SCOTTISH CONSUMER COUNCIL

THE RIGHT TO BUY IN SCOTLAND

PURCHASERS' EXPERIENCES

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CHAIRMAN'S PREFACE

Buying a house is likely to be the most important and expensive purchase consumers ever make. Purchasers will need the best advice and information possible in deciding whether to buy and in working out the costs and responsibilities of home ownership.

It was with this principle in mind that we looked at the experiences of purchasers in the private housing market over two years ago, as reported in *Buying a House in Scotland*, (SCC 1988). Now we have extended our investigations to council and other public sector tenants who have taken advantage of their "right to buy".

Our report draws on the experiences of a national cross-section of tenants who have bought their homes in the past two years. We were especially interested in their satisfaction with their landlord, lender and solicitor in arranging the purchase and with their initial experiences of home ownership.

As indicated in our report, the great majority of purchasers buying their house or flat have had a relatively trouble-free experience. It does, however, highlight certain areas of concern, which are addressed in a series of recommendations at the end of our report.

Our findings and recommendations will be of interest to central government, housing authorities, solicitors, buildings societies and other lending institutions, surveyors and various other bodies or individuals concerned with the sale of public sector houses. I commend this report to you.

Barbara Kelly

December 1990
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Scottish Consumer Council would like to thank district councils, new town development corporations and Scottish Homes for their assistance in providing us with the names and addresses of purchasers. We are especially grateful to staff from the following housing authorities for offering their time and expertise at the initial stage of our investigations: Dunfermline District Council, East Kilbride District Council, Edinburgh District Council, Glasgow District Council, Glenrothes New Town Development Corporation, Irvine New Town Development Corporation and Scottish Homes.

We would also like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their comments on drafts of the questionnaire and report on our findings:

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Finally, the Scottish Consumer Council wishes to thank most sincerely 'right to buy' purchasers for their completion of the questionnaire and for making our investigation possible.

Typescripts: Nicola Milne, Muriel Adam and Rona Rae.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 House purchase: Consumer Issues

Buying a house or flat is the largest single purchase most people are ever likely to make. It is also a much less straightforward process than most ordinary purchases and involves the services of lawyers, surveyors and other professionals. And the house or flat, after purchase, may turn out to be a lot costlier to own and maintain than was first expected. People are therefore likely to need access to good advice and information before, during and after the purchase of their house or flat.

It was with this issue in mind that the Scottish Consumer Council carried out a study of first-time buyers in 1987, as reported in Buying a House in Scotland (SCC, 1988). Buyers reported a high overall level of satisfaction with their purchase and the services they had received from solicitors, lenders, surveyors, estate agents, and so on. Most of them had also found home ownership a very satisfactory experience, with few post purchase problems, although nearly a half had said that costs were higher than expected. A high proportion of those who had bought brand new houses (41 per cent of 80 respondents) reported poor after-sales service from builders, however, with dissatisfaction centering around builders’ failure or reluctance to attend to faults or necessary repairs. The SCC is currently carrying out a follow-up study of this issue among building firms.

The SCC’s study of first-time buyers was confined to purchases in the private housing market. The SCC nonetheless recognised that tenants in the public sector taking advantage of their right to buy also constituted an important group of first-time buyers. Their situation was, however, regarded as sufficiently different from that of first-time buyers of private sector properties to merit a separate investigation. Unlike purchasers in the private housing market, sitting tenants buying their own house or flat are not faced with choices and decisions about what property to buy. They are also much more likely to have detailed knowledge of the property they are purchasing than buyers in the private market. And unlike private purchasers, they will be paying, under the discount rules, a price for the property that is often well below market valuation - and without the worries and pressures of blind bidding against competing offers. The purchase process itself is also different for public sector tenants, who first have to approach their landlord to set it in motion.

In other respects, though, tenants buying their house or flat share a number of experiences in common with private sector purchasers. Both sorts of purchaser will have to choose and deal with solicitors, both groups will probably need to secure a loan, both are free to decide whether to have their own survey carried out, and both will have fees and other charges to pay at the end of the purchase process. As owner-occupiers, both sorts of purchasers will be faced with similar financial and repair responsibilities. Most of all, tenants taking
advantage of the right to buy are likely to share with people buying for the first time in the private housing market a need for good advice and information if they are to sidestep the pitfalls of property purchase and ownership.

Tenants who have bought under the right to buy may face certain other experiences which raise issues or difficulties that are less likely to affect private purchasers. For example, they may be put under pressure to buy from door-to-door sales representatives offering various package deals, such as free or low cost insurance or home improvements linked to the purchase. How much influence have these approaches had on tenants who have bought their house or flat?

Another issue that may particularly affect tenants who have bought their own flats is the management and maintenance of "common parts" of the building - such as surrounds, roofs, stairs, common entrances, and so on. Up to the time of purchase, this work is carried out and paid for by the tenant's landlord. How well prepared are tenants who have bought their flats for their common repair and maintenance responsibilities?

These were among the issues in which the SCC was interested in extending its study of the house purchase process to those who had bought under the right to buy. Before describing the aims and methods of this study in detail, however, it is appropriate at this point to place the right to buy in context.

1.2 Tenure patterns

Over 200,000 public sector dwellings have been sold to tenants since being given the right to buy under the Tenants Rights Etc (Scotland) Act 1980 (1). Just over ten years ago, one in three houses were owner-occupied - now it is one in two. (Before the war, only one in six houses were owner-occupied.) Between 1981 and 1987, right-to-buy sales averaged 18,000 a year. Following rises in the maximum discount levels, sales to sitting tenants rose to 31,650 in 1988 and to 39,214 in 1989 (2). By 1990 about one million homes in Scotland were owner-occupied. They accounted for 50 per cent of all dwellings compared with 35 per cent in 1979 (3).

1.3 Sales policies up to 1980

Until the Tenants Rights Etc (Scotland) Act 1980, public sector tenants had no statutory rights of their own to buy their house or flat from the landlord. Sales of council and other public sector houses, before October 1980, took place only with the specific or general consent of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State could grant or withhold consent to encourage or discourage sales by landlords, with Conservative governments favouring general consents and Labour governments favouring more limited consents (4). For example, a Labour government circular of 1974 indicated that consent would only be granted where housing authorities could show that there was no shortage of houses to rent in
their area (5). The circular also withdrew the discount (of up to 20 per cent) on sales offers and required owners selling within five years of purchase to give the local authority the first option to buy.

Between 1974 and 1978, sales of public authority houses numbered no more than a few hundred each year. With the return of the Conservatives to government in 1979, the general consent to sell to sitting tenants was reinstated, except for sheltered and special housing (6). Discounts from 30 to 50 per cent of the selling price were also offered, depending on length of tenancy. Sales rose from 745 in 1978 to 1,619 in 1979 and to 5,099 in the first 9 months of 1980 (7). Purchasers selling within five years of purchase were under a continuing obligation, however, to give the local authority the first option to buy.

1.4 Tenants' Rights Etc (Scotland) Act 1980

The Conservative government, on being returned to office in 1979, committed itself to giving council and other public sector tenants a "charter" of rights, notably the right to security of tenure, a right to a written lease, a right to carry out reasonable alterations and improvements, a right to sub-let and assign the tenancy, and certain rights to pass on the tenancy to others after their death. Dominating the government's programme, however, was a commitment to encourage the spread of home ownership:

"The Secretary of State considers that the sale of local authority houses has an important part to play in this policy in Scotland. He believes that many local authority tenants would like to purchase the houses in which they live and that they should be encouraged to do so by conditions of sale which recognise their interest in the house" (8).

This charter of rights, including the 'right to buy', was written into the Tenants' Rights Etc (Scotland) Act 1980 (subsequently consolidated into the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987). The Act gave the right to buy to tenants of local authorities, new town development corporations, local authority housing co-operatives, the Scottish Special Housing Association and certain other public bodies. It was subsequently extended, under the 1987 act, to cover tenants of most housing associations, and to tenants renting from certain other public authorities not covered by the 1980 Act, such as regional councils and police and fire authorities. The right to buy was not granted to tenants in sheltered housing schemes specially designed and adapted for elderly and disabled people and with their own warden and call system. Amenity housing with facilities substantially different from those of ordinary housing could be bought by tenants, however, except when the authority, with the agreement of the Secretary of State, refused permission (minor adaptations did not justify refusal, however). The right to buy did not apply to tenants whose occupancy of the house or flat was required under their conditions of employment or to tenants living in homes attached to property used for purposes other than housing.
Briefly, tenants are normally entitled to buy their house of flat if they or members of their family have lived there for at least two years. The house or flat can be bought jointly with anyone over 18 in the tenant's household who has lived there without breach of occupancy for at least six months, although the landlord may allow joint purchase even if these conditions are not met.

The purchase price is normally based on the official market valuation of the house less a discount of between 32 and 60 per cent (houses) or 44 and 70 per cent (flats), depending on length of residency, including houses previously occupied. There are restrictions on discounts deductible for recently built houses. Some or all of the discount may be repayable if the house is re-sold within three years.

The landlord must attach such "conditions as are reasonable" to the offer to sell, including terms giving purchasers as much use and enjoyment of their homes as they had as tenants and requiring purchasers to meet their share of any common repair costs. Tenants can, within a month of the offer to sell, ask the landlord to change any conditions they are unhappy with and, if still dissatisfied after that, can appeal to the Lands Tribunal. They cannot appeal to the Tribunal against the purchase price, except if this has been miscalculated. They can go to the Tribunal if the landlord refuses to sell or if the offer to sell has not been made within the legal time limit (normally two months after receipt of application).

As with purchasers of private property, tenants can buy their house or flat with a loan from a building society or other lender. They can also borrow from their landlord, as lender of "last resort" if they cannot get a loan elsewhere; regulations lay down the amount the landlord may offer. Tenants can appeal to the sheriff court if they have been refused a loan from their landlord or if they think that the maximum amount they are entitled to has been miscalculated. If they cannot get a loan large enough for their purchase, tenants can, within two months of the loan offer, take up a "fixed price" option: in return for a £100 deposit, the landlord agrees to keep the offer to sell open for two years, thus giving tenants time in which to raise additional finance.

1.5 Recent developments

To encourage further take-up of the right to buy, the government has introduced the following changes and initiatives:

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

This relaxed some of the discount rules applying to members of tenants' families and extended the right to buy to tenancies in newbuild special amenity housing (9). Landlords were also put under a duty to inform tenants who had applied to buy of any impending changes in the law affecting the calculation of the purchase price.
Rents to Mortgages

In October 1989, Scottish Homes introduced, for its own tenants and Scottish new town tenants, its "rent to mortgage" scheme designed to bring owner occupation within the reach of those tenants who cannot quite afford to buy under the "Right to Buy" scheme (10). Under this scheme the tenant buys the house at a price based on market value, less a discount calculated on the basis of length of tenure in the same way as the right to buy, but set at 15 per cent less than the right-to-buy discount.

The discounted price is financed by a combination of mortgage, advanced from banks or building societies, and a second loan from Scottish Homes itself. The first mortgage is based on the level of loan repayments equivalent to what is currently being paid in rent, but adjusted to take account of repair and other housing costs. For example, a tenant paying the average Scottish weekly rent of £20.65 in 1989 could expect to make weekly mortgage payments of £17.72 under the scheme compared with £32.53 under the right to buy scheme.

The mortgage is topped up by an interest free loan from Scottish Homes, repayable when the house is resold or at any other time beforehand: at the time of repayment the Scottish Homes loan is adjusted to reflect additional discount points earned, plus any increase in the value of the house. The scheme does not extend to tenants on housing benefit or basic income support. The scheme will be extended to tenants of other public sector landlords in April, 1991.

Portable Discount Scheme

This scheme, introduced in 1989, allows Scottish Homes tenants in defective houses or specially designated estates to buy - at the same discount as under the right to buy - another public rented house that has become vacant (11). It is aimed at those tenants who would like to become owner occupiers but for some reason would not wish to buy the house which they presently occupy. For example, it applies to Orlit and other system built houses which are unlikely to attract mortgages from the banks or building societies. Tenants in multi-storey flats may also be able to take advantage of the scheme. The houses they vacate would be re-let to homeless and other people on housing waiting lists.

Tenants' Incentive Scheme

Under this scheme, introduced in 1990, housing association tenants can be given a grant (currently £9,000) towards the purchase of another house or flat, thus releasing more housing association accommodation to homeless and other needy people (12). The grant can also be used to help elderly tenants pay for the cost of extending property to provide independent living accommodation for members of their own family. The grant cannot be used to buy other public sector properties, commercial property or mobile homes. Housing associations are free to decide whether or not to belong to the scheme. Local authorities are also free to introduce their own incentive schemes for tenants, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.
Sales to non-tenants

In a recent case, the Court of Session ruled that a district council was obliged to sell a house to people who were not tenants of the property (13). The tenant had died after the contract of sale had been drawn up but before the missives had been signed, and the council called the sale off. The tenant's executors took the case to court and, after appealing, the council was informed that, unless the contrary was expressly stated, the tenant's rights passed under common law to his or her executors at death. There was nothing laid down in statute requiring further procedures to be followed in such a case before the sale could be binding. At the time of writing, the council had lodged a further appeal with the House of Lords.

