

# Scottish Government submission of 16 June 2023

## PE1957/G: Home Reports – make surveyors more accountable

This petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure surveyors are legally responsible for the accuracy of information provided in the single survey, and to increase the liability on surveyors to pay repair bills where a Home Report fails to highlight existing faults in the condition of the property.

We previously responded to this petition on 6 September 2022 and our position remains unchanged. The view of the Scottish Government is that this would be inappropriate for the following reasons:

- The scope of the home report survey is outlined at the beginning of the report. It clearly identifies the limitations of the survey being carried out and the extent of the survey is clear. It is aimed at providing an assessment of all elements that can be accessed in the property at the time of inspection, based on a visual, non-invasive inspection/survey. The surveyor is not expected to move any obstructions within the property and externally is expected to carry out the inspection from ground level.
- Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, only members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) can carry out the single survey and valuation in the home report. A home report must be signed off by a fully qualified member of RICS who is also a registered valuer. To gain qualification to the RICS the valuer must have passed the appropriate examinations or hold an accredited degree and will have passed an Assessment of Professional Competence based on relevant work experience. Members of the RICS who carry out a home report must have in place a complaints handling procedure, offer independent 3rd party recourse to complaints, including Alternative Dispute Resolution by The Property Ombudsman (TPO), and carry professional indemnity insurance (PII).

Therefore, we do not support the petitioner.

Further to this, the committee has written to the Scottish Government on 19 May 2023 to request an update on plans to review the Home Report.

We can confirm that the five-year review on Home Reports, published in 2015, found that the original objectives were still being met and were still appropriate.

A second review was planned for 2020 but this work was postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Our current plans are that the review of Home Reports will now be progressed alongside our work to update cross-tenure housing standards. It will fully consider the findings from the first review together with other issues which have emerged since, such as the recommendations by the Scottish Parliamentary Working Group on Tenement Maintenance and the measures set out in our Heat in Buildings Strategy. We will engage with key stakeholders as we reflect on how Home Reports should evolve to ensure prospective purchasers are furnished with a useful assessment of the house condition which will in turn help them to make informed decisions about purchase.