

**A GUIDE TO
FINDING THE
RIGHT BUY TO LET
MORTGAGE
FOR YOU**

The UK's increasing rental demand has made buy to let investment popular.

If you are looking to purchase your first buy to let (BTL) property or expand your BTL portfolio, we understand you may have some questions... and we are here to help.

WHAT IS A BUY TO LET MORTGAGE?

Buy to let (BTL) mortgages are for people buying a property to rent out. The lending criteria is similar to a residential mortgage but with some differences.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES?

First of all, not all mortgage lenders offer BTL mortgages. Those that do may lend to first-time buyers, while others will only lend to a seasoned property investor.

There is often a difference in age limits too. Residential mortgages tend to have a higher maximum age limit by the end of the term.

You will typically need a higher deposit to take out a BTL mortgage compared to what you would require for a residential mortgage. Usually the maximum loan-to-value ratio (LTV) is 75%, so that means you will need at least a quarter of the total property value as a deposit.

As always, every mortgage application is subject to underwriter approval whether it is a BTL or a residential mortgage.

You should seek professional advice on your mortgage options before you start looking for a buy to let property. Our Mortgage Consultants can advise you on lending criteria, budgeting and affordability.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Buying a property to rent out is a serious investment, and you will want expert advice before proceeding with the mortgage application or committing to the purchase.

We are part of a national network of professional, qualified Mortgage Consultants regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and authorised to give mortgage and insurance advice.

Long-standing relationships with our panel of lenders mean we sometimes have access to exclusive mortgage products not available anywhere else. Our Mortgage Consultants have in-depth understanding of each lender's criteria, which is especially important for the buy to let investor. Whatever your situation we can tailor the right mortgage and insurance products to suit your needs.*

WHAT WE WILL DO FOR YOU

- We have access to over 1,500 buy to let mortgage products from our panel of selected lenders, so you can be sure **we will be able to find the right mortgage for you**
- **Confirm how much you may be able to borrow** and all the costs involved*
- Help you find a property and **explain** everything you need to know about the buying process and all the costs involved
- **Aim to save you money on the property you want to buy** by negotiating with the seller. This only applies when the property is for sale with another estate agent and we do not act for the seller
- Take care of all your **mortgage and insurance** arrangements whether you buy through us or not*

* Subject to status and lender criteria.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Our lifetime members receive ongoing mortgage and insurance advice for life. We are constantly reviewing the products and services we offer to make sure lifetime members get great value. If you join, we will be in touch about finding you another great buy to let mortgage product when your initial benefit period is coming to an end.

You will always have access to our advice, you will get a discount on our conveyancing service, and should you decide to sell with us in the future, you will get a discount on our estate agency fees too. We will also reward you if you recommend a friend who goes on to arrange their mortgage with us.*

Do not forget: once you are a member you will never pay another broker fee again – no matter how many mortgages you arrange.**

Do you need help turning your property investment into a successful letting? We are one of the largest lettings agents and property management services provider in the UK. With different service packages from tenant sourcing to full property management, we can:

- Find and reference tenants, including right to rent checks
- Handle viewings
- Draft a comprehensive Tenancy Agreement
- Arrange inventory checks at the beginning and end of tenancy
- Arrange property inspections
- Offer an opportunity to let your property with a deposit replacement guarantee product instead of a full deposit
- Offer rent protection cover (terms and conditions apply)
- Provide letting and property management advice (Letting fees apply)

* Can be withdrawn at any time.

** An administration fee will still apply on all mortgage applications.

FINDING THE RIGHT PROPERTY

Some lenders have restrictions on what types of properties they will lend on, so having a property in mind beforehand will help our Mortgage Consultant find a suitable buy to let mortgage product.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INVESTMENT?

Think about how suitable the property is for the widest range of tenants possible, and what you want as a return on the investment. For example, a one bedroom flat would not be suitable for a family, so your tenant choice would be limited for this type of property.