1.6 Previous studies

An early Scottish Office study of the right to buy looked at, among other things, why some tenants applied to buy and then dropped out of the purchase process (14). It concluded that among the factors putting off applicants from going through with the purchase were worries about future job security, second thoughts about being able to afford the purchase, and confusion or uncertainty about what home ownership involved. The study also examined why better off council house purchasers did not buy in the private housing market. The main reasons appeared to be: difficulty in finding private semi-detached and terraced houses of similar quality and price; younger purchasers using the right to buy as a stepping stone to a private purchase; and older purchasers not having enough future earnings to climb up the housing ladder. The 96-97 per cent of tenants who had not applied to buy at all, despite recognising the attractions of purchase, appear to have been deterred by such factors as low household income, unemployment or poor job security, a strong tradition of renting, dissatisfaction with the condition of their property, advancing age, and so on. Similar findings emerged in a later study of SSHA tenants (15).

In a study carried out for the Department of the Environment, most purchasers found the buying process straightforward, with very few difficulties, but one in five purchasers reported contacting the council about post-purchase problems, mostly to complain about conditions on the estate but also sometimes about major unforeseen repairs and disputes with neighbours (16). Some of these difficulties, the survey findings suggested, could have been ameliorated or avoided by accurate information and effective counselling at the time of purchase.

In another report, published in 1986, the Scottish branch of the Institute of Housing examined local authorities' policies and practices concerning the right to buy and put forward a number of recommendations for improving practice (17). This and the above mentioned studies are referred to in appropriate parts of our report.
1.7 The SCC investigation: aims and methods

Aims

In the present study of the right to buy, the SCC sought to build upon its own and other previous research to identify any difficulties or problems affecting house purchase by sitting tenants. Of particular interest to the SCC were:

* the factors influencing tenants' decisions to buy, including the influence of door-to-door sales representatives.

* buyers' satisfaction with the purchase process itself, such as dealings with landlords and solicitors.

* purchasers' early experiences of home ownership, particularly in connection with their housing costs and repairs responsibilities.

Although coverage of these aspects of the right to buy was found in some of the above mentioned research studies, the SCC also had a special interest in comparing the purchase experience of former tenants under the "right to buy" with the experience of first time buyers in the private housing market, as reported in our 1988 survey. Would the two groups have similar or different rates of satisfaction with the purchase process? Would they be similar or different post-purchase problems? These and other comparisons between the two sorts of buyers are reported on in this study.

Initial investigations

Before embarking in the proposed survey of recent purchasers, the SCC conducted group discussions with purchasers and interviewed housing staff in selected authorities to identify the key issues for investigation. System Three Scotland was commissioned to set up, chair and report on three discussion groups of recent purchasers from:

* East Kilbride - former tenants of East Kilbride Development Corporation or the Scottish Special Housing Association who had bought within the previous six months.

* Glasgow - former tenants who had bought their flats from Glasgow district council in the previous 18-24 months.

* Paisley - former tenants of the district council or the Scottish Special Housing Association who had bought their homes no more than two years ago.

Groups were set up so as to contain a spread of age groups of both men and women. Discussions took place between 29 May and 8 June 1989.
Visits were also made to housing departments in several local authorities and two new towns, to discuss with officials various aspects of the proposed survey, including issues of local concern or difficulty which might be taken up. The SCC was also interested in exploring their policies or practices on such matters as advice and information for purchasers, home loans, and common repairs in mixed-tenure properties. Visits were made to local authority housing departments in Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale, Glasgow and Stirling, and to housing departments in East Kilbride, Glenrothes and Irvine new town development corporations.

Findings from the group discussions and interviews were then referred to in drawing up a questionnaire to be sent to purchasers. They are also referred to in appropriate sections of this report dealing with the survey findings.

Data collection

In October 1989, the SCC posted questionnaires to 1,650 former tenants who had bought their house or flat. The sample was divided evenly into purchasers who had bought between:

- September and November 1987 inclusive and who thus had had about two years' experience of home ownership;

- February and April 1989 and whose experiences of the purchase process therefore dated back to not more than five to eight months before.

Names and addresses of purchasers were supplied by 37 of the 58 local authorities approached and by Scottish Homes and each of the five new town development corporations. Housing association purchasers were not included, partly on grounds of cost and partly because this would have called for a different sort of investigation. To prompt a quick response, purchasers were informed that ten cash prizes of £25 each would be awarded at random among those entering their completed questionnaires for a prize draw at the end of October.

The questionnaire

A questionnaire covering buyers' experiences was drafted, circulated for comment, piloted and revised several times before being sent to purchasers in October 1989. Bodies consulted included the Scottish Development Department, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Liaison Committee of the Building Societies' Association, Scottish Homes and some local authorities and new town development corporations. The questionnaire is reproduced at the end of this report. Questions broadly cover the same range of topics as in the SCC's previous survey. There are some additional items, however, specific to the right to buy, covering such matters as door-to-door sales and buyers' dealings with their former landlord. Certain others, specific to private purchases, have been dropped, such as choosing a house to buy.
The first part of this report deals with such matters as tenants' reasons for buying, influences on tenants' decisions to buy, advice and information about buying, and approaches by sales representatives. The second part covers the purchase process itself: choosing a solicitor, the purchase price and discount offered, obtaining a loan, surveys, getting estimates of fees and charges, length of purchase process, and so on. Part three asks buyers about their experience of home ownership, such as meeting their housing costs and repairs responsibilities, repair and improvement work carried out since purchase, common repairs, and future intentions. Buyers are also asked about the age and type of property they occupy and for details about where they live, their age, income, occupation, and so on, to see if any of these factors affect their experience of the right to buy.
REFERENCES


5. Scottish Development Department, "Sale of Local Authority Houses", *SDD Circular No.36/1974*.


12. Scottish Homes, *Tenants' Incentive Scheme* (free booklet).


CHAPTER 2: FINDINGS

2.1 The sample

Response

Out of the 1,650 questionnaires posted, 526 were mailed back in time for analysis - a return of 31.8 per cent. This response rate was lower than the 46 per cent response rate achieved in the SCC's study of house purchase in the private sector, but the number of responses was roughly the same as the previous survey (541). Recent and less recent purchasers replied in about equal proportions. The response rate may have been depressed partly as a result of the questionnaires being longer (68 questions) than the one used in the previous survey (40 questions) and also because of differences in the socio-economic make up of public compared with private sector purchasers. The lower response rate also meant that statistical comparisons were subject to wider sampling error than in the previous report and so need to be viewed with some caution.

Representativeness

Replies were received from former council tenants from all local authority regions of Scotland, other than the islands areas, in roughly similar proportions to the regional breakdown for all council house sales between 1979 and 1989 (Table 1). There was, however, slight under-representation of Tayside region and slight over-representation of Borders region. Purchases of semi-detached and terraced houses among respondents were almost identical to the proportion for all sales since 1972 (Table 2). A much higher proportion of respondents had bought flats, however, with the remainder in the "no information" category. This is to be expected, with the acceleration of sales of flats from 1987, when higher discounts were introduced for them. About the same proportions of respondents as all purchasers since 1979 were former council, new town development corporation (NTDC) or Scottish Special Housing Association (SSHA) tenants.

The sample contained much higher proportions of purchasers in older age groups and in lower income groups compared with the SCC's 1988 sample of first-time buyers of private housing. These differences between respondents in the two samples may have some connection with the differences in response rates mentioned above (see below).

Characteristics of purchasers (Tables 1 and 2)

Most purchasers were living in terraced houses (40 per cent of purchases), followed by semi-detached houses (29 per cent) and flats (26 per cent). This was considerably different from the pattern of sales reported in the Scottish Office study of sales between October 1980 and summer 1982, when well over four fifths of sales were of semi-detached houses and only very small percentages were flats (1). The introduction of higher discounts on the selling price of flats in the late 1980s has undoubtedly contributed to this.
Most purchasers were living in properties built since the end of the war, with sales of properties built since 1960 prevailing over those built in earlier post-war years. Purchasers of older properties were somewhat more likely to be former tenants of the district council, reflecting the fact that local authorities started building houses before the Scottish Special Housing Association (SSHA) and the New Town Development Corporation (NTDC).

Most purchasers were over the age of 30, with a fairly even spread across age groups above this. Over a quarter of purchasers were 60 or over, a considerably higher proportion than that taking advantage of the right to buy in 1980-82. Over half of this age group had been resident at their address for over 20 years.

There was a fairly widespread representation of purchasers in the sample according to the length of residence at their present address: roughly equal proportions (one fifth approx) had been resident for up to 5, 10 or 15 years or for over 20 years, compared with the less even pattern in the early 1980s, when over 40 per cent of sales were to purchasers who had been resident at their address for over 20 years.

Nearly half of respondents (47 per cent) were living on household incomes under £10,000, including a significant proportion (14 per cent) on incomes under £5,000, mainly from the 60+ age group. A smaller proportion (15 per cent) were on higher incomes (£15,000+) compared with first-time buyers in the SCC's private sector survey (24 per cent).

The great majority of purchasers were from two-adult households. Three out of five purchasers had dependent children under 16. One in 15 purchasers were single adults with children under 16. Two thirds of purchasers were employed in manual occupations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Per cent sales*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampian</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothian</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayside</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No information</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>69.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>New town DC</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSHA</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detached house</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached house</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced house</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built before 1945</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1945-1960</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built since 1960</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)**</td>
<td>(522)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


** Unless otherwise indicated, the base on which percentages are calculated excludes respondents answering "don't know" or leaving the question unanswered.
### Table 2. Other Characteristics of Purchasers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of respondents</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(1988 survey)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>(77.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 44</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>(18.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 59</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>(2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of residence</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(1988 survey)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident up to 4 yrs</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident 5 - 9 yrs</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident 10 - 14 yrs</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident 15 - 19 yrs</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident 20+ yrs</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household income</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(1988 survey)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under £5,000</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5,000 - £9,999</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>(33.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000 - £14,999</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>(42.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,000 - £19,999</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>(17.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20,000+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>(6.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One or both respondents</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(1988 survey)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in full-time employment</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>(96.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household size</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(1988 survey)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single adult</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 adults</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+ adults</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 16</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social class</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(1988 survey)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional/managerial</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate non-manual</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine non-manual</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled manual</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled manual</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled manual</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Base) (522)

*Buying a House in Scotland, SCC, 1988
BEFORE PURCHASE

2.2 Reasons for purchase

The generous sale price of their house or flat after discount was mentioned by 80 per cent of purchasers as a very important reason for their decision to buy. Over two thirds said that purchase made a great deal more sense than renting, and only 14 purchasers said that this was not an important consideration behind their decision to buy. These findings accord with those in previous surveys carried out by the Scottish Office and the Department of the Environment on the right to buy (2). Other factors, such as age, income and social class, did not have any marked influence on whether this reason or most other reasons for purchase were mentioned.

The next most important reasons for buying were worries about rising rents (56 per cent), not being able to afford to buy privately in the open market (49 per cent), the purchase as something to leave in a will (45 per cent), and the desire to have always wanted to own a home of one's own (43 per cent). Younger purchasers (under 45) were more likely to mention not being able to afford to buy privately, whereas older purchasers were more likely to emphasise the purchase as something to leave in a will.

---

TABLE 3. REASONS FOR DECISION TO BUY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>quite important</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attractive sale price</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More sense than renting</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepping-stone</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom to do repairs</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future nest-egg</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worries about rising rents</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always wanted own home</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An investment to re-sell</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More freedom to move</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have already spent a lot</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor repairs service</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot afford to buy</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something to leave in will</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others in area have bought</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash help with purchase</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty about future</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nearly a third (30 per cent) of purchasers said that they had also been motivated to buy as a result of a lot of their own money already having been spent on repair or improvement work. Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) mentioned the greater freedom to do their own repairs as a very important reason for buying. Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) said that their decision to buy had also been strongly influenced by their dissatisfaction with the repairs service of their landlord. The group discussions with purchasers revealed that dissatisfaction was related not only to delays in getting repairs carried out but also to poor workmanship and poor levels of supervision and quality control.

Just over one quarter of purchasers (27 per cent) mentioned uncertainty about their future as tenants as a reason for their decision to buy, with over 40 per cent of NTDC and SSHA tenants mentioning this. Questionnaires were completed at a time when changes in the law, allowing transfers of public sector tenants to other landlords, had just been brought into force, amidst much public debate, under part III of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988. Transfers would mean tenants losing their statutory rights as secure tenants, including their right to buy, on becoming assured tenants with their new landlord, although tenants would still be free to negotiate their contractual rights with the landlord.

