

# North Devon Conservatives

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## Blow to North Devon's housing market from Home Information Pack red tape

### *New Government rules will make it harder to buy and sell your home*

Philip Milton, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for North Devon, today expressed concern for North Devon's fragile housing market, following the introduction of complex and expensive new Home Information Pack rules.

From 6 April, extra Home Information Pack (HIP) regulations will hinder sellers from putting their homes onto the market, mislead buyers and create a real danger of £200 fines from town hall officials.

- **New delays if you sell your home:** The Government is cancelling the 'first day marketing' provision – which allowed sellers to market their home if a HIP had been ordered, but had not yet been completed. Sellers will now have to wait even longer before they can put up a 'For Sale' sign.
- **New untrustworthy Property Information Questionnaires:** Also from 6 April, HIPs must have a so-called 'Property Information Questionnaire' completed by the seller. The Questionnaire is useless as unscrupulous sellers can sidestep difficult questions that could reduce their house price by ticking a "don't know" box. The buyer cannot be certain that the information is reliable about such things as past dry rot or damp, insurance claims, experience of flooding, and whether past alterations had official permission. Honest sellers will also suffer, as disputes over information in Property Information Questionnaires will end up in the courts, with buyers suing sellers.
- **Heavy-handed town hall fines:** Town halls have been instructed to "identify specific cases of non-compliance and enforce the requirements" – and start fining homeowners £200 a time if they do not follow the new rules.
- **HIPs are already harming the housing market:** The Government's own research has found that there is little public knowledge about, or interest in HIPs; that the industry thinks they are a waste of time; that they duplicate costs and that buyers are not bothering to consult HIPs. Ministers have emergency powers under the Housing Act to suspend HIPs, but have refused to use them.

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Philip said:

“Home Information Packs have already damaged the market and discouraged sellers. Now Gordon Brown is making things even worse. You cannot trust the contents of a Home Information Pack, and these regulations will lead to yet more wasted time and expense.

“A Conservative Government will scrap Home Information Packs outright. If Ministers really wanted to help homeowners, they would use their emergency powers to suspend HIPs and provide a shot in the arm to North Devon’s ailing market. Only Conservatives are on the side of Britain’s home owners and the many people who want to move on and up the housing ladder.”

For more information, please contact 01271 344300.

ENDS

**Philip J Milton**  
Prospective Member of Parliament for North Devon



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