

## Starters orders: Government appoints agent for rollout of starter homes programme

21 October 2016 | By [Helen Crane](#), [Samuel Horti](#)

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has finally “started the ball rolling” on the government’s long-awaited £2.3bn starter homes programme.



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The HCA has appointed Carter Jonas to seek out **private land sites for the starter homes programme**, which was first announced by then chancellor George Osborne almost a year ago.

The agent has also been asked to identify sites for the development of other tenures, to be funded through a range of existing HCA programmes.

Half the starter homes fund will be used to acquire land, while the other half will go towards construction, development funding and subsidies.

The focus is believed to be on London and the South East, where first-time buyers find it most difficult to get on the housing ladder.

The focus of the new scheme will be London and the South East – Source: [JZA/Creative Commons](#)

A number of sites have already been acquired, but it has yet to be decided whether the homes will be delivered directly by the government or in joint ventures with developers – and this may vary from site to site.

“They’re just looking to start the ball rolling,” said a senior market source. “The next step is to decide how the homes will be delivered.”



<sup>3</sup> Speaking to **Property Week at Mipim UK** this week, Sir Edward Lister, the chair of the HCA, said “tight criteria” would be applied to the starter homes fund.

“We don’t want to go up against local developers,” he said. “It’s really where they’re not going to bring [development] forward, that’s where we come in.”



He added that the HCA would “do joint ventures and all sorts of things” to bring schemes forward.

A HCA

spokesperson added: “The HCA is currently reviewing suitable sites and has appointed agents to undertake some preliminary work on some of these. Carter Jonas is one such agent.”

## 200,000 starter homes pledged for 2020

The starter homes programme – unveiled in last November’s Spending Review – will provide purpose-built homes to first-time buyers under the age of 40 at a 20% discount. The government pledged to build 200,000

starter homes by 2020.

However, the industry has since been waiting for details of how the scheme will work in practice.

In May, **the British Property Federation warned that time was running out** for the government to meet the 200,000 target. Its chief executive, Melanie Leech, said at the time that “the longer the government takes to iron out the details of this policy, the more that target slips into the distance”.

At Property Week’s RESI conference last month, housing minister Gavin Barwell said the government might include discounted rental homes in the 200,000 figure as part of **a shift in emphasis from home ownership to other tenures**.

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