Less frequently mentioned as very important reasons for buying were: using the purchase as an investment to sell at a profit (17 per cent) or as a stepping stone to buy a more desirable property (14 per cent); greater freedom to move house as a result of owning one's own home (17 per cent); and receipt of cash help with the purchase, for example, money from relatives (7 per cent).

The majority (53 per cent) of purchasers did not identify anybody in particular as having influenced their decision to buy. Thirty per cent mentioned family or relatives. Group discussions with purchasers revealed the "domino" effect of neighbours, family and friends on the decision to purchase: if a close friend or member of the family had recently bought, this helped to remove any lingering fears or uncertainties about buying. Fewer than 6 per cent mentioned other influences such as advertising or media publicity, their bank or building society, or the local council, although it is possible that a higher proportion of purchasers were influenced by these agencies at an unconscious or "subliminal" level. Four per cent (21 purchasers) mentioned having been influenced by doo-to-door salesmen (see below).

2.3 Advice and information

Over half of the purchasers (53 per cent) said that they had approached their landlord for advice and information about the right to buy. The vast majority described their landlord as very helpful (46 per cent) or quite helpful (45 per cent) in providing advice or information. In the group discussions, some purchasers commented how landlords had become more positive about the right to buy in recent years. This could be a result of all party support for sales and also because councils rely heavily on sales receipts to fund capital programmes. About five per cent of purchasers (15) who had approached their landlord said that officials had been unhelpful.
Two out of five purchasers (40 per cent) had also approached a solicitor for advice and information before purchase (compared with 70 per cent who had done so in the SCC’s survey of first time buyers in the private sector). Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of those doing so said that the solicitor had been very helpful, with another 18 per cent saying the solicitor had been quite helpful. These were even higher levels of satisfaction than reported in the SCC’s private sector survey, in which 58 per cent of first time buyers said their solicitor had been very helpful. Five purchasers (under 3 per cent) said that the solicitor had not been helpful.

A similar proportion (36 per cent) had also approached a building society for advice and information (35 per cent in private sector survey). Again there was a very high level of satisfaction with the advice and information given. A significant proportion (30 per cent) had also approached insurance companies, and a small proportion had approached banks (16 per cent), surveyors (16 per cent) and other sources, such as local advice centres (4 per cent). As one purchaser in the group discussions put it:

"I asked my Prudential insurance man how to go about buying it, and he said to go up to the council offices, and he would keep me right from then on, and he got me a lawyer and arranged me a loan".

Sixty three purchasers (12 per cent), however, had not approached anybody for advice and information at all.

Most purchasers were satisfied that they had received enough advice or information about the right to buy (83 per cent), the costs of home ownership (69 per cent), and their future repairs' responsibilities as owners (63 per cent). This nonetheless left considerable proportions who thought that they had not received enough information about their future repairs' responsibilities (30 per cent) or about the costs of home ownership (25 per cent).

Dissatisfied purchasers said that they would have liked more information or advice about:

* legal, surveyors' and building society/lender's fees
* choice of mortgage
* common repairs
* communal service charges
* cost of alterations
* insurance costs
* repairs responsibilities
* factoring

Written information

Nearly three quarters of purchasers (73 per cent) said that they had received written information from their landlord about their right to buy; most had found this information very helpful (45 per cent) or quite helpful (43 per
cent). About one in seven purchasers said that they had also received some written information from a building society, which again they mostly found very helpful or quite helpful. Thirty seven purchasers also mentioned solicitors as sources of written information. Only seven purchasers (under 2 per cent) receiving information from these sources found it unhelpful - a lower level of dissatisfaction than for first-time buyers in the private sector (13 per cent). Those who found the literature helpful - the great majority of purchasers - made the following sorts of comments:

"Council leaflet answered most questions"

"Gave a rough idea of how much purchase would cost"

"Told you step by step how to go about a purchase"

"Easy to understand"

"Helped us to make our minds up to buy"

The few purchasers (8) who found the literature from these sources unhelpful commented:

"Too much jargon"

"Difficult to read or follow"

"Not clear enough"

2.4 Door-to-door sales

Over a quarter of purchasers (28 per cent) said that they had been approached by door-to-door sales representatives about their right to buy. Door-to-door sales activity appears to have been more widespread in the urban compared with rural regions of Scotland and among NTDC/SSHA purchasers compared with council purchasers, as indicated below (because of the small numbers, significance should not be attached to differences between single regions).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Purchasers Approached</th>
<th>All Purchasers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampian</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayside</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSHA/NTDC</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>148</strong></td>
<td><strong>507</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most purchasers who had been approached said that the sales representative was from a finance or insurance company (95). Others mentioned the name of firms such as:

"Home Improvements" (17 mentions)

"Homes Assured" (6 mentions)

"Tenants Advisory Service" (3 mentions)

"Mortgage Advisory Service"

"Home Owners"

"Citizens Right to Buy"

A few purchasers mentioned double glazing companies. Three said that the representative was from "the council". A third (34 per cent) of those approached found the approach "helpful", but a third also found it "annoying"; another 15 per cent found the approach misleading. Purchasers who found this approach "helpful" (52) volunteered the following sorts of comments:

"Agent explained the costs of mortgage"  

"It was the best way to buy"
"Offered different ways to pay"

"Gave indication of the cost of an endowment mortgage"

"Attended to everything"

"Explained process step by step"

"Helped us to reach a decision - admired his direct but helpful approach"

Purchasers who said that the approach had been "annoying" or "misleading" (74) made the following kinds of remarks:

"Wouldn't stop pestering us"/"Too pushy"

"Gave impression he was an official helping you with your right to buy"

"Resented the intrusion"/ "unsolicited"

"Too many visits"/ "pestered by phone calls from different companies"

"Information was deceitful"/ "Given incorrect facts"/ "Financial estimates misleading"

"Each firm gave different facts"/ "Advice given varied"

"Lost interest after hearing our ages"/ "Only interested if you wanted home improvements"/ "Only interested in selling his policy"

"He explained it his way - we did it our way!"

Fifty seven of those approached by door-to-door sales representatives said that they had also received written information; 36 had found this literature helpful, but another 16 had not. Some of those who found the literature unhelpful claimed it was "misleading" (4 mentions), "glossed over costs" or was "inaccurate", "biased", or "unclear", "confusing", "not detailed enough", "too general" or "out of date".

Most of the 150 purchasers who had been approached reported that they had been offered a mortgage (82 per cent), insurance (53 per cent) or conveyancing (32 per cent). One purchaser mentioned being offered rent-free accommodation.

A quarter (37 out of the 150 approached, or 7 per cent of the total sample) said that they had taken up one or more of these offers. Most of the purchasers taking up these offers had found them satisfactory, but, for eight purchasers,
the offers had turned out to be less satisfactory than expected. Most of the offers taken up (37) were insurance policies (21), mortgages (21) and home improvements (10). Another four taken up were conveyancing offers.

Purchasers who said that the offer taken up had turned out to be less than satisfactory (8) made the following sorts of comments:

"Inefficient organisation. I now have to make three separate payments and arrange my own tax relief"

"Home improvement loan had too many strings attached - eventually changed to building society"

"Accepted endowment mortgage, but cancelled within seven days and a struggle to get my money back"

"After six months of uncertainty, dropped the firm on the advice of a lawyer"

"Double glazing not sealed properly"

"Company only interested in my money"

Reasons purchasers gave for not taking up offers included:

"Prefer to deal directly with building society and lawyer and cut out middle man"

"We decided to do it all ourselves"

"Put off by his pushy attitude"

"Considered them loan sharks"

"We weren't sure they could be trusted"

"Thought there must be a catch in it"

"Got a better deal with our own bank and solicitor"

"Wanted to deal with a known firm"

"Offers were too expensive"

"Didn't like wording of the pamphlets"

"Salesman lied, so we didn't proceed"
PURCHASE PROCESS

2.5 Purchase price

Purchasers paid an average price of £12,050 for their house or flat, with two-fifths paying £5,000-£10,000 and nearly a half paying between £10,000 and £15,000. This average was slightly below the average for all right to buy sales in Scotland in 1988-89 (£12,600) (3).

Lower purchase prices (under £10,000) were more likely to have been offered to former district council tenants (49 per cent) than former NTDC tenants (27 per cent) or SSHA tenants (37 per cent) and to purchasers living in older flats (88 per cent) or properties built before 1945 (65 per cent). Nine purchasers (under 2 per cent) said that they had experienced difficulties connected with the landlord's valuation of the property in determining purchase price.

On average, purchasers bought at a discount of 49 per cent (compared with an average discount of 55 per cent for all local authority sales in Scotland in 1988) (4). Over three fifths of the discounts (62 per cent) were between 40 and 60 per cent of the valuation on the property, and about one in seven purchasers (13 per cent) qualified for the maximum discounts of 60 per cent (houses) or 70 per cent (flats).

One in six of those qualifying for maximum discounts had been living in their present home for no more than four years, having been public sector tenants for considerably longer than this. Seventeen purchasers in the sample (3 per cent) reported that they had had problems or difficulties in connection with the level of discounts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5. PURCHASE PRICE AND AMOUNT BORROWED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector Purchasers (Sept-Nov 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Purchasers (Feb-May 1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to £5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5,001-£10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,001-£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,001-£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sixteen per cent of purchasers (83) had paid for their property outright (compared with 3 per cent of first-time buyers in the SCC's private sector survey who had done so). Two-fifths of those paying outright had bought their house or flat for under £10,000, after discount. Over three quarters (79 per cent) of outright purchasers were aged 60 or over and two thirds were retired. Nearly half of them (46 per cent) were living on household incomes of under £5,000 (compared with 14 per cent in the total sample).

2.6 Mortgage payments

Over four fifths (84 per cent) of purchasers had borrowed money to buy their house or flat. One half (51 per cent) of purchasers aged 60 or over had taken out a mortgage, compared with 95 per cent in other age groups. About one half of purchasers (49 per cent) on household incomes of under £5,000 had taken out loans, compared with 90 per cent of purchasers on higher incomes. Sixteen purchasers (3 per cent of the total sample) said that they had had difficulties in getting a mortgage.

The average amount borrowed was £9,800, representing 81 per cent of the average purchase price (£12,050) and 94 per cent of average income (£10,399). This may be compared with an average mortgage of £23,412 in the SCC's survey of first time buyers in the private sector, representing 90 per cent of the average purchase price (£26,100) and one and two thirds average household income (£15,540). Whereas over two thirds of first time buyers of private properties had borrowed over £20,000, less than 4 per cent of purchasers under the right to buy had borrowed this much. Fifteen of the 33 purchasers who had taken up door-to-door sales offers had borrowed over £25,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household income</th>
<th>Under £10,000</th>
<th>£10,000-£15,000</th>
<th>Over £15,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under £10,000</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,001-£15,000</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £15,000</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)</td>
<td>(407)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly one third of purchasers (32 per cent) had borrowed additional money to pay for home improvements (a few had also borrowed extra money to pay for legal fees). The extra amount borrowed was between £1,000 and £5,000 in two thirds of cases or £3,000 on average.
Over two thirds of purchasers with a loan (69 per cent) had borrowed from a building society; another 15 per cent had borrowed from a bank, and 8 per cent from an insurance company. The corresponding figures for first-time buyers in the SCC's private sector summary were 64 per cent, 34 per cent and 1 per cent. Only three purchasers had borrowed from the council (compared with a quarter in the Scottish Office study of purchasers in 1980-82). Eleven had borrowed from more than one source, such as a building society and an insurance company. Building society loans were more likely to be taken out by purchasers over 60 (89 per cent) compared with other age groups (68 per cent).

Over three quarters (78 per cent) of purchasers with loans had taken out endowment mortgages, with most remaining borrowers (16 per cent) taking out repayment mortgages (compared with a rather higher proportion, 88 per cent, of purchasers in the SCC's private sector survey taking out endowment mortgages). Purchasers with higher household incomes were somewhat more likely to have endowment mortgages than those on lower incomes (88 per cent on incomes above £10,000, compared with 76 per cent on incomes below this). This still left a quarter of purchasers on incomes below £10,000 on endowment mortgages. About half of purchasers over 60 (51 per cent) were on endowment mortgages.

Over a third of purchasers with a loan (35 per cent) had contacted the building society or other lender themselves to arrange the mortgage, and almost another third (30 per cent) had done so through their solicitor. (Similar proportions in the SCC's private sector survey had done so). A smaller proportion (seven per cent) had used mortgage brokers. Another six per cent (32 purchasers) had relied on an insurance company/agent or a financial firm/adviser to arrange the loan. Three per cent (16 purchasers) said arrangements had been made through a door-to-door sales representative. Two per cent (10 purchasers) mentioned relatives.

2.7 Choosing a solicitor

A quarter of purchasers said that they had chosen their solicitor through personal recommendation of a friend or relative. About one in five purchasers had chosen a solicitor through their building society or insurance company or broker. As one purchaser in the group discussions remarked:

"Once I got the facts and figures from the corporation, the broker I was dealing with actually contacted the solicitor on my behalf and he took it from there".

