

Mortgage & Protection news

Blue and White Mortgage & Insurance Services

BLUE AND WHITE MORTGAGE
& INSURANCE SERVICES

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Amongst the current turmoil, we've seen a sizeable increase in mortgage interest rates.

» In light of this, an analysis by the Resolution Foundation has suggested that for over five million households, annual mortgage payments may rise by an average of £5,100 between now and the end of 2024. Although, £1,200 of this amount was attributed to the impact of the mini-budget - much of which has now been shelved.

(Source: Resolution Foundation, 15 October 2022)

A consequence of the financial crisis following September's mini-budget is that we now have a new Prime Minister (and a different Chancellor), which has helped to calm the financial markets. At least for now. But high inflation still remains (at around 10%), and this would continue to have an impact on interest rates.

(Source: Office for National Statistics, CPI, October 2022)

So, **is it now time to reassess your own mortgage borrowing needs?** Of course, those on fixed rate deals would remain, if wanted, at their agreed interest rate until the end of their deal period.

Stamp Duty decrease

As set out in the box to the right, various property purchasers will now benefit from paying less tax than they expected.



Base Rate rise

Upward inflation has been a contributory factor in the Bank of England Base Rate rises.

Whilst it is not the only determinant that influences mortgage interest rates, it does have a knock-on effect. And recent comments from the Governor of the Bank of England hint at further, and possibly larger, interest rate rises.

(Source: Bank of England, 22 September 2022, and Governor speech 15 October 2022)

Mortgage Rate rises

The rise in interest rates will be a shock for many, with the broad direction of travel being upwards. Although, with a degree of calm returning to the markets, some lenders have reduced their rates. Albeit they're still a lot higher than a year ago, and also more than what was on offer back in the summer.

(Source: Moneyfacts, average rates comparison to October 2022)

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STAMP DUTY

Reduced rate bands are now applicable to a property purchase in England and Northern Ireland.

Up to £250,000	0%
The next £675,000	5%
The next £575,000	10%
The remaining amount	12%

■ You'll usually have to add a 3% surcharge to the above for those buying an 'additional' property.

First-Time Buyer discount

Up to £425,000	0%
Portion from £425,001 to £625,000	5%

■ If the property price is over £625,000, the FTB reverts to the normal rates.

(Source: HM Treasury, 23 September 2022)

HM Revenue & Customs practice and the law relating to taxation are complex and subject to individual circumstances and changes which cannot be foreseen.

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Welcome.... to this newsletter, which covers what we believe are some of the key issues of the moment that affect mortgage, protection and insurance products - and sets out how **we may help you.**

■ Blue and White Mortgage & Insurance Services is an Appointed Representative of Mortgage Saving Experts Ltd which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority under number 779662 in respect of mortgage, insurance and consumer credit mediation activities only.

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

Who should be talking to us?



- Those looking to purchase their first home.
- Those who have a mortgage deal that's due to end in the next 6 months or so.
- Those borrowers who simply want to obtain a new deal at the current interest rates and/or raise more funds.
- Those who need more living space, either within their current home, or are looking to move.
- Those who may be worried that further cost of living rises (and possible property price falls) could markedly impact on their mortgage affordability calculations into the future.

Rate check

Monthly payments for a mortgage per £1,000 borrowed over 30 years

Interest rate %	Interest-only* £	Repayment £
0.25	0.21	2.88
0.50	0.42	2.99
1.00	0.83	3.22
1.50	1.25	3.45
2.00	1.67	3.70
2.50	2.08	3.95
3.00	2.50	4.22
3.50	2.92	4.49
4.00	3.33	4.77
4.50	3.75	5.07
5.00	4.17	5.37
5.50	4.58	5.68
6.00	5.00	6.00
6.50	5.42	6.32
7.00	5.83	6.65
7.50	6.25	6.99
8.00	6.67	7.34
8.50	7.08	7.69
9.00	7.50	8.05
9.50	7.92	8.41
10.00	8.33	8.78

Here's how to use the mortgage payments calculator: A £100,000 mortgage over 30 years, charged at a 5% interest rate would cost 100 x £5.37 (for Repayment) = £537 per month.

* Excludes any payments to a separate savings scheme, to help pay off the capital amount borrowed.
This calculator only provides a guide to monthly payments and does not guarantee eligibility for a mortgage.
The actual amounts that you may have to pay may be more or less than the figures shown.
Please contact us for a personalised illustration.



What now?... (contd)

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Securing a suitable deal

Future Base Rate decisions will have an impact on the marketplace, as will the Autumn Statement, when the Chancellor sets out the tax and spending plans on 17 November. According to some, these decisions may be taken in a slightly more positive economic environment.

