scotland, Acts of Parliament in 2001 and 2003 effectively mean that any person over 16 who can establish that they do not have a safe or permanent home (e.g. young people who have left the parental home) can be determined to be homeless and thus in housing need. The issue of what should constitute ‘need’ is discussed further below.

The analysis of existing need has been based on four main sources of information:

- The analysis of data obtained from the local authority and DSC waiting lists;
- A survey sent to all applicants on the general and sheltered housing waiting lists and people on the First time Buyer register;
- Focus group discussions with applicants for public housing and for the House Purchase Assistance Scheme and with clients of the housing assistance organisation Kemmyrk;
- Consultations with housing public providers and with other bodies involved in helping or advising people in housing need.

The survey of housing applicants sought information on the social, personal, economic and financial circumstances of applicants, their reasons for seeking public sector housing (or assistance from the first time buyer scheme) and their willingness to

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consider alternative means of securing suitable housing. For applicants for sheltered housing the survey included questions on what may be termed 'support needs'.

These issues were further explored in five focus group discussions. These involved two groups with a mixture of household types, a group of people seeking support from the House Purchase Assistance Scheme and a group of people being assisted by Kemmyrk.

Newly emerging and future need can be expressed as an annual flow and comprises the following:

- Newly formed households unable to afford housing;
- Existing households whose circumstances change;
- People with housing needs who are 'newly qualified' through residence

The projections of future need are based on demographic data and the analysis of trends over the last decade in the number and characteristics of persons joining the housing waiting lists (including the first time buyer list).

Current and projected need levels were compared against the current and projected supply of affordable housing. The known and projected supply of affordable housing under existing policies consists of the amount of housing becoming available for occupation in a period of time (i.e. annually). Relevant data obtained from local authority and DSC records covered:

- Re-lets of public sector houses;
- Net additions to the public stock;
- Re-sales of affordable houses within the 10 year limit;
- New affordable homes;
- Houses purchased on the open market under HPAS

This analysis was supplemented by consultation with DSC and the local authorities:

4 THE HOUSING SYSTEM AND HOUSING NEED

4.1 Introduction

The housing system on the Isle of Man, as elsewhere, can be understood as a set of stocks and flows. The stocks consist of a set of households (who require housing) and a stock of houses. The flows are additions to and reductions in those stocks: the number of households can be increased by new household formation and by immigration and reduced by death, household dissolution and emigration. The stock of housing can be added to by a flow of new construction and conversion and reduced by demolition.

The stocks (and flows) are, of course, diverse. Households differ from one another in size, composition and circumstances among other ways while houses are also very diverse. Thus while it is useful to start by considering the balance between the requirement for housing and the supply in terms of the number of households and the number of houses (and changes in those two numbers), there are many ways in which there can be mismatches between the availability of houses and the needs of households: thus there may be fewer houses of a particular size than households seeking such houses or mismatches between the supply or housing and requirements
in particular areas. Moreover, the circumstances of households can alter so that their housing needs change.

Where people have the financial means to obtain housing in the market (buying or renting) we can expect mismatches to be resolved by market transactions – households seeking larger or smaller houses will search for such properties to buy or rent. Where particular types of housing are in strong demand we can expect developers to respond by providing such housing. This process of market adjustment does not, in reality, always work smoothly. Planning or land use issues may limit the supply of housing while the recent financial crisis has greatly affected the availability of finance for house purchases and development so causing the market to become much less responsive.

Nevertheless, in the medium to long term the housing market provides the mechanism by which most households satisfy their housing requirements. The demand for housing is a requirement or desire for a particular type of housing backed by the capacity to pay for it. For most households the housing they need and the housing they are able to demand are sufficiently similar for the market to meet those needs. For some households, however, the type of housing they need and the housing they could afford are very dissimilar. Such households are in unmet need. In this study we are concerned with measuring the extent and nature of unmet need now and projected need over the next decade.

This definition of need implies that households seeking public housing who could afford to buy or rent privately but who simply prefer public housing (on grounds such as value for money) are not in need. We discuss below whether this is an important issue for the measurement of need.

With reference to housing need, Figure 3.1 illustrates the key stocks and flows. Thus at any time there is a stock of need which comprise households who are unable to access adequate housing. This stock is added to by a flow of new households who cannot obtain adequate housing and existing households whose circumstances change in such a way as to place them in housing need (for example loss of employment which makes existing housing unaffordable or changes in health).

The stock of need is also reduced by outflows comprising people who are successfully housed by the public sector and people whose circumstances change so that they are no longer in need of housing on the Island (due to, obtaining housing in another way, to a rise in income or to a decision to leave the Island).

**Figure 4.1 Housing Need Stocks and Flows**
4.2 The Drivers of Demand and Need

The overall level of demand (and need) for housing in an area is driven by two principal factors, the number and composition of households and the ability of those households to pay for housing.

Between 1961 and 2011, the resident population of the Isle of Man increased from 47,100 to almost 85,000. This is growth of 81% over 50 years or 1.4% per annum. Over the same period, the number of households on the Isle of Man also increased from 15,600 in 1961 to 35,600 in 2011. This is growth of 128% over 45 years or 1.9% per annum. The greater growth in household numbers reflects a decline in average household size from 3 in 1961 to 2.44 in 1996. Since 1996, average household size has continued to fall slowly reaching 2.38 in 2011.

The extent to which households will be able to meet their needs in the market place. A broad indication of affordability trends is given by that ratio of average house price to average earnings. This is not intended as a precise measure – most houses are purchased with the support of more than one income – but it is an indicator. As Figure 3.2 shows, this index has shifted quite dramatically over the last decade.

Figure 4.2 Average House Price to Mean Income

Despite the recent slight reduction in house prices, housing appears less affordable than decade ago. It is the case that account must be taken of other dimensions of affordability; low interest rates mean that households can sustain the cost of historically high loans relative to income. However, for recent new buyers the financial crisis has meant that, for a period at least, house purchase loans have been harder to come by.

4.3 Tenure trends in the housing system

Most households on the Isle of Man (66%) are owner occupiers. Public sector tenants account for 16.4% of households and the remaining 17% of households are mainly renting from private landlords.

Over the period 2001 to 2011 the proportion of households who are owner occupiers has fallen (from 68%) as has the proportion of public sector renters (from 18%). Private renting has grown from 13% of households to about 17%, an increase of 37% (1,600) in the number of private renters.

One clue to this growth in private renting may be found in the data on house owners. As noted, the share of owners in the population of households has fallen: the absolute number of owner households has risen by 10% over that period (about 2,000 households). However, the growth in home ownership is almost entirely accounted for
by growth in the number of households who own their homes without a mortgage: these are established older households or people with means who have moved to the Island. The number of households buying with a mortgage has risen buy only 500 in a period in which the number of households has risen by 4,000.

We can reasonably assume that newer or younger owners are to be found among those buying with a mortgage. This data suggests that the owner occupier market is becoming harder to access and that more ‘would be’ owners are to be found in private renting. This may be a consequence of the financial crisis which began in 2008.

If home ownership had grown at about the same rate as the household population there would be 625 more owners than there are in 2011 (and by implication 625 fewer tenants).

The 'excess growth' in the private rented sector (the amount by which its growth exceeds the growth of households) amounts to 1060 households over the period 2001-2011. We can argue that at least 600 of these ‘extra households’ are people who might have expected to buy during that time. The fall in the number of public renters means that in 2011 there were around 400 fewer public renters than there would have been if that sector had maintained its ‘share’.

Bringing this together we can say that increasing difficulty in accessing the owner occupier sector has increased the size of the private rented sector by over 600 households. Some of the increase in private renting also appears to be related to inability to access public renting but we cannot assume that all of the shift from public to private renting comprises people who would otherwise have wanted to be public renters since they may also be a trend from public renting to home ownership.

The implications of this shift in tenure will be considered further after the evidence of the housing waiting list has been considered.

5 MEASURING NEED: WAITING LIST ANALYSIS

5.1 The General Waiting List: Trends

Waiting lists of applicants for public sector housing are maintained by all of the local authorities which are housing providers and by the Department of Social Care. Applicants are not allowed to be on more than one list, though it is possible that in some cases two persons intending to form a household may have applied to separate lists.

Applicants must meet the normal residential criteria (10 years on the Island and 5 years in the local authority area if applying to a local authority) and must also have income below the qualifying threshold.

There is, therefore, not one waiting list for general needs housing but several. Nevertheless, we analyse here data which consolidates the various waiting lists into one list.

Over the last decade the waiting list has risen by less than 100. However, that long term change incorporates a sharp rise in the list (by almost 400) between 2003 and 2010 followed by a decline. The rise in the list in 2005 was driven by a change in eligibility which meant that over 500 single persons previously ineligible were able to apply for public housing: without that impact the number on the list would have fallen.
The most rapid increase in the size of the list was in the period from 2007 to 2010 which runs up to the time of the 2011 census and suggests that some of the growth in the number of people in the private rented sector may indeed have consisted of households unable to obtain public rented housing.

Figure 4.2 provides an analysis of the flows within the waiting list in the period 2008 to 2012. Unfortunately data on inflows to the list is not available for the 2008 to 2010 period.

The data shows that the rise in the waiting list over 2008 to 2010 was accompanied by lettings of over 750 properties so that the net inflow of applications must have been over 900. However, in the period 2010 to 2012 the number of new applicants exceeded let by 420 but the list fell by 200 which implies that around 200 people must have left the list each year for reasons other than obtaining a public sector house.

We have limited information on why people leave the waiting list but DSC data for 1999 to 2012 provides information on 258 people who were either removed from the list or withdrew. Of that group a large majority were either removed because they did not respond to communications (150) or withdrew their application without explanation (38). Specific relatively common reasons given for leaving the list were:
- Purchased a property – 15 cases (8 with the aid of the HPAS);
- Found other accommodation – 23 cases;
- Income rose over threshold – 5 cases.

Looking at data for 2012 only (which we may expect to be reliable), of the 45 people who cancelled their application or were removed from the list, eight found other accommodation, two purchased homes and 3 were over the earnings limit. Most of the rest did not respond to communications or were found to be ineligible (i.e. they should not have been accepted on the list).

An out flow of 45 from the DSC list (other than by being housed), if reflected across the whole of the public waiting lists would imply that up to 360 people leave the overall list each year (the DSC list being about 13% of the total). We may also note than in 2012 while 70 people joined the DSC list and 67 were housed, 45 people were removed or cancelled. We consider the implications of this pattern further below.

5.2 The General Waiting List: Characteristics

The people on the waiting list can be classified into four main groups as shown in Figure 5.3

**Figure 5.3 General Waiting List – Household Composition**

![Pie chart showing household composition]

- Singles
- Couples: no child
- Couples with child
- Single parents

Single persons are the largest group and account for almost half the waiting list. Including single parent households raises the proportion of households on the list with one adult to 75%.

As would be expected given the income limits for social housing, almost all the households on the list have an income of under £30,000. As Figure 4.4 shows, the modal income is around £17,000 per annum. Given the cost of open market housing on the Isle of Man, it appears that most persons on the list would not be able to afford to buy. We consider that the minimum income at which a person (with some savings) could afford to buy a single bed house would be at least £25,000 per annum and only 20% of applicants have an income above that level. Moreover, as will be explained below, incomes among single adult households are lower than the average.
The four main household types as identified above have, on the basis of the waiting list data, distinctive characteristics. Key features of the four groups are:

- **Single persons** Single person households have the lowest average incomes (a median income of £14,600 per annum). The group is not primarily composed of younger persons. Only 16% of single person applicants are under the age of 25 and only 29% are under 30 while 34% are over 50. It would appear that most single applicants are not ‘new’ households though a number may be a result of relationship breakdown. This group thus includes many persons in early middle age (the modal age group is 45 – 49) with low incomes;

- **Single parents** These households also have low incomes (median income is £17,000) but they are mainly headed by younger people – 47% are under the age of 30 and only 6% are over 50;

- **Couples without children** The childless couples on the waiting list have relatively high incomes (median of £23,900). They fall into two groups: one comprises younger persons (48% are under 35) and the other comprise people in late middle age and early old age (37% are between 50 and 70);

- **Couples with children** This group has the highest incomes (median £24,900) and is almost entirely made up of relatively young people – 55% are under 30 and 84% are under 40.

### 5.3 General Waiting List: Waiting Times

The data on the overall waiting list provides some information on how long people wait to be housed while data from DSC for the people they house provides further insights.

For people on the waiting list in 2012 the median time on the list was 1.9 years (i.e. 50% had been on the list for less than two years). The mean time on the list was 2.6 years. Around 20% of people on the list had been waiting 4 years or more and 10% had been waiting for over five years. One applicant had been on the list for 17 years.

It is potentially misleading to define the number of points a household will require to secure housing since this is affected by the type of housing sought and available (so
that a household seeking a three bed house might be housed with fewer points than a single person seeking a one or two bed flat). However, 50 points is generally seen as a level at which the probability of being housed rises sharply and it is the case that few households on the list (about 10%) have over 50 points – which implies those households tend to be housed.