Another fifth had based their choice on the fact that they had used the solicitor before. Twenty three purchasers (4 per cent of the sample) said that a door-to-door sales representative had arranged their choice of solicitor. Hardly any purchasers mentioned the yellow pages (9), advertisements (1) or advice centres (1) in choosing a solicitor.
About one in 14 purchasers (7 per cent) said that they had "shopped around" for a solicitor. Reasons given by purchasers for their choice were that the chosen solicitor was the "cheapest" (20 mentions), "friendliest" (14 mentions), "most helpful" or "most efficient" (3 mentions), or the "nearest" or "most convenient" (3 mentions).

An overwhelming majority of purchasers were very satisfied (73 per cent) or fairly satisfied (22 per cent) with their solicitor, with only 29 purchasers in the sample (5 per cent) expressing dissatisfaction. This compares even more favourably with the 57 per cent of purchasers very satisfied with their solicitor in the SCC's survey of first time buyers in the private housing market. It also compares well with the satisfaction level recorded among an SCC sample survey of the population at large, in which 53 per cent of people who had used a solicitor were very satisfied, 31 per cent fairly satisfied and 13 per cent dissatisfied with their services (6).

Reasons for dissatisfaction (single mentions) by purchasers included:

"Solicitor was friendly with the insurance salesman, giving us insurance we did not need"

"Solicitor didn't investigate my financial position and charged me more than he had promised"

"Solicitor spent very little time explaining conditions of sale, deed of conditions, etc."

"Solicitor lost all the forms and had to start all over again, delaying the purchase by a year" (5 other similar mentions)

"Solicitor sent bill two months before he said he would"

"Solicitor very abrupt/a poor communicator"

"Solicitor failed to have papers ready for signing on time"

"Solicitor and council blamed each other for delays" "Solicitor was a disaster from start to finish - broken promises, broken appointments, etc"

"Solicitor charged the earth even though the advice centre did all the work"

Several dissatisfied purchasers (6) mentioned solicitors' charges being too high.
2.8 **Valuations and surveys**

Most purchasers who had not bought outright said that they had been shown lenders' valuation reports on their house or flat (82 per cent), and another 10 per cent had been given verbal accounts. This compares favourably with the lower proportion (61 per cent) in the SCC's survey of first time buyers in the private sector saying they had been shown written reports. Purchasers who had not approached anyone for advice before deciding to buy were less likely to have been shown the valuation report (72 per cent).

A surprisingly large proportion of purchasers (25 per cent) had arranged for their own house survey to be carried out, that is, in addition to the lender's valuation survey (compared with 19 per cent of first time buyers in the private sector). Three quarters of purchasers not having an additional survey done did not think one was necessary (compared with 35 per cent of first-time buyers in the private sector). Thirty one purchasers (8 per cent) said that they had not heard about such surveys (compared with 17 per cent of first-time private purchasers). Purchasers buying outright were no more likely than other purchasers to arrange an additional survey.

Most purchasers were very satisfied (61 per cent) or fairly satisfied (34 per cent) with the surveyors; the 20 dissatisfied purchasers mainly commented on the short length of time the valuation survey had taken.

2.9 **Fees and charges**

Most purchasers said that they had been given estimates of lenders' charges (58 per cent), solicitors' charges (71 per cent) and surveyors' charges (68 per cent). Corresponding proportions for purchasers in the SCC's survey and first-time buyers in the private sector were: 58, 61 and 73 per cent. Purchasers on household incomes under £5,000 were less likely to mention having received estimates for solicitor's charges (64 per cent) than those on higher incomes (77 per cent). Purchasers who had approached someone for advice before deciding to buy were more likely to mention receiving solicitor's estimates (83 per cent).

As shown in Table 7, most purchasers found that fees charged were more or less the amount they had expected. Purchasers were rather more likely to report solicitors fees being either higher or lower than expected than for fees charged by lenders or surveyors, however. Purchasers in the SCC's private sector survey were more likely to say that fees had been higher than expected.
TABLE 7. PURCHASERS' SATISFACTION WITH FEES CHARGED BY LENDER, SOLICITOR AND SURVEYOR

(Percentages in parenthesis refer to responses by first-time buyers in SCC's private sector survey).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>lender %</th>
<th>solicitor %</th>
<th>surveyor %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher than expected</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22.4)</td>
<td>(24.5)</td>
<td>(13.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As expected</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(69.6)</td>
<td>(62.5)</td>
<td>(81.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than expected</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td>(11.0)</td>
<td>(3.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannot recall</td>
<td>(6.2)</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
<td>(2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)</td>
<td>(380)</td>
<td>(477)</td>
<td>(409)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purchasers who had not received estimates were more likely to say that charges had turned out to be higher than expected, as shown in the table below.

---

TABLE 8. PROPORTIONS OF PURCHASERS SAYING CHARGES HIGHER THAN EXPECTED ACCORDING TO WHETHER ESTIMATES GIVEN OR NOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charges higher than expected</th>
<th>Estimate received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lender's charges</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitors' charges</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor's charges</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)</td>
<td>(346)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.10 Length of purchase process

Over two fifths of purchasers (42 per cent) said that the sale of their house or flat had taken more than six months to complete. Twelve per cent of sales were completed in less than 4 months. (The average completion time for all right to buy sales in Scotland in 1989 was 9.6 months) (7).

Two fifths of purchasers (40 per cent) said that the sale had taken longer than they had expected, with a slightly higher proportion (45 per cent) saying it had taken as long as expected and a small proportion (12 per cent) saying it had taken a shorter time. Former SSHA tenants (28 per cent) were much less likely than other purchasers to say that the sale had taken longer than expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 9. LENGTH OF PURCHASE PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A third of purchasers (33 per cent) claimed that they had experienced delays in the purchase process. Over two fifths (43 per cent) of purchasers experiencing delays said that the purchase had taken over nine months to complete.

The vast majority of purchasers were very satisfied (44 per cent) or fairly satisfied (43 per cent) with the council's/landlord's handling of the sale of their house or flat. Similar levels of satisfaction were expressed by former council, NTDC and SSHA tenants. The 67 purchasers (14 per cent) expressing dissatisfaction mainly commented on the landlord being "very slow" to complete the sale. A few (15) commented on the council's "refusal" or "reluctance" to carry out repairs pending completion of the sale. A few purchasers also said that the council had taken too long or had been unforthcoming in answering enquiries.
2.11 General experience of the purchase process

Most purchasers (70 per cent) said that they had found buying their house or flat very straightforward. A quarter (26 per cent) said that the purchase had been fairly straightforward but with some difficulties. There were no significant differences according to age, income, social class, and so on. These findings accord with the DoE survey, in which 88 per cent of buyers said that the purchase process had been very easy or fairly easy (8).

A significant proportion (22 per cent) referred to difficulties in getting repairs done. Some purchasers (25) mentioned that they had had difficulties or problems connected with the offer to sell, 17 had had problems to do with discount levels, 16 mentioned difficulties in getting a mortgage, and 9 mentioned valuation difficulties. Whether purchasers were former council, new town or SSHA tenants made little difference as to whether any difficulties were mentioned or not.

Purchasers experiencing difficulties frequently referred to "delays" in the purchase process or to poor communication. Comments (mainly single mentions) included:

"You could hardly even get in touch with the people you wanted, and when you did, they would always say that they would get back to you, but they never did"

"It was never made clear what happened next" (and a number of similar comments).

"Some difficulties in finding out about our rights as flat owners as opposed to house owners"

"Homes Assured were very difficult to get in touch with" (4 mentions).

"Solicitor uncommunicative and disinterested"

"Purchase papers difficult to understand"

A few purchasers mentioned procedural difficulties:

"Council very nitpicking about minor details in application form, so had to keep filling in form over again"

"Wife partially disabled - some problems with signatures for documents"

"Unexpectedly large amount of paperwork involved"
A few purchasers said that their purchase had been incompetently handled:

"Property company made mistakes with insurance cover and solicitor's fees."

"Plans wrong - had to be returned twice"

"Incompetent building society employee"

Some difficulties were related to insurance or financial matters:

"Arranged own insurance, then building society sent bill on assumption that I would require their policy"

"Building society difficult over getting independent insurance"

"Building society cheque late in coming through"

"Problems over standing order for mortgage payments"
AFTER PURCHASE

2.12 Housing Costs

Nearly two fifths of purchasers (38 per cent) who had taken out a mortgage said that mortgage payments had been higher than expected. (The survey was conducted among purchasers who had seen interest rate rises from 10 per cent at the end of 1987 to 15 per cent at the end of 1989). Twenty purchasers (4 per cent) said that they were having difficulties meeting mortgage payments, an identical proportion to that for first-time buyers in the SCC's private sector survey. The proportion saying payments were higher than expected rose to over half (51 per cent) among purchasers who had bought two years previously. Fourteen purchasers (3 per cent) said that their mortgage payments had been lower than expected. Purchasers in the 30-44 age group were also more likely to say that mortgage costs had been higher than expected (46 per cent) compared with older age groups who had borrowed to buy (38 per cent in the 45-59 age group and 26 per cent of purchasers aged 60 or over). This was connected with the fact that purchasers in the younger age group were borrowing more money than those in older age groups. Seven per cent of the less recent purchasers also said that the costs of repairs or service charges had been higher than expected.

Purchasers who had received advice about future housing costs were slightly less likely to say costs had been higher than expected (37 per cent), compared with those who had not received advice (44 per cent). Five purchasers mentioned having sought help with meeting their housing costs.

2.13 Home improvements and repairs

Three quarters of purchasers (76 per cent) who had bought about two years ago said that various improvements to their home had been carried out since purchase. As indicated in Table 10, many purchasers had installed new kitchens or bathroom units, central heating, double glazing and new doors; a fifth mentioned alterations to internal walls. The type or age of housing occupied or the income, age or social class of purchasers did not appear to be significantly related to whether home improvements were mentioned or not.
**TABLE 10. HOME IMPROVEMENTS SINCE PURCHASE (LESS RECENT PURCHASERS ONLY).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mentions</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen units</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-replacements</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double glazing</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom units</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central heating</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alterations to internal walls</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replumbing</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewiring</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensions</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof insulation</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other improvements</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No improvements</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Base)</td>
<td>(251)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty six purchasers said that they had had problems or difficulties in getting improvement work done. The following sorts of comments were made:

"*Workmen very slow*"

"*Lack of funds*"

"*Delays in getting planning permission*"

A number of these comments were directed at poor workmanship by double glazing firms.

Two thirds (68 per cent) of purchasers (65 per cent of less recent purchasers) said that there were alterations or improvements they would still like to be done. Again, the most frequently mentioned improvements were installation of new kitchen units, double glazing, central heating, and new doors, with other mentions including loft conversions, roof or cavity insulation, extensions, garages, storage space, fireplace replacement, porchways, and patios.

Purchasers in properties built before 1945 were less likely to say that improvement work needed doing (56 per cent) compared with purchasers in houses or flats built later (74 per cent). Purchasers in flats were also less likely to mention improvements needing to be done (60 per cent) compared with those in
terraced or semi-detached houses (75 per cent). These findings could be associated with, although need not be casually connected with, the fact that the largest proportion of purchasers in property built before 1945 or living in flats were aged 60 or over and no longer in full time work, and on lower household incomes (under £10,000).

Nearly three fifths (58 per cent) of purchasers who had bought two years previously said that repair or maintenance work had been carried out since purchase. A quarter of purchasers said repairs had been done to the roof and about one in 10 purchasers said repairs had been done to walls and windows, plumbing, and to the central heating. Small proportions of purchasers (3 per cent or less) mentioned repairs to stairways, balconies, fixtures and supply services. No significant relationship was observed between whether or not repair work had been done and the age or type of property or the age, income or social class of purchasers. (Slight connections between age and income and whether repairs had been done were found among purchasers in the DoE study in England (9).

Three quarters of purchasers said that the repair work last done had been paid for out of their own pocket, with remaining purchasers saying costs had been recovered from their buildings insurance. A few purchasers (7) said that the council had paid for the work and a few other purchasers had secured a loan or got the work paid for by someone else, such as a relative. Over half of the purchasers who had paid for the repair out of their own pocket said that they had taken this money from a savings account. Five per cent of purchasers (23 in total sample) said that they had had difficulties meeting repair bills and of that proportion 14 said that these difficulties remained unresolved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paintwork (external)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofwork</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutters/drainpipes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window repairs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External walls</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterwork</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs to doors</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs to garage</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinks/sanitary appliances</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonework</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairway</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water heater</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central heating</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural defects</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal walls</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimney stack</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cistern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerial</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal plumbing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Base)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(515)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One in five purchasers (48 out of 248 less recent purchasers 60 out of 267 recent purchasers) said that there was repair work still waiting to be done. No association was found however between the age or household income of purchasers and mention of repairs needed. Paintwork, roof and gutterwork, roughcasting and window repairs were the most frequently mentioned items of work needed, as indicated in Table 11.