Understandably though, it is at times like these that **our skillset can really be utilised to your advantage.**

For example, some homeowners may view the combination of rising costs, and higher interest rates with great concern. In which case, when looking for a new mortgage deal, they may add selling up and downsizing into the mix.

Of course, the circumstances for each borrower will be different, and that's why it's vital that you take advice.

House prices

In the midst of all this, UK house prices continue to rise, by 9.5%, on average, in the year to September 2022. But the general view is that price rises will ease further over time, with possible falls.

However, on a positive note, price rises over the last few years may offset any fall, as many existing homeowners have built up their property asset value. For example, in the **last two years alone, the average house price has increased by almost £50,000.**

This 22% rise in value could also give borrowers access to a 'comparatively' better current deal - as the loan-to-value required today could be lower than what was needed, say, 2, or 5 years ago. Also, house prices over the long-term have been incredibly resilient, and in the last 30 years, for example, we have seen the **average house price rise**

from around £52,000 to about £273,000.

That's more than a fivefold increase. (Source: Nationwide, House Price Index, September & Q3 2022)

Lender requirements

As has been the case for a good few years, borrowers will be well aware that lenders continue to apply stringent controls on both the 'evidencing of income' and if the borrower meets the 'affordability' criteria.

Remortgaging early?

In a broadly rising market for interest rates, some borrowers may feel that it is beneficial to pay the **early repayment charge** to ensure they can get what they believe is a better rate now, rather than waiting until their deal period ends.

No one knows where rates will be in the future, but talk to us first, as we can run through the options. We could then assess if it might save money, or cost you more.

This is just one reason why you should talk to us...

With so much to consider, it can be quite confusing. For our part, we have the expertise, and are working in this marketplace day-in day-out (and currently many evenings!).

We also know how swiftly the market moves, with deals being pulled by lenders - with minimal notice - plus, we're tenacious, and can act swiftly on your behalf.

You may have to pay an early repayment charge to your existing lender if you remortgage.

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



Do policies PAY OUT?

Yes, they do, with 98% of all claims being paid out in 2021.

Life Cover

- 99.5% of all claims were paid out.
- Average payout of £80,485 (term), £4,125 (whole of life).

Critical Illness

- 91.3% of all claims were paid out.
- Average payout of £67,951.

Income Protection

- 86% of all claims were paid out.
- Average payout of £23,380.
- Average length of claim could be around 6 years.*

(Sources: Association of British Insurers, 2021 data, May 2022 release; *2021 claims data from LV and Aviva)

With the current Cost of Living crisis, your existing income stream may already be stretched to cover mortgage costs, ongoing living expenses, holidays, etc. So imagine the impact if an income earner was then unable to work (and earn) for a long period, or worse still, died.

» At its most basic level, it's vital to have a suitable amount of **life cover** in place, to help pay-off the mortgage, should the unthinkable occur.

However, what is more likely to happen during your working life, is that you suffer a serious illness, or injury, and are unable to swiftly return to work, if at all.

There are products on offer to deliver a lump sum payout if suffering a 'specified' serious illness (**critical illness cover**), or

deliver a regular income (until you return to work, or retire), in the event of a specified illness or injury (**income protection**).

What if you already have cover in place?

If you are looking for savings across your household expenditure, an insurance policy that you feel may never be claimed against, might seem one way to cut costs.

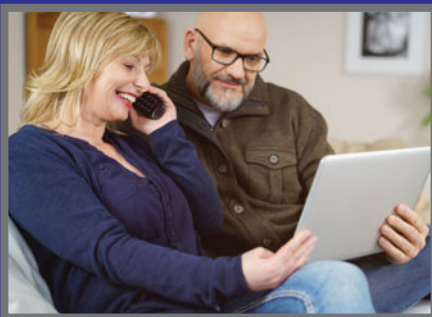
However, do talk to us first before tak-

ing any action, as it may prove to be a false economy, plus there might be alternatives that enable you to still have a degree of protection cover.

As with all insurance policies, terms, conditions and exclusions will apply.

Coming to the end of your mortgage deal rate period?

