



# New Build Home Survey 2017

## Report of findings



February 2018

[www.southlakeland.gov.uk](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk)

[www.investinsouthlakeland.gov.uk](http://www.investinsouthlakeland.gov.uk)



Executive Summary .....	4
Introduction .....	4
Key Findings .....	4
Who is buying new homes in South Lakeland and why? .....	4
What do people think of their new homes? .....	4
Further Information and Contact Details .....	5
Introduction .....	6
Findings .....	7
Part 1: Who is buying new build homes in South Lakeland? .....	7
Household Size and Type .....	7
Occupancy Levels .....	7
Household Ages .....	8
Employment Status .....	9
Place of Work .....	9
Location of Previous Home.....	10
First Time Buyers .....	11
Reasons for Moving Home .....	12
Holiday/Second Homes .....	13
Part 2: What do people think of their new build homes? .....	14
Storage Space.....	14
Room Sizes .....	14
Future Proof Homes .....	14
Broadband Services .....	15
Environmental Sustainability .....	16
Other Views.....	17
APPENDIX 1: Copy of Questionnaire.....	19

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> Household Types .....	7
<b>Figure 2:</b> Household Size .....	7
<b>Figure 3:</b> Household Types and Numbers of Bedrooms .....	8
<b>Figure 4:</b> Age Profile of Individuals .....	8
<b>Figure 5:</b> Employment Status of Householders .....	9
<b>Figure 6:</b> Place of Work of Survey Respondents .....	10
<b>Figure 7:</b> Where Households Moved From .....	10
<b>Figure 8:</b> Where Households moved from: By Town .....	11
<b>Figure 9:</b> First Time Buyers and House Sizes .....	11
<b>Figure 10:</b> Where First Time Buyers have moved from .....	12
<b>Figure 11:</b> Reasons for moving into a new build home .....	12
<b>Figure 12:</b> Comments on storage issues .....	14
<b>Figure 13:</b> Satisfaction with broadband provision .....	15
<b>Figure 14:</b> Comments on broadband provision .....	15
<b>Figure 15:</b> Environmentally Friendly 'Optional Extras' .....	16
<b>Figure 16:</b> Types of environmental measures householders would have been interested in	16

# Executive Summary

---

## Introduction

In March 2017 the Council's Development Plans team undertook a postal survey to find out more about who is buying new build homes in the district (excluding the national park areas) and their experience of living in their new homes. We surveyed a range of new sites in Kendal, Ulverston and Grange-over-Sands.

We will use this information to help us further our understanding of the need and demand for new homes in the district. It will form part of our evidence base to help us plan for the right number, type and mix of new homes and will be used to inform future planning policies and guidance relating to the standards of new housing developments.

In total 254 surveys were posted out and 96 were received, giving a response rate of 38%.

## Key Findings

### *Who is buying new homes in South Lakeland and why?*

- 👤 The majority of households were couples, a third were families, and 20% were single.
- 👤 34% of households were adult only and over the age of 50.
- 👤 A quarter of the households contained children aged under 15.
- 👤 The average household size was 2.4 people.
- 👤 Over 70% of householders were employed/self-employed.
- 👤 Just over a fifth of householders were retired.
- 👤 Almost half of the householders that were employed/self-employed worked in the same town that they live in, with a further 17% working elsewhere in South Lakeland. 17% worked outside of Cumbria and 7% worked from home.
- 👤 56% of the households moved from within the same town into their new home (this was as high as 64% in Kendal), and a further 15% from elsewhere with South Lakeland, meaning over 70% of moves were within the district.
- 👤 A quarter of households moved from outside Cumbria. This varied significantly between towns – in Grange-over-Sands 64% of people moved from outside Cumbria, compared with less than 20% in Kendal.
- 👤 Almost a third of respondents were first time buyers, and almost 90% of the two bedroomed new build houses were bought by first time buyers.
- 👤 People bought their new build homes for a wide range of reasons – the most commonly recorded were that people liked the location of their new home, they were specifically looking for a new build in the area, and were attracted to their new home/development when it was advertised. 'Upsizing' and setting up home for the first time were also popular reasons.

### *What do people think of their new homes?*

- 🏠 The vast majority (92%) of households were happy with the room sizes in their new home but some concerns were raised with bedroom and living area sizes.
- 🏠 30% of households did not consider they have enough storage space.
- 🏠 Around 60% of households felt their new homes will continue to be suitable in the future should their needs change. 1 in 5 households did not feel their homes will

continue to meet their needs in the future and 18% weren't sure. A number of respondents mentioned potential problems with stairs in future and others stated they will need to move as their household grows in size.

- 🏠 44% of households were dissatisfied with the broadband services available to them, reporting very low speeds and a lack of fibre broadband. There was a general expectation of high speed broadband on new estates.
- 🏠 Only 7% of households recalled being offered 'optional extras' in relation to green build/environmental sustainability, whilst 58% would have been interested in purchasing such extras. 30% of households stated that they would have been interested in rainwater collection systems/water butts, and 29% expressed an interest in solar panels.
- 🏠 People raised a number of positive and negative issues in relation to their new homes.
  - ✓ Positive remarks were made on the design and quality of homes and low running costs and energy efficiency. A number of households also welcomed the help to buy schemes which enabled them to buy their home. Many people also commended the location of their homes and the access to good local facilities and transport links.
  - ✗ Negative remarks were made around the upkeep of rented properties on developments, anti-social behaviour issues, parking problems, lack of safe children's play areas resulting in children playing in roads, unmaintained communal landscaped areas, difficulties navigating the estate for blind and mobility impaired people due to design, being flooded in December 2015, and poor broadband speeds.

## Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to speak to a Council officer regarding this survey or would like any further information please contact:

Development Plans Team  
South Lakeland House  
Lowther Street  
Kendal  
Cumbria  
LA9 4DQ

Email: [development.plans@southlakeland.gov.uk](mailto:development.plans@southlakeland.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01539 733 333

## Introduction

---

In March 2017 the Council's Development Plans team sent out postal questionnaires to residents who have recently purchased new build homes in the district. The aim of the survey was to collect information to help us further our understanding of the need and demand for new homes in the district, by finding out more about the households living in new build properties and their views on their new homes.

The information collected through this survey will form part of our evidence base to help us plan for the right number, type and mix of new homes, and will be used to inform future planning policies and guidance relating to the standards of new housing developments.

Questionnaires were sent to privately owned properties on a range of new build sites in Kendal, Ulverston and Grange-over-Sands. We asked a range of questions about the households including their size, age, employment status and where they had moved from. We then asked a series of questions about people's views on their new homes including on issues such as space and storage, accessibility, broadband service and environmental sustainability. A copy of the questionnaire can be found at Appendix 1.

Questionnaires were sent to 254 addresses, and 96 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 38%, which is considered to be a good level of response for a postal survey. 77 responses were received from Kendal sites, 14 from Grange-over-Sands sites and 5 from Ulverston.