The average number of points per person on the list in 2013 was 38 which means that the average applicant could expect to reach 50 points within three years. Combining this with the average time people have already waited implies that the ‘typical’ applicant might expect to wait 4 – 5 years.

DSC data suggest that people are housed a little more rapidly. Over the period 2005 to 2012 the pattern of lets was as follows:

- Single persons who were allocated a house waited an average of 2.7 years on the list and had an average age of 44 at letting;
- Couples without children waited an average of 1.7 years for a house and had an average age of 42;
- Couples with children waited 1.6 years and had an average age 31;
- Single parents waited 2 years on average and had an average age of 34.

These figures bear some relationship to the data on applicants in terms of the age profiles (single parents and couples with children being the youngest). The data also suggests that couples with children are prioritised over single parents. This is also suggested by the DSC data: over the period examined the DSC housed almost equal numbers of couples with children and single parents though single parents outnumber couples with children by almost 2 to 1 on the DSC Waiting List.

The preference given to couples with children is ‘built in’ as there are extra points for being a couple. It is also possible that single parents living with their own parents may be in better physical housing circumstances than is the case for families living in the private rented sector.

The data on lettings does not necessarily contradict the data on waiting times. It is possible that the persons housed in any year are not typical of those on the list. Thus low income Manx born households with children who are living in housing which is certified as a health risk and overcrowded may expect to be housed very rapidly while a single person in housing which was not deemed a health risk would expect a much longer wait. In short, the people housed most rapidly may not be typical so that most households on the list do indeed face a wait of several years.

With this in mind we have modelled the hypothetical waiting times for the four household types applying now. We have taken 50 as a notional target for being housed while recognising that this is a considerable over-simplification. The aim is to show the relative responsiveness of system as much as the absolute waiting times.

Table 4.1 models the predicted wait for what we term ‘high points’ and a ‘low points’ cases. The former are Manx born with very low incomes and ten points for housing conditions while the latter are not Manx born while having maximum residency have no income or house condition points.
Table 5.1 Modelled Waiting Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>High Points</th>
<th>Low Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Person</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>7.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple no children</td>
<td>1.25 years</td>
<td>6.25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with one child</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent with one child</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis suggest that there are important distinctions between those housed quickly and those who wait.

Points for housing which is unfit (or overcrowded) are important in letting priority but will usually count for less than a combination of being Manx born and long term residency (which can add 25 points).

5.4 The General Waiting List: Conclusions

The analysis of the Waiting List data has identified six key groups of people in housing need. These are:

- Single (mainly female) parent households;
- Young single people with low incomes;
- Single people in middle years;
- Younger couples without children (who may become parents);
- Couples without children at home in late middle age or older (the ‘emerging elderly’);
- Couples with children.

The survey work and focus groups provide more insights into these groups.

The analysis also suggests that there is a considerable degree of ‘churn’ in the waiting list with people moving on and off the list in substantial numbers. Most who move off the list do so because they fail to respond to communications so that their applications are determined not to be ‘active’. This suggests either that a significant number of people on the list are not in need or that they find other ways to meet their needs.

At the same time, about half the people on the list have been there more than two years and 30% have been on the list for four years. There is some evidence that households whose characteristics ‘fit’ with the allocations system (long term residence, low income and two adults) will be housed fairly quickly while others, who may have pressing housing needs, will wait much longer. The survey work provided more information on these issues.

The waiting list data suggests that in overall terms need is not growing strongly but it is also the case that need is not falling and there may be a substantial element of need which is not being met and is not likely to be met.
5.5 Sheltered Waiting List

The analysis of issues relating to sheltered housing in this report is limited as further analysis is set out in a separate strand of work. However findings from the waiting list analysis are set out here and survey results of sheltered housing applicants are reported below.

The Sheltered Housing Waiting List has shown a steady increase over most of the last decade, with a small decline in the last year, as detailed in Figure 4.4. The rising population of older people (i.e. over 70 years) is undoubtedly a factor in this. That population has grown by 6% over the last 5 years – slightly ahead of general population growth.

Figure 5.5 Sheltered Waiting List

Growth trends for the over 70 group are shown in Figure 4.5. It is notable that almost all the growth in the age group was due to a very sharp growth of over 16% in the 70 – 74 age group, a trend which suggest as sharp increase in the number of very elderly people in the next 10 to 15 years.

Figure 5.6 Population Change 2006 - 2011
As Figure 5.8 shows, over recent years the number of new applications has exceeded the number of lets. Despite this, the waiting list fell in 2011 – 2012. This can only have resulted from a fairly high number of withdrawals or other removals from the list.

**Figure 5.7 Waiting List Change**

![Waiting List Change Graph]

The greatest impact of demographic on the need for sheltered housing may be some way in the future as the elderly cohort expands but there is evidence that demand rising with applications continuing to increase. The drivers of this demand were explored in the survey work reported below.

6 **MEASURING NEED - SURVEY ANALYSIS AND FOCUS GROUPS**

6.1 **Introduction**

This section of the report sets out the findings from the survey that was conducted to inform the housing needs analysis, together with the findings from the focus group analysis.

6.2 **Survey approach**

All current applicants for social and affordable housing on the Island were surveyed as part of the study. The surveys considered issues around

- Household circumstances;
- Nature of current household need;
- Willingness to consider and ability to afford alternative forms of housing

Separate questionnaires were produced for applicants on a housing waiting list (HWL), the sheltered housing list and those registered for the First Time Buyers (FTB) scheme. Common classification and attitudinal questions were used across the surveys as appropriate, but the questionnaires were tailored to reflect the life-stages and characteristics of the different client groups.

The questionnaire was designed by DTP, in collaboration with the client.
The survey was undertaken by post. The questionnaire incorporated an introductory letter, which outlined the purpose of the research, and gave details of a free phone facility, staffed by DTP, which provided information about the survey as required. Housing authorities/boards also had the option of enclosing an additional letter with the questionnaire. The mailing-out of the survey forms was undertaken by the housing authorities/boards or, if they preferred, by DSC on their behalf.

The forms were sent out between 18th and 23rd January and returned to a PO Box. All the processing and analysis of the questionnaires was undertaken by DTP.

A total of 2234 forms were distributed and 533 were returned. Responses and response rates by sub group are shown in Table 6.1.

Applicants to waiting lists should not be on more than one list, so there should not be any duplication across the HWL and sheltered surveys. However, both these surveys did reveal a (small) number of respondents who were on more than one list. It is unclear - and probably doubtful - if any of the respondents completed more than one waiting list questionnaire. It is acceptable for people to be on a housing waiting list and the FTB register. Consequently, the survey instructions requested anyone receiving both forms to complete both. None of the analysis has been aggregated across the surveys.

Table 6.1 Survey Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey responses</th>
<th>Total count</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing waiting list (HWL)</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time Buyer (FTB)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Analysis of applicants to the housing waiting list

There were 308 respondents to the HWL survey; 26% of the forms distributed. We asked respondents which list they had applied to. As the table below shows, the greatest response came from people on the Douglas list.

**Authority** The regulations prohibit applicants from applying to more than one public sector housing list. However, 6% of respondents indicated they had applied to more than one list. In one case, the respondent had applied for public sector housing and to the Manx Housing Trust (which is permitted); but in the other cases they had applied to two or more public sector landlords.
Table 6.2 Applications by authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Total Count*</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braddan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castletown</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malew</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onchan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peel</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Erin</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port St Mary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple lists</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age and sex As the table below shows, the respondents were almost equally split between men and women (46%, 54%). Most respondents were aged below 45 years (58%). This was somewhat below the corresponding percentage on the Waiting List (68%). Respondents aged 60 or over were over represented in the survey (14% as against 9% on the Waiting List).

The age profile of male and female respondents differs; with the female respondents skewed towards the younger age groups (69% aged below 45 years, compared with 45% of men); while the male respondents were skewed towards the older age groups.

Table 6.3 Analysis of waiting list respondents by Age/Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=4
**Household type** The most common household types of HWL respondents were single adult households: both those with and without children. In comparison with the known age and household type structure of the waiting list, as discussed in Section 4, the survey responses closely matched the waiting list with only single parents slightly underrepresented (25% in the survey as compared to 29% on the waiting list).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single person with no children</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent living with 1 - 2 children</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single person with access rights to child/children</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with 1-2 children</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with no children</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with 3 or more children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent living with 3 or more children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>307</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing: n=1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most respondents were established households\(^2\), that is households that either currently or had previously owned or rented their own home (74%), while around a quarter (26%) had never owned or rented their own home and can be regarded as new or emerging households.

**Current tenure** Most of the respondents were living in the private rented sector (PRS), typically in unfurnished accommodation (accounting for 68% of those in the PRS). A significant minority (21%) of the respondents were living with parents. Only a handful lived in the other tenures.

\(^2\) A household may comprise one or more persons.
Table 6.5 Current Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private rent</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied accommodation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary accommodation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=1

Employment and income The majority of respondents were either employed or self-employed (63%). Just under half of all respondents (45%) were in full-time employment, and in just over half of all cases (52%), either the respondent or their partner was in full-time employment. Of the two adult households: 38% have two earners and 14% have two full-time earners. This pattern suggests a much higher proportion of employed households seeking social housing than in GB: for example in 2012 just 35% of households applying for social housing to Scottish Housing Associations were headed by an employed person.

About half (47%) of the respondents had incomes below £15k. Household incomes were particularly low for lone adult households (54% reporting incomes below £15k, compared with 27% for two-adult households); this reflects the data on households to which houses were let as reported above. Emerging households were more likely to have incomes below £15,000 than was the case for established households (52% compared with 41%).

Table 6.6 Income Distribution by Household Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income bands</th>
<th>Single adult Hhlds</th>
<th>Double adult hhlds</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £15,000</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,001-£25,000</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001-£35,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £35,000</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents:</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Debts and savings Two-fifths of respondents said they were in debt: commonly these debts were low with about 19% of respondents owing less than £5,000 and 10% owing between £5,000 and £10,000. However, the largest group of respondents (43%) said they were debt free but had no savings either. Some 17% of respondents stated they had savings: 7% had savings of up to £5,000, the others reported savings ranging between £5,000 and £20,000. Existing households were slightly more likely to have debts than emerging households (42% compared with 31%). Only a small minority of
applicants would, therefore, be likely to be able to provide a deposit for house purchase.

**Housing costs** Housing costs currently paid by applicants ranged from nothing to over £900 a month.

- Some 7% of respondents paid no rent;
- A further 15% paid less than £400 a month;
- Most of the respondents (59%) were paying under £600 a month.

Given that most of the applicants currently live in the private rented sector (PRS) or with parents, the bulk of housing costs relate to either private rents or contributions to the parental home.

- As might be expected those living at home paid least: 24% paid no rent, another 37% paid less than £400; that said, a few of those living at home indicated high rent amounts, they may have been noting their parents’ mortgage payments, or they may well be making sizable contributions to the family home.
- Those in the PRS were typically paying between £500 and £750 a month (accounting for 58% of the PRS respondents). 23% were paying less; 19% were paying more.

Unsurprisingly, there was a relationship between income and rent levels: those on the higher incomes were more likely to be in higher rent properties; while those on lower incomes were generally in lower rent properties. However, a significant number to low income households were in high rent properties.

A large minority (39%) of respondents received benefits to assist with housing costs: for 19% of respondents benefits covered all of their rent, for 20% benefits covered part of the rent.

Table 6.7 Rent by Household Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent/income</th>
<th>up to £15,000</th>
<th>£15,001-£25,000k</th>
<th>£25,001-£35,000</th>
<th>over £35,000</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No rent</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to £400</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£401-£500</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£501-£600</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£601-£700</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £700</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 There was an instruction on the questionnaire that those staying at home to only record the amount they pay, not the total mortgage amount, but some respondents may not have adhered to this.
Adequacy of Housing  Almost three quarters of respondents said that their current home was not adequate for their needs.

Table 6.8 Adequacy of Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Rented</th>
<th>Live with parents</th>
<th>Temporary accomm</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is home adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most respondents were in private rented housing, so differences between tenure groups are difficult to discern. There was a very slight variation by tenure, with those living with their parents more likely to say their home was adequate for their needs than was the case for people renting. None of those in temporary accommodation stated that their current home was satisfactory.

As shown below, by far the most common reasons that people gave for considering their homes inadequate, and thus why the respondents were applying for public sector housing, were the cost of current housing, the size of home, and the fact that their existing housing was not an independent home. Rather fewer respondents also mentioned insecure tenancy, major disrepair, lack of facilities or anti-social behaviour.

