



Press Release Tuesday 2nd September 2008

Stamp duty and benefit measures a step in the right direction but Government still has a lot more to do say Scottish home builders

The Scottish home building industry today recognised the Treasury's announcement that stamp duty is to be axed for a year on properties costing less than £175,000 as a step in the right direction. It also greeted reforms to Income Support for Mortgage Interest which will see the maximum claim size increased to £175,000 and waiting times reduced to 13 weeks. (Other measures unveiled by Communities Secretary Hazel Blear do not apply in Scotland.)

Jonathan Fair, Chief Executive of Homes for Scotland, the organisation which represents companies building 95% of the country's new homes, said:

“Clearly anything that helps inject activity back into the market, particularly as far as first time buyers are concerned, and improves consumer confidence are positive steps but today's announcements represent just two of the measures we have been demanding from Westminster over the last few months. The risk is that this could be too little too late.

If the Government is serious about re-energising the housing market and supporting one of the UK's most important industries, it must immediately address the fundamental issue of mortgage funding. Quite simply, if it does nothing then the measures introduced today will be incapable of tackling the scale of crisis now facing us.”

Referring to other measures unveiled by Communities Secretary Hazel Blears, which do not apply in Scotland, Fair said:

“We will study the detail of what has been announced today to determine what further action is required from the Scottish Government.”

Ends

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Note to Editors:

1. Homes for Scotland (www.homesforscotland.com) represents the country's home building industry which:
 - is the largest source of private investment in Scotland
 - is the largest user of the planning system in Scotland
 - last year built 20,000 new homes, contributed £6bn to the economy and directly impacted the employment of 100,000 people
2. Click [here](#) to read Homes for Scotland's "Call to Action" which outlines the Scottish home building industry's demands of both Scottish and Westminster Governments.

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