



Circular: Housing 11/2025

31 March 2025

To: Local Authority CEs  
Cc: Directors of Services/Housing  
Housing Agency CEO  
Housing Delivery Coordination Office CE

### **Social Housing Second Hand Acquisitions Programme 2025**

Dear Chief Executive,

The purpose of this circular is to set out the arrangements where second hand social housing acquisitions require to be undertaken by local authorities in 2025. This communication formalises the arrangements set out in the Department's communication to you of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and also in the two recent webinars with your housing teams.

## **Background**

The clear focus of Government in *Housing for All* is to increase the supply of new build social and affordable homes. Increasing the overall housing supply is key to addressing the housing challenge and in particular preventing and ultimately eliminating long term homelessness. In respect of acquisitions it is necessary to avoid undue impact on the private housing market, including avoiding competition in second hand acquisitions with first time buyers or with other private individuals/families. In that context, Housing for All set initial targets to acquire a maximum of 200 second hand homes, for use as social housing, each year from 2022 to 2026.

With the lifting of the Eviction Moratorium in 2023, and the reported uplift in the number of landlords within the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) exiting from the market, Government agreed to temporarily increase the upper limits for acquisitions. This increased from 200 to 1,500 for both 2023 and 2024, with the primary focus being on acquiring properties where a tenant in receipt of social housing support i.e. HAP/RAS, had received a Notice of Termination (NoT) due to the landlord's intention to sell the property.

## **Government Decision on 2025 Social Housing Acquisitions**

To continue to support local authorities in responding to acute local situations where households in receipt of social housing support are at risk of becoming homeless or where there is an urgent need to acquire a property to respond to a particular need, Government has approved an increase in the funding available for second-hand social housing acquisitions for 2025 from the €60m initially available under Housing for All to €325m through the allocation of an additional €265m.

This increased funding will allow for a significant programme of acquisitions in 2025 for the following priority categories of need **only**:



1. Tenancy Sustainment - Tenant in Situ (TiS);
2. Exits from homeless services;
3. People with a disability and older persons requiring urgent housing responses; and
4. Buy and Renew (B&R) acquisitions which tackle vacancy.

Further information on these priority categories and the arrangements and criteria that will apply to them, are set out below.

## Eligibility Criteria for Each Priority Category of Acquisition in 2025

### 1. Tenancy Sustainment - TiS

The following criteria will apply for all TiS acquisitions being undertaken in 2025:

- The tenancy is registered with the Residential Tenancy Board (RTB) and the validity of the NoT issued to the HAP/RAS tenant is confirmed by the local authority/approved housing body;
- The property being acquired has been the subject of social housing support payments for a continuous period of at least two years;
- The local authority Tenancy Sustainment Officer must engage with the landlord to see if the tenancy can be maintained within the current or an alternative social housing scheme and if not, the tenant must be assisted in looking to secure alternative private rented accommodation;
- Where the existing or an alternative tenancy cannot be secured, the local authority must examine if a tenancy in a local authority or approved housing body property is an option;
- The local authority must certify that the acquisition is only undertaken as a last resort in order to prevent homelessness;
- Ensure that the acquisition has been recorded as homeless prevention on the PAS System;
- In undertaking the acquisition, priority should be given to families with children, older persons or people with a disability who are at serious risk of homelessness;
- The purchase price and associated fees (e.g. valuation, legal, etc.) **only** will be recouped and must be within the Department's latest Acquisition Cost Guidelines (ACGs);
- Where improvement works are required in the short to medium term to future proof the property, these can be undertaken as part of local authority maintenance/upgrade work, while use can also be made as appropriate, of funding programmes such as the Planned Maintenance programme and Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme;
- The local authority is responding only to valid 'no fault' NoTs and not landlord overtures; and
- In making a submission claim to the Department, the local authority Chief Executive must certify on each HCA3 Form that all mandatory eligibility criteria for acquisitions have been complied with for each acquisition undertaken.

The delegated sanction available to local authorities to pursue acquisitions will remain in place where the conditions set out above have been met and where the all-in cost [purchase price, associated fees (e.g. valuation, legal etc.) are within the Acquisition Cost Guidelines (ACGs).

As part of your decision-making process, priority should be given to families with dependent children/elderly/disabled persons. Prioritising households should not however be interpreted as excluding any



household. The final decisions in relation to each individual purchase rests with the local authority having considered the individual circumstances of each case.

