

22 April 2024

**Our Ref: FOI 329**

## **Request**

We received your request on 28 February 2024 for the following information:

*1 Can you please let us know the total number of houses purchased from the open market by housing associations in the North Down and Ards area, which have been procured for social housing to remove people of the homeless lists. It would be helpful to have the figures for the past 5 years. This scheme is part of the current housing policy, but NIHE have told us they are not aware of this happening in recent times.*

*2 The total number of special needs houses (disabled needs) built within developments by housing associations in the North Down and Ards area over the past five years?*

*3 The total number of houses within the current social housing stock suitable for large families eg 5 bedrooms and more in the past 5 years.*

*4 The total number of homeless families in the north down and ards area waiting for suitable disabled properties to become available within social housing.*

*5 At any point over the past 5 years have two existing neighbouring properties within the social housing stock been adjoined and adapted to make one larger family home with disabled facilities.*

*6 The total number of large families on the housing waiting list waiting for large family homes 5 beds or more.*

Further clarification was received on 23 March 2024 as follows:

### *Request one*

*We would like to know the number of properties bought ESP, the number of properties bought OTS and the number of Special Purchase properties bought.*

### *Request 2*

*We mean ground floor properties suitable for residents with mobility issues, of family home size 3 beds and above.*

### *Request 3*

*At this current time, what sock of properties are there for larger families 4 beds and above.*

*Request 4*

*Yes Wheelchair accessible properties, ground floor living accommodation.*

*Request 6*

*Just Ards and North Down.*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

## **Our response**

- 1. Can you please let us know the total number of houses purchased from the open market by housing associations in the North Down and Ards area, which have been procured for social housing to remove people of the homeless lists. It would be helpful to have the figures for the past 5 years.**

Following your clarification of 23<sup>rd</sup> March in which you advised that you wished to be provided with the number of properties bought ESP, the number of properties bought OTS and the number of Special Purchase properties bought, table 1 below details the total Existing Satisfactory Purchase (ESP), Off-the-Shelf (OTS) and Special Purchase units confirmed as Starts as part of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) in the Ards and North Down Council area for the period 2019/20 – 2023/24. Scheme Type definitions can be found at [Scheme types | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk). Please note that ‘Special Purchase’ has been taken to mean properties acquired by nominated housing associations to meet the specific requirements of Applicants with Complex Needs.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total SHDP ESP Starts</b>	<b>Total SHDP OTS Starts</b>	<b>Total SHDP Special Purchase Starts</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	4	4	0
<b>2020/21</b>	0	3	1
<b>2021/22</b>	2	3	0
<b>2022/23</b>	1	29	0
<b>2023/24</b>	1	5	0
<b>5-Year Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>

**2. The total number of special needs houses (disabled needs) built within developments by housing associations in the North Down and Ards area over the past five years?**

Following your clarification of 23<sup>rd</sup> March in which you advised that you wished to be provided with the number of ground floor properties suitable for residents with mobility issues, of family home size 3 beds and above, The table below provides details of the number of Wheelchair Standard (WC) units completed as part of the SHDP in the Ards and North Down Council area for the period 2019/20 – 2023/24, broken down by House Type and number of bedrooms.

<b>Year</b>	<b>WC 1-Bed flats</b>	<b>WC 2-bed flats</b>	<b>WC 2-bed houses</b>	<b>WC 3-bed flats</b>	<b>WC 3-bed houses</b>	<b>WC 3-bed bungalows</b>	<b>WC 4-bed+ houses</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	<b>8</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	0	3	0	0	2	3	1	<b>9</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	<b>6</b>
<b>2022/23</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>2023/24</b>	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	<b>10</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>

**3. The total number of houses within the current social housing stock suitable for large families e.g. 5 bedrooms and more in the past 5 years.**

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 the Housing Executive had 407 houses with 5 or more bedrooms. Please note we do not hold stock information for housing associations.

**4. The total number of homeless families in the north down and ards area waiting for suitable disabled properties to become available within social housing.**

Following your clarification of 23<sup>rd</sup> March in which you advised that you wished to be provided with the number of families on the Waiting List who require ground floor or wheelchair standard accommodation, the tables below provides the requested information as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

Waiting List figures are produced quarterly and so the most up to date figures are as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. However, Waiting List Statistics are included in the Department for Communities Housing Bulletin which is designated as a National Statistic.

Section 13(1) of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 states that ‘the person producing any official statistics which are designated under section 12 as National Statistics must ensure that the Code of Practice for Statistics under section 10 continues to be complied with in relation to those statistics.’ Provision of the requested figures before publication of the DfC Housing Bulletin in which the dataset from which they would be drawn is published would be a failure to comply with the Code in respect of parts [T3.3 and T3.4](#).

The March 2024 figures are therefore currently exempt from disclosure under Section 44 of the Freedom of Information Act - disclosure prohibited by other legislation. The March 2024 figures can be made available upon request subsequent to the publication of the Bulletin, which is currently expected around w/c 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Dec 2023 Wheelchair user families		
LGD	FDA	Allocations to FDA
Ards & North Down	27	<10

Dec 2023 Families requesting ground floor accommodation		
LGD	FDA	Allocations to FDA
Ards & North Down	105	20

*Please note that where there are less than 10 applicants, applicants in housing stress or allocations, they have been listed as <10 in compliance with Data Protection requirements.*

*Applicant Information (all applicants and applicants in housing stress) is as at end December 2023.*

*Allocation information refers to the number of allocations in the preceding 12 month period.*

*FDA refers to Full Duty Applicants – these are applicants accepted as being homeless, to whom the Housing Executive owes a duty under the Homelessness legislation, Article 10(2) of the Housing (NI) Order, 1988 to “secure that accommodation becomes available for his/her occupation”.*

*Please note that household group is recorded at point of application and may not reflect the current composition of the household – the above figures are based on the small family and large family cohorts.*

- At any point over the past 5 years have two existing neighbouring properties within the social housing stock been adjoined and adapted to make one larger family home with disabled facilities.

All Regions have confirmed that such works have not taken place at any point over the last 5 years.

**6. The total number of large families on the housing waiting list waiting for large family homes 5 beds or more in the North Down and Ards area.**

There were 23 applications classed as 'large family', requiring  $\geq 5$  bedroom accommodation, on the waiting list in the Ards and North Down area, as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

Please note that household group is recorded at point of application and may not reflect the current composition of the household.

This concludes our response.