

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24th MARCH 2015**

Question

Will the Minister inform members what proportion of social housing units, whether properties of Andium Homes or of other trust providers, are categorised as under-occupied?

Of this number, what proportion are:

- (a) pensioner households where the adult children have left;
- (b) non-pensioner households where the family has left home;
- (c) households where there are adult children still resident;
- (d) households where there are health, disability or other needs which require an extra room?

Is it still the case, as previously with the Housing Department, that in (a) and (b) above, the under occupation is disregarded if the tenant has applied to downsize? In this context, how many of the 154 Andium one-bedroom properties which become available are used for downsizing annually?

Answer

Affordable (social) housing providers do not record statistics on under-occupation levels in their existing housing stock.

However, the 2011 Census identified that 17 percent of existing tenants in States (now Andium Homes), housing trust or parish rental accommodation were under-occupying their properties by one bedroom, and 2 percent were under-occupying by two or more bedrooms. In comparison, 39 percent of households in the United Kingdom living in social rental accommodation have more than one spare bedroom.

It should also be noted that, in the situations described, (c) would not be considered under-occupation and (d) would provide reasonable medical grounds for a household to have a spare bedroom.

It is important that under-occupation is handled sensitively and tenants are supported to transfer into a size and type of property which is appropriate to their needs, for example, where under-occupation is the result of older tenants remaining in their existing properties after their children have grown up and left home.

The responses of the Minister for Social Security to written question 8648 of Deputy M. Tadier on 24th February and the oral question on 10th March explain the implications of under-occupation in the context of the accommodation component of Income Support, although not all households who under-occupy will be in receipt of Income Support.

In the period 2013 to present, Andium Homes allocated 48 percent of one bedroom properties to under-occupying households.

The regulatory framework for social housing – which the Minister for Housing will bring forward by the summer – will provide a mechanism to review occupancy levels within existing social housing stock, and support the development of policies to address under-occupation.