## 2. Properties that allow persons/families to exit homeless services

The Build programmes remain the primary approach to the delivery of new social homes, including those that will support persons/families to exit homeless services. However, acquisitions that support particular persons/families to exit homeless services can be supported where new build supply is not in a position to meet such housing needs and, in particular, where this involves exiting people/families from emergency accommodation. Where you are identifying an acquisition as being for the exiting of people/families from emergency accommodation, you must provide the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) identification number for the exits on the HCA3 Form.

As part of your decision-making process it is essential that priority is given to:

- Families in Emergency Accommodation for more than 24 months;
- Single people especially those identified for Housing First;
- Large families; and
- Care leavers.

The acquisition of one-bedroom properties to deliver on the Housing First Programme targets will also be supported in 2025. Local authorities proposing such acquisitions should briefly confirm the housing need being met, progress being made against Housing First targets and efforts being made to deliver additional 1-bed units through the Build programmes including those of AHBs.

The delegated sanction available to local authorities to pursue acquisitions will apply for an acquisition to accommodate an Exit from Homeless Services, where the all-in cost [purchase price, associated fees (e.g. valuation, legal etc.) and minimal essential refurbishment works combined] are within the ACGs.

In making a submission claim to the Department, the local authority Chief Executive must certify on each HCA3 Form that all mandatory eligibility criteria for the acquisition have been complied with for each acquisition undertaken.

## 3. Housing Suitable for persons with a disability or the elderly

While the primary response to delivery of new build social homes, including for people with a disability or age-friendly housing, should be via Build programmes, it's recognised that in certain urgent /emergency situations, acquisitions may be required for particular situations of disability/elderly need. In such cases, the local authority should provide basic information on the particular client disability (or related) needs and the reasons this need is being met via a targeted acquisition. AHBs can undertake CAS-funded acquisitions for disability-related situations.

As part of the recoupment process, please be clear within the HCA3 Form about the emergency nature of the situation, and about the suitability of the property including adaptations needed to cater for the needs of the intended tenant(s). It is also expected that where a tenant's situation is of an urgent/emergency nature, that there would be a quick turnaround envisaged for any works required to the property and that where required, any necessary care supports e.g. HSE, are confirmed before completing the acquisition.



The delegated sanction available to local authorities to pursue acquisitions will apply for an acquisition to accommodate disabled/elderly persons, where the all-in cost [purchase price, associated fees (e.g. valuation, legal etc.) and minimal essential refurbishment/adaptation works combined] are within the ACGs.

In making a submission claim to the Department, the local authority Chief Executive must certify on each HCA3 Form that all mandatory eligibility criteria for the acquisition have been complied with for each acquisition undertaken.

#### 4. Buy & Renew acquisitions which tackle vacancy

The B&R acquisitions programme was identified under Housing for All, as a valuable opportunity for tackling vacancy and dereliction. However, since the commencement of the B&R programme, a number of other options have emerged to support the tackling of vacancy/dereliction. In tackling vacancy to deliver new social homes, most local authorities now focus on longer-term and harder to tackle vacant/derelict, effectively obsolete, properties which the market will not address, rather than acquiring quicker turnaround, vacant modern suburban houses.

From a high of 270 units of B&R acquisitions being acquired in 2018 involving 22 local authorities, the number of units acquired in 2024 dropped to an estimated 33 units involving 13 local authorities. As regards social homes delivered via construction-led Renewal projects as part of the local authorities build programme, this amounted to only 40 units in 2021 but continues to grow and is encouraged where the harder to address vacant/derelict and effectively obsolete properties are being tackled.

If there are situations where proceeding with a B&R acquisition for social housing purposes does not compete with private purchasers, and where it represents the best and most timely option for tackling a vacant/derelict property, and where other options are not proving viable, then local authorities can proceed with such acquisitions in 2025. When drawing down funding, please be clear about the reasons for the use of a social housing-led acquisition approach, in lieu of other options.

The delegated sanction available to local authorities to pursue acquisitions will apply for B&R situations where the all-in costs [purchase price, associated fees (e.g. valuation, legal etc.) and refurbishment works combined] are within the ACGs.

In making a submission claim to the Department, the local authority Chief Executive must certify on each HCA3 Form that all mandatory eligibility criteria for the acquisition have been complied with for each acquisition undertaken.

