



AFTER YOU'VE PURCHASED

A GUIDE TO YOUR SHARED OWNERSHIP HOME



CONGRATULATIONS

You're now a shared owner!

We hope you enjoy making your new home your own. This guide will answer any questions you may have about your home, how to make changes and what to do if you ever experience financial difficulty.



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YOUR COSTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a new shared owner, there's lots to take in. Here's a quick overview of all the key costs and responsibilities.



BUILDING INSURANCE

We know your new home is more than just a house – it's your home. And that's why we protect your property with a building insurance policy. You can get a summary of our policy by emailing **helloradian@abri.co.uk** for homes in the South, and **helloyarlington@abri.co.uk** for homes in the South West.

Our policy covers:

- fire
- flood
- vandalism
- damage from a burglary or accident.

For most claims, you'll need to pay a £100 excess. If you're claiming for subsidence, the insurer will need to appoint a 'Loss Adjuster' to assess the claim. This will have an excess of £1,000.

Our policy may change from year to year, so please contact us for the most up-to-date information. Don't forget, you'll need to organise your own contents insurance.

RENT

All shared owners pay a monthly rent. This is for the bit of the property you don't own. If you buy more shares in your home, your rent costs will go down.

Your rent costs can be found in your lease and will be reviewed every year. Normally, any rent increases are related to the Retail Price Index (RPI). We'll usually review this every April.

SERVICE CHARGE

Your service charge goes towards the services we provide to you as one of our leaseholders. This includes repairs, maintenance, insurance and management costs for the shared areas of your building. Your service charge won't change if you buy more shares.

In some cases, a management company may also provide services, so we may ask you to pay them directly. Alternatively, we may pay their invoice and then pass this cost on to you.

You can ask us for copies of accounts, receipts and other documents relating to your service charge account. But there may be a small fee for this service.



YOUR LEASE

You'll have been given a copy of your lease by your solicitor. Keep this in a safe place – it's an important legal document.

Your lease is an agreement explaining your rights and responsibilities as a leaseholder (or 'lessee'), and the relationship between you and Abri. It also sets out our responsibilities as your landlord.

Your lease will include:

- your obligations (or 'covenants') to Abri and other tenants
- your obligation to keep your home in good repair
- your duty to get permission from us before altering your home
- details of your rent and service charge, including when this should be paid and by how much it can increase each year
- how to purchase more shares in your home.

For apartments:

- your rights over other parts of the building, including shared areas
- our obligations to you. We must keep the apartment block in good repair and should let you know about repairs to shared areas which will cost more than £250.

If you don't have your lease, you can pay a fee to get a new copy. Find out more at **lease-advice.org.uk**.



BUYING, SELLING, RE-MORTGAGING AND MORE

Life doesn't stand still. From buying more shares to re-mortgaging, your home ownership can be flexible too.





BUYING MORE SHARES

As a shared owner, you may be able to buy more shares of your home. This is called 'staircasing'. The more shares you own, the less rent you'll pay.

We'll work out how much you need to pay for any extra shares, based upon the value of your home at the time of staircasing. This could go up or down, depending on the market. We'll get an independent RICS-qualified valuer to tell us how much your home is worth.

There will be some costs to staircase, including a valuation fee, solicitors fees and a processing fee. But it shouldn't cost as much as buying your first share.

If you do staircase to 100% (you could do this over a few purchases), you'll become an outright owner, and won't need to pay rent to us anymore. You'll continue to pay your service charge, and may have an annual ground rent.

We'll let you know about any future charges before instructing solicitors.

SELLING YOUR HOME

As a shared owner, you're able to sell your home at any time. You'll need to let us know in writing that you'd like to sell your property. Our Resales team will then help you through the selling process.

We'd love to help someone else benefit from Shared Ownership, too. So, when you choose to sell, we'll have a set nomination period to look for a Shared Ownership buyer for your home. The length of your nomination period is in your lease. Please note there will be a fee involved.

Any potential buyer of your share must meet the Shared Ownership criteria. This means their household must earn £80,000 or less, and have a deposit saved to buy at least the share you are selling.

After your nomination period, if we haven't found a buyer, you can continue marketing with us or choose to sell your home through an estate agent. We'll still need to approve the buyer, and there will be a processing fee for this.

Visit abrihomes.co.uk to take a look at our selling your home guide to find out more.

GETTING A VALUATION

Whether you're staircasing or selling your home, you'll need a formal valuation. This helps us to protect the public funds invested in your home.

We can send you a list of recommended surveyors to choose from. Or, you can choose your own surveyor (but they must be RICS/FRICS registered).

The cost of a valuation report can vary and is only valid for three months from the report date. So, you'll need to try and agree a sale within this window. Once your sale is agreed, your valuation is valid for another three months.