## Findings

### Part 1: Who is buying new build homes in South Lakeland?

#### Household Size and Type

Almost half (47%) of the households that responded to the survey were couples, 34% were families and 19% were single. The average size of households responding to the survey was 2.4 people. Two thirds of the households comprised of one or two people.

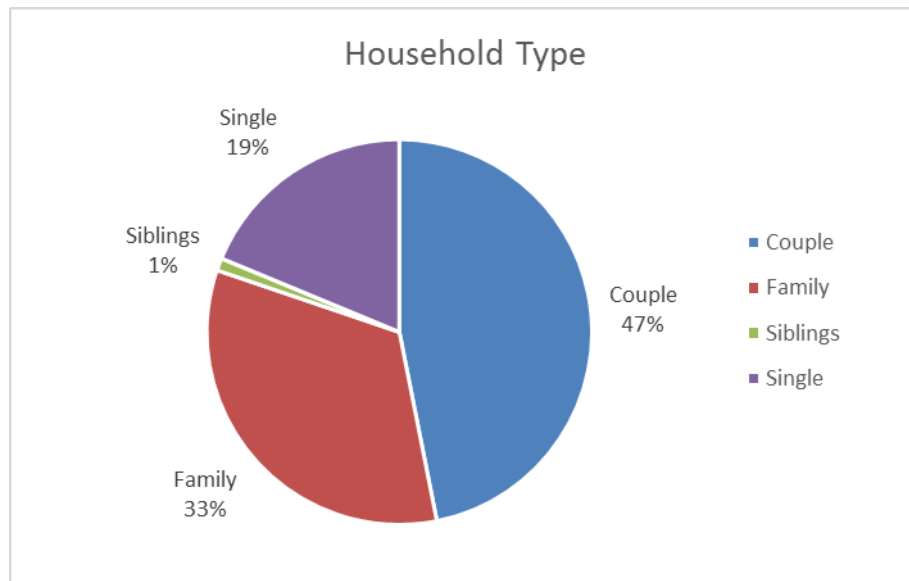


Figure 1: Household Types

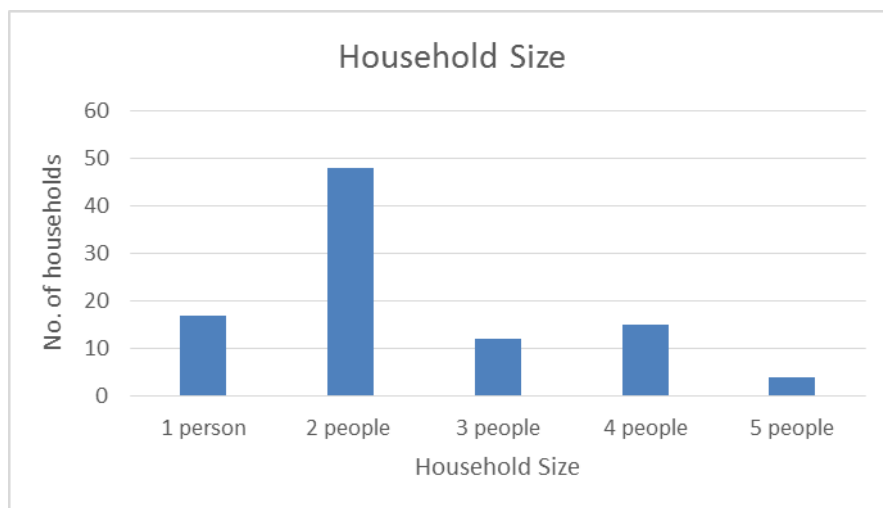


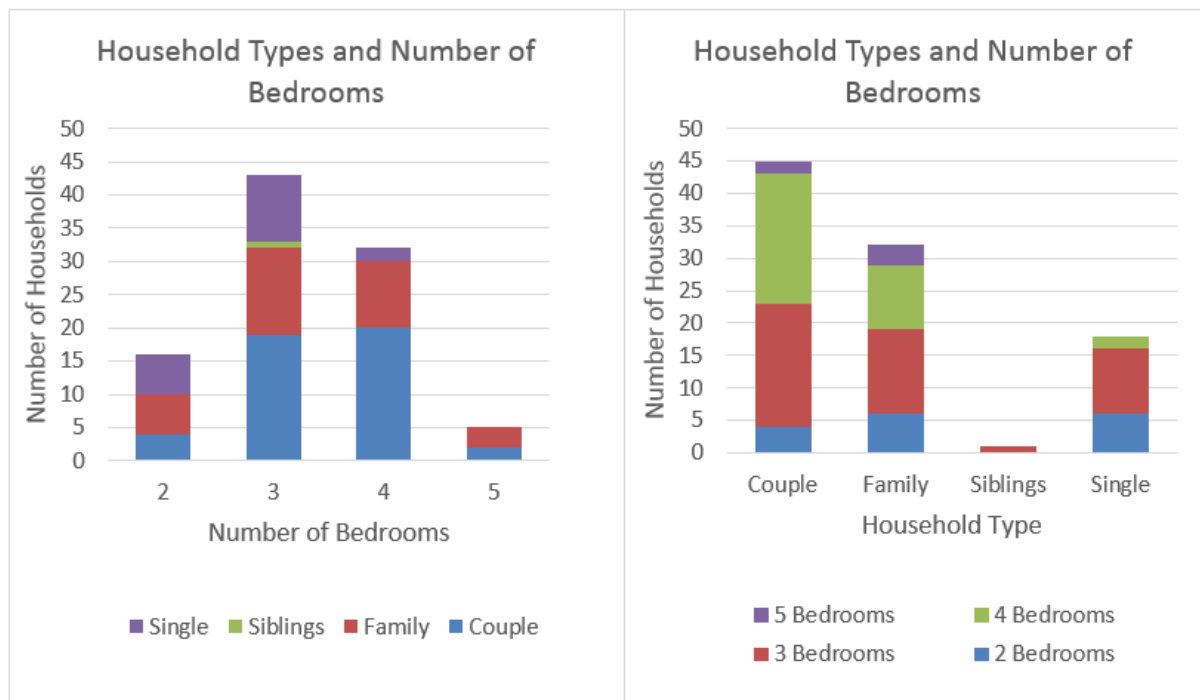
Figure 2: Household Size

#### Occupancy Levels

Within the 97 households who responded to the survey there were 229 people. With a total of 314 bedrooms in the homes they live in this provides a ratio of 1.37 bedrooms per person or 0.7 people per bedroom.