Lack of spare cash (38 mentions) or time (20 mentions) to attend to repairs were mainly cited as reasons for the work not being done. A few (5) said that the work was "not urgent". Up to two or three mentions of the following sort were also made:

"Not sure who is responsible for repairs".

34
"Council inefficiency"

"Factors' responsibility"

"Still waiting for tradesman to turn up"

"Council has no money"

"Council's responsibility"

"The weather"

2.14 Common repairs and factoring

Two fifths (41 per cent) of purchasers said that they had common repair and maintenance responsibilities for shared parts of the property (with 20 per cent in semi-detached houses, 33 per cent in terraced houses, and 80 per cent in flats saying so). Thirty four purchasers (6 per cent of total sample) said that they did not know whether they had shared repairs responsibilities; fifteen of these purchasers were in terraced houses and 8 were in flats. Nineteen of the 132 flatdwellers (14 per cent) and 123 out of the 206 in terraced houses (60 per cent) claimed that they did not have any shared repairs responsibilities. Roofs fencing, shared pathways and stairways were the most frequently mentioned items of common repair and maintenance, but a wide range of other items were mentioned as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of mentions:</th>
<th>flat owners only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roofs</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing/boundary walls</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared pathways</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairways</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared entrances/close</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutters</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden/green/surrounds</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downpipes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividing walls</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimney stack</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior of building</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse area</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry/access/security doors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loft</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stair lighting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balcony</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking areas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Base) (113)
Most purchasers mentioned one or two items only; a few mentioned three or four; none gave a comprehensive list.

Fourteen of the 208 purchasers (7 per cent) saying they had shared repair responsibilities said that they had had problems getting work done to common parts. Reasons given for these difficulties included the following sorts (single mentions):

"Long delays by council/development corporations"

"Disputes over costs"

"Neighbours don't report damage"

Almost a third of flat dwellers (30 per cent) said that the property was provided with factoring services, a similar proportion (29 per cent) said that they did not know whether the property was factored, with the remainder (41 per cent) saying no factoring was provided.

The 41 flat dwellers saying factoring was provided, mentioned the following services:

- Grasscutting 14
- Servicing external lighting 12
- Landscaping 9
- Upkeep of exterior 5
- Window cleaning 4
- Common repairs 4
- Water supply services 1
- Electricity supply 1
- Buildings insurance 1
- Launderette facilities 1
- Roofwork 1
- Conduct of neighbours maintenance 1

Only a small proportion (15 per cent) of the 54 purchasers who said that they had factoring services thought that services were good value, 17 (30 per cent) thought they were poor value; 29 (46 per cent) had mixed views (similarly, only a quarter of purchasers in the DoE study for England and Wales said that the service charge was good value for money (10). Fourteen purchasers said they paid annual standing charges of up to £40, 13 paid between £41 and £80, 10 paid between £81 and £100, and 8 paid over £100. Ten purchasers said that they had experienced difficulties in paying for service charges. Those paying higher charges (£60 plus) were no less dissatisfied than those paying lower charges.
Those saying that factoring services represented poor value made comments such as:

"Not enough information about what we are paying for/bills not itemised properly"

"Grass not cut often enough"

"Poor standard of landscaping"

One owner made the positive comment, however, that:

"The long experience of the development corporation ensures that flats are managed most effectively; the corporation's ability to employ contractors on a large scale helps to reduce costs for the individual"

Small numbers of owners in the sample said that since purchase they had been involved in property disputes with the council (16 purchasers) or with neighbours (18 purchasers). Nine purchasers had experienced difficulties to do with repairs to common parts of the property.

2.15 Housing advice

One in twelve owners (8 per cent) said that they had sought housing advice since purchasing their house or flat. Most had either approached the council (18 purchasers) or a solicitor (17 purchasers) for advice, but several others mentioned a building society (5), an advice centre (4), an architect (3) or someone else (5). Purchasers with household incomes under £5,000 were more likely to have sought advice (14 per cent) compared with other income groups (7 per cent).

The advice sought covered a range of financial and legal and planning matters, relating, for example, to insurance claims, charges for work done, outstanding rent arrears, repair grants, access rights, claims for third party damage and new installations or extensions. One purchaser wanted to know if the council was required to provide owners with the names of other owners at their request.

Most of the 40 purchasers who had sought advice said that the advice given had been helpful (9) or fairly helpful (10), but 14 purchasers said it had not been helpful. A number of purchasers commented:

"Solicitor got in touch with the council and sorted it all out for us"

"Council wrote to the people involved to say that I did own the land at the back"

"Advice resulted in us not having to pay bill for roughcasting"

"Explained our options"
"Council spared no effort to help us to get a grant"

Those who were dissatisfied with the advice given made the following sorts of comments:

"Haven't sorted out problems"

"Didn't know answer"

"Council unable to advise who is responsible"

"Still awaiting outcome"

2.16 Future intentions

Just over half of purchasers (51 per cent) said that it was not very likely at all that they would sell their house or flat. Purchasers aged 60 or over were most likely to say so (74 per cent) compared with the 45-59 age group (62 per cent) or purchasers under 45 (31 per cent). Similarly, purchasers who had paid outright (70 per cent), on household incomes under £5,000 (69 per cent) or not in paid work, (63 per cent) were most likely to stay where they were. Most of these purchasers were in the 60+ age group. Former district council tenants were also more likely to intend staying put (50 per cent) than former SSHA (39 per cent) or former NTDC tenants (34 per cent). Owners in semi-detached houses (60 per cent) were also more likely to want to stay than flat dwellers (46 per cent) or purchasers in terraced houses (48 per cent). Similarly, purchasers in older properties were more likely to want to stay put.

Purchasers who had borrowed between £10,000 and £15,000 were less likely to want to sell (49 per cent) than those with either higher loans (21 per cent) or lower ones (24 per cent). Again this was related to the age and household income of purchasers. Purchasers whose mortgage costs turned out to be higher than they had expected did not differ significantly in their future intentions from those whose costs were as expected.

Fourteen per cent of purchasers intended to sell within five years and another 14 per cent expected to move at some time after this. One in five purchasers (21 per cent) were undecided about their future intentions. Purchasers under 45 were more likely to say they would move within five years (25 per cent) than 45 to 59 year-olds (6 per cent) or those 60 or over (4 per cent). Purchasers on incomes over £15,000 were also more likely to say so (27 per cent) than those in lower incomes (12 per cent).

A third of former NTDC tenants said they would move within 5 years, compared with 13 per cent of former SSHA tenants and 10 per cent of former council tenants. Flat dwellers (19 per cent) and purchasers in terraced houses (16 per cent) were also more likely to say they would move within 5 years, compared with
those in semi-detached housing (7 per cent). Those in properties built since 1960 were more likely to want to move within five years (21 per cent) than those in older properties (9 per cent).

Owners on a mortgage, especially a higher mortgage (over £15,000) were more likely to say they would move within five years (23 per cent) than those on lower mortgages (13 per cent) or who had paid outright (16 per cent). Again these differences are connected with the age and household income of purchasers.

Of the 143 purchasers who expected to sell at some point (within 5 years or later), nearly two thirds (65 per cent) expected to buy another house in a dearer price range. Another 13 per cent expected to buy in the same price range, and 3 per cent (4 purchasers) expected to buy cheaper. Two purchasers intended to return to rented housing. Nine were undecided. Thirteen said they would "do something else", such as build their own house (5) or emigrate (3).

2.17 Satisfaction with home ownership

Nearly three quarters of purchasers (73 per cent) said that owning their own home had been a very satisfactory experience, with no problems or difficulties, with very similar proportions of recent and less recent purchasers saying so. About one in five purchasers (22 per cent) said ownership had been fairly satisfactory but with some problems. Only one purchaser said it had been a totally unsatisfactory experience. These proportions compare very favourably with the experience of first-time buyers in the SCC's private sector survey, in which 51 per cent of purchasers were very satisfied, 45 per cent were fairly satisfied and 2 per cent had been dissatisfied with home ownership. They are not dissimilar to the proportion of purchasers in England, 93 per cent of whom were pleased that they had bought (12).

Purchasers were more likely to say that ownership was a satisfactory experience but with some problems if they were

* former new town tenants (38 per cent, compared with 22 per cent of former council tenants and 18 per cent of former SSHA tenants)

* on household incomes in the £5,000-£15,000 range (27 per cent, compared with 10 per cent of those on higher or lower incomes)

* living in property built since 1960 (30 per cent, compared with 20 per cent in older property)

Since each of these factors were inter-connected, it is difficult to establish, owing to limited sample size, which of them carry most weight. No connection was found between satisfaction with purchase and type of property occupied: flat owners were just as satisfied as those in terraced or semi-detached houses. Owners who had before the purchase sought advice about ownership were, however,
more likely to report that ownership had been a very satisfactory experience, with no problems (80 per cent), than those who had not sought advice (60 per cent).

Purchasers who were less than fully satisfied with their experience of ownership (142 purchasers) said that their main sources of dissatisfaction were: worries about the mortgage (54 purchasers), repair costs (53 purchasers) resale value of the house (19 purchasers), and the neighbourhood (12 purchasers), with other reasons being given by 4 purchasers. Some of the dissatisfied purchasers volunteered comments such as:

"Worried about mortgage rates rising again"

"Even with a small mortgage interest rates make payments a struggle"

"The very high interest rates have caused a lot of alterations to be shelved"

"Would have liked someone to have warned us how much the interest rate was going up"

"Unemployment after purchase caused major financial problems"

"Cost of caretaking and maintenance is enormous and detracts from the attractiveness of the discount"

"Worried about cost of major renovations to be carried out - new roof, phone entry system, roughcasting, removal of balcony"

"Can't afford improvements"

"The most annoying thing is having to pay for common repairs without prior notice of the work".
REFERENCES

1. Scottish Office, *Council House Sales in Scotland*, Central Research Unit Papers, May 1985,


4. Scottish Development Department, *Statistical Bulletin*, July 1989. This average is lower when sales of NTDC houses (50 per cent average discount) are included.


7. Scottish Development Department, *op. cit.*


10. Ibid, para. 132.
CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Summary of findings

The large majority of purchasers in our sample found buying their house or flat a straightforward and satisfying experience. Most purchasers were attracted by the very generous sale price of their house or flat, after discount, and some, particularly elderly tenants, had saved up enough money to buy outright. For most tenants, house purchase also made a great deal more sense than renting. Many purchasers however would have liked more advice and information about their future housing costs and repair responsibilities before going ahead with their purchase. It was evident, for example, that many purchasers had found their housing costs higher than expected and would have benefited from advice about, say, the effects of interest rate rises.

Purchasers were on the whole exceedingly satisfied with the way the purchase had been handled by the council/landlord and by their solicitor. The main difficulty appeared to be delays in the purchase process, the length of the purchase process varying from three months to over a year. Some purchasers found solicitors' and other fees connected with the purchase higher than expected.

Home ownership since purchase also appears to have been a very satisfactory experience for most purchasers. Many owners had initiated some improvement or repair work since purchase, although flat dwellers appeared to have limited awareness of their common repair responsibilities. Most intended to "stay put" for the foreseeable future, but younger purchasers were more likely to use the purchase as a stepping stone to moving up the property market. There was some concern, however, among a fifth of purchasers about keeping up with mortgage payments or repair costs.

These findings suggest the 'right to buy' is working well for the majority of purchasers, who appear to be even more satisfied with their experiences than first-time buyers in the private housing market. They nonetheless point to room for improvement in certain areas, notably in the provision of information and advice, both before and after purchase.

3.2 Reasons for purchase

Without doubt, financial considerations, notably the attractive discount, were uppermost in mind by purchasers in reaching a decision to buy, although purchase was motivated by other considerations as well. As one purchaser put it:

"It just seemed the logical thing to do if you were getting so much discount ... especially in view of the way house prices are rising all the time."
The great majority of purchasers saw buying their house or flat as much more sense than renting and as outweighing the costs and responsibilities of home ownership. The mortgage was seen as representing a similar amount to that currently being paid in rent, even at a time of high interest rates and rises in repair, maintenance and buildings insurance costs. According to one report, the average right to buy mortgage payment of £23 a week in Scotland was only £3 more than the average council house rent (1).

As indicated in the group discussions with purchasers, rents would continue to rise while mortgage payments would occasionally fall; and whereas mortgage payments would come to an end and benefit the individual, rent payments would not.

Purchase was of particular appeal to younger purchasers, on the one hand, who could not afford to buy in the private market and who took the earliest opportunity to take advantage of the discount rates, often with a view to moving into the private market later on. Older purchasers, on the other hand, saw purchase as "cementing" their attachment to the property they lived in, often with a view to passing on the property to their family. Other factors, such as having already spent a lot of their own money home improvements or dissatisfaction with repairs services, also spurred on some tenants to purchase.