RE-MORTGAGING YOUR HOME

You can make changes to your mortgage to save or raise money, or just get a mortgage that's better for you. If you'd like to change mortgage lender or borrow more money, you'll need to ask us first.

To raise money for further borrowing, you'll need to have equity in your home. This helps us to protect the public funds invested in your home.

The costs:

- Re-mortgage fees
- Solicitor fees
- Lenders administration fees

Ask your solicitor and lender for details on their fees. Get in touch for information on our re-mortgaging fee.

We'll only approve applications for further borrowing:

- to comply with the leaseholders' covenants in your lease, e.g. essential repairs
- to allow one leaseholder to buy out another's interest in the same property
- to fund changes needed for special needs requirements in your home
- to allow you to staircase

It's important to shop around and find the best mortgage for you. Not sure where to start? We have a panel of independent Mortgage Advisors who can help.

TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP

We know that your life may change since buying your home. So, you can add or remove an owner from your lease, if needed. There’s two ways to do this:

DIVORCE AND A COURT ORDER

Under the terms of the Court Order, we’ll arrange the transfer to the person that will stay in the property.

MUTUAL AGREEMENT

If changing from joint to sole ownership, we’ll need to check that the person who is staying in the property can afford to do so. If you’re changing from sole to joint ownership, you’ll need to ensure both owners meet the Shared Ownership eligibility criteria.

You’ll need to supply some supporting documents and may need to fill in an application form for us to be able to approve any changes.

The costs

- transfer of ownership fee
- solicitor fees
- lenders administration fees

Ask your solicitor and lender for details on their fees. Get in touch for information on our re-mortgaging fee.



MAKING HOME IMPROVEMENTS

We know that you’re going to want to make your house a home, and really make it your own. It’s important to ask us before making any home improvements, as it may impact the value of your home.

But good news! We approve most requests, and you don’t need to ask us to carry out general repair and maintenance to your home.

Here’s some guidance on what we class as a home improvement:

| HOME IMPROVEMENTS | MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR |
|---|------------------------|
| New double glazing | Redecorating your home |
| New kitchen | New carpets |
| New bathroom or plumbing | New fence / patio |
| Installing or replacing central heating | Landscape gardening |
| New conservatory | |
| Extension | |

You can ask us about home improvements by a letter or email to your Leasehold Officer. You’ll also need to pay an administration fee and share any quotes or receipts for works completed. Not sure who to contact?

Call us on **0300 123 3245** or email **helloradian@abri.co.uk** for homes in the South, and **helloyarlington@abri.co.uk** for homes in the South West.

MONEY WORRIES AND FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

If you're facing difficult times financially, please do let us know as soon as possible.





COPING WITH MONEY WORRIES

Financial challenges can happen to everyone at some point, and the stress and worry can get to you. If you find yourself in this situation, the best thing to do is talk to us. You can call us on **0300 123 1567** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm, and 9.00am to 7.00pm on Thursdays.

HELPING YOU MANAGE YOUR MONEY

Here at Abri, we have a Welfare and Benefits team who can help you work out what's affordable for you. This includes using our free budget planning tool, advise where you could cut down your outgoings, and if you qualify for any extra benefits.

USEFUL INFORMATION

There are many organisations offering free and independent debt advice, both over the phone and face-to-face:

Money Advice Service
moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Citizens Advice
citizensadvice.org.uk

National Debt Line
nationaldebtline.co.uk

Consumer Credit Counselling Service
cccs.co.uk

If you're having trouble making your mortgage repayments, it's important to let your mortgage lender know. Your home is at risk if you don't keep up with these payments, or payments on other loans secured on the property.

SELLING BACK YOUR SHARES

In exceptional circumstances, you may be able to sell back some of the shares you own. It's important to know that this is not a right for shared owners, and all applications for this are reviewed individually.

It's best to speak to someone as soon as you find yourself in financial difficulty. You can speak with your mortgage lender, seek advice from our in-house Welfare and Benefits team, or an independent debt counselling agency.

We're only able to help people whose financial difficulties are linked to their mortgage and / or rent payments, not those who have accumulated debt through unsecured loans or credit cards.

When we assess your application to sell back shares, we'll also look at your ability to cover any future repair or maintenance costs for your home.

To apply, you'll need to be an Abri shared owner, currently owning less than 100% of the property. You must be paying rent on the share you do not own – this excludes ground rent and service charges.

Selling back shares is not available to other owner-occupiers, even if you were previously one of our shared owners or have bought your home through Right to Buy or the Help to Buy: Equity Loan.



GET IN TOUCH

0800 145 6663

abrihomes.co.uk

*Please note all costs quoted are subject to change.

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