

PRESS RELEASE

BANK OF SCOTLAND SEES BOOST AS SCOTTISH PROPERTY MARKET EMERGES FROM LOCKDOWN

29 June 2020: Online mortgage application enquiries to Bank of Scotland have jumped 75% in the past week, ahead of the Scottish property market emerging from lockdown.

The imminent reopening of the property market means new lending appointments are also up, with an increase of 470% on the previous week.

Bank of Scotland data revealed that the majority of these enquiries and appointments are from first-time buyers. As movers navigate the post-lockdown housing ladder, many will be looking for help on what this now looks like and what it means for them.

Graham Blair, Mortgages Director, Bank of Scotland, said: “With the housing market slowing in the last few months, it has left many people at a loose end, whether that involved delaying plans to buy, extending rental agreements, or having to move in with relatives or friends.

“As Scottish estate agents look to reopen their doors, we are seeing an increase in mortgage applications and new lending appointments as more people want to get moving. Our branch-based advisers are also there to help people take the next step, but there’s plenty that people can do to get the ball rolling in the meantime.”

Top Tips from Bank of Scotland on homebuying in the current environment:

- **First-time buyers** – If you are taking your first step on the property ladder, you should have a look at the First Home Fund which may be an option in helping you purchasing your first home. You can find more details at www.gov.scot/policies/homeowners/first-home-fund/
- **Start the ball rolling** – The quickest way to find out how much you can borrow will be on checking online tools and calculators which can help take the first step to buying, moving home or remortgaging your home within minutes. Our branch-based advisers are on hand to help with any homebuying questions/
- **Keep documents up to date** – Before speaking to a mortgage adviser, make sure all your income details, bank statements and pay cheques are up to date and you have them prepared before the first meeting. The more accurate information you can provide from the offset, the smoother the process will be.
- **Be realistic** – For those selling, there will be lots of speculation over the coming weeks about house prices going down, but we should remember we are in unprecedented times. With market activity currently almost at a complete standstill, and therefore a more limited number

of transactions, it will take time for the true trend to emerge. Consider looking at a trusted house price website as well as talking to a number of local estate agents who can share local expertise on the area.

- **What if I have been furloughed?** – From a Bank of Scotland perspective, our conditions largely remain the same for those applying for mortgages and we recognise furloughed income. Many people have changing circumstances which is why it is important to bring all the latest information with you.
- **Prepare to be patient** – Physical valuations are starting up again and this is positive news for people looking to move or buy. Many estate agents are also flexible in offering virtual tours. While these are great, getting the feel of a home and the local area should always be an essential part of the process. However, with social distancing in place and some concerns about the economy, there will likely be strains on all parts of the housing chain. This means the process could be slower than normal. Keep in mind that some third parties such as solicitors and conveyers may have less capacity and the process may be a bit slower than normal.
- **Remortgaging** – With the current low interest rate environment, it is a good time for homeowners to investigate their options as it could save them hundreds of pounds every year.

ENDS

*Bank of Scotland data from new online mortgage enquiries, dated from 19 June 2020, compared to 26 June 2020