Uncertainties about their future as tenants appears to have been a motivating factor among some who had bought, particularly former tenants of Scottish new town development corporations or the Scottish Special Housing Association (now Scottish Homes). The greater freedom to move house afforded by house purchase than by renting was cited as another factor, particularly among younger purchasers in new towns.

3.3 Advice and information

In a working party report published some years ago, the Scottish branch of the Institute of Housing said that prospective purchasers "needed to have as much information as possible to determine whether buying their home is still the best course for them" (2). This information should tell the buyer how much their purchase will cost, what precisely is included in the sale, and what are the responsibilities of home ownership. Our survey findings suggest that these information needs continue to be as pressing today. Few housing authorities produce right to buy literature of their own. The government's own leaflet on the right to buy issued in 1987, required updating to reflect legislative and other changes, and a revised leaflet "Buy Your Home" was issued in 1990. This, together with the supporting information on the right to buy application form, offers tenants general information about the costs and responsibilities of home ownership.

What prospective buyers appear to need most is advice and information about the right to buy tailored to their financial and other circumstances. This is all the more crucial at a time of rising mortgage interest rates and repair costs.
This point is borne out by the fact that owners who had sought advice before purchase were less, likely to report problems or difficulties after purchase, such as concern with keeping up with mortgage payments.

As suggested in the Institute of Housing report, this information should be broken down into:

Costs

* monthly mortgage payments plus mortgage and insurance costs
* repairs and maintenance costs
* buildings insurance
* service charges (which can be especially high in multi-storey flats)

What is purchased

* details of the property to be bought, including garden ground (with map if possible denoting exact boundaries)
* details of common ownership rights and responsibilities, including access rights (to help avoid future disputes with the authority or neighbours)

Responsibilities

* common law repair responsibilities
* responsibilities laid down in the title deeds
* responsibilities for the costs of repairs, including details of arrangements for the levying and recovery of any charges
* rules about upkeep of garden grounds and common parts.

Prospective purchasers should also be told about any proposed modernisation or environmental improvement work or other plans by the authority which could affect their decision to purchase or the timing of their purchase.

In 1989 the Law Society of Scotland introduced a free advice scheme of its own for home buyers, "Home Free", under which solicitors were prepared, free of charge, to advise purchasers about the pitfalls and responsibilities of home ownership (3). About 10 per cent of solicitors in Scotland were expected to offer this service, prompted partly by concern among solicitors that many people were often frightened of making an initial approach and partly by concern about the activities of some doorstep house sales firms. A series of factsheets was
launched as part of the scheme in late 1990 and covers a very extensive range of topics, including: council house sales; purchase costs; surveys and valuations; mortgages; home improvements and repairs; moving home; and areas of concern such as "blackmail selling" by estate agents and "churning" by insurance agents in order to earn higher commissions.

**Recommendation 1**

Public sector landlords involved in the sale of houses and flats under the "right to buy" should widely distribute to tenants written advice and information about house purchase and home ownership, including information about the advantages and disadvantages of ownership and the responsibilities involved. This information could appear in tenants' handbooks and information packs. All tenants should also receive copies of the government leaflet "Buying your Home", which the Scottish Office should update regularly. Copies of the "Home Free" pack of the Law Society of Scotland should also be made widely available.

When deciding whether or not to buy, tenants should be directed to local sources of professional advice. A statement should be included advising tenants to be careful of door-to-door salesmen, especially with quasi public names.

Landlords should provide prospective purchasers, on applying to buy, with advice and information about home ownership tailored to their financial and other circumstances. This information should include estimates of house purchase fees, monthly mortgage payments, and post-purchase costs (building insurance, repair costs, service charges etc). It should also include advice and information about the different types of mortgage and house survey available, with explanations of the advantages and disadvantages of each, and comparative costs and warnings about the 'hidden costs' of cashing in endowment mortgages.

Landlords should keep under regular review their policies for giving advice and information to prospective purchasers.

3.4 **Door to door sales**

Our findings suggest that most tenants are well able to protect themselves from door-to-door pressures to buy their house or flat. Only a very small proportion of purchasers had been influenced by door-to-door sales in their decision to buy, and far more had been put off or irritated by doorstep sellers than had been persuaded by them. There is nevertheless cause for concern about the sales techniques of some firms and the difficulties experienced by a few purchasers taking up offers. Although companies which adopt unfair trade practices risk having their licence to sell credit removed, no such action has so far been taken against doorstep sellers. In March, 1990, however, the Office of Fair
Trading warned in a circular that credit brokers which undertook "undesirable activities" connected with the sale of council houses could have their credit licences revoked (4). Unfair trading practices include "cold calling" by credit vendors, concluding endowment insurance policies before the property is valued or purchased, misleading tenants into believing that the firm had some connection with the local authority, and putting financial pressure on tenants to enter contracts for home improvements as a condition of the mortgage agreement.

In the circular, the OFT encouraged local authorities to monitor and bring complaints to its attention. Some months earlier, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities had agreed to urge housing authorities to liaise closely with regional council trading standards and consumer protection departments to help put an end to any illegal cold canvassing connected with the right to buy (5). The SCC's survey showed that at least one local authority, Stirling District Council, had issued a leaflet advising tenants how to deal with doorstep sellers; tenants were encouraged to contact the council if they felt that they had been subjected to high pressure sales techniques.

Recommendation 2

The Office of Fair Trading should keep under continuing review the door-to-door sales activities of firms taking advantage of tenants with a view, if necessary, to mounting full scale investigations. This review, and any investigations, should fully extend to the operation of firms in Scotland. The OFT should call on public sector landlords and advice agencies in Scotland to notify them of any complaints in this area.

3.5 Landlords

Most purchasers were happy with the landlord's handling of their application to buy, but some purchasers complained about the length of time it took to complete the purchase. The right to buy legislation envisaged a purchase process of seven months from application to buy to completion of sale, assuming there were no disputes between offer and acceptance. Over 40 per cent of purchasers in our survey reported that the sale had taken more than seven months to complete. Some of the local authority staff interviewed attributed delays to increases in the volume of sales which had not been matched by appropriate changes in administrative procedures or resources to pay for additional staff. The average time to complete a sale - just over six and a half months - was nonetheless a considerable improvement of the position in the early 1980s, when sales on average took some months longer (6).

Two complaints to the local government ombudsman in 1989 highlighted how delays in the purchase process could in some instances give rise to considerable distress and financial loss on the part of purchasers (7). In one case, the purchaser's husband died before the sale was completed and the purchaser claimed that if the authority had dealt with their application without delay, her
mortgage would have been covered by insurance. As a result, she was now having to pay the mortgage herself. The ombudsman concluded that maladministration had taken place, arising from inadequate procedures in the handling of the application, and the authority agreed to pay compensation of £2,700 to the purchaser for the injustice caused. In the second case, the purchaser claimed that following her husband's death during the application the housing department had failed to notify the legal department of the authority of the consequent transfer of tenancy to herself. This had resulted in the re-application to purchase being delayed and, as a result, an increase in the purchase price. The ombudsman concluded that poor co-ordination between local authority departments had given rise to maladministration and recommended compensation of £525 to the purchaser.

The ombudsman's annual report for 1988-89 also revealed that a significant number of complaints had come from tenants and former tenants of district councils which had made errors or failed to consult neighbours properly in defining land boundaries, particularly garden grounds, pending a sale (8). These had given rise to "acrimonious exchanges and deteriorating relationships" between purchasers and neighbours and to injustices which had been difficult to rectify.

One source of complaint highlighted in our survey was the apparent reluctance or refusal of landlords to attend to repairs, other than basic ones, during the application period, despite the applicant paying the same rent as before. The law requires landlords to attend only to statutory and common law repair obligations, such as keeping the house structurally sound or wind and watertight. Other repair undertakings, except if written into the lease, need no longer apply and are a matter of policy. The report of the Scottish branch of the Institute of Housing recommended that housing authorities should review their practices to ensure that their repair obligations in this period continue to be properly fulfilled (9). They should explain in writing to applicants what repairs the landlord will carry out pending the sale and which ones are the purchaser's responsibility. This would help to minimise possible confusion, misunderstanding and resentment among prospective purchasers.

**Recommendation 3**

Public sector landlords should inform purchasers in writing, on receipt of their application, of the date by which the sale is expected to be completed; this should not normally be more than six months after application. Where delays are recurrent, landlords should review their procedures for processing applications.

Landlords should also give purchasers written information about their policies on attending to repairs and maintenance up to the completion of the sale and inform purchasers of their responsibilities.
3.6 Solicitors

An exceedingly high proportion of purchasers - around three quarters - were very satisfied with the work of their solicitor, who had often been selected on personal recommendation. This satisfaction level was even higher than that reported among first-time buyers of private housing or the population generally. Only a few purchasers, however, had shopped around for a solicitor. The very small proportion (5 per cent) of dissatisfied purchasers mostly complained about poor communication with their solicitor.

Most purchasers seemed to have been aware of the likely legal costs of purchase and had therefore not been surprised by the size of the solicitor's fee. About a quarter of purchasers nonetheless found their solicitor's charges higher than they had expected, especially if they had not asked for an estimate. There was some evidence from the group discussions that some solicitors, however, had allowed payment of their fees in instalments rather than insist on a single payment.

Under the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act, recently passed by parliament, licensed conveyancers as well as solicitors will be able to arrange house purchase. This is expected to lead to increased competition and lower charges for conveyancing, a development the SCC has very much welcomed, subject to various safeguards (10). In anticipation of competition, a solicitors's co-operative, Solicitors' Finance Services, has recently set up a pilot scheme of "one-stop shops" at the 260 offices of its member firms (11). These developments make it even more important that purchasers are given advice and information which will help them to choose a solicitor/conveyancer and work out their purchase costs.

Recommendation 4

Solicitors and licensed conveyancers should issue written information telling prospective purchasers what their services cover, with an updated guide to their fees and charges, and with details about payment arrangements, including any "easy payment" options. The Law Society of Scotland's "Home Free" package of information booklets (mentioned in section 3.3 above) is a welcome step in this direction. Solicitors should also be encouraged to advertise by "Mailshot". They should be given training in communication with their clients.

3.7 Lenders

The right to buy appears to have created very few problems or difficulties for prospective purchasers in obtaining a mortgage. Difficulties had been experienced by fewer than three per cent of purchasers in the sample. Only three had borrowed from their landlord as lender of last resort. Over two thirds of purchasers had borrowed from a building society, with most others
borrowing from a bank or insurance company. Most had dealt directly with the lender or through their solicitor to obtain a mortgage. Very few had relied on doorstep sellers.

Three quarters of purchasers took out more expensive endowment mortgages. A sizeable proportion were on lower incomes. This finding echoes the results of an earlier survey by the National Consumer Council, which found that two thirds of house buyers - mainly the younger and less well off - had opted for an endowment mortgage and that only 20 per cent of buyers said that they had been advised on the type of mortgage (12). Sixty per cent were unaware that six of the 10 largest building societies were "tied" to an insurance company, from which they could earn commissions ranging from £650 to £1,200.* Given the anxieties of many purchasers about keeping up with their mortgage payments at a time of rising interest rates, the question arises as to how many purchasers in the sample could really afford the endowment mortgages they were paying. These mortgages generally involve higher monthly payments, comprising an insurance premium and interest-only payments, with the insurance policy paying off the capital on maturity. They are less flexible than repayment mortgages in that they neither allow the borrower to extend the payment term nor temporarily pay the interest only. They have low "cash in" value if cancelled in the early years as purchasers switch to a repayment mortgage.

Nearly a third of purchasers had borrowed more money than the purchase price of their property to pay for home improvements, with an extra £3,000 being borrowed on average. It is not clear whether purchasers had already committed themselves to carrying out home improvements before the purchase or whether they had done so as a result of sales encouragement. There was some evidence that purchasers who had taken up door-to-door sales offers had borrowed considerably more money than the purchase price to pay for home improvements. One district council has claimed, for example, that some purchasers had been persuaded to take out larger loans to pay for, say, central heating and double glazing, only to discover later on that they could not keep up with the payments and had approached the council to be rehoused.

* In response to these points, the Scottish Liaison Committee of the Building Societies Association has commented that being linked to an insurance company does not absolve building societies from giving the best advice under the Financial Services Act.
Recommendation 5

Lenders or their agents, including insurance and door-to-door sales firms, should be under a legal requirement to tell purchasers in writing that the offer of a loan for house purchase is not conditional on the purchaser taking out endowment insurance or loans for home improvement, such as double glazing.

3.8 Valuations and surveys

Most purchasers were shown the lender's valuation report on their house or flat and a quarter arranged to have their own house survey carried out. There were no indications that lenders were putting difficulties in the way of purchasers seeing valuation reports, although purchasers who had sought advice about purchase beforehand were more likely to mention having seen the valuation report. As occupants of the property they wished to buy, most purchasers did not think it necessary to have their own surveys carried out; some were deterred by the additional cost; and some purchasers were not aware that they could commission their own house survey.