When asked if they had ever experienced homelessness or insecure accommodation, such as a let of less than three months or having to sleep on a friend’s sofa since joining the waiting list:

- 84% said no;
- 10% said once;
- 4% said 2-3 times;
- 2% said 4 or more times.
### Table 6.9 Reasons for Seeking Public Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons current home is inadequate</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent/mortgage/bills too expensive</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too small</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live with other people and want my own home</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of/cost of heating</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of outdoor space</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenancy insecure</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major disrepair</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment/neighbours/antisocial behaviour</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too large</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too far from work/family/friends</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car parking/garages</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under threat of eviction/repossession</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>231</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=77

Multi-response (up to 3) possible, so count may sum to more than 231

**Actions Taken** In addition to applying for housing, just over half (55%) of the respondents had taken other forms of action to secure housing in the last two years. The main actions taken related to finding housing within the private rented sector; visiting properties to rent and getting a deposit together. A significant minority of all respondents (17%) had considered the first time buyers’ scheme, with greater interest/awareness in the new build properties for sale, than in the open market homes schemes.\(^4\)

\(^4\) Far fewer respondents indicated they were registered in the scheme than indicated they had considered purchasing properties, but that may simply be that they had registered more than two years ago.
### Table 6.10 Actions Taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you done any of the following in the last two years</th>
<th>Total count</th>
<th>% of those taking action</th>
<th>% of all respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private rent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited properties to rent</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started saving deposit for a rented property</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered with a letting agency</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First time buyers initiative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered buying a new build property on the FTB scheme</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered buying an existing home on FTB scheme</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined the FTB Scheme Register</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owner Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started saving deposit in order to buy</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an application for mortgage refused</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged a mortgage ‘in principle’</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited properties for sale</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made an offer on a property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered purchasing current home</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>170</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=138

Note: * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 170

Relatively few (14% of those who had pursued other housing options, 8% of respondents overall) respondents indicated they were pursuing housing to buy, with almost as many (11%/6%) indicating that they had already had an application for a mortgage refused.

**Tenure Preferences** A number of respondents living in private rented housing said that they would consider buying their current home.

Nonetheless, when asked which tenure they were considering for their next home, the majority of applicants (71%) said they were only considering the public sector. Of the others, 22% were also considering the private rented sector and 9% were also considering owner occupation, with a handful considering all three options.
The survey included a series of questions to explore why respondents want to rent public sector housing. The main reasons for choosing to rent in the public were overwhelmingly financial: 73% indicated that they could not afford suitable housing in the private sector. Around a quarter (28%) indicated that they preferred to rent in the public sector. About a fifth (20%) said they had chosen to rent in the public sector because they were now eligible to do so. It was not clear what proportion of answers on ‘eligibility’ referred to residence criteria and what proportion to financial considerations.

Table 6.12 Reasons for Choosing Public Renting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main reasons for choosing to rent in the public sector</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could afford suitable housing in private sector</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to rent in public sector</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now eligible for public sector housing</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked, if they would prefer to rent in the public sector, what their main reasons for doing so were. Again, affordability was by far the most common reason given though security was a significant consideration.
### Table 6.13 Reasons for Preferring Public Renting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for preferring public sector housing</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector housing is more affordable</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector tenancy is more secure</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector housing is good quality</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>287</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=21

Finally respondents who felt they would not be able to rent or buy privately were asked, why that was. Again, cost was a factor for most people, with 68% of respondents saying that they could not afford private sector housing, with many (58%) noting that house prices/rents are too high.

Particular problems were noted with home ownership: around two-fifths of respondents indicated that they could not get a mortgage. The problems that these respondents had encountered included

- Being unable to fund the deposit (52%);
- Being too old to get a mortgage (17%);
- Having insufficient income (11%);
- Not working/ being on benefits (8%).

The proportion reporting inability to provide a deposit is consistent with the answers reported above on savings.

### Table 6.14 Reasons Unable to Buy or Rent Privately

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Total -Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unable to afford</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House prices/rents too high</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not get a mortgage</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too old to buy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment insecurity</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of repairs/maintenance</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>296</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=12

---

3 102 of the 125 respondents who were unable to get a mortgage specified a reason for not getting a mortgage.
Property type preferences  The most popular size of property sought was two-bedded accommodation – typically houses (53% of those responding), but two-bedroom flats are also fairly popular (31%). There was a relatively high level of demand for 1 bedroom flats (28%) – almost entirely from single person households (64% of single person households indicated they would like a one bedroom flat). A significant minority of respondents indicated they were interested in larger houses (in particular, 19% for 3 bedroom houses), but there was only limited interest in larger flats.

Table 6.15 Size of Property Sought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type/size property are you looking for?</th>
<th>Total Count*</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bed flat</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed flat</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed flat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed house</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed house</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bed house or larger</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Missing=2 - Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 306

Length of time on waiting list  Just under half of the respondents had been on the housing list for under two years, but one third had been on the list for over four years. The table below suggests that the length of wait may vary between different household types. In particular, single person households were most likely to have been waiting for long periods on the list – with over a fifth (22%) waiting for more than six years. This compares to 8% for the other household types as a whole. This pattern is consistent with the waiting list analysis reported above.

Table 6.16 Time on Waiting List by Household type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time</th>
<th>Single person</th>
<th>Lone parent</th>
<th>Couple</th>
<th>Couple with children</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to a year</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to 2 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 5 years</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 10 years</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing=2, Other = 11
Applicants were not particularly optimistic about the speed with which they will be housed: around a quarter of respondents (23%) expected to be housed within a year, and another 30% within two years. However, around a fifth said they expected to have to wait more than five years and another 7% wrote that they did not know how long it would take.

This compares poorly against people’s assessments of when they need to be housed, with half of respondents considering they need a new home in the next year, and 84% within the next two years.

Table 6.17 Expectations of Waiting Time and Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much longer do you expect to wait to be housed and when is accommodation needed</th>
<th>Expected wait to be housed</th>
<th>When is accommodation needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 months or less</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 months</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 months</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2 years</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were to consider a set of statements and choose the one that best described their situation.

Just over a third of the respondents said they need a property soon, and were relatively flexible about the property characteristics they would accept. A further quarter of respondents indicated they need a property soon, but indicated there may be some properties/areas which they might not accept.

Notably 40% of respondents said they did not currently need to move into public sector housing: 30% said they would like to move into the sector soon, but were willing to wait until a good property becomes available; and a further 10% that they did not want to move into the sector soon, but would if they were offered the right property.

Surprisingly, the length of time respondents had been on the list appeared to make very little difference to these findings – except that those who have just joined (in the last 6 months) were more likely than others to say they are willing to wait until a good property becomes available.
### Table 6.18 Description of Urgency of Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I need a public sector house now, I'm not that concerned about the location or the type of property, so long as it is the right size for my needs.</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to move into a public sector house soon, but there are some neighbourhoods and/or properties that I might not accept.</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to move into a public sector property soon, but I am willing to wait until a good property/neighbourhood becomes available</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not really want to move into a public sector property soon, but would if the right property was offered to me.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alternatives** Finally, the survey noted that the government is investigating alternative schemes to assist people access affordable housing. It asked if respondents would be interested in any of these options and, if so, how much they would be willing to pay per month in rent/mortgage payments.

The two rent-based schemes generated the greatest interest: 57% of respondents were interested in mid-market rent and 47% in rent-to-buy. Only around a quarter (28%) were interested in the shared equity scheme.

The amount respondents were willing to pay per month varied widely, ranging from under £100 to £1,000 for each of the initiatives. The most common responses tended to be around £400-£500. Respondents were generally inclined to pay least for mid-market rent and most for rent-to-buy. The tables below show the average price people were prepared to pay for each of the initiatives and the distribution of prices.

### Table 6.19 Interest in Alternatives and Willingness to Pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Level of interest in the initiative</th>
<th>Price people willing to pay per month **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number *</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-market rent</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent-to-buy</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared equity</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note* * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 308

** Many of the respondents noted a range on their return – we have taken the higher of the values indicated
Table 6.20 Distribution of Monthly Amounts Respondents Willing to Pay by Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£pcm**</th>
<th>MMR #</th>
<th>RtB #</th>
<th>Shared equity #</th>
<th>MMR %</th>
<th>RtB %</th>
<th>Shared equity %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 300</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-600</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601-700</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 700</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>157</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 308
** Many of the respondents noted a range on their return – we have taken the higher of the values indicated

6.4 Analysis of the sheltered housing waiting list survey

There were 117 respondents to the sheltered housing waiting survey (SH) survey\(^6\) - 30% of the forms distributed.

We asked respondents which list they had applied to. The highest response came from people who had applied to Ramsay and Northern (32%). Two of the respondents had applied to more than one list, and some had forgotten to which list they had applied.

Table 6.21 Authority to Which Application Made

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority to Which Application Made</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castletown and Malew</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas (Waverley/Ballanard Court)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marashen Crescent</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onchan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peel and Western</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey and Northern</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal British Legion/SSAFA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple lists</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing: n=2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Respondent profile** Female respondents outnumbered male respondents (57% compared with 43%). As would be expected, almost all of the respondents were aged over 60, more than half of the respondents (53%) were aged over 75. Most households

\(^6\) Two further forms were returned without being completed
were single person households (57%), with around 39% couple households. The others lived with siblings, children, and so on.

Table 6.22 Respondents by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 60</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current tenure Most of the respondents were currently owner occupiers. Private tenants were the second largest group with one in ten of the respondents currently public tenants. Around 15% of respondents mentioned other arrangements – living with family, other family members/friends, rent-free accommodation or nursing homes.

Table 6.23 Current Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Rent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Rent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing: n=1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment The vast majority of households were headed by a retired person (87%) with just over half of all households (58%) containing one retired person and 29% containing two retired persons. Nonetheless, 16% of responding households contained at least one person in work or self-employment.

Income and savings The incomes of sheltered housing applicants also tended to be fairly low which is to be expected given the prevalence of retired persons, with around half (48%) having an income of less than £15,000 per annum. The sample size was small, so sub-group analysis cannot be conducted with confidence. However, the returns may suggest that:

---

7 Some households contain a retired person and an employed person, which is why this sums to more than 100%
8 The income, savings and equity questions had an especially low response rate. Some respondents noted on the form that these were private matters. In particular, the response to the question on savings was very low, with just 95 people answering this question.
Renters have lower incomes than owners: 63% had incomes below £15,000, compared with 35% of owners;

Single person households had lower incomes than couple households: as shown below, 67% of singles have incomes below £15,000 compared with 21% of couples.

Notably, however, almost a tenth of respondents (8%) reported an income of over £35,000.

Table 6.24 Annual Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income bands</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Couple</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £15,000</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,001-£25,000</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001-£35,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £35,000</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of sheltered housing applicants (65%) have some savings, with around a quarter of the respondents having savings in excess of £20,000:

- 28% have savings up to £10,000;
- 13% have savings between £10,000 and £20,000; and
- 24% have savings above £20,000.

A further quarter (24%) said they have no savings but do not have any debts either, while just around a tenth (11%) said they are in debt, with these debts ranging from small amounts to over £20,000.

As might be expected, home owners tended to have fairly significant levels of equity in their home:

- 4% said they had less than £50,000 of equity;
- 5% said between £50,000 and £100,000;
- 37% said between £100,000 and £200,000;
- 19% said more than £200,000.
- 36% said they didn’t know how much equity there was in their home;

Housing costs Just over half of the respondents (58%) did not pay rent or mortgage. Owners were most likely to be free of housing costs – indeed, almost all (85%) of the owners now own their home outright. Some 42% did still pay housing costs, typically less than £400 a month, but some were paying amounts well in excess of £600 a month.

---

9 The definition of savings here excluded any equity in their home; this is covered in a separate question.
10 Most (88%) of the current owners responded to the question
Table 6.25 Current Housing Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent paid by household income</th>
<th>Own</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No rent</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to £400</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£401- £600</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £600</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total #</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current accommodation

Respondents generally considered their current home to be in good condition, over 70% reported condition as good or better. Those in owned accommodation were more likely to say their home is better condition than are those in rented accommodation.

Table 6.26 Current House Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition of home by current tenure</th>
<th>Owned</th>
<th>Rented</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some 50% of respondents said their current home was adequate for their needs and 50% said it was not. Those who rent were disproportionately less likely to say their home was adequate (64% said their home was not adequate). The main reasons for saying their current home was not suitable were:

- Too large (37%);
- Garden too difficult to manage (35%);
- Unable to undertake repairs and maintenance (26%);
- Lack/cost of heating (25%).

It should be noted that some of these responses were from people who said their current home is adequate for their needs. The issues raised by people who did consider their home adequate tended to be that their home was too large, their garden was getting difficult to manage, or they lived too far from friends/family.
Table 6.27 Reasons Current House is Unsuitable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too large for household</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden too difficult to manage</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to undertake repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cost of heating</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to afford repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internal layout is unsuitable</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too far from family/friends</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent/mortgage/bills too expensive</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major disrepair/poor condition</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of car/mobility scooter parking</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenancy insecure</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too small for household</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under threat of eviction/repossession</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just under a third (30%) of respondents had some form of adaptations/ modifications to their home; typically grab rails and level access showers.