The survey illustrated that most of the new build homes were typically being under occupied in terms of the number of bedrooms and household type. For example over 90% of the

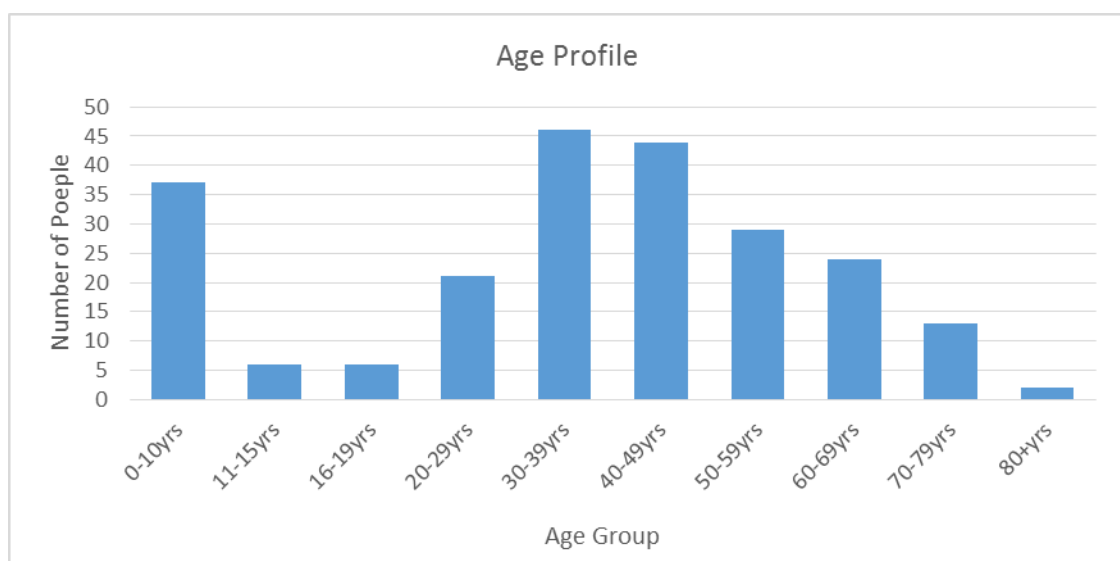
couple only households lived in three, four or five bedroom homes, and two thirds of the single households lived in three or four bedroom homes. 63% of the four bedroom homes were occupied by couple only households and two thirds of the three bedroom homes were occupied by single or couple only households.



**Figure 3: Household Types and Numbers of Bedrooms**

### Household Ages

The graph below shows the age profile of the people living in the households that responded to the survey, and illustrates that the most common age groups of individuals were 30-39 years and 40-49 years. The next largest age group was 0-10 years, with 37% of individuals falling into this group.



**Figure 4: Age Profile of Individuals**



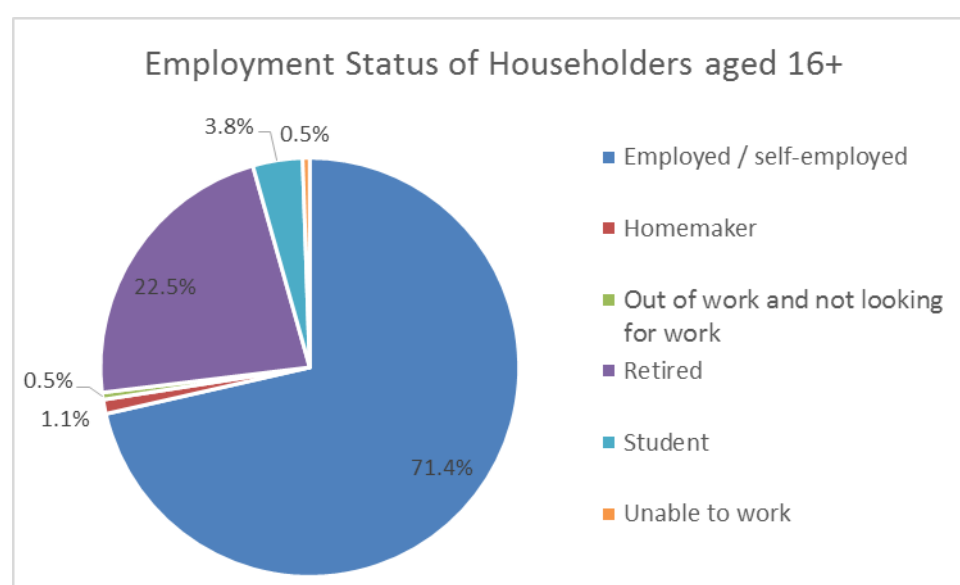
The table below shows the percentage of households that fell into a range of age categories. A quarter of households had someone aged 60 or over within them and around a third of households were adult only and comprised of people aged over 50. Just over a quarter of households had children under the age of 15.

Type of household	% of households in survey
Households with someone over 60	25.00%
Households with children under 15	26.04%
Households with 'adult' children in their 20s	4.17%
Adult only households in their 20s-40s	31.25%
Adult only households aged 50+	34%

**Table 1:** Household Ages

### Employment Status

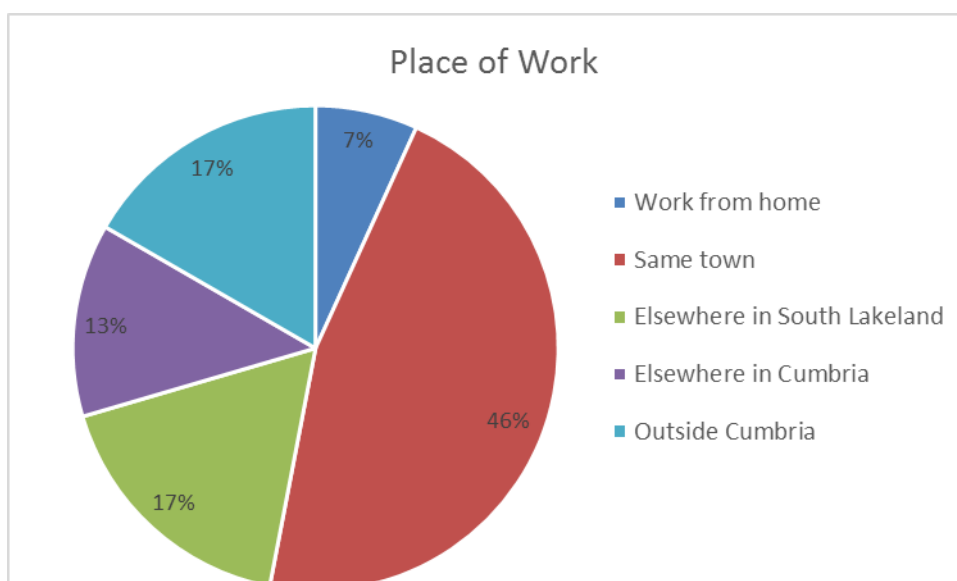
Over 70% of individuals within the households that have recently purchased new build homes were employed or self-employed at the time of the survey, and almost a quarter were retired.



**Figure 5:** Employment Status of Householders

### Place of Work

We asked people where their place of work was to understanding the commuting patterns of people purchasing new homes in the district. Almost half responded that they work in the same town as their new home. A further 17% worked elsewhere in South Lakeland and a further 13% elsewhere in Cumbria. 17% of respondents worked outside Cumbria and 7% worked from home.