A considerable proportion of purchasers (25 per cent, compared with 19 per cent of first-time buyers in the private sector) had arranged to have their own surveys carried out. It is not clear what factors had prompted them to do so, but one possible explanation is that, compared with private sector purchasers, buyers have a stronger stake in the condition of the property they already occupy. Unlike private sector purchasers, they are not faced with the possibility of having to pay for more than one lender's valuation survey, so giving them more money in hand for additional survey work. Publicity about the condition of the public sector housing stock may also have prompted purchasers into having their own surveys carried out.

The proportion of purchasers not aware of or not arranging their own surveys is nonetheless a cause for concern. As indicated in a report by the National Consumer Council, many purchasers continue to be unaware that the valuation surveys they have paid for are carried out not on their behalf but for the building society before granting a mortgage (13). Purchasers also need to understand that surveys carried out for lender's valuation purposes will not necessarily uncover serious defects, which could be costly to put right. Although the House of Lords has ruled that purchasers can take legal action against negligent lender's valuations, only one in ten respondents in the NCC's survey who had discovered defects after house purchase had considered doing so (14). The NCC has recommended that mortgage lenders should develop a scheme to deal with complaints against surveyors and valuers in their employment.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland has already produced its own leaflet explaining the types of survey available, and this is normally issued to purchasers through lenders and solicitors. The RICS believes that
purchasers should be given as much encouragement as possible to arrange their own independent surveys in view of the difficulties that can arise if they are not carried out.

**Recommendation 6**

Lenders or their agents should automatically supply prospective purchasers with their own copies of valuation reports. This should be accompanied by explanatory information about different types of property inspection, such as the leaflet "House Valuations and Survey: The Choice Available", produced by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Scotland. Guidance should be given to purchasers about whether and how to arrange their own valuations and surveys.

3.9 **Housing costs**

Keeping up with mortgage payments and repair costs were sources of concern for one in ten purchasers in our sample. Two out of every five purchasers said that mortgage payments were higher than expected. Four per cent of purchasers said that they were having difficulties meeting mortgage payments, and a similar proportion had problems paying for repair bills. These concerns and difficulties were most apparent among younger purchasers, who had often had to borrow more money than older purchasers to buy their house or flat. According to figures supplied to the government, one per cent of home owners are six months in mortgage arrears, and 0.1 per cent of properties sold under the right to buy are subsequently repossessed (15).

These concerns or difficulties are attributable to various factors. Purchasers in our sample bought at a time of rises in interest rates. Many will be paying more in mortgage payments than they were in rent (in England, the average rent was 77 per cent of mortgage payments in the mid-eighties) (16). Many will have taken out more expensive endowment mortgages. Purchasers will also be faced with bills for repairs and services which were previously paid for by their landlord.

Discussions with housing staff indicated that authorities were prepared to deal sympathetically with owners who were having difficulties in meeting their housing costs, such as falling into mortgage arrears. This could include giving owners advice about deferred or extended mortgage payments. In serious cases, such as repossession, the authority could offer a tenancy, either by buying back the property or providing accommodation elsewhere, so long as the owner had genuine difficulties in keeping up with mortgage payments, in accordance with the Scottish Office Code of Guidance on Homelessness (17).

These findings reinforce the point already made above about the importance of purchasers having good access to housing advice. Purchasers who had sought housing advice beforehand were less likely to report concerns or difficulties with their housing costs. Only five purchasers had sought help with their difficulties after purchase, suggesting that access to housing advice, or
awareness of such advice, is not as good as it might be. Only a few specialist housing advice centres currently exist in Scotland, mostly provided by local authorities and Shelter.

Some purchasers were also surprised by the charges for common services in blocks of flats, such as charges for security, caretaking and common property management. These charges in some cases could amount to several hundreds of pounds a year, especially for items like lift maintenance in high rise blocks. Landlords are not legally obliged to give tenants any indication of what their share of these costs is likely to be as owners. At some point in the application process, tenants should be told what these costs will be.

See Recommendation 1

3.10 Repairs and improvements

Our findings suggest that the right to buy has encouraged most purchasers to carry out some repairs and improvements to their property but that a significant proportion of purchasers (a fifth) have been held back from carrying out further (or any) repair or improvement work because of limited finance, time or inclination. The most common repairs were roof repairs. The most frequently mentioned improvements were double glazing, central heating, and replacement of bathroom/kitchen units. Three quarters of purchasers had paid for repairs out of their own pocket, half doing so out of their savings. Only five per cent said that they had had difficulties meeting repair bills; about 7 per cent said that repair costs had been higher than expected.

One area of difficulty, highlighted in interviews with some housing staff and in the earlier study by the Scottish branch of the Institute of Housing, is that while housing authorities have certain powers to secure essential repair work, they have little control over non-essential or improvement work carried out by owners. The title deeds can say what basic repairs should be carried out but cannot insist upon certain improvements being done. This has had a "pepper pot" effect on estates where owners have not taken part in planned maintenance or improvement schemes (18). A related difficulty is that there is no hard and fast rule saying whether an item of work such as external re-painting or refurbishment, counts as an essential or non-essential repair or an improvement, although Lands Tribunal and the courts have laid down certain general principles (19). Problems also arise if owners cannot afford or dispute the need to get repairs done, when the authority must decide whether to meet the costs itself.

Recommendation 9

Public sector landlords should provide purchasers, before completion of the sale, with an itemised list of their repair and maintenance responsibilities. On completion of the sale, purchasers should also be given a summary of their responsibilities and written guidance about arranging for repairs to be carried out. They should be issued with a list of approved local contractors who could undertake such
work. Purchasers should be given advice and information about any planned maintenance, improvement or modernisation schemes they can choose to take part in.

3.11 Common repairs and factoring

Most purchasers were aware of their responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the "common parts" of their property, but many flat dwellers appeared to have an incomplete understanding of what items were covered. Fourteen per cent of flat dwellers in the sample were not aware of having any shared responsibilities at all. Many flat dwellers also appeared to have limited awareness of any factoring services or thought that they were poor value for money. A proportion of flat owners (9 per cent) said that they had had difficulties getting repairs done to the common parts, as a result, for example, of disputes between owners over costs.

The house sales working party of the Scottish branch of the Institute of Housing reported some years ago that only just over half of the 33 local authorities which had submitted specimen copies of their title deeds connected with house sales spelt out common repairs responsibilities in a comprehensive manner (20). Failure to set out these responsibilities clearly enough is likely to give rise to disputes and misunderstanding. Difficulties can also arise if owners are not given a proper say in the timing, scale, and execution of common repairs.

If there are no adequate provisions in the title deeds about common repair responsibilities in flatted properties, then the common law of the tenement applies. Briefly, this states that:

* the roof belongs to the owners living in top flats, who have a duty to keep it in good repair.

* the foundations and the garden and other surrounds are presumed to belong to the owners of the lowest flat, who may not do anything to the foundations or surrounds which could harm the interests of other owners.

* the external walls of each flat belong to each owner, but other owners can stop work on external walls which would endanger the security of the tenement.

* the floor and ceiling of each flat are divided in ownership by an imaginary line drawn through the middle of the joists, which may not be weakened or unduly exposed to fire risk.

* common passage and stairways belong in common to owners of flats to which they give access.
A study of the implications of mixed ownership for the repair and maintenance of properties and common areas, commissioned by the Scottish Office, is expected to shed further light on owners' understanding and experience of their common repair responsibilities (the results of this study, were not available at the time of writing). Householders have been asked about such matters as how they were made aware of their common repair responsibilities, who decided what work needed doing, expenditure on work done and how this was paid for, disputes with other owners, satisfaction with current arrangements for managing common repairs, standard of work done, general upkeep of the common parts, and so on (21). The law of the tenement is currently under review by the Scottish Law Commission, which is expected to issue a discussion document on this matter later in 1990.

In a discussion document issued in 1989, the Property Owners' and Factors Association, Scotland, called for a rationalisation of the management of common property, and this was broadly welcomed by the SCC (22). At the time of writing, the SCC was conferring with a number of organisations about how this could be achieved. A major concern was that without proper management of the common parts of the property, common repair and maintenance work would get neglected. This concern is likely to grow as more flats are sold off to sitting tenants, who up to purchase have relied on their landlord to factor the property. According to an Institute of Housing report cited above only a small number of housing authorities included provision for a factoring system in the title deeds of property sold under the right to buy, although possibly many more were providing a factoring service for owners in "everything but name" (23). One of the most well developed schemes is run by Scottish Homes (formerly Scottish Special Housing Association), which requires all new owners to pay an annual property management fee, currently £30 a year, and meet separately billed items of common repair (24). Key ideas put forward by the Property Owners and Factors Association include compulsory provision of a common repair and renewal fund and owners forming their own associations, on a block-by-block basis, to manage the common fund, with day-to-day administration being handed over to professional agents.

**Recommendation 9**

Scottish Homes, as the key housing development agency, should draw up proposals, in collaboration with other housing interests, for rationalising the management of common parts in blocks of flats, with a view to securing legislation in this area. The proposals should include provision for owners in blocks of flats to pay into a common fund to pay for factoring and common repair and renewal work. The fund would be managed by an association of owners and administered by a professional agent.
REFERENCES

1. Figures as quoted in the Scotsman, 13 March 1990.

2. Institute of Housing, Scottish Branch, House Sales: the Management Implications, para. 7.2.


6. Scottish Office, Council House Sales in Scotland, Central Research Unit papers, May 1985, p. 23. In the last quarter of 1982, for example, the average council house sale took ten months.


17. **Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1987**, Scottish Development Department, 1980, para. 2.16 (The code has been under review by the government, which is expected to issue a new code of guidance later in 1990).


19. In the *Scots Law Times*, 52, 1967, Lord Denning stated: "It seems to me that the test so far as one can give any test on these matters is this. If the work which is done is the provision of something new for the benefit of the occupier, that is properly speaking an improvement; but if it is only the replacement of something already there, which has become dilapidated or worn out, then albeit that it is a replacement by its modern equivalent, it comes within the category of repairs not improvement."


21. Written communication to SCC.


23. **House Sales**, op. cit., para. 5.12.

APPENDIX:

The Questionnaire
Most questions can be answered with a tick, but there is space for you to give comments or detailed information as well. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

1. How long have you been living at your present address? [ ] years approx.

2. Which part of Scotland do you live in?
   - district/town
   - region/island

BEFORE PURCHASE

About your house or flat.

3. When did you actually buy your house or flat? year: [19] month: 

4. Before purchase, who did you rent your house or flat from? **tick one box only**
   - district/islands council
   - new town development corporation
   - Scottish Special Housing Association
   - another landlord
   - did not rent at all

5. When was your house or flat built? **tick one box only**
   - before 1945
   - between 1945 and 1960
   - after 1960
   - don't know

PLEASE TURN OVER TO OTHER SIDE
6 What sort of house or flat do you live in?  

- detached house  
- semi-detached house  
- terraced house  
- four-in-a-block flat  
- low-rise block: up to 6 floors  
- high-rise block: over 6 floors  
- other: specify below.

7 Does your house or flat have:  

- its own garden for use of your household only?  
- back green or garden shared with other households?  
- garage/parking area?  
- none of the above

8 Is access to your house or flat:  

- at the ground floor?  
- by stairway only?  
- by lift?  
- none of the above

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
**Decision to buy**

9 How important were each of the following reasons for your decision to buy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attractive sale price, after discount</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more sense than renting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stepping stone to buying another house or flat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom to carry out own repairs and improvements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future nest egg/hedge against inflation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worries about rising rents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always wanted to own own home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an investment to sell later on at a profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more freedom to move house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have already spent a lot of own money on the property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor repairs service by the council/landlord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannot afford to buy in ‘open’ market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>something to leave to family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others in neighbourhood have bought</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cash help with purchase from family, relatives, etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncertainty about future change of landlord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down below any other reasons for decision to buy.

10 Before deciding to buy, did you consider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Can't recall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what your housing costs would be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what your repairs responsibilities would be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whether you might have to move house sometime?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE**
11 Was your decision to buy influenced by: 

- council/landlord
- building society
- family, friends, neighbours
- solicitor
- door-to-door salesman
- radio, TV or press
- bank, insurance firm, etc
- nobody in particular
- someone else: specify below.

Advice and information

12 Before purchase, did you approach any of the following people or bodies for advice and information about the ‘right to buy’? 

- tick one or more boxes

- the council/housing official
- solicitor
- building society
- bank
- insurance company
- surveyor
- advice centre
- anybody else? specify below.

nothing approached

Write down below any reasons why these bodies were ‘helpful’ or ‘not helpful’.