Table 6.28 Adaptations Provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptations</th>
<th>% of all respondents</th>
<th>% of those responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grab rails</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level access shower</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key safe</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handrails</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stair-lift</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoist</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors widened (wheelchair requirements)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for applying for sheltered housing The vast majority of people who have applied for sheltered housing are thinking about their future needs: around three quarters said they applied because they anticipate more support may be needed in the future and a third mentioned that their family think it will be a good option for the future.

Current issues that have prompted applications include the reassurance that support is available if needed, a desire for a smaller home, and desire for an easier to manage
home. Around a fifth of owners (19%)¹¹ gave releasing equity from their property as (one of) their reasons for applying for sheltered housing.

Table 6.29 Reasons for Applying for Sheltered Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total count*</th>
<th>% of all respondents</th>
<th>% of those responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating more support may be needed in future</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want reassurance someone is there if help is needed</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family think it will be a good option for the future</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want a smaller property</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling to manage upkeep of home</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to move nearer to family</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel lonely – want to be nearer people own age</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to release some equity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot manage to get around property – mobility problems</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Missing: n=7
Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 110

Time on the housing waiting list and urgency of need Some 37% of the respondents have been on the sheltered housing list for less than two years, while 62% have been on the list for three years or less. However, almost a quarter (23%) of respondents had been on the list for more than six years. As the table below suggests, single person households are likely to have been waiting longer than couple households.

Table 6.30 Time on Waiting List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single person</th>
<th>Couple</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to a year</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 2 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 5 years</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 years</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Missing n=5

Although the most common reasons for applying for sheltered housing were around anticipating needs for support in the future, more than half of the respondents (53%) felt they needed to be re-housed within the next two years, with a quarter estimating that it would be another 3-5 years before they needed sheltered housing, and 15% saying it would be longer than that. Expectations of being re-housed were broadly in line with perceptions of housing need, with around 50% of respondents expecting to

¹¹ The table shows 12% - this is of percentage of all those responding to this question, not just the home owners.

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be re-housed within two years. A significant minority (10%) did note on the questionnaire that they didn’t know when they would be re-housed.

To explore the urgency for housing further, the survey asked people about their current housing situation. It asked whether respondents need sheltered housing now, would need it soon, or if they were keeping their options open.

- Just under 10% of the respondents said they needed to move into sheltered housing either now or very soon;
- Another third (36%) said they would like to move into sheltered housing soon, but would like to wait until an appropriate property becomes available;
- The others (55%) said they did not want to move into soon – some might if they were offered the right property (19% of respondents), others are staying on the list in case their circumstances change (36% of respondents).

### Table 6.31 Urgency of Need and Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>When need to be re-housed (%)</th>
<th>When expect to be re-housed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 6 months</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 7-12 months</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 1 – 2 years</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 3 – 5 years</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years’ time</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing: n=12/17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.32 Description of Housing Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I need sheltered housing now, I’m not that concerned about the precise sheltered housing scheme/location.</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to move into sheltered housing very soon, but there are some areas/sheltered housing schemes that I might not accept.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to move into sheltered housing soon, but I am willing to wait until a home in the right area/scheme becomes available</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not really want to move into sheltered housing soon, but would if a property in the right area/scheme was offered to me as there are not many other alternatives</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not really ready to move into sheltered housing at the moment but I want to stay on the list in case my needs change in the future</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample is fairly small, but analysis of the data would suggest that those most willing to wait currently live in owner occupied accommodation, while those most likely to say they would like sheltered housing soon currently live in rented accommodation.
Property preferences As might be expected, the most commonly sought property size/type was the 2 bed bungalow/cottage (55% of respondents). Two-bedroom flats were preferred to one bedroom properties\(^2\).

### Table 6.33 Property Type Sought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Total Count*</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bed bungalow/cottage</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed bungalow/cottage</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bed flat</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed flat</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing=6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note</strong> * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most respondents wanted a property close to their current home: 40% of respondents said they would be willing to travel up to 2 miles for an appropriate property, and a further 39% said they would be willing to travel up to 5 miles. The others were prepared to travel distances ranging from 6 to over 20 miles. Occasionally respondents indicating they would be prepared to travel longer distances had indicated elsewhere on the questionnaire that they were interested in moving to another part of the Island (usually to be nearer to family), so were actually noting the distance from their current home to where they wanted to live, rather a willingness to accept properties across the Island to speed up the allocation process.

Support requirements Just under half (44%) of the respondents noted they currently need help with some tasks. Most commonly, they said they need help with daily living tasks such as looking after the house, shopping, and so on (27% of respondents). Only around a tenth of respondents said they need some help with administering their home, and around a tenth needed help with personal care. A tenth also mentioned needing assistance with other things, most commonly gardening, DIY jobs around the house, and transport (to shops, post office, etc.).

---

\(^2\) The option on the questionnaire was simply “2 bed flat”. A number of respondents wrote in that they would need a ground floor flat.
Table 6.34 Support Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks with which help is currently needed</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of total respondents</th>
<th>% of those noting an issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily living task</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=66

Note - Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 51: Thirty-nine of the respondents (33%) mentioned only one thing they needed assistance with; the others mentioning two or more.

Only a minority of people said they receive assistance with the different tasks, and 40% say they receive no assistance at all. Most of those receiving help do so from friends/family.

Table 6.35 Description of Housing Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks for which help is currently provided</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>% of total respondents</th>
<th>% of those noting an issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily living task</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note - Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 40
Table 6.36 Service Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of those receiving assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Government (DSC)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary sector provider</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector provider</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family / Friend</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=88
Note - Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 29

Interest in Alternative Forms of Provision

The survey asked whether if sheltered housing were available in the private sector, respondents would consider renting or buying privately and, if so, how much they would be willing to pay. Around a third of all respondents (34% of those responding to this question, 30% of all respondents) said they would interested in rented privately, and proposed a wide range of rent levels, averaging just under £400 per month. Around a tenth (12% of those responding to this question, 9% of respondents overall) said they would be interested in buying private sheltered housing. The prices people would consider paying were fairly modest, averaging at just under £125,000. Most (60% of those responding to the question, 53% of all respondents) said they were not interested in either buying or renting privately.

Table 6.37 Interest in Alternative forms of Provision and Willingness to Pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Interest</th>
<th>Number Interested</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Range (£)</th>
<th>Average (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renting private sheltered housing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>£80-£850 per month</td>
<td>£382.50 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying sheltered housing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>£90,000-£155,000</td>
<td>£124,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>103</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=14
Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 103
**For rented housing, we asked for monthly rents; for bought housing we asked for purchase price
Finally, the survey asked those not interested in private sector initiatives their reasons for only seeking housing in the public sector. The main reason given was that people felt they could not afford suitable housing in the private sector (69% of those responding). Other reasons for choosing the public sector were that it was more affordable, more suitable for people with health issues, and more secure. Only 14% of respondents cited lack of private alternatives as a reason for seeking only public provision.

It should be noted that this question was aimed at people who had indicated they would *not* consider private sector alternatives. However, many of those who said they would consider renting private sheltered housing also completed this question. Many of these people also considered they would be able to afford private sector alternatives.

### 6.5 Analysis of the First Time Buyers Register Survey

There were 108 respondents to the First Time Buyers (FTB) survey; 17% of the forms distributed.

**Respondent Profile** The respondents were equally split between men and women. As might be expected, most were aged below 45 years, and none was aged 60 or over. Notably, a significant minority (29%) were aged below 25 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.38 Age/Sex Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FTB Survey: age and sex of respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common household type was single person household accounting for 44% of respondents. The other types were couples with children (32%), couples with no children (17%) and lone parents (10%).

Most respondents were established households (60%), although a sizable minority still lived with parents and had never owned or rented their own home (40%).

**Employment** Almost all the respondents were in employment/self-employment (90%). Indeed most respondents (82%) were in full-time employment, and in 90% of households either the respondent or the partner was in full-time employment. Of the two adult households: 79% had two earners and 58% had two full-time earners.

**Income and savings** Most respondents had incomes between £15,000 and £35,000. Income levels were skewed towards the lower bands, with 20% of respondents in the £15,000 - £20,000 band and 22% in £20,000 - £25,000 band. Notably 7% of respondents had an income of £15,000 or less but 7% had an income of more than £40,000. As might be expected, there was a relationship between household type and income – single adult households tended towards the lower income bands, while two adult households tended towards the higher income bands.
Table 6.39 Income Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income bands</th>
<th>Single adult Hhlds</th>
<th>Double adult hhlds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £15,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,001-£25,000</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001-£35,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £35,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Around half of respondents (53%) had some savings: in just over half of these cases the savings were less than £5,000, while 14% of respondents overall had savings of more than £10,000. Notably, 8% of the respondents had fairly significant debts (more than £10,000).

Rent levels None of the applicants was paying for a mortgage; all housing costs were either rent payments or contributions to the parental home. Housing costs were skewed to the lower end of the rental range: with 13% of respondents paying no rent and another 45% paying less than £500 per month. However a quarter of respondents were paying more than £700 per month. The sample size is low, precluding detailed analysis, but as the table below indicates, there is some relationship between income and rent levels: those on the highest incomes tend to pay at least some rent (although many are in low rent properties), while those on the lowest incomes are generally concentrated in the lower rent properties.

Table 6.40 Rent Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent/Income</th>
<th>up to 15,000</th>
<th>£15,001-£25,000</th>
<th>£25,001-£35,000</th>
<th>over £35,000</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No rent</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to £400</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£401-£500</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£501-£600</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£601-£700</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£701-£800</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over £800</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current accommodation Thirty per cent of respondents said that their current home was adequate for their needs. There is a small variation by current tenure: those with their own tenancy in the public sector and those living with parents in owner occupier sector were disproportionately likely to say their home was adequate, while those in the private rented sector were less likely to say their home is adequate. The main reasons given for wishing to leave the current property were:

- Want to own a property (67%);
- Want an independent home (46%);
- Lack of space (31%);
- Insecurity in their accommodation (threat of eviction, short-term lease, etc.) (19%);
Cost of the accommodation (11%).

A relatively small proportion of the respondents reported problems with current house condition: 14% mentioned lack of facilities, 7% mentioned repair issues (typically damp) and 7% mentioned lack of outdoor space. Indeed, when asked to rate the condition of their home, most respondents said that it was good, very good or excellent (73%), while just 18% said that it was fair, and 9% that it was poor or very poor.

This would suggest that generally people are living in reasonable accommodation that they can afford, and their motivation for joining the FTB scheme is the opportunity to purchase their own home.

**Action Taken** The survey asked respondents about the actions they had taken in the last two years to secure housing. Most housing actions have, as might be expected, been related to owner occupation: saving for a deposit, making arrangements for a mortgage, looking at properties for sale. Perhaps surprisingly, around a quarter of the respondents indicated they had considered purchasing their current home. Around a quarter also indicated they were making preparations for private renting: looking at rented properties, saving for a deposit, and so on. Notably, around one in ten of the respondents said they had not taken any of these actions over the last two years.

**Table 6.41 Action Taken**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Taken in Last Two Years</th>
<th>Total Count*</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started saving money for a deposit for a property to buy</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged a mortgage ‘in principle’</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited properties for sale</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an application for mortgage refused</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered with solicitor/estate agent with a view to purchasing a home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made an offer on a property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited properties to rent</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started saving money for a deposit for a rented property</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered with a letting agency with a view to renting a home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/none</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered purchasing current home</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=2
Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 108
The survey also asked respondents which tenures they were considering for their next home. Again, as might be expected, most (64%) were considering owner occupation among their options. The chart below shows that just under half of the respondents were only considering the owner occupied sector, while many were considering tenure options. Notably, almost a third of the respondents were only considering renting which makes their presence on the list puzzling.

**Figure 6.1 Tenure options being considered for next home (%)**

![Tenure Options Chart]

Around two-fifths of the respondents (38%) were on a waiting list for public sector housing. However, many of those that indicated they were considering the public sector for their next home were not on a waiting list (10 of the 41 respondents).

**The First Time Buyer Scheme** Almost all (92%) the respondents said they were willing to buy either a new build or an existing/second hand property under the scheme. There were very clear patterns around the property size and types in which respondents were interested; houses were preferred to flats, with 2-bedroom properties – both flats and houses – preferred to other property sizes.

**Table 6.42 Acceptable Type and Size of Property Preferred**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Size of Property</th>
<th>Total Count*</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bed flat</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed flat</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed flat</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed house</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed house</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bed house or larger</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(multiple responses allowed)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The principal reasons given by respondents for participating in the scheme were income-related: they reported that they were unable to afford to purchase a suitable property in the open market without assistance and were unable to afford the required deposits without assistance. However, for a substantial minority the motives included access to a better home or purchase at an earlier date. Issues such as enabling better locations and bigger properties were much less important as motives.

