

The LIFT Scheme: 10 Steps to Buying a Home in Renfrewshire

This information has been provided by Link Group, administrators for the Scottish Government of the OMSE (Open Market Shared Equity) scheme.

Do you want to buy a home in Renfrewshire but don't think you can afford the full price? The Scottish Government's LIFT (Low Cost Initiative for First Time Buyers) scheme may be able to help.

Owning your own home can sometimes feel like an unachievable goal, however, if you are a local authority or housing association tenant, you could be eligible for funding of up to 40% towards the cost of a home through the LIFT OMSE (Open Market Shared Equity) scheme.

Find out more about the LIFT scheme and apply online at:
www.linkhousing.org.uk/lift-tenants

How does it work?

The LIFT OMSE scheme is a shared equity scheme provided by the Scottish Government. Buying through a shared equity scheme means you pay for the majority share of the property – usually, a combination of deposit and mortgage – and the Scottish Government provides funding for the remaining share.

If you are eligible, you will be awarded funding of between 10% and 40% towards the price of a property you have chosen on the open market. Open market means that the property has been advertised for sale publicly.

Example: *If you find a home that costs £100,000 and can afford to contribute £70,000 (through mortgage and personal contribution), the Scottish Government could provide the remaining £30,000 (30%). When the property is sold, 30% of the sale price is returned to the Scottish Government.*

The share funded by the Scottish Government is held under a 'shared equity agreement'. It's up to you if you want to increase your share in the property over time or wait until the property is sold to repay the Government's percentage.

When buying a home through a shared equity scheme, you own it outright and have the full title to the property, just as you would buying without assistance.

10 steps to buying your own home

Buying a home through the LIFT scheme is straight-forward. Follow these 10 steps to affordable homeownership:

1. Check your mortgage suitability

We advise that you talk to an Independent Financial Advisor (IFA) before applying to the scheme as you are required to provide a Mortgage Promise or Mortgage Agreement in Principle along with your application. Most IFAs do not charge for this service.

2. Submit an online application

Check your eligibility for the LIFT scheme by completing an online application form. You can find out more and apply online by visiting www.linkhousing.org.uk/lift-tenants

3. Application assessment

Link administers the LIFT scheme on behalf of the Scottish Government for the whole of Scotland. Our dedicated LIFT team will assess your application within 5 working days (providing all supporting documentation is included with the application form).

4. Get your application approval

We will let you know if your application has been approved. You will also be given details of the minimum financial contribution you will be expected to make towards the property and the maximum price of property you can buy.

5. Find your new home

You have 12 weeks from the date your application is approved to find a property you would like to buy.

6. Send the property details

Our team will check that the property you have found is eligible for the scheme. The best way to do this is to send a link to the property advert.

7. Make an offer

Once the property has been approved, you can go ahead and make an offer. You can finalise your mortgage when the offer has been accepted.

8. Finalise the sale

Your Solicitor will confirm the terms of the sale and arrange for the paperwork to be signed.

9. Claim funding

Our team will claim your funding from the Scottish Government.

10. Transfer funds

Your Solicitor will gather the funds for the sale price and transfer them to allow you to collect the keys to your new home.

Who can apply?

The LIFT scheme was created to help first-time buyers get onto the property ladder. However, you can apply to the scheme if you are in one of the below priority groups, even if you have previously owned a property. Priority groups are:

- Local authority and housing association tenants
- People with a disability who can demonstrate a housing need
- Members of the armed forces
- Veterans who have left the armed forces within the past two years
- Widows, widowers and other partners of armed forces personnel who have lost their life while serving in the armed forces within the last two years
- People aged over 60 who can demonstrate a housing need

To be eligible, you must be able to demonstrate that you could not afford to buy the property without assistance from the scheme. If you can raise more than 90% of the value of the property (through mortgage and personal contribution), you will not be eligible for the scheme.

What property can I buy?

To be eligible for the scheme, properties must be advertised for sale on the open market and be the correct size for your household. You will be told what size of property your household is eligible for when you apply to the scheme.

Example: A family of four (two parents and two children) could be entitled to buy up to a four-bedroom property (five apartments including living room/dining rooms).

The maximum price threshold is different for each local authority area. In Renfrewshire, the maximum price thresholds are:

2 apartment* (1-2 person household)	£55,000
3 apartment (1-2 person household)	£70,000
4 apartment (3 person household)	£85,000
5 apartment (4 person household)	£115,000
6 apartment (5 person household)	£205,000

*An apartment is classed as a habitable room including; bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms, box rooms and sunrooms. Kitchens, bathrooms and conservatories are not classed as apartments.

Visit www.linkhousing.org.uk/lift-tenants or contact our team on lift@linkhaltd.co.uk or 0330 303 0125 for more information.