We offer a free rental valuation service. A member of our lettings team will visit the property you are interested in to assess its potential. You will receive a realistic figure for rental income on the property, so you can decide if it is worth the investment. The rental income assessment will also be used as part of your BTL mortgage application, as your lender will want to know this figure. Speak to our Mortgage Consultant who will arrange this for you.

HOUSE OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY AND MULTI-UNIT FREEHOLD BLOCK***

Some landlords choose to buy a house of multiple occupancy (HMO) or a multi-unit freehold block (MUFB), especially in large cities or near universities.

A property is deemed a HMO if both of the following apply:

- At least three tenants live there forming more than one household (if more than five tenants occupy the property, this will be deemed as a large HMO – lender criteria will differ from standard HMO to large HMO).
- Your tenants share bathroom or kitchen facilities with other tenants.

A property would be classified as a MUFB if there are at least two residential self-contained units in one property and the units share amenities, services and/or facilities – typically a house converted into two or more flats.

The rental income can be higher with HMOs and MUFBs, but these types of property are subject to different lender criteria, as well as different licencing, insurance and safety requirements.

*** Please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/house-in-multiple-occupation-licence> for full guideline and requirements. Further terms apply.

Why not use our FREE help to find service in your search for a BTL property? Our Mortgage Consultants will work with our branch team to search for the type of property you are looking for, run wanted adverts in our branch windows and leaflet your key areas to find a property that suits your requirements. Thinking of investing in property further afield? As part of a national network of estate agents our large property database means you can extend your search throughout the UK.

YOUR MORTGAGE OPTIONS

There are lots of different types of BTL mortgage products available, and the right one for you depends on your chosen property and circumstances. Our Mortgage Consultants can compare the products available from our wide panel of lenders and find you a buy to let mortgage that suits your needs.*

REPAYMENT OPTIONS

Before you choose a mortgage product it is worth considering what repayment option suits you. There are two main options:

CAPITAL REPAYMENT MORTGAGE

This is a lower risk repayment method most common in residential mortgages. You repay the money borrowed in monthly increments, plus interest (a capital repayment). At the end of the mortgage term, as long as you have kept up your monthly repayments, you will have paid the debt completely and own the property outright.

INTEREST-ONLY MORTGAGE

The monthly payments are lower as you only pay the monthly interest from the original mortgage amount you borrow. At the end of the mortgage term, as long as you have not taken out any additional borrowing, you will still owe the amount you borrowed so you will need to organise a way to repay the debt. Your options for that are called repayment vehicles.** These could include:

- **Personal pension plan** – You could use a lump sum from your pension to repay the mortgage balance.
- **Sale of the financed property, or another property** – Lots of investors choose to repay their mortgage from the sale proceeds of the property itself, or another property they own. The risk here is if you do not have enough equity in the property when you sell or if the market puts you into negative equity, you may have to find extra funds to repay the mortgage.
- **Endowment policy** – This pays out a lump sum after a specific length of time.

* Subject to status and lender criteria.

TYPES OF MORTGAGE

FIXED RATE

Your monthly mortgage payments are fixed for a set amount of time (usually 2-5 years), which is useful when working out your monthly budgets. You are protected from rate increases during this fixed period, but will not benefit from rate decreases.

STANDARD VARIABLE RATE (SVR)

You pay the lenders current interest rate. You may benefit from rate reductions, however you could be impacted by rate increases too.

BASE RATE TRACKER

This follows an interest rate usually set in line with the Bank of England (BoE) base rate for a certain period of time. It is typically higher and you may benefit from immediate rate reductions, but your payments will go up if the rate increases

DISCOUNTED

You pay the lender's standard variable rate, minus a set discount for a fixed period of time, after which it reverts to the SVR. You could benefit from immediate rate reductions, but equally your payment will go up if the rate increases.

CAPPED RATE

Even if the base rate rises, this mortgage rate will not go past a certain amount for a set period of time. If interest rates fall, so will this rate.