Table 6.43 Reasons for Joining FTB Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total Count*</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income is too low to buy without assistance</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No deposit/insufficient deposit</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home much more quickly</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better home than I could otherwise afford</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to a new build property</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good value for money</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to a fixed price property</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better location than I could otherwise afford</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger home than I could otherwise afford</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of these</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 108

Although two-fifths of the respondents said that they had joined the FTB scheme in order to enable them to buy a home more quickly, the FTB scheme does not appear to be an especially fast route into home ownership: 61% of the respondents have been on the register for at least 2 years; while 38% have been on the register for at least 4 years.

That said, respondents were generally willing to wait some time before purchasing: only 21% of respondents said they were not willing to wait up to a year for a home, while 42% said they would be willing to wait up to two years, 26% said they would be willing to wait between 4 and 5 years and 11% said they could wait even longer. The number of responses was really too low to permit a further breakdown but it did not appear that those least willing to carry on waiting were those that had already waited for some time (indeed, those that had generally joined the register fairly recently were more likely to prefer a short waiting period.) The list does thus contain a significant number of people who are in no hurry to buy.

About a quarter of the respondents indicated that they needed a property soon, and were relatively flexible about the characteristics about the property they would accept.
The largest group of respondents indicated that they would like to buy a property soon, but are willing to wait until the right property became available. Notably around a third of the respondents, said they are not ready yet to buy, but would like to keep their name on the register in case the right property came up. Younger respondents (those aged under 25) were no more likely say they were ‘not yet ready to buy a property’ than older applicants.

However, there appears to be a relationship between readiness to buy and options being considered for next home. Only a quarter of those who are aiming for home ownership in their next home do not feel ready to buy yet; this rises to a third of those considering the public sector, and well over two-fifths of those considering the private rented sector.

Table 6.44 Current housing situation, by housing options being considered for next home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>All (Number)</th>
<th>Public sector</th>
<th>Private rent</th>
<th>Owner occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I need a property now/soon, I'm not that concerned about the location or type of property, so long as it is the right size for my needs.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to buy a property soon, but there are some areas I might not consider.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to buy soon, but I am willing to wait until a good property/ a property in a suitable area becomes available</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not ready to buy a property yet but would like to stay on the Register in case my circumstances change in the future</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing: n=2
Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 108. As figure 1 above indicates a fair degree of overlap between options being considered, so categories here are not mutually exclusive.

Around a fifth of respondents (22%) had been given the opportunity to purchase a property under the scheme, but had been unable to complete the purchase. Fifteen of these respondents provided a reason:

- In 7 cases the reasons were broadly financial – they could not get a mortgage, could not get the required deposit together, felt they would be unable to afford the mortgage repayments;
- In 3 cases the offers had been withdrawn for administrative reasons – the applicants no longer fulfilled eligibility criteria (residency issues, financial thresholds, etc.);
- 2 were offered accommodation that did not meet their household’s requirements;
- 3 gave other reasons.

Interest in alternative initiatives Finally, the survey noted that the government is considering developing alternative schemes to enable people to access affordable
housing. It asked if respondents would be interested in any of the different options that are currently being considered and, if so, how much they would be willing to pay per month in rent/mortgage payments.

Most of the respondents were interested in a rent to buy scheme (88%). A very wide spread of rents was proposed by the respondents, with most in the region of £500-£800, and an average of £616. This is higher than would generally be charged by a rent-to-buy scheme, which would pitch rents at a level so as to enable tenants to save towards a deposit.

Just over half were interested in a shared equity scheme. Again, a very wide range of repayments were suggested by the respondents, with 75% in the region of £400-£700, and an average £608.

As the table shows, there was much less interest (27%) in mid-market rent. Most (75%) of the respondents suggested rents around £400-£600, with an average of £538.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Level of interest in the initiative</th>
<th>Price people willing to pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number expressing interest *</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-market rent</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent-to-buy</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared equity</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note * Multi response possible, so total count may exceed 108

### 6.6 Focus groups

Five focus groups were undertaken to explore the issues covered in the surveys in greater depth: in particular issues around living in the in the private rented sector, poor quality housing, the issues faced by older applicants, and experiences of those on the first time buyers scheme.

Four groups were recruited from the survey responses. The questionnaires included a question asking if respondents would take part in further research, and between and third and a half of the respondents indicated they would be willing to participate. From this pool, a sample of potential participants was drawn up and contacted by telephone (and in some cases by text where they could not be reached by phone). Between six and twelve people were invited to each group, depending on the pool of eligible participants, to achieve between five and ten participants in each group.13

The fifth group was recruited on our behalf by the homelessness organisation Kemmyrk, from their client list. The participants in the ‘Kemmyrk’ group, were a mix of

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13 As noted on the table below, some participants in group 5 also brought their parents or partner with them. These have not been included in the participant numbers.
people now living in settled accommodation following support/interventions from Kemmyrk, and people still living in very poor conditions.\(^{14}\)

**Table 6.46 Focus Group Profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group profile</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 HWL applicants: all ages and current tenures</td>
<td>Castletown</td>
<td>HWL survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 People who are/have recently had high levels of housing need/homelessness</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>Kemmyrk clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Applicants for sheltered housing and older people on the HWL (over 60s), mix of current tenures</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>HWL/SH surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 FTB applicants: typically young, renters/live with parents</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>FTB survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 People with children: couples, single parents, parents with access(^*)</td>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>HWL survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\)This was a large group as four of the participants brought along their parent(s)/partner.

The fieldwork was undertaken between 11th and 14th March. A series of topic guides (appended) were developed for the groups, which contained a number of themes common to all the groups some specific issues for consideration at the different groups. All the groups were recoded with the groups’ permission for later analysis. They each lasted around one and half hours.

**Reasons for applying for public sector housing** General housing applicants had a number of reasons for applying public sector housing: access to more affordable housing, desire for improved housing conditions, and obtaining independent housing. The affordability of the sector, compared to the private rented sector, was mentioned as the main reason by most of the participants. Some participants mentioned that moving from the private rented sector to public sector housing would enable them to save for owner occupation.

Improved housing circumstances was also a key concern for a number of participants. In particular:

- To move to a trusted, reliable landlord;
- To secure suitable accommodation, in terms of improved quality, property type (a number mentioned that it was especially difficult to find affordable family accommodation in the PRS), size, adaptations/particular needs;
- Security of tenure – even with the forthcoming changes in tenancy agreement, there will be greater security than tenants presently have in the PRS, where one month’s notice may be given.

For younger participants, the main reason for applying was often to get a home of their own, when they could not afford anything (suitable) in the private sector.

\(^{14}\) This group was recruited and held in Kemmyrk’s offices. Two of the participants were unable to climb the stairs to the room where the discussion was scheduled to take place, and it was not possible to relocate to an alternative meeting room. Consequently one of the DTP researchers conducted a separate paired depth interview with them, while the focus group was conducted.
Reasons given by older people and applicants for sheltered housing were slightly different. Affordability was still a major factor, with concerns about being able to continue to afford high PRS rents when they retired being a particular concern. Other reasons for applying were needing to downsize, no longer being able repair/maintain their current property, need for warden service, and wanting to live in a community setting. There were some obvious overlaps with the motives of people seeking sheltered housing.

Some of the participants stressed that they did not necessarily want public sector accommodation – that they would prefer to buy, but could not afford to. They considered the public sector a better housing option than the private rented sector: it was more affordable, good quality housing, and seemed to offer the potential to save towards a move into the owner occupied sector.

However, many felt very pessimistic about being re-housed in the public sector. Some thought it would take a very long time, possibly several years (a number had very few points, so they could be right) and some of the older participants expressed doubts that they would live long enough to be re-housed. A number of the participants said they knew they could increase their chances of being re-housed, but were unhappy about taking these steps because of the impact it would have on their prospects for home ownership and on their family. These steps were:

- Lying on the application/update form (a number considered this was common practice)
- Giving up work/reducing hours or overtime
- Having an (another) child
- Moving to substandard accommodation which would thus gain them extra points

The Application Process A number of concerns were raised about the application process. As might be expected, given the comments above, the length of time people have to wait was the main issue raised. Participants commented that there is often a lack of clear information about the process in general and individual applicant’s progress/outlook in particular. They are told how many points they have, but are not clear what this means in practical terms – in particular, how the allocation process works, or approximately how long they are likely to have to wait.

Applicants are only allowed to apply to one housing list, and it must be in an area where they have a demonstrable connection (have lived for at least five years). Many noted that they were willing to be flexible about where they lived, and would prefer to be able to apply to a number of areas if that could improve their chances of being housed.

Some specifically indicated that they would have preferred to have been able to apply for an area for which they are not currently eligible. Some indicated they would have preferred to have applied for DSC housing as the waiting time was shorter, but they had never lived in an area with government housing. This restriction was considered to be particularly unfair – given the government serves the whole Island, even if the housing stock is only located in specific areas.

A number of participants felt that the points system does not necessarily reflect need
priority points should also be given to those who had lived on the Island since childhood and those who had lived on the Island a very long time, and especially if their parents were Manx;

- Additional points for couples were questioned – especially by singles. In two of the groups singles commented that they had been advised to get a partner to improve their housing situation;
- There is a perception that some current tenants have very high incomes. Consequently, participants were generally supportive of the new measures that are being introduced to enable public sector landlords to review the tenancy agreements of new tenants every two years. Nonetheless, a number complained about the way increases in their income were treated: they were generally unhappy when their points totals were reduced in response to changes in income, in particular when a very small increase in their income took them over a threshold for a points reduction, or when the points reduction resulted from a seasonal/one-off income change.
- A number felt that the points system did not take full account of their housing circumstances. They noted there is no interview, just a form to fill in set information. It was suggested by some participants that these indicators were too mechanical, and could not get to the heart of people’s needs – the poor quality housing they were living in, the anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood, and so on.
- A small number of the participants felt the rules on applying for public sector housing where there was an on-going interest in an owned property were unclear.

**Reasons for joining the First Time Buyers’ Scheme** Reasons given for joining the FTB scheme were slightly different to those for applying for public sector housing. Applicants were looking for:

- Stability – participants were looking to put down solid roots;
- Investment – the scheme was seen as a good way of using their money; with rent was seen as ‘dead money’. Almost all the participants were currently living in the private rented sector, so they considered they were typically paying at least as much in rent as they would be in mortgage. The FTB scheme would give them a tangible asset at the end;
- Bettering yourself – owner occupation was regarded as something to aspire to, something to pass on to their children;
- Financial security – As noted above, they were confident they could afford the mortgage payments. They felt that owning their own home would give them much more control over their finances. Although public sector housing was cheaper, some of the participants raised concerns about the new public tenancy agreements, and how that would introduce a degree of financial insecurity – as they would worry about rents going up in later life when their family left home.

**Views on Other Initiatives** The focus groups considered the range of affordable housing initiatives identified by the study team.
Sheltered Housing Participants considered that it is generally very difficult to find out about information, advice and support services for older people. There was general agreement that making information - particularly about income support - more easily available would be very helpful. Some participants were aware of a housing development aimed at older people, although not a sheltered scheme. It was thought the properties were around £200,000, which was considered too expensive.

FTB scheme The participants in the general groups were often fairly interested in the FTB scheme, but many noted that there is not a great deal of information; they felt that it is not widely advertised, and that the information on the website is fairly limited and not very clear. This sentiment was echoed by the participants in the FTB group, who did not feel they had enough information early enough in the process.

Possibly the biggest barrier to participating in the scheme was saving a deposit (the banks generally require a deposit, even from scheme participants although will accept the grant as part of the deposit). All those in the FTB group identified this as key issue. Most were living in the PRS, so managing to put aside enough money to build up an acceptable deposit while paying high rents was proving a significant challenge.

The interplay between the benefits and the scheme was highlighted. Family Income Supplement (FIS), which many participants rely on to help with housing and childcare costs, is counted as household income when DSC works out eligibility for grant. However, the bank do not include FIS as income when working out the mortgage calculation. As a consequence, applicants on FIS tend to need to self-fund relatively large deposits. They find it difficult it hard to save the deposit because of the PRS rent (and if they move to a cheaper property, their FIS will be adjusted accordingly). They described this situation of not qualifying for grants but having a large deposit requirement as being stuck between a rock and hard place.

Participants were generally supportive of the open market First Time Buyer Scheme – which supports people to buy existing properties. They were aware of the differences between it and the new build scheme - they noted there was no top-up loan, and there was an upper price limit. But indicated they would be happy with a second hand property as long as the condition and location were acceptable. However, not all participants had been aware of this option.

Strict regulations on the size and type of properties covered by the scheme were seen as problematic – especially as people are ‘locked in’ to the property for ten years and many are buying at times in their life when their circumstances are prone to change.

Shared Equity There was general support for a shared equity scheme. Participants were particularly attracted to the greater flexibility that the scheme offered, in terms of the type and size of property that could be purchased. The option to staircase up as financial circumstances improved was also considered attractive.

