

# SHERLOCK INVESTIGATES:



## Campaign summary:

---

The property market saw its fair share of headlines throughout 2014.

With questions hanging over the stamp duty threshold and house affordability for first-time buyers, the opportunities and threats were evident for those working in the removals industry.

By devising a strategy which would provide thought-leadership positioning for Bishop's Move, the UK's largest family owned removals company which, in 2014, celebrated its 160<sup>th</sup> year in business, Sherlock PR would ensure that the company would become part of some of the UK's most high-profile debates.

## Brief & Objectives:

---

In its 160<sup>th</sup> year in business, we would position Bishop's Move's core values and strong family ethics within mainstream media investigating one of the property market's hot topics - the Help to Buy scheme.

We would look to promote the company and its 22 regional branches and franchises across the UK as forward thinking and championing first time buyers.

## Campaign objectives included:

- To maximise Bishop's Move's 160<sup>th</sup> year in business, ensuring this key message was included across media outlets where possible
- Firmly push the family business angle and company history within a mixture of trade and national titles

- Secure a minimum of ten pieces of national coverage throughout the year
- To position Bishop's Move as a leading voice for its peers in the removals industry, homeowners and those struggling to get onto the property ladder
- To align the company with high-profile, national issues of interest to those buying property

**Strategy and tactics:**

- Media briefings were secured in advance and draft comments written prior to the announcements of the December 2013 Autumn Statement; 2014 Budget; and 2014 Autumn Statement.
- Comments were also drafted ahead of each key date which would call for the Government to introduce a regionalised Help to Buy model to stimulate regional growth. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/10841956/A-regional-Help-to-Buy-model-would-stimulate-growth-where-its-needed.html>
- We consulted Bishop's Move and advised them to conduct a national survey which would look at the attitudes and knowledge of the Help to Buy scheme amongst first time buyers - a key demographic for both Bishop's Move and the scheme itself.
- This survey would ask five questions to 1000 people actively looking for property and, as well as providing national figures, would be broken down regionally, by gender, and by age. These questions, which all came with a selection of answers, were:
  - *What do you know of the Help to buy scheme? Please tick the statement which best describes your view.*
  - *What do you see as the greatest challenge to buying property?*

- *What is the first thing you look for when viewing a property?*
- *How would you best describe the Help to Buy scheme?*
- *How long, on average, did it take for you to reach completion from having an offer accepted / placing an offer on your last a property? This came with a list of time brackets.*

**Outputs:**

Between December 2013 - December 2014:

- 23 press releases were distributed and sold-in to key media. Ten of these were survey stories and four specifically looked at attitudes into the Help to Buy scheme.
- News-jacking occurred on a regular basis to ensure Bishop's Move was at the forefront of all high-profile national issues. These would regularly call for the introduction of a regional Help to Buy model.
- The survey found a significant portion of property buyers were unaware of the scheme or had heard of it but didn't realise what it did. It also found that 15 per cent of 18-24 year olds thought the Help to Buy scheme is a recently launched face-to-face, personal shopping service by the major supermarkets for over 60s.

**Outcomes:**

- Between December 2013 and December 2014, 131 piece of media coverage were secured, 15 of which were national titles
- Following the 2014 Autumn Statement, Bishop's Move was featured prominently on the Mail Online, discussing how foreign investors will have to pay capital gains tax from April 2015 when they sell their property. The same comments were also featured in This is Money.

- In response to the 2014 Budget, Bishop's Move's Managing Director was featured in the likes of The Independent and City AM applauding the decision to extend the Help to Buy scheme. The Independent's Simon Read tweeted: "Ping. First budget comment arrives in my inbox. Congrats Alistair Bingle, Managing Director at Bishop's Move who is pleased about Help to Buy".
- In July 2014 alone we secured 45 pieces of media coverage, all looking at Bishop's Move survey results revealing 22% of those looking for property hadn't even heard of the Help to Buy scheme. Coverage was featured exclusively in The i; The Independent; and The Independent Online - a key outlet given the target demographic of first time buyers. Coverage was also secured within various personal finance, property and regional outlets.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/property/homehunters-still-dont-know-about-help-to-buy-9592307.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/property/house-buying-process-takes-longer-in-the-south-east-than-anywhere-else-in-the-uk-property-news-roundup-9707881.html>

- The company was also the front-page story in leading trade title, Removals & Storage magazine looking in-depth at its 160<sup>th</sup> year in business.
- 85% of articles published included the key message of "Bishop's Move is the UK's largest family owned removals company".
- 82% of articles published throughout 2014 featured the '160<sup>th</sup> year in business' key message.
- To help promote Bishop's Move's national branch network, the survey results were broken down regionally and sold-in to local press across the UK and between July 2014 - December 2014, secured 44 pieces of coverage was secured.

[http://www.stroudnewsandjournal.co.uk/news/11631512.Top\\_10\\_Lenders\\_Have\\_you\\_heard\\_of\\_scheme/](http://www.stroudnewsandjournal.co.uk/news/11631512.Top_10_Lenders_Have_you_heard_of_scheme/)

- Commenting on Stamp Duty reform following the 2014 Autumn Statement, Bishop's Move was featured in The Huffington Post; AOL Money; Startups.co.uk; Daily Telegraph; Telegraph.co.uk; and Fresh Business Thinking.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/12/03/-stamp-duty-reform-vs-mansion-tax\\_n\\_6261288.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/12/03/-stamp-duty-reform-vs-mansion-tax_n_6261288.html)

<http://money.aol.co.uk/2014/12/03/autumn-statement-2014-what-the-experts-think/>

- Finally, after seeing our published articles, the Government's Department for Communities and Local Government contacted Sherlock PR and Bishop's Move to discuss how the both parties can work in tandem to ensure this lack of understanding of the Help to Buy scheme is resolved in 2015.