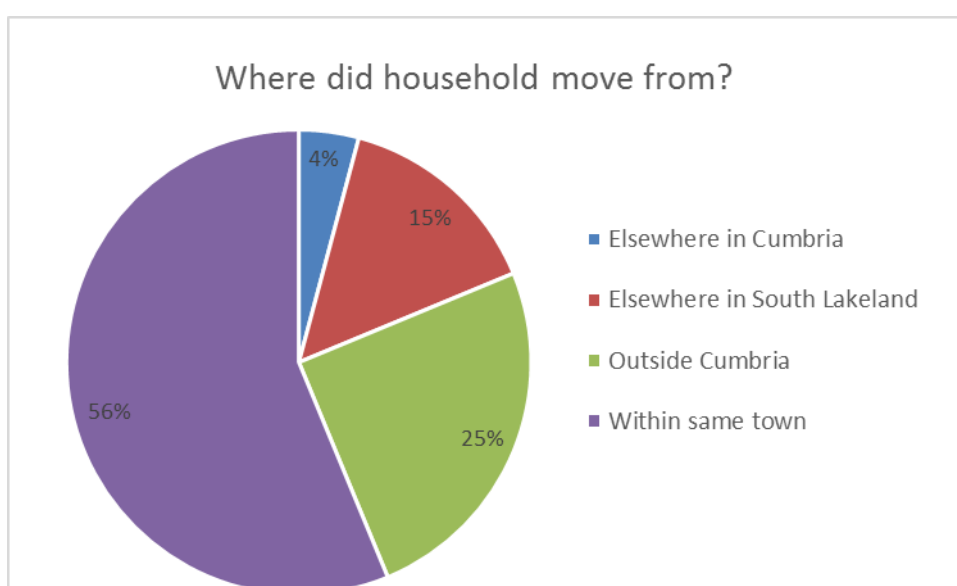


**Figure 6:** Place of Work of Survey Respondents

### **Location of Previous Home**

We asked new home purchasers in South Lakeland where they have moved from. It is frequently questioned at public consultation events on planning documents why the amount of new homes that are being built are needed and it is perceived that they tend to be bought by people from outside the area so we were interested to understand the where the demand for new homes is coming from.

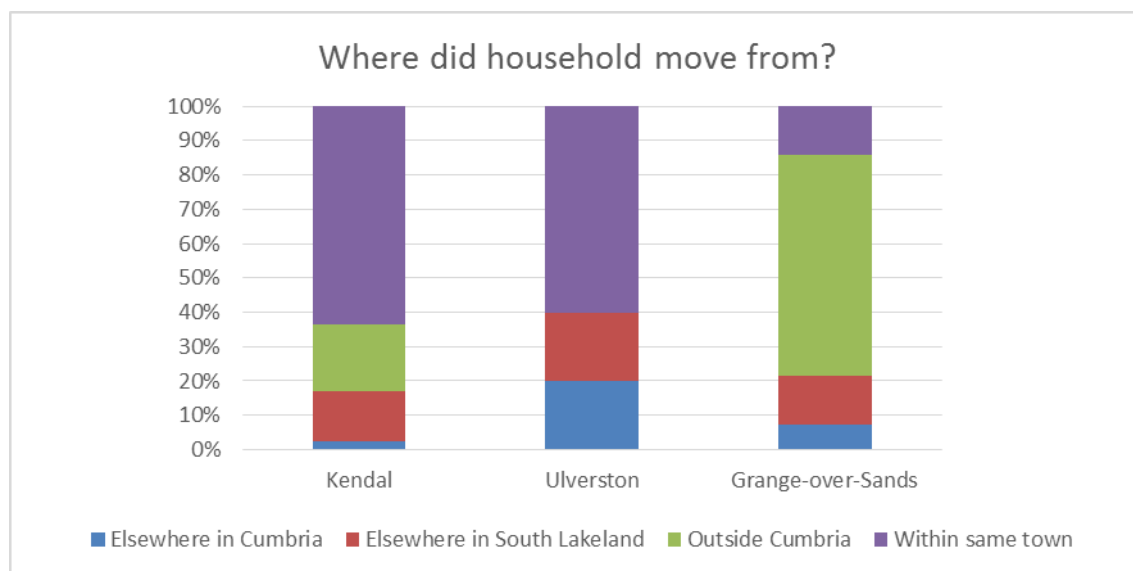
The survey revealed that 56% of households had moved within the same town, 15% from elsewhere within South Lakeland, 4% from elsewhere in Cumbria and a quarter from outside Cumbria. This illustrates that the majority of moves could be considered 'local' moves within the area.



**Figure 7:** Where Households Moved From

These percentages varied between towns, with notable differences between Kendal/Ulverston and Grange-over Sands. On the Kendal and Ulverston sites over 60% of

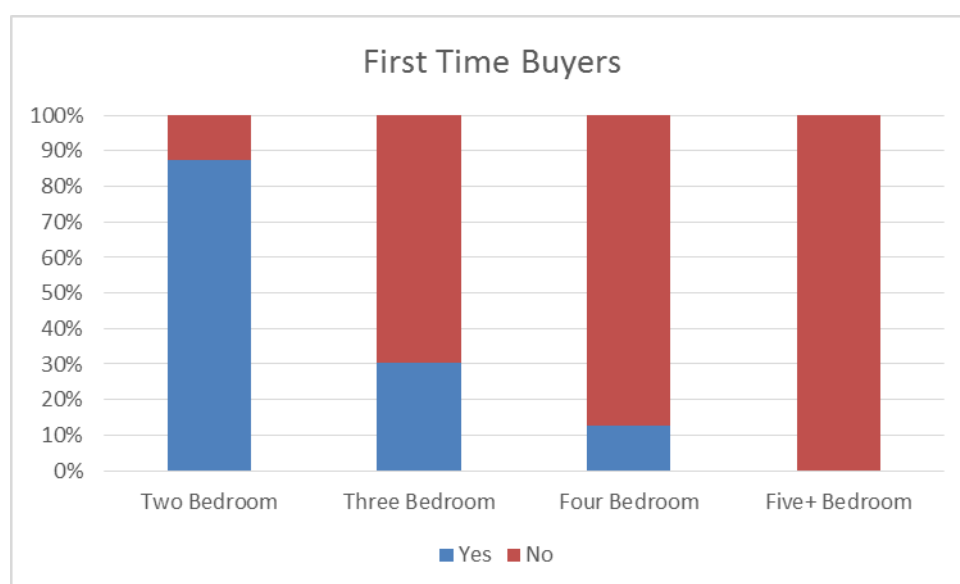
householders had moved within the same town, whereas in Grange-over-Sands this was only 13%, with the vast majority of respondents (67%) stating that they had moved from outside Cumbria. Caution must be employed when analysing the Grange-over-Sands figures due to the small number of responses (14), but it would be interesting to investigate whether this apparent trend continues in the future, through future surveys.