Rent to Buy There was support for rent to buy option, which a number of the participants knew about from similar UK schemes. They commented that paying less rent should give them a chance to save. There was also support for schemes which included an element of ‘forced saving’. Some noted that paying less rent would mean that FIS would be reduced, so the opportunity to save may not be as great as the rent reduction might suggest. However, the scheme would clearly suit those who are not on benefits.
Mid-market rent Again there was a fair level of support for this. Participants were particularly liked the idea of being able to access a decent quality property, from a reliable landlord, at a manageable rent (it was noted that the FIS issues above would apply here).

Right to Buy Finally, the option of sitting tenants buying their public sector homes (RTB) was raised. The focus groups included a small number of current tenants, and they indicated that they probably would be interested in buying their own homes.

Those who were not yet renters were also generally supportive of a RTB. It was suggested that the people buying would have been likely to have stayed in those homes for quite a while yet, so it was unlikely that their purchases would adversely affect the housing available to people on the waiting list. Nonetheless, they did feel that any such policy would have to be accompanied by a new build programme to replace the sold stock, and so minimise the longer term impact of the initiative.

The Private Rented Sector Most of the participants currently lived in the PRS. A number of key issues were raised about the sector

- Poor quality – many of the participants commented on the poor quality of their accommodation. The main issue raised was dampness; other problems included properties not being cleaned for entry, poor standards of facilities (cracked toilets, no locks on doors), hard/expensive to heat, poor standards of repair and maintenance;

- Unresponsive landlords – unwilling to carry out repairs, maintenance and safety checks;

- Expensive – rents were high, and housing costs were compounded by high running costs – everything from the tenants having to undertake basic repairs, decoration (for example, one mentioned being expected to retile their bathroom) through to running humidifiers to counteract dampness;

- Disincentives to moving (barriers to exit) – Costs of securing a property are fairly high, which discourages tenants from looking for alternative accommodation once they have rented a property: tenants are generally required pay a deposit and a month’s rent in advance. They may also have to pay for reference check and credit checks. Some reported difficulties in getting deposits returned;

- Lack of security – tenancy agreements are generally 6 or 12 months. Some said their tenancy agreement was fixed for this period, and that they could not leave before the end of their contract unless they found a replacement tenant. Others mentioned varying notice periods (1 or 3 months on either side).

That said, a number of participants were living in good quality PRS accommodation. In some cases this was associated with high rents. In others a good relationship had been established between the tenant and the landlord over a longish period.

There was a strong view that clearer standards were required for the PRS, and that landlords should be held accountable for the standard of service they provided to tenants.
Other Issues

A general sense of unfairness ran through the all groups. Almost all the participants were living in very difficult housing circumstances, including at least one, if not more, of the following – inappropriate accommodation, poor quality housing, high rent, anti-social behaviour, long HWL waiting time. They saw other people - people that they perceived as being in less housing need - being allocated public sector housing. They also considered some existing tenants as being less deserving of a public sector home than they were, typically because the tenants had high incomes or well-paid jobs; but sometimes because of their conspicuous expenditure (cars, holidays/timeshares, etc.), the number of working adults in the home, and so on. Because the allocations process is fairly opaque, rumours are fairly rife (single mothers get all the housing, people ‘off the boat get housed’, MHK friends and family get housed, etc.).

There was a great deal of support for measures that ‘policed’ existing tenants:

- People who had clearly lied on their application (e.g. who had had a partner with another income)
- Under-occupancy (either by evicting people who no longer need larger properties or by charging higher rents – and they seemed particularly hard on single people, less so on couples)
- People who did not look after their properties
- People whose incomes were much higher than the eligible amount
- People whose children caused anti-social behaviour issues

It was felt that the definition of Manx differed between departments. It suggested that some departments would consider people who had lived on the Island since primary school Manx.

The issue of empty/second homes was raised. A number of ‘schemes’ were mentioned as ways of getting them back into use, including paying people from the HWL to live in them and make basic upgrades.

Land banking by a small number of developers was identified as one of the reasons property prices on the Island were so high.

Response of politicians A number of participants mentioned taking their housing issues to their MHK without success – either the MHK had simply not replied to their call/email, or had told them there was nothing that could be done about their situation.

Ex-owner-occupiers, who have lost their place on the home ownership ladder There were a few participants who had been home owners, left the Island for one reason or another and when they returned realised that they could no longer afford to buy a home. They were left in a difficult situation – generally older people – with too much equity for the public sector, but unable to qualify for a decent mortgage or any of the initiatives that are currently available. Their only option was to go into the PRS and start reducing their capital on rent.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other violence issues. A number of participants reported severe ASB issues. There is no provision to enable people to apply to another list even in extreme circumstances. Their only option is a mutual exchange. It was also noted that there is not a policy for dealing with perpetrators of ASB.
Information services There is no source for people needing impartial information, advice and advocacy on housing issues, although there are a number of organisations providing specialist services. Some, but not all those that would have benefited from their services, were aware of Kemmyrk and Help the Aged. And only Kemmyrk's clients were aware of the range of information and support services that they provide.

7 CONSULTATIONS WITH HOUSING ORGANISATIONS

7.1 Introduction

A series of in-depth consultations was undertaken with all the key housing organisations across the Island, to ensure that the views, experience and expertise of these bodies informed the development of the study as well as our interpretation of the study findings. The consultation interviews were held with

- All the local authorities: Each authority determined who would best attend the meeting. Typically several people attended; a mix of commissioners and officers. Some meetings were held with individual authorities, some were grouped geographically;
- The sheltered housing authorities: A joint meeting was held for the sheltered housing authorities. It should be noted that not all were able to attend (the weather was particularly severe the evening of the meeting);
- Government representatives: DSC was interviewed in capacity as a landlord and planning authority; we also interviewed prison officers with responsibility for resettlement;
- Specialist housing organisations: These comprised Manx Housing Trust, Kemmyrk, Graih and David Gray House.

The interviews were carried out following a topic guide (appended) which had been sent to consultees in advance of the meeting. Some consultees provided additional material such as user statistics, policy documents, a tour of their housing. The discussions each lasted between 1 and 2.5 hours.

Except where stated, the consultations were carried out face to face and were undertaken between 21st January and 6th February 2013.

7.2 Issues Discussed - Need for housing

Who applies for public sector housing?

The main household types applying for public sector housing are, in the view of housing bodies, single people, single parents and retired people. Older applicants coming onto the general waiting list are typically people who can no longer able to afford their private rented home, people who have developed mobility/health problems so are having difficulties managing their current home, and people having to leave tied accommodation. There was a view that some of the very young applicants are not yet ready for their own home, but they feel they should apply early (or advised to do so by family or friends) because they know the waiting list is lengthy.

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15 The interview with the prison officers was carried out by telephone. The meeting at David Gray House, was undertaken in March.
A number of other groups were noted:

- People whose relationship has broken down;
- Previous owner occupiers – those who can no longer afford owner occupation and so have to move into renting. These are usually people whose relationships have broken down; people who have fallen into debt; and others who have lost their place on the housing ladder (typically sold, left the Island, and realised when they came back they could no longer afford to buy);
- People who might previously bought but are now unable to afford deposits – both because house prices are higher and because deposit requirements are more onerous.

Some consultees remarked that they had fewer applications from couples with children. One authority commented that ‘traditional’ married couples are less common than in the past; and that unmarried couples were more likely to split up, and expect that the authority will then provide two sets of accommodation. It was suggested that this was more a reflection of a lifestyle choice, rather than a housing need. However, one authority noted that couples with children were becoming more likely to apply as the PRS was increasingly less tolerant of children.

Changes over recent years

The key change over recent years has been more applications from households with children, possibly because of the relaxation of the rules on housing separated couples with children. The accommodation needs of the children are taken into account for both parents; however, only the parent with care (usually taken to be the parent with the child benefit book) is given the points for the children. Where the couple was already housed by the authority, the parent moving out of the property starts again at the bottom of the HWL – and is not given any points for the time they have been in the tenancy, so it may take some time before they are re-housed.

Consultees also noted an increase in the number of applications increases when a new development comes on stream. Consultees were not clear whether new applicants were attracted to the sector by the new build properties, or whether people were encouraged to apply when they see new building as they considered their chances of being housed were increased.

When do people apply?

It was clear that people approach the housing authorities with different levels of housing need. Some people appreciate that the waiting lists are very long, so ‘get their names down in good time’. However, a number of the consultees noted that some people do still come to them when they are in crisis need – for example, young women who are pregnant; needing/expecting to be housed immediately. A number of the authorities noted that people in extreme need (with very high levels of points) are referred to Manx Housing Trust for temporary housing, until a permanent solution can be secured. Only one identified a crisis situation that it had addressed from its own housing stock.

Why do people apply?

There was a clear view that people apply for public sector housing because the rents are low. For some people low rents are essential; they are on very low incomes, and
alternative housing options are very expensive. However, it was suggested that for some people, it was a lifestyle choice; they choose public sector housing so that they are left with a decent residual income to spend on other things.

There was also a suggestion that some applicants come from several generations of public renters. They have no experience of other tenures, and would not seriously consider them as options.

Consultees identified a number of very positive reasons for applying for public sector housing:

- Want a good quality home – the housing authorities all commented that their properties were of a very good standard, were subject to an on-going repairs and maintenance programme, and noted that tenants on the whole took good care of their homes;
- Want a well-managed home – and all commented that their properties were well-managed and that they delivered a responsive landlord service;
- Want a home for life – tenants want a secure property;
- No stigma attached to the sector;
- They are in crisis.

Where do they apply?

Most applicants apply to their local list. Consultees indicated that on the whole they know the applicants, and are confident that the information provided on the forms is correct – in particular, that the applicant is entitled to have applied for housing in their area. Nonetheless, they suspect – and sometimes were fairly sure – that there were some cases where both parties in a couple have been on two different housing authority lists, with a view to taking whichever property becomes available.

It was noted that some people may not always be clear about the rules and/or which area they actually live in. This particularly affects people living in rural areas around towns, who use services in the local town. Often young people from the surrounding area expect (and would prefer) to be able to apply for housing in the town as well, but cannot.

It was also appreciated that some people apply as ‘insurance’ – they do not need re-housing now, but they know waiting lists are long and that people need a lot of points to be re-housed, so they apply early in case they need housing in the future.

‘Hidden’ demand

Generally authorities think that people eligible for public sector housing and in need will apply to the housing waiting list. However, they did feel that the waiting list may miss some people in need:

- People who have lived on the Island for less than 10 years;
- People whose income is just a little too high/varies slightly above the threshold from time to time (although there is a view that people manage their overtime to stay within the FIS and public housing limits);
- People with an interest in a property (e.g. people who are subject to a possession order) – some of the authorities try to be accommodating, by noting the date of
first enquiry and backdating the application to that date once the property has been sold.

The other housing bodies we spoke with felt that there may be some pockets of hidden housing need. It was noted that ex-prisoners are often reluctant to apply for housing: many are not eligible, or find it difficult to be accepted onto local authority lists because of the nature of their offences; and even if they are accepted onto lists, they tend to have very few points, so waiting times are considerable.

Both homelessness charities (Kemmyrk and Graih) commented that the bulk of their clients were people who had been living on the Island for between 5 and 10 years - that is, people ineligible for public sector housing. Graih noted that many of its clients were in housing need, but not on the waiting list. Some will not yet have their residency eligibility; but most are not currently well-placed to support a tenancy independently, and would need additional support/a supported tenancy.

**Points system**

There was a clear view that points system was helpful in allocating housing, but did not fully reflect relative levels of need. In particular, it may award too many points to residential elements and too few points to needs issues.

- Young people do not have the time to build up a lot of points, but may be in severe need; whereas older people, may have simply been waiting a long time, but not really have a great deal of housing need;
- Single people with severe needs appear disadvantaged by the system that automatically gives five points to couples;
- Some authorities have people with support needs, autism, drug/alcohol dependency – these needs cannot be reflected in the points available;
- All noted there were people on their lists without needs points, and were likely over time to be re-housed.

It was suggested that the Manx Housing Trust is used as a way of ‘fast-tracking’ people in severe housing into permanent housing. That is – people in severe housing need, but no support needs, are being referred to MHT so that they can benefit from the additional 10 points they earn after living in MHT housing for a year.

**Flows off the list**

All of the authorities carry out regular (usually annual) reviews of their waiting lists, to ensure that applicants remain eligible for public sector housing. People are removed from the list because:

- Review forms are returned unopened – typically because the applicant has moved (away, off Island sometimes) or died;
- The applicant is no longer eligible – income increases, new partner bringing household income over the threshold, etc.;
- Purchased under the first time buyer (FTB) scheme;
- Sometimes their partner was on another list and they have been re-housed elsewhere;
- No longer wish to remain on the list – it was suggested this is particularly the case with young people who were encouraged to join by parents, but then do wish to keep up with annual re-registrations.
Housing needs of current tenants

Tenants can apply for a transfer after they have been in their property for one year. Some tenants who have taken an unsuitable property just to be housed will apply for a transfer at this time, but all authorities indicated that this was very rare. Indeed, transfers requests per se are fairly rare. They tend to be sought for:

- A larger property – it was noted that not all such requests are in line with environmental health guidance on the number of rooms required, and may be judged to be ‘aspirational’. Authorities differ on how these are dealt with. Some indicated that they will often grant them where they can, as in time the family may/will need the extra room to accommodate older children; others will prefer to encourage mutual exchanges, sometimes suggesting mutual exchanges with under-occupying members of their own family as a potential solution)
- Emerging disabilities/infirmities
- Downsizing – there tend to be far fewer of these requests

It was noted that authorities are discouraged from undertaking transfers, as these result in two ‘voids’. Instead, they are encouraged to deal with transfers through mutual exchanges where possible.