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
13 Before purchase, did you receive any written information (leaflets, booklets, etc) about the 'right to buy' from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tick one for each box ticked in the far left column, say whether</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or more boxes very quite not can't below helpful helpful helpful recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the council/landlord?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building society?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicitor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>door-to-door salesman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advice centre?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anybody else? specify below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobody else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down below any reasons why this information was 'very helpful' or 'not helpful'.

14 Looking back, were you given enough advice or information, before purchase, about:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tick one box only in each row yes, no, too can't enough little recall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your legal 'right to buy'?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the costs of home ownership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your future repairs responsibilities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

write down below what advice or information you could have been given before purchase.

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
Door-to-door sales

15 Before purchase, were you ever approached by any
door-to-door sales representatives about your ‘right to buy’?
Yes □ No □ Can’t recall □
Go to Q 20 Go to Q 20

*If ‘yes’, write down below where the sales representative was from (e.g., insurance or finance company, home
improvement firm, council, etc)*

[Blank space]

16 Did you find this approach: 

- helpful? □
- annoying? □
- misleading? □
- none of the above □
- can’t recall □

*Write down below reasons why you found the approach ‘helpful’, ‘annoying’ or ‘misleading’.*

[Blank space]

17 Did these approaches include any of the
following sorts of offer?

- a mortgage or loan □
- home improvements □
- repairs □
- redecoration □
- conveyancing □
- insurance □
- rent-free accommodation □
- other offers: specify below □

[Blank space]

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
18 Did you take up any of these offers?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Can't recall ☐

Go to Q 20

If 'yes' write down below which offers were taken up:

If 'no' write down below reasons for not taking up any offers:

Then go to Q 20

19 Have any of the offers you have taken up turned out to be less satisfactory than you had expected?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

If 'yes' write down the reasons for your dissatisfaction below:

THE PURCHASE

20 What was the purchase price of your house or flat after discount?

£

21 What percentage discount did you get? eg, '60 per cent'

☐ per cent discount

22 How have you paid for your house or flat?

Tick one box only

with a mortgage or loan

paid for outright, without a mortgage or loan

Go to Q 28

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
Mortgages and loans

23 How much have you borrowed to buy your house or flat? £

If the amount borrowed is higher than the purchase price, please say what the extra amount has been borrowed for (e.g. home improvements).

24 What sort of mortgage or loan has been taken out? 

- repayment mortgage (payment of interest and capital) □
- endowment mortgage (payment of interest and savings insurance) □
- part repayment and part endowment mortgage □
- don’t know □
- another sort of loan: specify below. □

25 Who is the mortgage or loan from? 

- building society □
- bank □
- insurance company □
- finance company □
- money lender □
- the council □
- family, relative, or friend □
- other: specify below □

from more than one source: specify sources below.

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
26 Who personally arranged the mortgage or loan for you?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>made my/our own arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicitor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative, friend, etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mortgage broker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the council/housing official</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>door-to-door sales representative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone else: <em>specify below</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Who actually pays back the mortgage or loan?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>self or spouse/partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone else living with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone else not living with you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private firm or agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other: <em>specify below</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 How did you choose a solicitor to arrange the purchase?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Through:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a friend, neighbour or relative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building society or other lender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an insurance or other firm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a door-to-door sales representative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the council/former landlord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an advertisement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the yellow pages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an advice centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used same solicitor before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by other means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannot recall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
29 Did you ‘shop around’ for a solicitor before making your choice?

Yes □  No □  Can’t recall □  If ‘yes’, how many did you approach? □

If ‘yes’, give below the reasons for your choice, eg. ‘cheapest’, ‘friendliest’

Surveys

30 Were survey reports on your house or flat:  
tick one box only

shown to you in writing? □
described to you verbally only? □
not shown or described to you at all? □
can’t remember, don’t know □

31 Apart from the lender’s valuation survey, did you have any additional surveys of your own carried out on your house or flat before purchase?

Yes □  No □  Don’t know □  Go to Q 33

32 If you didn’t get any additional surveys of your own carried out, could you say why not?

tick one box only

didn’t know about additional surveys □
didn’t think additional survey was necessary □
couldn’t afford to pay for additional survey □
one of the above reasons □

Fees and charges

33 Were you given estimates of:

tick one box only in each row

Yes  No  Can’t recall/ not applicable

lender’s charges? □  □  □
solicitor’s charges? □  □  □
surveyor’s charges? □  □  □

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
34 Were any of these charges: 

- higher than expected? 
- more or less less as expected? 
- lower than expected? 
- don't know/not applicable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lender's charges</th>
<th>solicitor's charges</th>
<th>surveyor's charges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purchase process as a whole

35 While buying your house or flat did you have any difficulties or problems to do with:

- getting a mortgage/loan? 
- the valuation of the property? 
- the level of discount? 
- getting basic repairs done? 
- the offer to sell? 
- delays in the purchase process? 
- other purchase problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Can't recall/not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*write down below details of any difficulties or problems.*

36 How long did the sale take to complete, starting with your application? 

- months approx.

37 Was this length of time to complete the sale:

- longer than you expected? 
- shorter than you expected? 
- more or less as expected? 
- don't know

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
38 On the whole, how satisfied were you with each of the following in helping you to buy your house or flat? tick one box only in each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very satisfied</th>
<th>fairly satisfied</th>
<th>rather dissatisfied</th>
<th>very dissatisfied</th>
<th>not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>council/landlord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building society/lender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surveyor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down below reasons for any dissatisfaction, saying which of the above you are referring to (eg. council, building society, etc)

39 On the whole, did you find the purchase process: tick one box only

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very straightforward?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairly straightforward, but with some difficulties?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rather difficult?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannot recall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down below details of any difficulties you had.

Please turn to the next page
AFTER PURCHASE

Housing costs

40 Have the following housing costs turned out to be higher or lower than expected at the time of purchase?

mortgage and loan repayments

higher than expected □
lower than expected □
more or less as expected □
don’t know, not applicable □

*tick one box only*

repairs and maintenance costs

higher than expected □
lower than expected □
more or less as expected □
don’t know, not applicable □

*tick one box only*

service charges (eg, security, factoring)

higher than expected □
lower than expected □
more or less as expected □
don’t know, not applicable □

*tick one box only*

other unexpected housing costs: *specify below.* □

41 Have you had any actual difficulties meeting: *tick one box only in each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Can’t recall/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mortgage or loan repayments?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repair or maintenance bills?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service charges (eg. security, factoring)?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If ‘yes’ to any of the above, have these difficulties been resolved?

Yes □ No □ Don’t know □

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
42 Have you had to approach anyone for help with your housing costs?

Yes ☐  No ☐  Can't recall ☐

If 'yes', please say below who you approached and what sort of help, if any, was given:

[Blank space]

Alterations and improvements

43 Since purchase, have any of the following alterations or home improvements been carried out?  

- new kitchen units fitted ☐
- new bathroom units fitted ☐
- central heating installed ☐
- double glazing installed ☐
- roof or cavity wall insulation ☐
- new plumbing installed ☐
- electrical rewiring ☐
- extension or garage built ☐
- door replacements ☐
- removal of/alterations to internal walls ☐
- roof replacement ☐
- other alterations or improvements: write down details below. ☐

[Blank space]

- no improvement work done ☐

44 Are there any alterations or home improvements you would still like to be done?

Yes ☐  No ☐  Don't know ☐

If 'yes', write down below what alterations or improvements you would like to be done.

[Blank space]

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
Repairs and maintenance

45 Since purchase, has repair or maintenance work been carried out on any of the following? (do not count improvements mentioned above)

- the roof, chimneys, gutters
- walls, floors, ceilings
- windows
- doors
- plumbing
- drainage
- electrical system
- fixtures
- stairway
- balconies
- heating system
- other work: specify below

[Box] no repairs done since purchase

[Box] Go to Q 48

46 What sort of repair was carried out last time? specify below.

[Box]

47 How was this work paid for? tick one box only

- out of own pocket
- with a grant
- with a loan/on credit
- paid for by someone else
- combination of above
- by other means: specify below

[Box]

If paid for out of 'own pocket', was the money taken out of savings set aside?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]
- Don't know [ ]

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
48 Is there any repair or maintenance work still needing to be done?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don’t know ☐

If ‘yes’, write down below details of work needing to be done.

If ‘yes’, write down below why this work is still waiting to be done.

Common repairs

49 Do you have any responsibilities for the repair or maintenance of parts of your property shared with neighbours?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don’t know ☐

Go to Q 51 Go to Q 51

If ‘yes’, could you say which common parts of the property you have shared repairs responsibilities for? Write down details below.

50 Since purchase, have there been any problems or difficulties in getting repairs done to common parts?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don’t know/ not applicable ☐

If ‘yes’, write down below details of difficulties.

PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE
Factoring

51 Is the property you occupy provided with factoring services? (eg, by council, property manager)

Yes □ No □ Don’t know □
Go to Q 55 Go to Q 55

52 If ‘yes’, could you say exactly what the factoring services cover?
Write down details below.

53 How much do you pay a year in standing charges for factoring? £ □ a year
(do not count repair bills)

54 Do you think that the factoring services you get represent:
tick one box only

- good value for money?
- poor value for money?
- mixed views/unsure?

Write down below any reasons why ‘good’ or ‘poor value for money’.

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
# Housing problems

55 Since purchase, have you had any problems or difficulties connected with:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tick one box only in each row</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know/not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- repairs and maintenance?  
  *If 'yes', write down details below.*

- improvements or modernisation?  
  *If 'yes', write down details below.*

- access to common parts or shared supply services?  
  *If 'yes', write down details below.*

56 Since purchase, have you been involved in any property disputes or problems with:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tick one box only in each row</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- the council/former landlord?  
  *If 'yes', write down details below.*

- with neighbours/other owners?  
  *If 'yes', write down details below.*

**PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE**
57 Since purchase, have you sought advice about any housing problems or difficulties you’ve had from:  

- the council/former landlord?  
- a solicitor?  
- an advice centre?  
- building society or other lender?  
- architect, builder or surveyor?  
- somebody else?: specify below  

advice not sought  

Go to Q 60

58 What was this advice about? Write down details below.

59 Was this advice, on the last occasion:  

- very helpful?  
- fairly helpful?  
- not helpful?  
- cannot recall.

Write down below why this advice was ‘very helpful’ or ‘not helpful’.

Future intentions

60 Do you expect to sell your house or flat sometime?  

- yes, within, say, next five years  
- yes, but probably not within next five years  
- not very likely at all  
- undecided/don’t know

Go to Q 62  

Go to Q 62

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
61 If you do sell your house or flat, would you like to: 

- buy another dearer or better one? 
- buy another in the same price range? 
- buy something much cheaper? 
- rent once again from council, etc? 
- do something else: specify below

**do not know/undecided**

**Satisfaction with home ownership**

62 On the whole, would you say that ownership of your house or flat has been: 

- a very satisfactory experience? 
- a satisfactory experience, but with some problems? 
- an unsatisfactory experience? 
- difficult to say/don't know

**63 Are you dissatisfied for any of the following reasons?** 

- worried about keeping up with the mortgage 
- repair and maintenance responsibilities or costs 
- concern about resale value of property 
- unhappy with the neighbourhood 
- other reasons: write down details below.

**PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE**
ABOUT YOUR HOUSEHOLD

64 Age of main owner or joint owners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>First Owner</th>
<th>Second Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 - 24</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 44</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 59</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or over</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65 Number of people normally living in your household who are aged:

- under 16 □
- 16 or over □

66 Are you in:

- full-time employment? □
- part-time employment? □
- not in employment? □

67 Write down below the title of your present or last full- or part-time job:

First or main owner: [Blank]

Second owner (if applicable): [Blank]

68 What, roughly, is your annual household income? (including pensions, state benefits, etc)

- £5,000 a year or under □
- over £5,000 but not more than £10,000 a year □
- over £10,000 but not more than £15,000 a year □
- over £15,000 but not more than £20,000 a year □
- over £20,000 a year □

PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
Finally, please feel free to add below any additional information or comments or experience of the 'right to buy'.

Thank you very much for your help. Please return this questionnaire as soon as possible in the FREEPOST envelope provided (no stamp is needed).

Remember to fill in the separate form enclosed if you want your name to be put forward for the prize draw of 10 cash prizes of £25 each. The closing date for entries: 31 October 1989

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS
SCOTTISH CONSUMER COUNCIL
EXPERIENCE OF YOUR ‘RIGHT TO BUY’

I/we have completed and enclose the questionnaire on my/our experience of the right to buy and wish to enter for the prize draw of 10 cash prizes of £25 each.

I/we understand that my/our name(s) and address will be kept confidential.

Name(s) _____________________________________________
                                            ___________________________
                                            ___________________________

Address _____________________________________________
                                            ___________________________
                                            ___________________________

Postcode _________

Remember to enclose your completed questionnaire. Return in the FREEPOST envelope provided (no stamp needed) by Tuesday 31 October 1989 to be sure of your entry for the prize draw. Prizewinners will receive their cheques by post seven days later.