**Figure 8:** Where Households moved from: By Town

### First Time Buyers

Almost a third (32%) of the households that responded to the survey were first time buyers.

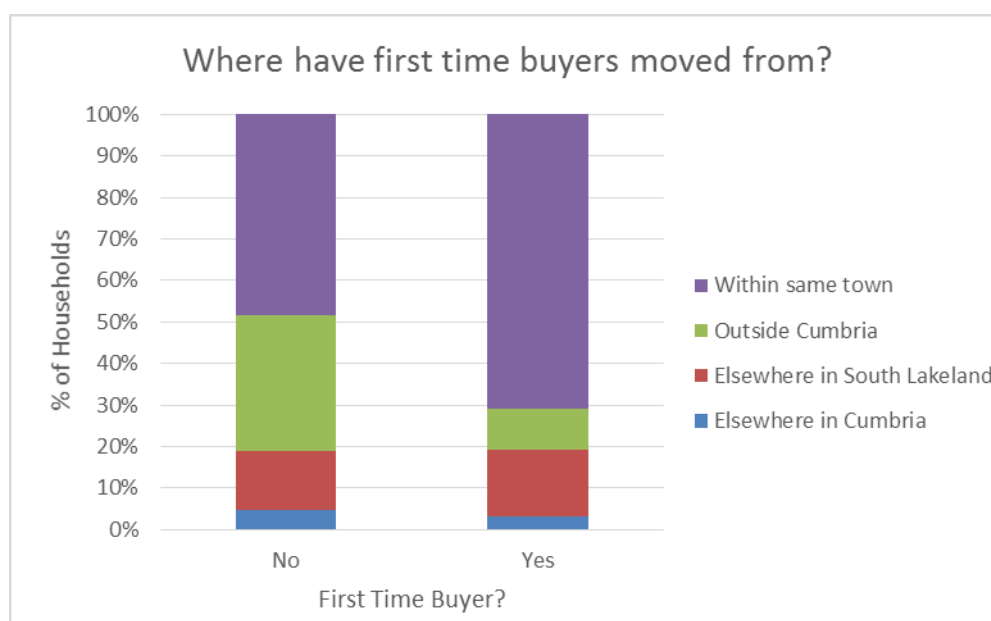


**Figure 9:** First Time Buyers and House Sizes

As may be expected, first time buyers generally purchased smaller properties, with over 90% of the two-bedroomed properties being bought by first time buyers.

The graph below also shows where first time buyer households had moved from, compared with non-first time buyers. This illustrates that the demand for new build homes from first time buyers appears to be more local than for non-first time buyers as over 70% of first time

buyers moved from within the same town into their new build homes compared with just under half of non-first time buyers.

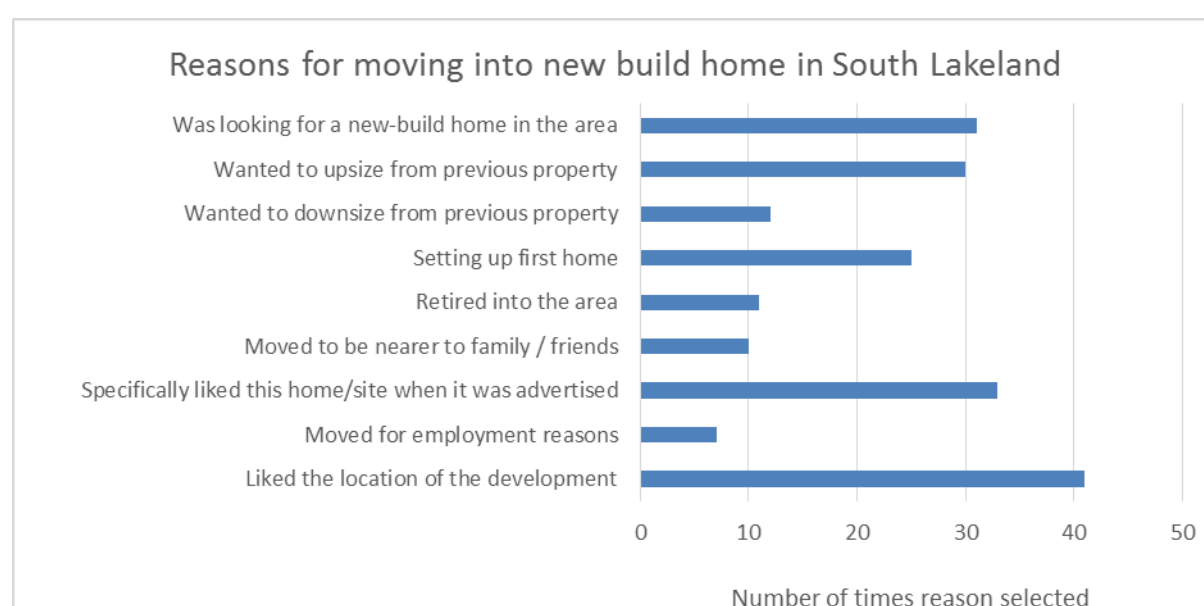


**Figure 10:** Where First Time Buyers have moved from

### Reasons for Moving Home

We asked people to indicate their reasons for buying a new build home in the area from a number of options. They could select more than one and add any other reasons that weren't listed. This question was included to give us an insight into people's motivations for buying new build homes in South Lakeland to help us better understand the demand for these types of homes.

The graph below shows how many times each of the most popular reasons were chosen by respondents.



**Figure 11:** Reasons for moving into a new build home

The location of the new build developments, and specifically liking the homes/developments when they were advertised were popular factors in people's decisions to move. Almost a third of respondents were specifically looking for a new build home in the area and almost a third were looking to upsize from their previous property. Almost a quarter of those that responded were setting up their first home. Other less common reasons mentioned by around 10% of respondents were downsizing, retiring into the area, moving to be nearer family and friends, and moving for employment reasons.

Some other reasons stated by people deciding to buy new build homes in the area included taking advantage of affordable housing opportunities and the help to buy scheme, requiring a bungalow due to disability, and moving out of a flood risk area following the December 2015 floods.

