



Top Tips when dealing with a Help to Buy Equity Loan

- **Chasing Discharges:** Homes England (HE) have confirmed that most discharges are done via electronic discharge with Land Registry wherever possible.

The current process requires conveyancers to send a completed DS1 form for **all** full redemptions post completion. This forms part of HE checks to enable discharge and is also used where HE is unable to electronically discharge.

ACTION: To help speed up the discharge process conveyancers must send, on the date of completion, the redemption amount, a completed DS1 form (all full redemptions) and the completion statement (for property sales only).

There is no need to chase within the first 10 working days of redemption.

- **Contact Response Time:** The correct delivery of information will speed up the process.

ACTION: Ensure that all information required to identify a customer and property are included on all emails. On any correspondence you should include the ID & Verification requirements, even when replying to a string of emails, to ensure the email attaches to the correct customer.

Field	Description	Format & Example
Agreement/Account Number:	The help to buy account number, this can be found on documentation sent from Help to Buy.	Numbers only 1234567
Full Name:	The full name(s) of the customer(s) as HE have them on file. You do not need to include both customers in the body of the email, one will do.	First name / Surname Joe Bloggs
Date of Birth:	The date of birth for the customer(s). To ensure this is clearly picked up, separate with forward slash.	DD/MM/YYYY 01/03/1992
Contact telephone number:	The mobile phone number for the customer(s).	11 Digits 07712345824
Email:	The email address on file for the customer(s).	email@address.com

The online guidance, link below, confirms what is required to ensure the email gets to the right Team. [Manage your Help to Buy: Equity Loan - GOV.UK](#)

- **Issues with Redemption Undertakings**

Up to 18% of redemption undertakings are rejected

ACTION: Ensure all redemption undertaking documents are completed correctly and in full.

To prevent frustration and delay make sure the redemption undertaking:-

- a) includes a signature
- b) is signed by someone authorised eg a partner or director of the firm
- c) includes all mandatory data items and they are correct
- d) that templates are not amended; and
- e) that the redemption undertaking appears, and is signed, on the firm's letter head.

- **Delays in Receiving Redemption Figures:** All necessary documents and payments need to be received from customers before a redemption letter can be issued. These will include the correctly completed application form, application fee, evidence of source of funds and RICS valuation less than 3 months old.

ACTION: You should highlight to the borrower these requirements at the earliest opportunity, and that HE cannot communicate with you until the borrower has authorised them to communicate with their appointed conveyancer via the application form.

- **Delays in Discharge:** Customers cancel their direct debit payments for interest and management fee before the completion date which can result in an outstanding balance. HE are unable to discharge if there is an outstanding balance.

ACTION: Conveyancers should remind customers to not cancel Direct Debits before the completion date to avoid delays in the charge being removed.

- **Communication of Process Changes:** Issues arise where HE processes are changed without notice to the conveyancers.

ACTION: HE administrators will ensure that any changes to processes are communicated to conveyancers in advance where possible.

- **Valuation Validity:** clarification around how long a valuation is valid for.

ACTION: Homes England have confirmed that a RICS valuation is valid for 3 months from the date of the report. Please note customers are written to prior to a report expiring advising how they can extend the valuation validity. Details are also on .gov.uk in the [how to repay your loan guides section 1](#) – “If the report expires” section.

- **Developer Loan Process Clarification:** Issues arising with lack of understanding of the process to deal with older products like First Buy.

ACTION: HE administrators will clarify the process for handling developer loans associated with old schemes, including contact details for developers.

- **Arrears Notification Process:** Issue arising where a borrower cancels their direct debit and Homes England write to the property which the borrower no longer owns.

ACTION: HE will review the arrears notification process to ensure that letters are not sent to sold property addresses and consider notifying conveyancers instead and communicating with borrowers via email.

Deed of postponement timescales and process

The application process to remortgage, or for a transfer of equity, should take 10 working days to acceptance, subject to all requirements being met such as forms, evidence and fees being correctly provided.

If an application is successful then the conveyancer will be sent the relevant legal pack to complete and return.

Once the relevant deeds have been submitted by the conveyancer the current timescales, for guidance purposes only, is 8 weeks to seal a deed of postponement, release or accession and return it to the conveyancer. HE will aim to return the deed/s before 8 weeks wherever possible.

Actions

HE are looking at all processes to improve the customer/conveyancer journey which would naturally reduce the timescale. This includes the digital sealing of deeds.

Until then the key actions are:

- Start the remortgage or transfer of equity process as early as possible
- Familiarise yourself with the end to end process on .gov.uk:
[How to remortgage your Help to Buy home and borrow more money - GOV.UK](#)

[How to remortgage your Help to Buy home without borrowing more money - GOV.UK](#)

[How to change ownership of your Help to Buy home - GOV.UK](#)

- Ensure all deeds are correctly completed to reduce return rates – when HE have to return a deed, due to it being incorrect, the 8 week timescale will start again on receipt of the correctly completed deed.

Digital processes will make the process more efficient. HE are working on digital sealing for all deeds, as well as a variety of other options to support a more digital customer/conveyancer journey to improve the timescales and overall experience.

HE will keep conveyancers updated of any changes to process.

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