

Viewpoint

Your latest newsletter from Eureka Financial Solutions



The value of mortgage advice



With so many mortgage lenders offering their products on the high street and online, it can be tempting to cut out the middleman and 'go direct'.

But when you're making such a huge financial commitment, the guidance you can get from a qualified mortgage adviser can be invaluable.

Here are five ways we can make a difference to your mortgage search:

1. We know what a good deal looks like

It's easy to underestimate the costs involved when buying a property or remortgaging. An attractive rate may appear good value, but this could change once you factor in things like fees and loan conditions.

We will compare a wide range of lenders and thousands of mortgages on your behalf; looking beyond the headline rate so that you understand

how the length and type of loan will affect how much you pay over the longer term. We'll highlight any additional costs you should be aware of (like administration fees, booking fees and valuation costs).

2. We know the market

If your mortgage needs or circumstances are 'out of the ordinary', you may find it more difficult to find a mortgage. We can save you time and hassle and help you find a suitable lender.

3. We can do the hard work for you

Selecting the right mortgage is just the start. We will work with you to complete all of the necessary application forms, liaise on your behalf with solicitors, valuers and surveyors, and help make the process as smooth as possible.

4. We are professionally qualified

Unlike many branch and telephone-based mortgage sellers in banks and building societies, we are able to advise you on a broad range of lenders and products. This means you benefit from genuine choice coupled with quality advice.

5. We look beyond the mortgage

We consider the bigger picture when it comes to advising you on your mortgage. For example, we can help you safeguard your home by recommending products that can financially protect you and your family, should the unexpected happen. We can also recommend providers that can help with other elements of the home-buying process, including solicitors and surveyors.

And, if you want us to, we can stay in touch with you into the future, to ensure your mortgage and protection arrangements remain appropriate for your needs.

Conveyancing is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Whether you're looking for a mortgage on your first home or dream home, we can help.

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage

Buying for the first time?



For first-time buyers, getting onto the property ladder may seem a daunting process, but there's more help available than you might think.

With supply and demand at an imbalance, the average UK house price has been pushed beyond the reach of many first-time buyers. August data from Land Registry shows an annual price increase of 8.4%, taking the value of the average UK property to £218,964. When you consider that first-time buyers would typically put down around 20% against their first home, it's no wonder finding a sufficient deposit is becoming increasingly difficult – especially if you are currently renting.

Help is at hand

A report from Which? shows that just over half of first-time buyers (52%) had to rely on financial support from a parent or family member in order to purchase their home. This 'bank of mum and dad' has been a useful financial foot-up for many.

If you're not able to put down a large deposit you may be able to find a mortgage rate of 90% or 95% – provided you can meet the lender's affordability criteria.

Government help

Although the Help to Buy: mortgage guarantee scheme came to an end in December 2016, the Help to Buy: Equity Loan is still available. Here, the Government lends you up to 20% of the cost of your home, so you'll only need a 5% cash deposit and a 75% mortgage to make up the rest. Equity loans are available to first-time buyers as well as homeowners looking to move, provided it's for a new-build worth less than £600,000.

The Help to Buy: ISA will help you boost your savings by 25%. For every £200 you save you receive a government bonus of £50. The maximum government bonus you can receive is £3,000.

Sound mortgage advice can take the complexities out of the home-buying process and maximise your chances of getting an affordable mortgage.

If you need help getting onto the property ladder please get in touch.

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Protection through the years



When it comes to protection insurance, we hold two firm beliefs:

- 1. it should form the foundation of your financial plan.**
- 2. cover should be reviewed regularly to make sure it continues to meet your needs.**

The latter is particularly important when you are at a particular 'life stage'. Whether that's buying a house, getting married, starting a family, setting up in business, or all of the above, protection insurance will help to protect your loved ones and your financial responsibilities.

So what type of cover is right for you?

- **Term Insurance** pays out a lump sum if you die within the agreed 'term' (the amount of time you have chosen to be covered for, eg. 20 years). Suitable for mortgage protection or while children are financially dependent on you.
- **Whole of Life Insurance** pays out a lump sum when you die, whenever that is, as long as you are still paying the premiums. Suitable for estate planning or to cover things like funeral expenses.
- **Critical Illness Insurance** pays out a tax-free lump sum on the diagnosis of certain life-threatening or debilitating conditions, like cancer, heart attack or stroke. You may decide to buy Critical Illness Insurance when taking on a major commitment, like a mortgage or starting a family, but it can be bought at any time to provide peace of mind.

- **Income Protection Insurance** pays out a regular, tax-free income if you become unable to work because of illness, injury and some policies cover unemployment. It could help you keep up with your mortgage or rent payments, as well as other living costs, until you're able to return to work.

Things change – and so should your cover

You may already have one or more of these in place, but it's still worthwhile reviewing your current cover levels – especially if your circumstances have changed. Ask yourself:

Whether your family could cope financially if either you or your spouse/partner died?

How much income would you have if you were taken seriously ill and couldn't work?

Would your business survive without you or your key people?

How would your lifestyle change if you had an accident and couldn't do the things you do today?

Contact us today for a Life and Protection Insurance review.

Keeping your heart healthy



Dementia and Alzheimers have replaced heart disease as the leading cause of death in England and Wales, but the latter still accounted for 11.5% of all deaths in 2015. In fact, every three minutes someone in the UK has a heart attack and 30% of those are fatal.

The good news is there's a lot you can do to keep your heart healthy.

Watch your weight

Research shows keeping to a healthy weight cuts your risk of heart disease. The British Heart Foundation offers support on eating well and being physically active which can help you manage your weight and keep your heart healthy. Find out more at www.bhf.org.uk

Stop smoking

Smokers are almost twice as likely to have a heart attack compared with those who've never smoked. It's a difficult habit to break, but stopping smoking is the single best thing you can do for your heart's health. If you smoke:

- ask your doctor, practice nurse or pharmacist for advice on how to stop.
- make a date to give up and stick to it.
- tell your family and friends that you're quitting and ask for their support.
- keep busy to help take your mind off cigarettes.

Don't drink too much

Drinking more than the recommended amount of alcohol can also have a harmful effect on your heart and general health. If you drink alcohol it is important to keep within the guidelines and drink no more than 14 units each week.

Manage cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure

If you have too much cholesterol in your blood, have diabetes or high blood pressure, this can increase your risk of heart disease and other cardiovascular diseases. Eating healthily and exercising regularly can

help lower cholesterol, reduce your risk of developing type two diabetes and reduce blood pressure.

Get financial protection

Life and Protection Insurance offers a financial safety net for you and your loved ones, should heart disease strike. In fact, Scottish Widows recently revealed that heart-related disorders were the second only to cancer as the most common reason for a policyholder to claim on their life cover and critical illness plan. They can provide a regular income or cash payout to ease the financial burden caused by serious illness or untimely death:

- *Life Insurance* can provide financial security to those who depend on your income when you die. It could pay off your mortgage, or provide an income to help cover things like regular household bills
- *Critical Illness Insurance* pays out a tax-free lump sum on the diagnosis of certain life-threatening or debilitating conditions, like cancer, heart attack or stroke.
- *Income Protection Insurance* pays out a regular, tax-free income if you become unable to work because of illness, injury, and in some cases, unemployment. It could help you keep up with your mortgage or rent payments, as well as other living costs, until you're able to return to work.

You may already have one or more of the above in place, but it's still worth reviewing your current cover levels. Personal circumstances can change regularly so it's important to ensure your level of cover remains appropriate.

Contact us today for a Life and Protection Insurance review.

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