### ***Holiday/Second Homes***

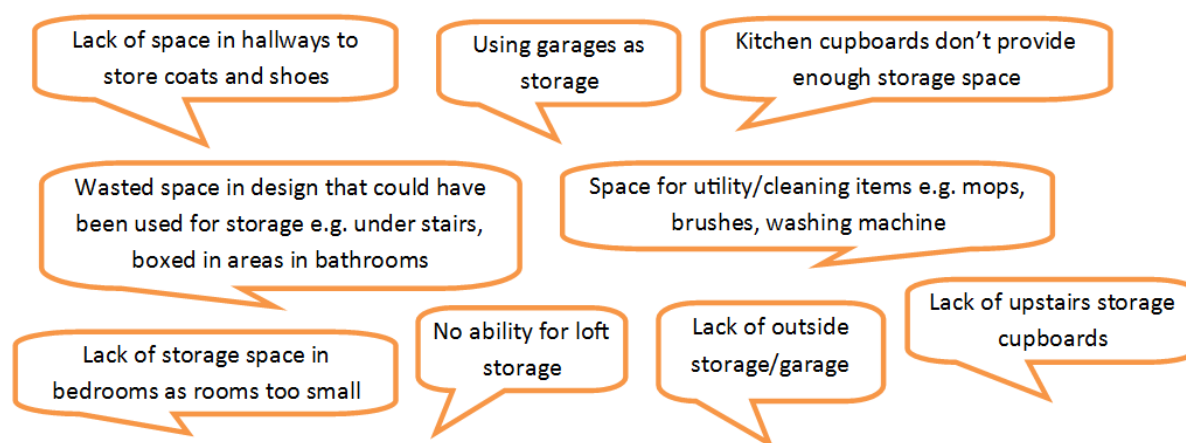
97% of respondents confirmed that their new home was their main home, and 3% stated it was a second home or holiday home. Of the three second/holiday homes recorded, two were in Grange-over-Sands and one was in Kendal.

## Part 2: What do people think of their new build homes?

### Storage Space

We asked people whether they feel that their new homes have enough storage space. If they answered no we asked them to explain what they think is lacking. This question was designed to inform our consideration of whether to introduce the Government's optional nationally described space standards which include minimum requirements for storage space inside homes.

71% of respondents felt they do have enough storage space, and 29% said they don't. Some storage issues that were reported included:



**Figure 12:** Comments on storage issues

### Room Sizes

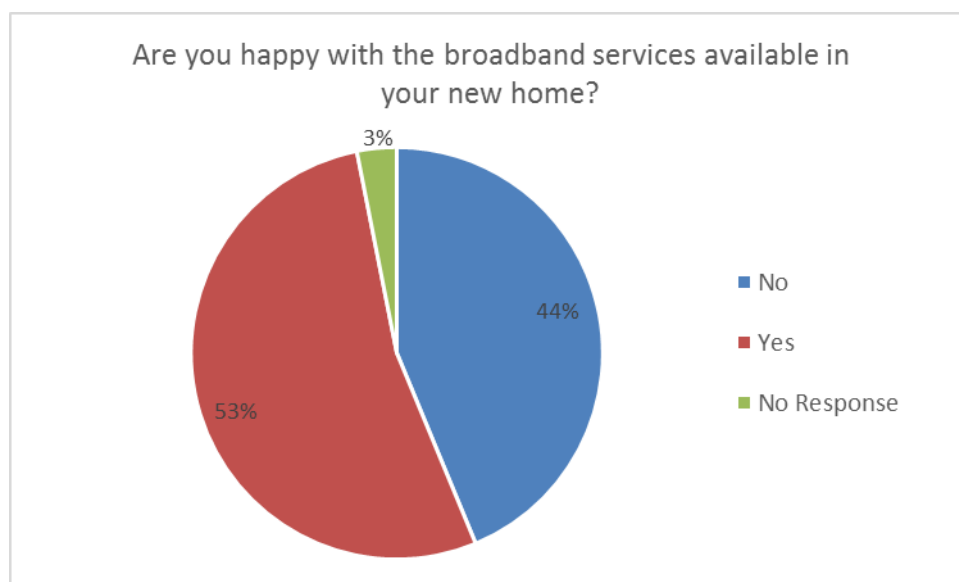
We asked people if they are generally happy with the sizes of the rooms in their new home. This question was designed to inform our consideration of whether to introduce the Government's national minimum space standards. The vast majority (92%) of respondents were happy with the room sizes in their new homes with only 8% stating that they were dissatisfied. Some comments raised by homeowners in response to this question mentioned that bedrooms were too small, living rooms were too small or poorly laid out (e.g. in terms of socket/radiator placement), kitchen/diners were too small for entertaining and living spaces were not big enough considering the number of bedrooms.

### Future Proof Homes

We were interested to know people's views on whether they felt their homes would be flexible and adaptable should their needs change in future. 61% of respondents felt their home would continue to be suitable for them in the future, 21% said they felt it wouldn't, and 18% weren't sure. Of those respondents that said no or not sure, a number mentioned potential problems with stairs and the arrangement of rooms on different levels should their mobility levels decrease. As would be expected a number of households also stated that they would likely need to move if their households grow and they require extra bedrooms or storage space. Of those homeowners who felt their homes would be suitable in the future a number mentioned that they felt their homes benefited from features such as wider doorways and accessible entrances, and others mentioned having enough space or potential to extend if required.

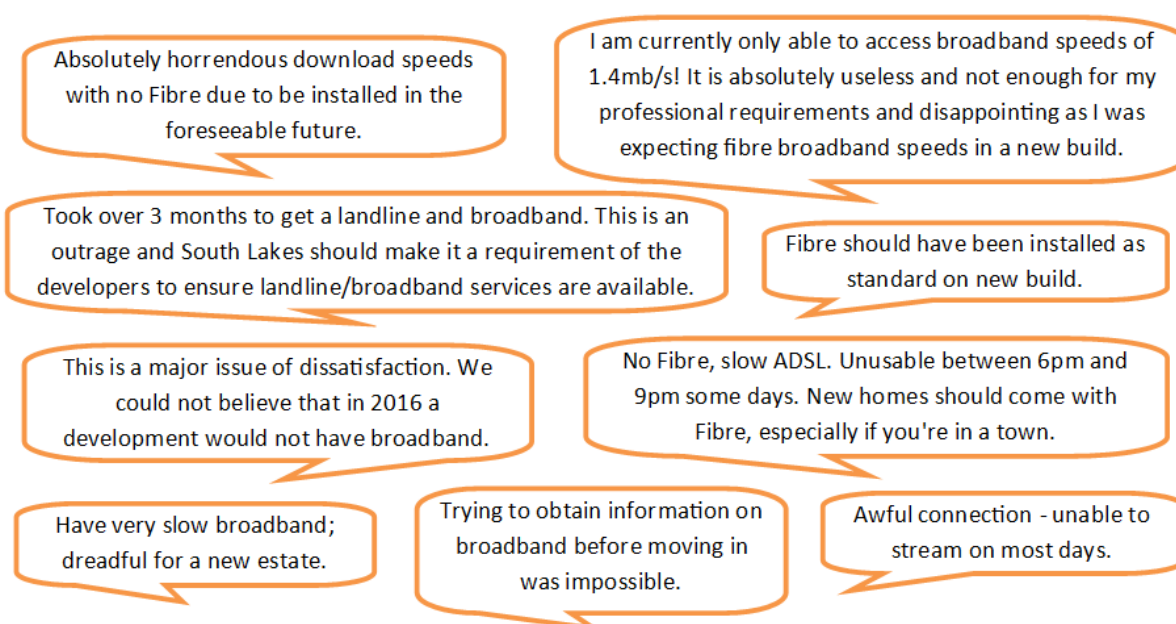
## Broadband Services

We asked whether people were happy with the broadband provision available in their new home. Only 53% of respondents responded positively to this question, and 44% stated that they were not satisfied with the broadband available to them.