7.3 Issues Discussed – Stock

Level of Demand

Authorities generally commented that all their stock was in demand. The greatest demand was for two bed properties. These were principally let to couples and singles with one or two children. They were also sometimes let to couples (who were planning to have children) and occasionally 2 bed flats (but generally not houses) were let to singles.

There was also high demand for:

- Bungalows (1 and 2 bed), which are mainly let to older people and to people with disabilities;
- Sheltered housing, although there are pockets of lower demand sheltered as well;
- The most recently developed housing and the most recently refurbished areas tend to be very popular;
- 1 bed properties; most areas have very few one bed properties, so demand for the available properties is generally high.

There was lower demand (but not low demand) for 3 bed properties in most areas.

It was noted that, in areas with both DSC and local authority housing, DSC will sometimes make its housing available where it is letting at significantly lower points levels than the local authority.

There is stock that is harder to let, typically poor quality housing and small flats/bedsits; although these properties make up a tiny proportion stock. Only one area, Bride, was identified as having a concentration of low demand stock; it is remote and has relatively poor transport links.

Under-supply

When asked if there were any areas of under-supply in their housing supply, the housing authorities focused on specialist housing

www.davidtolsonpartnership.co.uk
• Supported accommodation for older people: Given the closure of residential accommodation models of supported accommodation – possibly with the support provided by partner agency and the accommodation provided by the public sector are required to ensure that older people have adequate provision in the community.

• Housing for single people aged over 55 – It was noted currently over 55s who are only eligible for 1 bed properties have a very long wait.

• (Supported) housing for people with disabilities – Shortages of homes suitable for people with disabilities were noted, and it was suggested that different approaches to addressing this be considered. Some authorities have developed properties suitable for extension as a model.

• Ex-prisoners – there are no protocols in place for addressing the housing needs of people being resettled on release from prison. Nor are there any provisions for older ex-prisoners with support needs.

It was noted that encouraging/enabling public sector tenants to remain in their homes longer, rather than moving on to a residential setting, means those homes are not being released for younger people. There are clearly concerns about older tenants under-occupying family homes, but as the comments above indicate, the smallest properties are generally in high demand, so opportunities to accommodate down-sizing where that is requested may be very limited. There were suggestions that significant stock restructuring may be required.

Resolving supply issues

Lack of land on which to build is a key issue in resolving issues of general supply and specific supply for many of the authorities. A number of authorities mentioned having to think fairly small-scale: for example, acquiring small brownfield sites or existing properties for the site, as opposed to being able to build on greenfield sites.

All the authorities were clear that their housing stock should be built to a high standard; with some seeking to develop properties indistinguishable from the private sector. One of the authorities suggested that their building approach may be reviewed, to determine whether the quality approach was right, or whether the stock may be becoming ‘over-amenitied’; tenants might prefer some more basic (especially given the new rent-pointing approach, where tenants pay for the different features of their home) and more dwellings could be constructed from the budget.

7.4 Issues Discussed – Affordability and Alternatives

Higher rents/variable rents

There was a general view that the prevailing rent levels were not sustainable. Housing authorities commented that government had not adopted their rent recommendations, and instead implemented systematically lower increases, which had resulted in the current housing deficits and tenant expectations of very low rents.

The proposed rent rises are needed to both address the deficits and produce rents that more accurately reflect the product/service tenants receive. Nonetheless, some of the local authorities were concerned tenants think they are responsible for the rapid and significant hike in rent.
There were mixed views as to what the right ‘price point’ for the rents should be: ranging from close to (80%) market rent (with benefits to support those on low incomes), to a shift towards ‘economic’ rent that covered some/all of the authority’s costs but remained affordable for tenants public sector tenants.

There was also a fairly strong view that the rent structure for older person’s housing needs to be reviewed, so that the cost of the service better reflects the cost.

*Develop more intermediate housing options*

There was clear support for the measures to increase opportunities to access other forms of affordable housing. A number of suggestions were discussed.

- **Help with deposits** – There was a view that deposits were a major barrier to accessing the home ownership (including the FTB scheme). Many of the discussions were around ways of helping people to access deposits, including ways of enabling people secure deposits without the public sector actually paying anything up front: bonds, guarantees, etc;
- **FTB scheme** – There was a view that the FTB scheme was too restrictive. It was suggested that people should be allowed to buy poor-condition properties and improve them; and that people should have more flexibility around the size and type of property they bought. There was also a concern that FTB properties are not being allocated to local people;
- **Incentives to tenants with higher incomes to move out of the public housing sector** – There were mixed views on this. Some felt that incentives would free up a home for someone in need, so could be worthwhile. It was suggested that this could be in the form of a grant, or preferably acting as a guarantor (based on knowledge of rent payment record) for the deposit/mortgage. Some thought that simply raising rents for people on high incomes would remove the incentive to be a public sector tenant.

*Time-limited tenancy agreements*

Consultees were also generally in favour of time-limited tenancy agreements for existing tenants. These would reassess the eligibility of existing tenants on a regular basis (consultees typically suggested very five years) in same way that as new tenants). However, some suggested that getting the rent policy right would do away with the need for this (and by this they meant increasing the rents to near market levels, with those on low incomes being eligible for benefits). While some felt that implementation would be fraught with difficulties; people would modify their behaviour to beat the system, etc.

7.5 **Issues Discussed - Homelessness**

There is no statutory definition of homelessness and local authorities have no obligation to house someone who is homeless. The points system does not include a definition of homelessness, and it does not make an allowance for homelessness in the assessment of need.

None of the authorities were aware of any rough sleeping on the Island. The other housing agencies consulted mentioned a small number of cases of people sleeping rough. It was felt that the police are very strict about street sleeping, and people will be moved on if they try and sleep in doorways, so this form of rough sleeping is unlikely to happen. However, there are other locations that may be used; examples given were toilets, the beach, the park, and cars/vans. Graih provides emergency accommodation
for men with nowhere else to go. They noted that numbers using the service have declined in recent years – and suggested that lodging houses are more willing to accommodate their clients since the recession has reduced the number of building workers, etc. living on Island. They are aware from their outreach work that some of the accommodation in which their clients are living is extremely poor quality – no locks on doors, no running water, nowhere to prepare meals\textsuperscript{16}.

All the authorities were aware of sofa surfing. There were mixed views of whether this reflected housing need – with some regarding it as a fairly trivial situation; people who had fallen out with their parents/partners, but who could go back home if they wished and generally did. The housing agencies noted that hosting a sofa surfer can affect their rent level, which can act as a disincentive. It was also noted that people tend not to remain without an address for long, as they need a ‘permanent’ address for benefits purposes.

The local authorities stressed that that they refer people who are homeless to Kemmyrk, for advice and support with emergency housing.

\section*{7.6 Issues Discussed - Resettlement of prisoners}

The points system does not make specific provision to reflect the housing needs of prisoners on discharge from prison. There is not a housing/homeless protocol between the prison and the local authorities. However, the prison does have a resettlement team, which has a housing remit. They do not directly provide accommodation for the prisoners, but provide advice. For prisoners that move on to David Gray House (DGH)\textsuperscript{17} there is active advice and support to find accommodation, and support in developing housing and life skills to sustain a tenancy.

Some offenders are particularly difficult to re-house:

- Those with a conviction for arson – face difficulties securing housing. Even if they have a home to return to, the local authority/private landlord may view them as a risk to the property and be reluctant to take them back;
- Sex offenders – the licence restrictions may impact on where they can be placed, if the local authority is willing to re-house them. The agencies noted they often end up living in isolated areas, which may not be best for their rehabilitation or for the local community;
- Violent offenders;
- Older people – DGH is not licensed for elderly prisoners.

The consultees from the prison noted that small offences can attract a lot of attention in small communities. This can make it difficult to resettle prisoners, even after relatively small offences. The agencies noted that there were cases of local authorities refusing to take prisoners back to their previous accommodation even when their rent was fully up-to-date; and of not giving people who had been held on remand an opportunity to deal with rent arrears on their release.

The lack of supported accommodation on the Island was commented on. There are currently two hostels: DGH which provides supported accommodation and Graih which provides emergency accommodation for men. DGH has recently lost its four follow-on flats for people ready to move out of the residential accommodation, but still in need of

\footnote{Rents for this accommodation tend to be around the benefit levels, so around £75-£120 per week.}

\footnote{The Bail and Probation Hostel, run by the Salvation Army, which also supports ex-prisoners through resettlement}
some support. This accommodation mix is fairly restrictive. In particular, the options for women are limited: although DGH takes women, the environment may not be appropriate if it also housing a sex offender. Graih is seen as last resort accommodation, and is not a ‘home’, more somewhere to stay for the night.

7.7 Other issues
A number of other issues were raised during the consultations

- 16-17 year olds are not entitled to tenancies, even if they are parents. However, some private landlords do seem to grant tenancies to 16-17 years olds. They are likely to be in less desirable areas, which may not be appropriate for vulnerable households;
- Private rent levels are often determined by benefit levels (so can be c. £120 pw). This type of accommodation is nonetheless often very poor quality.
- A number of consultees commented on the number of empty/under-utilised homes on the Island, and suggested that more could be done to bring these properties back into productive use;
- One authority commented that some people are ‘economical with truth’ on the application form – for example, apply as a single person then ‘reconcile’ with their partner once they have been housed. They feel there is no action they can take to deal with this, but are concerned that people who would not be eligible for public sector housing are being allocated a property;
- Some of the agencies commented that the various agencies providing services to people are not joined up – either in the service provision or in the development of the provision. Key issues mentioned were resettlement of prisoners, information provision, procurement, housing development, housing for older people, and the allocations process.

8 THE LEVEL OF HOUSING NEED

8.1 Introduction
In this section we draw together the findings of the work reported above, particularly the waiting list analysis and the survey data, to provide an overall assessment of the need for affordable housing (other than sheltered) on the Island now and over the next decade. We consider first the overall level of unmet need and the balance between that and supply. We consider how that need might be met from public renting and from other forms of affordable housing.

We also provide an initial assessment of the need for sheltered housing bearing in mind that further work on this is underway at the time of writing.

In Section 8, having analysed the overall level of unmet need we consider how well the system will meet the needs of different groups and whether the needs of particular groups are being addressed. Policy issues arising from that are also discussed in Section 8.

8.2 Overall Need for Affordable Rented Housing
The need for affordable housing can, as explained above, be divided into an existing stock of need and a flow of new need. This is met by a supply made up of turnover in the existing stock and additions to the stock.
At present there are 1192 applicants on the general waiting list for rented housing. The survey evidence suggests that around 50% of these applicants are in need of housing in the very near future while the remainder have a desire or perceived future need which is not urgent. With lets running at around 200 per annum it would take two to three years to address this need if all lets were focussed on these persons. However, as will be discussed below it is not evident that lets are focussed on households in need.

As noted above, the stock of need is added to by new need and reduced by lets and other outflows. Figure 7.1 sets out our analysis of the pattern of inflows and outflows in recent years.

This flow pattern suggests that the stock of need, as measured by the waiting list, is likely to be stable with inflows and outflows in balance. However, the various flows need to be considered in more detail.

The inflow consists of newly formed households seeking housing and existing households. Based on the data on the characteristics of the waiting list and the survey, we estimate that newly formed/emerging households (i.e. people looking for their first home) constitute at most 30% of new entrants to the waiting list. This amounts to about 120 households and is estimated to be equivalent to about 20% of all new households formed in the Island in a year.

Figure 7.1 Housing Need Stocks and Flows

Based on the structure of the waiting list and the household structure of younger people on the list we estimate that the flow of new household applicants is made up of:

- Young single persons – around 25 per annum;
- Single parents – about 70 per annum;
- Couples with no child – about 7 per annum;
- Couples with children – about 15 per annum.

The majority of applicants are, however, existing households whose circumstances have changed or who have decided to seek public housing for the reasons set out in the survey. Many, but not all, of these households are in housing which is physically acceptable but which they regard as expensive or possibly unsuitable: some have
growing families. These amount to around 280 per annum and we estimate them to be made up as follows:

- Older single persons – around 170 per annum;
- Single parents – about 42 per annum;
- Couples with no child – about 26 per annum;
- Couples with children – about 42 per annum.