Across 2022 and 2023, around 1.3m and 1.8m borrowers, respectively,* will see their fixed rate mortgage deals come to an end. That accounts for **almost half of all fixed rate borrowers!** If they don't act, they could end up on their lender's Standard Variable Rate. (Source: *UK Finance, September 2022)



Many of those borrowers are likely to face a financial shock, with the average 2-year fixed rate increasing (at the time of writing) by around a 4% interest rate against two years ago. If they were borrowing £100,000 at the average fixed rate, over 30 years, then the extra payments might be about £250 more a month. (Source: Moneyfacts, 13 October 2022)

Cost of Living

Couple this with the rise in energy costs, and other expenses, and they have a double whammy of finding more money to pay both the mortgage and bills, than was the case a few years back.

Do we have a solution?

There's no escaping rising costs, but we can help in a number of ways:

- Ideally, don't revert to your lender's, generally, more expensive Standard Variable Rate.
- Don't wait until your deal rate ends. Talk to us 6 months ahead of that date. And, in the current marketplace we

might be able to secure a more suitable deal than what may be on offer 6 months down the line.

- And we can hold your hand throughout this process.
- Helping to assess the options between staying with a new deal with your current lender, or one elsewhere.
- assist with all the paperwork.
- liaise with all interested parties: lender, solicitor, surveyor, estate agent, etc.

Please let us identify the most suitable way forward for your needs.

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



Making the Right Decisions...

Landlords, as ever, need to be a pretty resilient group, with all the regulations, tax changes and market conditions thrown at this sector over the years, and now we have rising mortgage interest rates!

» On top of these developments, there are more changes coming down the track, such as the Energy Performance Certificate reforms (see box item below). However, a recent positive is that landlords will also benefit from the reduction in the Stamp Duty charges, albeit the 3% surcharge still remains.

Wanting to remortgage

As a consequence of the regulatory issues applied back in 2017, a sizeable number of landlords took out 5-year fixed rate deals to avoid some of the stress-testing requirements back then.

For those that are yet to remortgage, it's vital that you have a conversation with us. The current turbulent market environment means that some lenders are further tightening their stress-testing for mortgage loans.

The stress test rate is applied to check the ability of the borrower to pay at a rate above the deal rate on offer - and the percentage rate stress test rate seems to be rising. In addition to this, we still have the affordability criteria, where lender's will be looking for a buffer in

rental income to the tune of around 125-145 per cent. This is there to help cover non-payment of rent, void periods, repairs, etc.

Demand remains

For those renters who want to become homeowners, there's still a lack of suitable housing stock, and problems with building up a deposit. Plus, the current climate may delay some from wanting to get onto the property ladder at this time, and continue to rent.

Limited Company status

This is proving to be a popular direction, but won't be the most suitable option for all, so do speak to your accountant and solicitor regarding tax issues, and property structures (such as any leasehold issues you may face). And we're there to give an overview, and to assist with sourcing suitable deals.

There is no guarantee that it will be possible to arrange continuous letting of the property, nor that the rental income will be sufficient to meet the costs of the mortgage.

The value of your Buy-to-Let property and income from it can go down as well as up. You may also require advice on the legal and tax issues.

The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate legal and taxation advice, and most Buy-to-Let mortgages.

HM Revenue & Customs practice and the law relating to taxation are complex and subject to individual circumstances and changes which cannot be foreseen.

You may have to pay an early repayment charge to your existing lender if you remortgage.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Over three-quarters of landlords are willing to spend up to £3,000 to upgrade each of their properties to an EPC rating C, in order to meet the new regulations.

However, according to Paragon Bank, the average cost for these improvements may well be over £10,000 - covering elements such as replacement windows and loft insulation. New tenancies must have an EPC rating of at least C by the end of 2025. For existing tenancies, this will apply from 31 December 2028.

(Source: Paragon Bank, Rental Sector Energy Challenge report, July 2022)

■ Your property may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.



FIRST-TIME Buyer

The current market climate will present both positives and negatives for those who **want to buy their first home.**

» Rising interest rates are a concern for all, but maybe more so for those looking purchase their first property.

This is because the smaller the deposit is, the higher the interest rate offered will be. Yet even here there may be issues, with some lenders cutting back on their 5% deposit deals, with concerns that negative equity may rear its head in the future.

It's understandable that some potential first-time buyers may be

put off, but it's vital that you take professional advice first, to identify what's in front of you, as positive options may well exist.

Stay renting

Like normal residential borrowers, many landlords will have mortgages too for their rental properties, and they may pass onto their tenants their increased borrowing costs. Also, unlike buying your own home, the monthly rental payments will not be going towards possibly building your own property asset value.

Buy a property

A positive scenario is that interest rate rises may bring about a calming down, or even a reduction in house prices, which would be good for the first-time buyer.

Stamp Duty

If you're purchasing a property (in England or N. Ireland) then even if it cost as much as £425,000, there would no longer be any stamp duty to pay. Other residential borrowers would face a comparable tax bill of £8,750, increasing to £14,000 for landlords.