FLEXIBLE/OFFSET

Offset the amount you are borrowing by linking the mortgage to some savings or current account balances. Some of these products allow flexibility when making repayments or even allow you to make overpayments. With offsetting, you do not earn any actual interest on the accounts you link to your mortgage, instead your savings are used to reduce your mortgage balance.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND BASE RATE

The official bank rate (also called the Bank of England base rate BOEBR) is the interest rate the Bank of England charges banks for secured overnight lending. Most UK lenders use the base rate to help calculate interest rates on their own products.

**We are not able to advise on the suitability of your selected repayment vehicle. If uncertain we recommend that you seek independent financial advice.

OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

ARRANGE YOUR CONVEYANCING

Conveyancing is the legal transfer of a property from one owner to another. It includes all the legal work plus a variety of important searches and checks on the property.

This is where we can help. Our Home Conveyancing service is an easy and affordable way of taking care of all your conveyancing needs in one place. Here are some of the benefits:

- Open 7 days a week and evenings too
- No move, no legal fee
- Fixed transparent pricing
- Manage every aspect of your case securely online and by phone
- No need to visit a conveyancer's office
- We aim to deliver a consistently faster legal service

We can look after all the finer details for you and keep you up to date throughout the conveyancing process.

We will:

- Draw up and check contracts
- Raise enquiries with the opposing conveyancer
- Carry out local searches (e.g. local authority, Land Registry, water and environmental searches)
- Arrange Land Registry certification
- Organise payment of stamp duty (if applicable)
- Manage exchange of contracts
- Transfer monies

VALUATION AND SURVEYS

Your lender will require a basic mortgage valuation – a report they will arrange themselves, which confirms the property is worth the money you are asking to borrow.

There are also three main surveys which you might want to consider:

RICS Home Survey Level 2 (Survey Only)

This is a report suitable for conventional properties, built from common building materials and in reasonable condition. The focus of the report is on assessing the general condition of the main elements of the property.

RICS Home Survey Level 2 (Survey and Valuation)

This report is as above, but also includes the surveyor's professional opinion on the 'market value' of the property and an insurance reinstatement figure.

RICS Home Survey Level 3

This is a report suitable for a larger, older or run-down property, a building that is unusual or significantly altered, or if you are planning major works. It provides detailed information about the structure and fabric of the property.

We can help you choose which survey you will need for the property and arrange it for you either directly with the lender or through our own Survey and Valuation department.

FEES

Although there are some mortgage products without fees, some do have costs. Our Mortgage Consultant will discuss these fees with you.

Here are some fees you may incur to secure your mortgage with a lender:*

- **Administration fee** – payable to us for handling all the administration on your buy to let mortgage and insurance applications
- **Arrangement fee** – paid to the lender for arranging your buy to let mortgage
- **Booking or reservation fee** – usually charged upfront, it reserves the buy to let mortgage you have been offered while your application is being processed
- **Broker fee** – a one-off fee payable to us for lifetime membership to our mortgage services, which comes with a number of benefits
- **Legal fees** – costs incurred by your conveyancer for the legal work required for a buy to let mortgage
- **Valuation/survey fee** – pays for the valuation/survey carried out on the property
- **Stamp Duty** – this is a one-off fee that buyers have to pay the government on properties worth over a certain amount. In Scotland stamp duty is called Land and Buildings Transaction Tax, and in Wales it is called the Welsh Land Transaction Tax. Depending on the property value you may be exempt from stamp duty, particularly if you are a first-time buyer. We can tell you about this, or you can check the government website for current thresholds.

*The total fees payable will depend on your lender.

SECURE A MORTGAGE

DEPOSIT

There are some mortgage products that do not require a deposit, but typically you may need to raise at least 25% of the value of the property to get a buy to let mortgage.

That means if you were buying a £100,000 property you would need to raise at least £25,000 before applying for a buy to let mortgage.

However, if you raise a larger deposit, you might gain access to buy to let mortgage products with lower interest rates which could potentially result in lower monthly payments.

If you are funding your purchase with the sale of another property, your equity may cover your deposit.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD TO BORROW?

How much you can afford to borrow for a buy to let mortgage depends on lots of things: your income, expenditure, financial situation and personal circumstances are all factors. If you are buying a property with someone else, their income and financial situation will also be taken into account.