It is evident that the bulk of new demand is from single parents and from single persons and is thus smaller houses/flats.

Looking ahead we expect the flow of demand from new households to grow in line with the growth of the Island population. Growth of demand from existing households may be affected by economic conditions – i.e. to increase if the economy worsens and to reduce if it improves. While the economic outlook is uncertain, the economy is not likely to worsen over the next ten years and we would not expect need to rise on that account.

A further factor would be an increase in demand from migrant households who now qualify for housing. This is already a feature of applications, analysis the waiting list shows that 61% of applicants were not Manx born. However, there is not sign as yet that this factor is increasing. Applications made the last 12 months show almost exactly the same split between Manx born and not Manx born as in the overall waiting list. It seem reasonable to assume that demand from existing households will grow in line with household growth.

The outflows of people from the waiting list other than by being housed are, as discussed above, largely accounted for by people whose applications are deemed not to be active. These people have moved away or found other solutions to their housing needs or their circumstances may have changed. Some may not have been serious applicants in the first place. The most reasonable projection to make is that the rate of outflow of need in this way will be stable as a percentage of the waiting list.

If we define stabilising need as stabilising the waiting list then we can project unmet need by applying the assumptions made above to a projection of the waiting list. On the assumption of 200 lets per annum and projected household growth the waiting list is projected to grow by 200 over the next decade.

This figure is a net increase in demand. In considering the implications for the household stock it is necessary to consider the gross increase in demand. We estimate that over the next ten years the gross increase in demand, based on gross new need less the proportion of applicants expected to be deleted, be as shown in Table 7.2. Implications for demand for the stock are shown.

**Table 7.2 Gross Affordable Additional Housing Requirement (ex FTB)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Adults</th>
<th>Two Adults no children</th>
<th>Two Adults with children</th>
<th>Single Parents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>293</td>
<td>522</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>522</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While this demand could theoretically be largely met from lettings of existing stock, almost half the projected demand is for 1 or 2 bed properties which make up about 25% of the public stock (other than sheltered). The implication is that demand for these properties could exceed supply from re-lets by up to 2:1. In contrast, less than one third of gross need will be for the larger houses which make up 70% of the stock. If one adds existing need from people already on the waiting list the imbalances are even greater.

Aside from the issue of mismatch, the analysis indicates that on existing trends there could be an unmet need for 200 affordable homes to rent over the next decade to keep need levels stable.

There is an inevitable uncertainty about these forecasts – a small movement in the various flows could reduce or increase net need. Nevertheless, we regard the projection as reasonably robust over the long term though there will be year to year fluctuations.

To tackle the existing backlog of need would, we consider involve reducing the waiting list by around 500 by housing those in most need. We consider a waiting list of 500 – 600 to equate to the necessary turnover in the system with need being met promptly. To achieve this over 10 years would add a requirement for around 50 houses per annum.

These calculations assume that existing policies remain largely unaltered but, as discussed below, it may be possible to manage that need/demand balance in other ways.

### 8.3 Meeting Need

The figures set out above do not imply, however, that it is necessary to build either 200 or even 500 new public sector rented homes over the next decade. Need and supply could be brought into balance in several other ways. Other options are:

- Development of alternative affordable tenures;
- Encouraging people to move on from public rented housing;
- Managing expectations.

Considering first alternative tenures, the gross unmet need over the next decade can be considered to be 3,500 ‘new cases’ plus 500 already in need. The survey research indicates that around 10% of applicants to the waiting had income and savings levels which could make home ownership (possibly using the First Time Buyer Scheme) a practical option. In practice some of these people will take that course and people in that situation account for part of the ‘attrition’ of the waiting list. Of possibly greater significance was the high level of interest in other affordable housing schemes such as shared equity, mid rent and rent to buy. Over half of the respondents expressed interest in these schemes.

With a gross need over the decade of around 4,000 households, it would be necessary to divert under 25% of that need to alternatives to eliminate any requirement for construction of public sector rented homes even under existing policies: that amounts to 70 ‘alternative tenure’ units per annum. If the more modest aim of stabilising the waiting list was met then as few as 20 units a year would be needed.
The survey data suggest that these targets would be realistic. Many people on the waiting list are paying private rents which would be no more than the cost of shared equity or rent to buy as modelled in the related work on affordable housing.

Resources to fund development of all type of affordable housing could be raised by sale of public sector houses. The possibility of houses being sold to sitting public sector tenants was raised in the Focus Groups and in the consultations with finance providers for the work on affordable housing options. While the so called ‘Right to Buy’ has been seen in the UK by many as a mechanism which reduced the supply of affordable rented housing, it is possible that a policy of targeted public sector sales at or near market prices could assist in addressing housing need.

As noted at the beginning of this report, the policy approach to housing need on the Island focusses on circumstances at the time of application/allocation. Changes in circumstances of tenants which would have made people ineligible had they occurred before allocation are irrelevant. As is well known, there are households in public sector households with incomes far in excess of the levels at which new applicants would be deemed ineligible.

Efforts to devise a policy to encourage such households to ‘move on’ have not borne fruit. Income related rents and periodic reviews of income present considerable practical problems. A policy of selective sales could increase funds available for provision of new affordable housing, address the issue of relatively high income households living in public sector housing and help in restructuring the public sector stock to meet changing needs. Households would ‘move on’ and while they would take their houses with them, the value of that asset would largely be returned to the affordable housing system.

To take an illustrative example, assume that a batch of 20 three bed houses is targeted for sale and that the market price is £140,000. With a 10% discount the houses could generate a receipt of £2.52 million – enough to build perhaps 18 of the 2 bed properties most in demand. While the stock of public housing would have fallen, the low turnover of public housing on the Island means that the annual flow of new properties to let would have fallen by around 1 so that in the first five years there would be a net gain of around 13 properties. Indeed, it would probably be 20 years before the transaction could be said to have reduced supply of public housing to rent - and that is before taking account of the benefits of stock restructuring. It is also very likely that households taking up this opportunity would have relatively high incomes so enabling resources to be redirected to lower income households.

Demand might also be managed by changing allocation criteria. The survey work found that a significant proportion of people on the waiting list (up to half) do not have an ‘immediate’ need for housing but have joined the list with a view to obtaining housing in a number of years, this process being enabled by the gradual accumulation of points for ‘waiting time’. It is reasonable to assume that many of these people are adequately housed but see public sector housing as a better long term option.

There is a case on grounds of equity and ethical considerations for altering the waiting points system. It is, however, also the case that if policy made clear that allocation priority would strongly favour people in urgent need and in poor or stressful living conditions then demand from people who are presently adequately housed might be reduced. Certainly people would see little point in joining the list if their household circumstances were not problematic.
Aside from issues of demand management, the study also found that because the allocation system for housing prioritises eligibility over need, housing needs were not being effectively met for a number of groups.

It is the view of the study team that while the need to increase the overall supply of affordable housing is reasonably modest, there is an urgent need to consider a more radical shift of priorities in the allocation housing. However, even that will not be effective without measures to increase the supply of housing suited to single person households.

As noted above, a substantial number of households have been on the waiting list for several years and the survey work, and focus groups indicated that many of these households are in need.

The analysis in Section 4 identified six key household types in need

- Couples with children;
- Single (mainly female) parent households;
- Younger couples without children (who may become parents);
- Couples without children at home in late middle age or older (the ‘emerging elderly’);
- Young single people with low incomes;
- Single people in middle years.

In general the system will house couples with children quickly provided that they have a high level of residency points and particularly if they have certified problems of unfit or overcrowded housing. However, residency and ‘Manx born’ points weigh heavily: a childless couple with maximum eligibility points presently in acceptable housing could expect to be housed as quickly as a family with children with low residency points living in an unfit or over crowded house and more quickly than a single parent with low residency points in an unfit or overcrowded house.

Among couples without children there were two main groups. The older couples living in rented accommodation will generally have a high level of residency and waiting time points and, with forward planning, can expect to be housed before the issue becomes urgent. Younger households are likely to have fewer points and may also be in poorer housing conditions (even although this may not be recognised in their points.

Households hoping or planning to have children may have to wait until the birth of a child before having a prospect of being housed and even then the wait may be long. Arguably the system fails to prioritise the possibly more pressing need of younger couples.

The people who have the lowest priority in the system are single persons. Single young people who will have low residency and waiting points and who are seeking the type of housing which is in shortest supply face the greatest problems. Older single people will have more residency points in many cases but are still at a disadvantage.

As discussed above in the context of local authority consultations, older single men who are eligible only for single bedroom accommodation face a very long wait.

The survey work, focus groups and consultations all highlighted the problem of single people. Young people, especially those who are unemployed or are vulnerable, are usually accommodated in private rented housing of a very low standard and can expect to wait many years for housing. The lettings data suggest that older single persons, while not enjoying high priority, are housed more rapidly than are young people.
8.4 First Time Buyers

The register of applicants for first time buyer properties can be regarded as another source of information on people in housing need. The register was subject to a review in 2012 which reduced the ‘active’ list by 50%. The survey work indicated that around 40% of applicants on this register are also on the housing waiting list: in that respect their need has been accounted for. Other households also reported that they were considering public renting.

Many of the households on the register appear to be living in accommodation which they can afford – their presence on the register being more a matter of aspiration for owner occupation than of need. Two thirds of respondents did not consider that they had a need to buy in the near future.

It is also evident that there is some degree of overlap between the first time buyer scheme and social renting with some household pursuing both alternatives.

Of the estimated 300 household registered for the First Time Buyer it is difficult to say how many are in ‘need’. Certainly very few are in poor or unsuitable housing nor is it clear that their need for new housing is pressing.

It is, of course, an aim of policy on the Isle of Man to help aspiring owners who currently cannot afford to buy to do so and it is reasonable that policy should do so. Historically the scheme has assisted up to 100 households each year but, as argued in the 2012 Housing Review, it is not clear that this assistance was well targeted on need.

So far as quantitative estimates of need are concerned we consider that the figures derived for the general waiting list also account for most of the need among aspiring first time buyers.

8.5 Sheltered Housing Need

As stated above, conclusions on the need for sheltered housing are preliminary in view of other work underway.

More than any other type of housing, the expressed demand for sheltered housing is affected by what may be termed ‘precautionary’ demand. People are on the waiting list in many cases because they expect to need support in the future rather than now. This is entirely reasonable given the time it can take to find suitable accommodation and the speed with which health can deteriorate.

Of the over 400 people on the waiting list we estimate that around 50 are in urgent need. With lettings running at about 50 per annum it should be possible to meet this need in crude quantitative terms but there are bound to be mismatches.

Around a further 150 people are in a position where their need could become pressing in the next two years. This suggests that the system is in a rather precarious balance with the potential for need to rise above supply quite rapidly.

In the medium term (over the next five to ten years) need is likely to rise considerably as the population cohort aged 70 to 75 ages.

Households seeking sheltered housing are diverse in their economic circumstances and many have significant financial resources. The scope for encouraging use of those resources to meet need is being examined further.
9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Balance of Need and Supply

The analysis in the previous chapter led to the conclusion that at present at least 500 households on the Isle of Man (about 1% of households) are in housing need. That level of need is relatively stable with the additions to need over a year broadly matched by lettings and other ‘outflows’. It is also evident that need is dynamic with around 15% of the people on the waiting list leaving it each year.

The analysis also indicated that levels of unmet need would creep up; rising by about 200 over the next decade if the balance between supply and new need could not be improved. These figures suggest that the supply of affordable housing for general requires to be increased by up to 700 over the next decade.

9.2 New Development

With regard to investment in new housing, it is proposed that future investment in new affordable housing should be largely confined to ‘alternative tenures’. The study of affordable housing options recommends the replacement of the existing HPAS with a shared equity scheme. Drawing further on that report, it is proposed here that available resources for new build public rented housing should be devoted to a programme of development of Mid Rent (i.e. rents of around £500 per month) and Rent to Buy housing of up to 50 units per annum over the next decade.

9.3 Releasing Resources

We also propose that in order to release resources for new investment and to provide a mechanism by which higher income households presently in public rented housing may make a bigger contribution to housing costs that a policy of selective sales of public sector houses is introduced. It would be essential for the policy to be selective – applying to specific stock. While some especially high value properties could be sold on the open market, sales to sitting tenants would involve minimal discounts and would requiring purchasers to have been tenants for a long enough period to discourage people from seeking public housing as a short cut to home ownership.

9.4 Changing Priorities

So far as allocation is concerned we consider that, both on grounds of demand management and in order to focus resources on need, the waiting list pointing system should be altered to:

- Reduce or eliminate the points for Manx born;
- Eliminate or at least cap waiting points;
- Eliminate points for couples;
- Remove the cap on points for unfit housing, overcrowding and health/welfare issues.

In addition, there is a case for simplifying the definition of overcrowding so that an EHO assessment it not needed and accepting that housing can be physically unsuitable or unacceptable without being unfit for habitation.

Finally, the creation of a single Waiting List and the abolition of points for local residency would allow a more efficient and equitable allocation process.