Talk to us

We can help you with your application, factor in any financial support from parents (or grandparents), consider any specific government help, identify areas to improve once you obtain your credit score (see box item), and then scour the market for the most suitable deals on offer.

If this route is of interest for you (or a family member), then please get in touch to find out more.

Check your Credit Rating

Not being on the Electoral Register, or missing paying a monthly mobile phone bill can work against you, so do check and resolve any issues.

A credit score is designed to try to predict your future behaviour. So, those with a poor score may suffer, as can others who have no credit history at all!

Make sure you check your rating at one (or some) of the following:

- **Checkmyfile** - Tel: 0800 086 9360 (*this brings together most rating agency results*) - www.checkmyfile.com
- **Experian** - Tel: 0800 013 88 88 - www.experian.co.uk
- **Equifax** - Tel: 0800 014 2955 - www.equifax.co.uk
- **TransUnion** - Tel: 0330 024 7574 - www.transunion.co.uk

As every lender has its own 'perfect customer' profile, a rejection from one isn't necessarily a rejection from all. By talking to us we'll have a better feel for items which may score you down and where you might get a more favourable response for credit.

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

With the current demands on our disposable income, imagine what would happen if a wage earner then experienced reduced earnings from being **off work long-term due to an illness, or injury**. Could they survive financially?

INCOME Protection

» If you found yourself in this position, some may initially benefit from financial support from their employer. However, it's only likely to be there for a defined period. Plus, there's limited state support to access, with Statutory Sick Pay at around £100 a week.

However, will that be anywhere near enough to ensure you can continue to put food on the table and a roof over your head (via continued mortgage or rental payments) - and that's just for starters.

Average lifetime earnings

Consider this; across a working lifetime, taking the average annual income of around £32,000, this could equate to about **£1,500,000** (discounting inflation). This amount is well over five times the current average value of a UK home - circa **£270,000**.

Yet many will willingly insure their home, and sensibly take out life cover to help pay off the outstanding mortgage (as a minimum), but far fewer apply the same principles to their own income stream.

(Sources: Office for National Statistics, Labour market overview, October 2022 release; Nationwide, House Price Index, September 2022)

Finding the extra £s

With a Cost of Living crisis, it's quite likely that you're already looking at cost-cutting, encompassing all those little items we may take for granted, like the odd takeaway or a magazine. As part of that process, it could also be feasible to put aside some of those savings to help fund a Protection plan. Whilst we don't expect you to give up all of life's little luxuries, cutting out just one unit each week of the items below, could **save around £195 each month!**

Treats	£ Cost/unit (est.)
Soft drink	1.50
Snack	1.00
Magazine	2.25
Coffee (takeaway)	3.50
Pint of beer or lager	4.00
Glass of wine (175ml)	4.25
Taxi	8.00
Cigarettes (pack of 20)	12.50
Takeaway meal	8.00
Total =	£45.00



Could it happen to me?

Most of us will feel that being off work long-term, and unable to earn an income is unlikely. Yet almost **2.5 million people in the UK, are currently off work due to long-term sickness**, equating to around 1 in 10 of those in full-time employment.

(Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour market overview, October 2022 release)

A solution for you...

If you did find yourself in this position, then there is a protection product to utilise once any employer support, or savings, drops away, and that's an **Income Protection policy**.

Income Protection is a flexible product, and will generally cover up to around 60-65% of your gross income, and dependent on the type of product you opt for, it could be a tax-free monthly payout until you're well enough to return to work, retired or have died, whichever occurs first. And, if you're still working and paying premiums, you can claim against it more than once.

The product also allows you to defer payouts until you really need them (which could be for up to 52 weeks). The longer you opt to defer, then that will be reflected in a lower premium.

Alternatively, if an even lower monthly premium is better for your pocket, then you could opt for a scheme that only pays out for a specific period of time, generally one to two years (although it can be up to five, in some instances).

As with all insurance policies, terms, conditions and exclusions will apply.

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■ The contents of this newsletter are believed to be correct at the date of publication (October 2022).

■ Every care is taken that the information in the *Mortgage & Protection News* publication is accurate at the time of going to press. However, all information and figures are subject to change and you should always make enquiries and check details and, where necessary, seek legal advice before entering into any transaction.

■ The information in this newsletter is of a general nature. You should seek professional advice tailored to your needs and circumstances before making any decisions.

■ We do hope that the newsletter is of interest to you, however, please inform us if you no longer wish to receive it.