

ARTB 13

Bil Diddymu'r Hawl i Brynu a Hawliau Cysylltiedig (Cymru)

Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Dai Merthyr Tudful

Response from: Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation exercise on the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill.

A report was taken to our Board on the 25th April 2017 to encourage debate. Links to the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum were also provided along with a reminder of Board members views made as part of the "The Future of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire – A white Paper for Social Housing" consultation exercise.

Similar views were echoed again. One board member expressed their view that having the opportunity for a tenant to buy their Housing association property was the greatest gift that could be offered by government and that it would improve their health and social status. An alternative view was provided explaining that the discount was now only £8k and all tenants had the opportunity to buy properties on the open market but leaving the social housing stock intact to act as a safety net for those who lose their jobs, fall on hard times etc. Discussions were held on certain elements of the explanatory memorandum such as the equality impact and Health and well-being Assessments and Board members found the document helpful in informing their opinion.

Board members reflected on the difference in policy between Welsh and Westminster Governments approach to RTB/RTA, driven arguably by ideological difference.

Discussions were held on home ownership and that this can be perceived as a measure of social success and that it can place individuals in a stressful position when they cannot afford mortgage repayments. The preferred alternative would be to promote a functioning European style rental market for all.

After a lengthy debate, the Board of Management for Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association agreed with Welsh Government's preferred choice i.e. option 5: Abolish the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire after one year but in addition, abolish the Right to buy and Right to Acquire on newly let social housing from two months after Royal Assent and agreed that it provided the optimal security for the social housing stock and best achieves the policy intention of protecting the existing stock from further reduction. We were pleased that other models of shared ownership etc. are being promoted as a replacement.

However, they also reflected on the fact that in the short term, after the Royal Assent, there would be an increase in administrative duties in response to a perceived increase in applications for Right to Acquire and Right to Buy.