**Figure 13:** Satisfaction with broadband provision

The majority of those people that weren't satisfied lived on the same estate – a large development in Kendal. Homeowners were dissatisfied that no fibre broadband provision was provided on their estate, and reported extremely low broadband speeds that prevented them from being able to work at home. Some of the comments received from those respondents who are not satisfied with the broadband provision in their new home include:



**Figure 14:** Comments on broadband provision

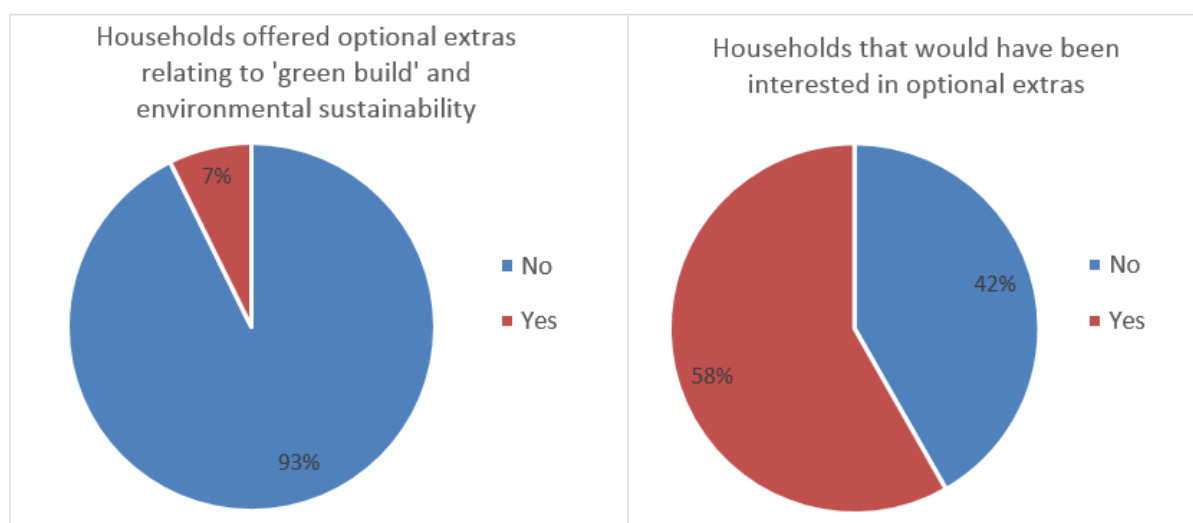
A number of other respondents who reported being happy with their broadband provision still reported delays in the installation when they moved in of up to 6 months.



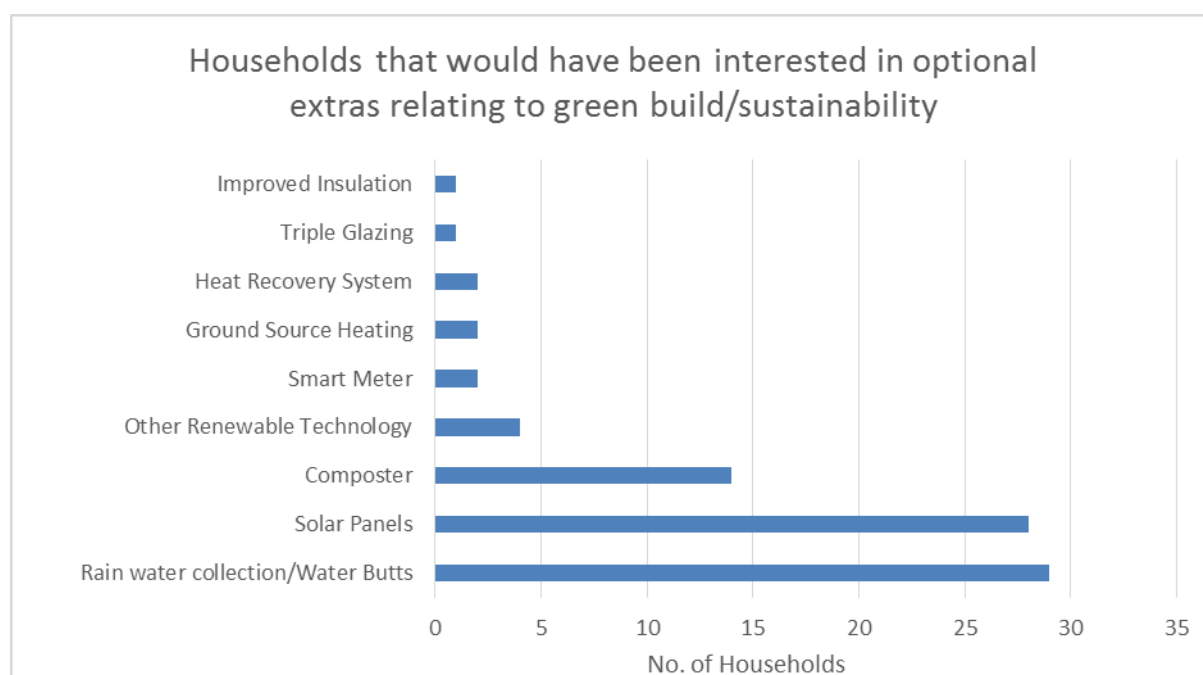
## Environmental Sustainability

We asked households whether they were offered any 'green'/sustainability optional extras to purchase when they built their new build homes. We asked this question as we are keen to promote the environmental sustainability of new build homes and were interested to find out what is being offered to new build home buyers.

The survey results show that only a very small proportion of households (7%) recall being offered 'optional extras' in relation to green build or environmental sustainability when they purchased their home, whilst 58% would have been interested in products if they were offered them. This clearly shows a missed opportunity, as whilst the costs of products would obviously influence purchasers' decisions, there is evidently a high level of interest from new build home purchasers in South Lakeland for environmentally sustainable new homes.



**Figure 15:** Environmentally Friendly 'Optional Extras'



**Figure 16:** Types of environmental measures householders would have been interested in

In terms of the types of measures that purchasers would have been interested in, 30% of the households that responded to the survey stated that they would have been interested in rain water collection systems and/or water butts as an extra when they purchased their new home and 29% expressed an interest in solar panels. Other technologies or measures mentioned included composters, other renewable technologies, ground source heating and heat recovery systems.



These results clearly show a significant interest in new build home purchasers in environmental sustainability and green build products, and potentially a missed opportunity in terms of the homes that have been built without these features. A number of respondents mentioned that they had purchased measures such as composters and water butts after moving into their homes.

### **Other Views**

We asked an open ended question to ask people to share their views on their reasons for moving into a new build home in the district and any other views they have on their new home and its location.

This question was designed to cover any other issues that we didn't cover specifically in the questionnaire.

