



Top tips from the Paradigm Mortgage Helpdesk



Our mini newsletter is designed to give you insights into the topics we see frequently on the Mortgage Helpdesk. We aim to provide you with some great hints and tips which will help you with future cases.

If you think we may be able to assist with your next case, please don't hesitate to get in touch!

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Making Ownership More Accessible: Affordable Housing

Affordability remains the biggest barrier to homeownership for many clients, but "affordable housing" covers a range of routes, not just one scheme. Right to Buy, Shared Ownership and First Homes are among the best-known options. This month, we explore the key routes into homeownership and the lending opportunities available. Not every scheme or lender is covered, so do contact the Mortgage Helpdesk if you are working on an affordable housing case.

Right to Buy

Right to Buy lets eligible council tenants buy their home at a discount. Since November 2024 the maximum cash discount has been capped between £16,000 and £38,000 by region, and from July 2025 the qualifying tenancy period rose from three years to ten, so check early how long your client has been a tenant.

Lending against the discount: Most lenders will offer up to 100% of the discounted price, but individual caps range from 75–95% loan-to-value, so check current criteria.

Named applicants: A common cause for delays with mortgage applications is applicants missing on the Right to Buy discount paperwork. Lenders require these to match. Dudley BS, Chorley BS (available in a JBSP basis), Leek BS and Kensington can consider the applicants that are not named on the Right to Buy papers with further information.

Shared Ownership

Shared Ownership allows a buyer to purchase a share of a property, typically 25% to 75%, while paying rent to a housing association on the remainder. Deposits are usually 5–10% of the share being bought rather than the full property value.

Staircasing: Standard staircasing lets owners buy further shares, usually in 5% increments. On newer homes funded through the Affordable Homes Programme, gradual staircasing allows 1% a year for the first 15 years, which suits clients building equity steadily.

Staircasing restrictions: Some housing associations do not allow staircasing to 100% ownership. Several lenders will decline where full ownership is restricted, so check with the association before submission.



First Homes

First Homes gives eligible first-time buyers a discount of at least 30% of market value. Price caps after discount are £250,000, or £420,000 in London, with household income capped at £80,000 (£90,000 in London). At least 50% of the purchase must be mortgage-funded.

Lenders will generally lend up to 95% of the discounted price, including some who do not offer 95% loan-to-value elsewhere in their range.

Lenders to consider: Chorley BS, Darlington, Ecology, Halifax, Leeds BS, Mansfield BS, Nationwide, Newbury BS, Newcastle BS, Penrith BS, Pepper Money, Skipton for Intermediaries, Loughborough for Intermediaries.

New Build Lender Schemes

Own New: A house builder contributes 3% or 5% of the purchase price, which the lender uses to cut the client's rate for the first two or five years, with deposits from 5%. Advisors can register by visiting [Own New I Find A New Build Home With Lower Mortgage Costs](#)

Lenders that participate are: Furness BS and Virgin.



Home ownership for people with long-term disability (HOLD)

People with a long-term disability (HOLD) looking to buy a suitable home on the open market may be able to do so using the shared ownership scheme.

Lenders: Subject to further information Chorley BS and Halifax may consider this scheme.



Scotland First Home Fund

Scotland's First Home Fund reopened in June 2026, offering shared equity of up to £10,000 towards a deposit.

It is limited to first-time buyers purchasing with a mortgage (cash buyers do not qualify) on properties valued at £300,000 or less.

Lenders confirmed: Ecology, Halifax, Leeds BS, Natwest, Scottish BS and Skipton for Intermediaries.

Home ownership for people with long-term disability (HOLD)

Eligibility criteria may include, but not limited to, the following:



Have a long-term disability defined under the Equality Act 2010



Cannot find a suitable shared ownership property to meet their needs or with a reasonable distance of their support networks



Income requirements as a household income of £80,000 a year or less (£90,000 a year or less in London)



Cannot afford all the deposit and mortgage payments for a home that meets their needs.

As always, we must advise that criteria does regularly change and therefore it is always prudent to double check with a Lender prior to submitting an application. Lenders provided are based on findings at the time of research, and may not include every option available.



Do you have a suggestion for a topic? [Email us!](#)



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