
House Buying Process

The Steps to Buying a Home

Except in very rare circumstances, home-hunting cannot be done quickly. Even when you have found a home, the financial arrangements and legal side will almost certainly take several weeks. Four to six weeks between agreeing a sale and exchange of contracts is common, with another two weeks before completion, or whatever you agree with the vendor (the seller). Remember too, that in England, a verbal agreement with a seller is not usually legally binding. However, both you and the seller should try to keep to any agreement. But if, for example, you get a bad survey report, you are entitled to try to re-negotiate the price or, pull out altogether. Take the process a step at a time, don't try to rush things, and you should find your purchase runs smoothly.

The following is a guide to the house-buying process and briefly explains each step. We can provide any advice you require.

Keys to Success

- We will help you work out how much you can borrow, and what price of home you can afford
- Contact estate agents, study local papers, look at lots of homes.
- With our help, decide what sort of mortgage you want, and pick the one that suits you best.
- When you've found the home you're after, make an offer and agree a price.
- Contact your solicitor and ask them to begin the conveyancing process.
- Contact us, tell us about the home you have found and arrange for your mortgage lender to carry out a valuation. We would also recommend that you arrange a Home Buyer's Report which is carried out for your benefit. If it's an older property, you might want to arrange a full structural survey with a surveyor.
- Wait while your solicitor carries out the searches. You might want to revisit the property to measure up for carpets and curtains. Ask some removal companies for quotes. If you want any work done on the property as soon as you move in, start arranging for quotes.
- If the valuation is satisfactory, an Offer of Advance will arrive from your lender. So will the results of the survey, if you've asked for one. If all is well, take it to your solicitor. He or she will have some documents for you to look through and sign.
- The contract is ready. You're nearing the end now. Agree a completion date and sign the contract.
- Your solicitor and the vendor's solicitor exchange contracts. You pay the agreed deposit. The house is nearly yours! But you can't move in until the day of completion.
- Completion! The moment the seller's solicitor confirms that they have received the full purchase price, the keys are yours. The seller will have moved out. And you're in!

Important Information To Consider When Taking Out A Mortgage

The following important facts should also be considered when committing to a mortgage. If you have any questions about any of these, please discuss them with us.

Joint Name Mortgages
If you are taking out a mortgage with your spouse or a partner, i.e. on a joint applicant basis, you should remember that you are both normally liable for the full amount of the mortgage loan until it is repaid. This is commonly referred to as 'Joint and Several liability'. We will be able to explain in more detail how this works.

Responsibility for Repaying your Mortgage

Your mortgage lender is required to send you an annual reminder about the method you are using to repay your mortgage. It is your responsibility to ensure that you maintain suitable arrangements to do so. If you have any concerns or questions at any time you should contact us.

Government Support for Borrowers in Arrears

In the event you become unemployed, the Government provides assistance to borrowers to help them meet their mortgage payments by way of Income Support benefit. However, the amount of support provided has been gradually reduced over recent years and on the 1 October 1995, the rules governing the payment of Income Support to cover mortgage interest payments changed radically. The following key features of the new system are as follows: No income

support for mortgage interest is payable for the first 39 weeks of a claim, on any mortgage loan taken out after 1 October 1995; For mortgage loans taken out prior to 1 October 1995 the following rules apply:

- No income support is payable for the first 8 weeks of any claim, thereafter only 50% of the mortgage interest is paid during the following 18 weeks of the claim. The interest rate used to calculate income support payments is determined by the DSS. In most cases, payments are made direct to the lender.

You can obtain additional advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau and other Government offices if you experience difficulties in paying your mortgage.

Fortunately, there are a complete range of insurances available to protect you in the event that you cannot pay your mortgage as a result of accident, illness or unemployment. We will be happy to discuss all of these options with you.