Lenders need to know much more about you than just your salary before making a decision on how much they are willing to lend by way of a buy to let mortgage. The lender will look closely at your financial history and existing commitments before making a decision. This is done for every mortgage application.

Each lender's criteria can be a little different, so what might be enough for one is not guaranteed to be accepted by another. Speak to one of our Mortgage Consultants who can explain each lender's criteria and advise you on what you can afford. This includes a comprehensive budget planner which lots of our customers find useful.

SECURE A DECISION IN PRINCIPLE/AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE

A decision in principle (DIP) or an agreement in principle (AIP) is confirmation that a lender has checked your finances and is willing to lend you a certain amount as a buy to let mortgage, subject to underwriting.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A BUY TO LET MORTGAGE

Once you have found a property and want to make a buy to let mortgage application, our Mortgage Consultant will complete the paperwork. Please bring along original copies of the following documents. Do not worry if you do not have them all to hand – our Mortgage Consultant will advise you which documents you need, depending on the lender.

Photo ID

- Valid UK/EU passport
- Valid driving licence (if not being used for address verification)
- Valid firearms ID card
- National ID card

Income Proof

- Latest P60 and last 3 months' payslips (some lenders may accept less than 3 months' documents)
- If self-employed, last 3 years' audited accounts/SA302 form, including tax year overviews (some lenders may accept less than 3 years' documents)
- Accountant's certificate (which includes their name and address)
- Proof of any bonuses/recent pay rise
- Pension/benefit statements

Address Verification

- Utility bill dated in the last 3 months (not a mobile phone bill or junk mail)
- Valid driving licence (as long as the address is correct and it is not being used for photo ID verification)
- Annual council tax bill
- HMRC/DWP letters dated within the last 3 months
- Last 3 months' bank statements (showing income and expenses)
- Latest credit card statement
- Latest mortgage statement (if applicable)

If you are making a joint application, we will need to see those documents for both of you.

Once our Mortgage Consultant has recommended a buy to let mortgage based on your circumstances,* they will submit a full mortgage application to the lender with certified copies of your documents (to prove they have seen the originals), details of the property and the conveyancer you are using to complete your purchase.

The lender will process your application and arrange a mortgage valuation/survey on the property. This is the point you may want to consider a survey upgrade for your own peace of mind (please refer to the valuation and surveys section on page 5).

MORTGAGE OFFER

Once the lender is satisfied with the results of the valuation report and the details you provided as part of the buy to let mortgage application, they will be in a position to issue a mortgage offer. A copy will be sent to you and your conveyancer, who will continue to work towards exchange of contracts and completion.

*Subject to status and lender criteria.

INSURANCE

PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT

The buy to let mortgage lender will require you to have buildings suitable for landlords in place from the point you exchange contracts on a freehold property. Some buildings insurance policies have a degree of accidental damage cover included, but you may want to add additional cover for more protection to the physical structure of your property.

There are other insurance products you may also want to think about. Speak to our Mortgage Consultant about:

- Contents insurance
- Life insurance
- Critical illness
- Income protection.

MAKING A WILL

If you have not made a will, investing in a property that will form part of your estate is a really good reason to finally do it. Planning what happens to your money, possessions and property would save your loved ones additional stress, worry and cost at a difficult time.

Our will-writing partner can provide a simple, straightforward service for your peace of mind, just ask our Mortgage Consultant for details.

A BROKER FEE MAY BE PAYABLE UPON MORTGAGE APPLICATION AS WELL AS AN ADMINISTRATION FEE. THE TOTAL FEE PAYABLE WILL DEPEND ON YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES. YOUR MORTGAGE CONSULTANT WILL EXPLAIN ANY FEES APPLICABLE IN YOUR INITIAL APPOINTMENT.

YOUR HOME OR PROPERTY MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE. YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY AN EARLY REPAYMENT CHARGE TO YOUR EXISTING LENDER IF YOU REMORTGAGE.

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