

Starter Guide For Buying a Home

If and when you decide that you would like to buy your own home, there are several factors to consider. For most people it will be the biggest purchase they ever make, so here is a handy guide to help guide you through buying a house;

1. Know your price range and budget

The majority of people will buy their home with a mortgage. With so many properties out there on the market, the first thing you should do is work out what you can afford.

Factors that will influence this will be;

- how much of a deposit you have
- how much you can afford in monthly mortgage payments and
- how much a mortgage lender is willing to offer



It is always a good idea to consider taking financial advice from a professional as they will be able to help you work out your budget. A financial advisor can help you to define your budget, taking different factors, such as income, lifestyle expenditures, and on-going hidden costs into account.

You should also contact mortgage lenders to see what you would be offered, who would be willing to lend to you and which company you want to use. You could consider seeing an independent mortgage advisor who would be able to do this for you and present the best deals forward to you.

You can get an offer of a mortgage in principle – which is where you have the offer in writing from a mortgage lender without actually applying for it. Offers will only be accepted once proof of funds can be provided to the estate agent. An offer in principle can help this process.

2. Choose location and browse the market

Give careful consideration to where you want to live and the type of home you would like.

Do you want somewhere close to transport links or a vibrant social community. Do you have children or are likely to do so in the near future and need to consider the local schools? Are you hoping to get a 'finished product' or would you like to put your own stamp on a home that may need some renovations (and could you afford to do this)?



If an area is unfamiliar to you it's a good idea to visit it multiple times on different days at various times to get a good feel for the place. Does it have all the amenities you need and check public transport, if you are dependent on it. If you drive, check the commute that you would have to make for work / school / other commitments.

Once you know your ideal location and your budget, you can start to browse the market. There are several online property search sites such as Rightmove. You should also contact local estate agents and explain to them what you are looking for so they can add you to their mailing lists. You may sometimes hear of properties that are due to come onto the market before they even appear online.

TIP; When browsing properties online, check the listings for ground plans and measurements. It can give you a more detailed impression of the space, which you sometimes can't see in pictures.

3. Arrange property viewings

Visiting as many properties as possible will give you a clearer understanding of what you want and what you don't want. If you view a property that you have a serious interest in, it is always worth booking a second viewing. First viewings are great to get an initial impression/feeling for a place, but second viewings allow for a more pragmatic approach and you will see things that you didn't take in the first time around. Remember to look closely at walls and ceilings for evidence of damp or other issues, think about how the space would be utilised by you and what work you would need to do – and whether you would have the funds to do so.

4. Make an offer

If you like a house, consider making an offer. Think about how much you are prepared to pay for fixtures, fittings and contents. You will put an offer in through the estate agent. Keep in mind that yours may not be the only offer so have an idea of what your maximum budget is.



5. Offer Accepted

If you have an offer accepted – firstly congratulations – this is an exciting time. You will need to provide proof of funds to the estate agent in order for the offer to be accepted. If you haven't found a mortgage lender yet, you must do so as quickly as possible.

Remember that the seller is legally allowed to accept another offer at any point until the exchange of contracts further down the line, so it is important to arrange finance as soon as possible.

6. Instruct a Solicitor or Conveyancer

In order for the process to be completed you will need to instruct a solicitor or conveyancer. If you don't already have a solicitor in mind you, find one that you want to instruct. Many provide online quotes for their services but consider other factors too; are they reputable, do they have good client reviews, are they CQS qualified, have they been recommended to you?

Buying a property is for most people the biggest investment they will ever make, so ensuring you have a qualified and experienced legal professional to do your conveyancing is imperative.

A good solicitor will make the process as seamless and stress free as possible, keep you in the loop at all times and complete all the stages on your behalf. For more information on how Howells can help, see [here](#).

7. The legal process

Once you have instructed a solicitor that you are comfortable with and trust, work with them to allow your purchase to go through as smoothly as possible by supplying all paperwork required in a timely manner. Be sure to ask any questions that you are unsure about and ultimately, look forward to getting the keys to your new home!

Conveyancing Team

Our experienced Conveyancing team are highly skilled and use the latest conveyancing technology but still offer the friendly and personal service that clients prefer. They understand that they're not dealing with 'cases' but with people, not bound up in legal process but in real lives.