### Capital Funding Allocations for 2025

For 2025, there is a capital funding allocation for each local authority to undertake acquisitions under the priority categories, rather than a specific unit allocation as was the case in 2024. Within your capital funding allocation, the level of acquisitions across each of the priority categories will be a matter for your local authority to decide.

Of the €325m available for SH Acquisitions in 2025, €8m is being set aside as a contingency that will be used as necessary to round off a local authorities allocation later in the year if the amount remaining to them is insufficient to meet the full costs of an additional acquisition or approved refurbishment costs.



The capital funding allocation for your local authority for 2025 is outlined in Appendix 1.

Properties acquired (sale closed) in calendar year 2024 which were not recouped in 2024 can be recouped in 2025 under the eligibility criteria applicable to 2024 acquisitions. Please note however that such recoupments will be funded from the capital funding allocation notified to you for 2025.

All properties acquired in calendar year 2025 will be required to fully comply with the eligibility criteria under the 2025 second hand acquisitions programme.

All local authorities are required to keep TRABIS trackers up to date to ensure that data on acquisitions is available in real time.

## Approved Housing Body led Acquisitions

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) are included in the acquisitions programme and will be funded using the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) on the same 100% grant funded basis as local authorities. Funding under the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) is not available to support acquisitions under the 2025 Programme.

The capital funding allocation available to each local authority for 2025 includes for acquisitions completed by AHBs within the LAs functional area. The level of AHB acquisitions activity varies widely across local authorities, from as low as nil in one local authority to 51 in another. Local authorities are asked therefore to work strategically with AHBs over the year to ensure that acquisitions completed by them are on those activities where AHBs may have a lead role, e.g. Housing First programme, accommodation for Care leavers and Disabled Persons and to ensure that they can be managed within the local authorities' capital funding allocation.

## Refurbishment Works

In respect of refurbishment works to acquired dwellings the following is the position in respect of each category of acquisition:

1. Tenant in Situ Acquisitions – No Refurbishment Budget Allowed
2. Older/Disabled Person Housing – Refurbishment Budget can be considered
3. Exits from homeless services - Refurbishment Budget can be considered
4. Buy & Renew (tackle vacancy) - Refurbishment Budget can be considered

The following is the detailed position:

Immediate essential repairs for Tenant in Situ properties should not be required. Such properties are in receipt of HAP/RAS and are therefore the beneficiaries of significant Exchequer funded rent supports every week. The properties are legally required to meet the provisions of the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 and are subject to inspection by local authorities to ensure they meet the said standards.

It is acknowledged that some refurbishment works may be required in the short to medium term but these should be noted as part of the condition survey of the property using the agreed national stock condition survey template and programmed for future planned maintenance works.



The capital funding available for Tenant in Situ acquisitions must be dedicated to maximising the number of acquisitions and not funding works which are not immediately required but are rather future proofing works.

There are a number of funding programmes available for local authorities to improve their social housing stock including the Planned Maintenance programme, the Disabled Persons Grant, the Regeneration Programme and Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme.

In respect of acquisitions under Exits from Homelessness, Older/Disabled Persons and Buy & Renew these properties are unlikely to be in the private rented sector currently and may not therefore be in compliance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. If that is the case they can be considered for a refurbishment budget for works required to bring them up to the 2019 rental standards or for adaptation works necessary to accommodate the needs of the household being accommodated.

For those acquisitions where refurbishment works are recoupable local authorities will have delegated sanction to proceed with the acquisition without prior notification to the Department where the 'All-in-Cost' (acquisition cost + fees + adaptations/refurbishment work) is within the Acquisition Cost Guidelines (ACGs).

Where refurbishment/upgrade costs are applicable, it is essential that the all-in costs represent value for money as measured against the Acquisition Cost Guidelines (ACGs). These guidelines contain a lower, upper and average/benchmark figure and a well-judged estimation, informed by a costed property inspection survey of refurbishment works is required when completing an acquisition.

The completion of refurbishments, followed by tenancing, should happen on a timely basis and a 6-month sunset clause (from the 'closing date' on the contract for the acquisition) will apply for the payment of refurbishment works. An exception to this 6-month sunset clause can only be considered where challenging adaptations are required to a property or for other exceptional situations.