Many homeowners provided positive responses to this question, including being happy with the location of their new home and having good access to a range of services, facilities and good transport connections. Some homeowners also responded that they were pleased with the design and build quality of their home, including aspects such as its energy efficiency, low running costs, and minimal upkeep and DIY requirements. A number also commented that they were pleased to have been able to use the help to buy scheme to buy their home. A number also commented on the positive experiences they had in purchasing their new homes from the house builder and highlighted good customer service.

A number of problems and negative issues were also however raised in the survey. A number of themes can be drawn from the various responses to this question and this section provides a brief summary of the main issues raised. Some of the responses provided useful insight into people's experiences of their new homes and development and present issues that will require further consideration by the Council.

- ✗ Difficulties navigating the development for blind and disabled people due to difficult corners, inconsistent footway widths, no tactile crossing place indicators.
- ✗ Concerns over mix of affordable and rented homes on sites, problems of upkeep and garden maintenance on rented properties.
- ✗ Concerns over antisocial behaviour and police attendances.

- ✗ Lack of children's play spaces resulting in children playing in roads.
- ✗ Concerns over lack of lighting and personal safety on estate.
- ✗ Dissatisfaction with broadband provision.
- ✗ Poor landscaping areas that are not maintained or completed.
- ✗ Smell from waste water treatment works.
- ✗ Disappointing to be flooded in a brand new house.
- ✗ Lack of parking, resulting in on-street parking, and issues of residents not abiding to allocated spaces system.
- ✗ Poor build quality.

## Next Steps

We will publish this report and its findings widely to those who have an interest in, and influence on future housing development in the district including Members, Council officers, developers and the public. We will identify issues raised through the survey that we feel need further scrutiny or action and seek to learn lessons from recent developments in the district. We will use the findings to inform our future work on planning and housing policies. We consider that the survey has been a valuable exercise that has provided a useful insight into the demand for new homes in the district and people's experiences and expectations of their new build homes. We intend to repeat the survey in future years to maintain an up to date understanding and to identify any notable changes over time.

## **APPENDIX 1: Copy of Questionnaire**

Below is a copy of the questionnaire that was sent out, to illustrate the questions that were asked. Separate questionnaires were produced for Kendal, Ulverston and Grange-over-Sands. The Kendal questionnaire is provided as an example.



### Who lives in a house like this?

The aim of this survey is to collect information about the households living in newly built homes in South Lakeland. We want to understand who is moving into new homes, where they have moved from and their views on their new homes. This information will help us better understand the types of new properties that are needed in the district and help us plan for them.

**Note:** Your responses are confidential and are protected under the Data Protection Act (1998). It is not possible for the council to link responses to individual addresses. If you do not wish to answer some of the questions please just leave them blank and fill out the ones you would like to answer.

### PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR HOUSEHOLD

#### Q1. Which of the following best describes your household?

Please tick one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple	<input type="checkbox"/> Family
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state):		

#### Q2. Please tell us the number of people living in your home in each of the following age groups:

0-10yrs	11-15yrs	16-19yrs	20-29yrs	30-39yrs	40-49yrs	50-59yrs	60-69yrs	70-79yrs	80+yrs

#### Q3. For each person aged 16 or over in your household please tick the following option that best describes their employment status:

Employment status	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4
In employment/self-employed				
Retired				
Student				
Out of work and looking for work				
Out of work and not looking				
Homemaker				
Unable to work				
Prefer not to say				

**Q4. For each person 16 or over in your household who is currently employed, please indicate their main place of work:**

Place of work	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4
Work from home				
Kendal				
Elsewhere in South Lakeland (please state)				
Elsewhere in Cumbria (please state)				
Outside of Cumbria (please state)				

**Q5. Please tell us where your household lived before you moved into your new home:**

Location of previous home	Please tick, and state location if outside Kendal
Kendal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elsewhere in South Lakeland – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elsewhere in Cumbria – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside of Cumbria – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you formed a new household (e.g. a couple moving in together) when you moved into this home please state where the other members of the household moved from:

**Q6. If you have purchased your new home, were you a first time buyer?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
------------------------------	-----------------------------	---

**Q7. What reasons did you have for moving into your new home?**

Please tick all that apply and provide any further comments if you would like to.

Moved for employment reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any comments?
Moved to be nearer to family/friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Retired into the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Setting up first home	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wanted to downsize from previous property	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wanted to upsize from previous property	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was looking for a new-build home in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Moved here because specifically liked this home/site when it was advertised	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Liked the location of the development	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	





## New Build Home Survey 2017

### PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW HOME

Q8. Please provide your postcode:

Q9. Is this your main home?

<input type="checkbox"/> Main home	<input type="checkbox"/> Second/holiday home
------------------------------------	--

Q10. How many bedrooms does your new home have?

<input type="checkbox"/> One	<input type="checkbox"/> Two	<input type="checkbox"/> Three	<input type="checkbox"/> Four	<input type="checkbox"/> Five+
------------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------

Q11. Is your home owned or rented?

Owned (with mortgage/outright)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rented – private	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shared Ownership or Discounted Sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rented – housing association	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q12. Do you think your new home has enough storage space?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

If no, please provide details of what you feel is lacking:

Q13. Are you generally happy with the sizes of the rooms in your new home?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

If no, please explain why (and in answering this question please think about the cost implications of more space and whether you would be prepared to pay extra for larger rooms):

Q14. Do you think your new home will continue to meet your requirements if your needs change in future?

Please think about things such as changes in your household size, changing health needs or mobility issues etc. This question is asking whether you think your home will be adaptable to different circumstances that might happen in your life.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------





**Q.14. (cont.)**

Please give a reason for your answer:

--

**Q15. Are you happy with the broadband services available to you in your new home?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

Any comments?

--

**Q16. Were any 'optional extras' relating to environmental sustainability or 'green build' offered to you when you bought your home? (This may include items such as solar panels or other renewable energy technology, water butts, rainwater collection systems, composter etc)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

If yes, please state which were offered and whether you purchased any:

--

**Q17. If you answered no to Q16, would you have been interested in purchasing any products or 'green' measures at the time you secured your property?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

If yes, please state what measures you would have been interested in (acknowledging that these measures would incur additional costs for you):

--



## South Lakeland District Council

### New Build Home Survey 2017

**Q18. Do you have any other comments you would like to share with us about your new home or your decision to move into a new build home in Kendal?**

You may want to use this space to say a bit more about why you moved from your previous property, why you chose a new build home, if you have moved from somewhere else why you chose Kendal, and any other views or opinions you may have about your new home and its location.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please use the pre-paid envelope to return your completed questionnaire before **Friday 21 April 2017**.

If you have any queries or require any further forms please contact:

Laura Chamberlain, Development Plans Team, South Lakeland District Council

Email: [development.plans@southlakeland.gov.uk](mailto:development.plans@southlakeland.gov.uk) Tel: 01539 793388

If you would like a copy of this document in another format such as large print, Braille, audio or in a different language, please call **01539 733333** or email **customer.services@southlakeland.gov.uk**