*All claims for refurbishment works on properties acquired in previous years must be submitted to the Department by the 30 June, 2025. Thereafter such claims will not be processed.*

In respect of properties purchased in 2024 and budgets for refurbishment works have been already approved by the Department, these works should be carried out without delay and efficiencies gained where possible, as there will be no scope to increase budgets if cost overruns occur.

Where budgets for refurbishment works on properties acquired in 2024 have not been agreed with the Department please note that a maximum refurbishment budget of €10,000 will be available.

Any recoupments to your local authority under the above arrangements will come from the 2025 capital funding allocation.

## Acquisitions to accommodate members of the Traveller Community

Accommodation for Traveller households is provided across a range of housing options ranging from social housing to Traveller-specific accommodation. The Department will consider funding the acquisition of standard



housing for Traveller families using the Traveller-specific capital provision in certain exceptional circumstances and subject to the available budget.

In exceptional circumstances, where properties are being acquired for members of the Traveller Community and it is intended that these properties are to remain in use in perpetuity for members of the Traveller Community, a case should be made for applications of this type through the Department's Traveller Accommodation Unit, including the submission of a clearly identified need, an outline of the alternatives considered and why these were deemed unacceptable, they should be routed.

Please note however that the acquisition of second hand homes for members of the Traveller Community do not have the benefit of delegated sanction and therefore, a submission seeking approval to proceed must be submitted to the Department's Traveller Accommodation Unit in advance. Each proposed acquisition will be considered on its merits. Binding contracts should not therefore be entered into by local authorities without written approval to proceed from the Department's Travellers Accommodation Unit.

## Recoupments

As part of a revised recoupment process it will be a requirement that the local authority Chief Executive certifies on the HCA3 Form that all mandatory eligibility criteria for acquisitions have been complied with, for each acquisition undertaken. The HCA3 Form is available at the following link: [Frequently used SHIP Claim Forms](#)

When drawing down funding in 2025 there will be a requirement for local authorities to provide additional data on each property being acquired and details in respect of the benefitting household.

The Department is required by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform to carry out a full review of the acquisitions programme in 2025 and this information will help inform the outcome of the review and the future of the second hand Social Housing Acquisitions Programme. Your co-operation with the data collection requirements is therefore essential.

## Statistical Reporting

For 2025, only acquisitions for which the purchase price has been recouped to the local authority by the Department should be included in the Statistical Returns for the supply of social housing which your local authority submits to the Department's Statistics and Data Analytics Unit on a quarterly basis.

## Audit

All activities by LAs under the Social Housing Investment Programme will be subject to audit from time to time. Please retain key documents for inspection by the Department in the event that the transaction is selected for audit.

Note also that payments from the Department to local authorities in respect of social housing acquisitions are made under the provisions of D/PER Circular 13/2014 on 'the Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds'. The SHIP arrangement for which were outlined to local authorities in Department Circular





Housing: 07/2025 – “Management of and accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funding for LA social housing” dated 14th February 2025.

## Registration of Title

Under the provision of section 23 of the Registration of Titles Act 1964, you should register your freehold or leasehold interest in a property within six months of the conveyance of that property taking place. Please ensure that this registration is carried out and evidence of same should be available for inspection if required for audit or other purposes.

## Queries

Any queries in relation to this should be directed to the relevant Department Social Housing Capital Investment team for your LA. Also see appendix 1 for some high level direction.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Benson".

---

Paul Benson  
A/Assistant Secretary  
Social Housing Delivery Division





## Appendix 1

### **Social Housing Second Hand Acquisitions Programme 2025**

The capital funding allocation for your local authority for 2025 is €xxxx (issued to LA).



## Appendix 2

	<b>TiS</b>	<b>Exiting Homeless Services</b>	<b>Elderly/ Disabled Person</b>	<b>Buy &amp; Renew</b>
Funding recouped in the calendar year 2025 will be off set against the capital allocation for 2025	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delegated Sanction Applies if within ACGs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Funding of Purchase Price	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Funding of Legal/Professional Fees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LA Admin	Only for sales closed in calendar year 2024	No	No	No
Funding of refurbishment works	Not for sales closed in calendar year 2025	Essential works only	Essential works only	Yes
6 month sunset clause on refurbishment works	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*
Recoupment to be certified by CE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**\* An exception to this 6-month sunset clause can only apply where challenging adaptations are required to a property or for other exceptional situations.**