Help to Buy

Help to Buy: Equity Loan Brand guidelines

November 2023

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1.0 Introduction

Welcome to the brand guidelines for Help to Buy: Equity Loan.

The scheme closed to new applications in 2023, and we have over 300,000 customers who are managing an equity loan.

These guidelines will help us to communicate consistently across all our communications formats and channels.

Whether you are sending an email or creating a presentation, Help to Buy has it's own distinctive design elements and written style.

These guidelines are based on best practice and our commitment to provide accessible information and writing in plain English.

Help to Buy is a registered trademark.

1.1 About Help to Buy

Help to Buy: Equity Loan is one of the government's largest housing schemes. It has helped first-time buyers into home ownership.

Since its launch in 2013 the scheme has helped nearly 400,000 homebuyers to buy their own home.

The scheme closed to new applications in 2023.

First-time buyers could purchase a new-build home with a 5% deposit. The government provided up to 20% (40% in London) of the purchase price of the home and the remaining amount was funded by a repayment mortgage.

Help to Buy: Equity Loan is a government scheme and the policy is developed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

1.2 Homes England

Help to Buy: Equity Loan is a business unit in Homes England a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

As the government's housing and regeneration agency, Homes England were established by statute in 2008, with the purpose of driving regeneration and housing delivery and creating high-quality homes and thriving places.

Homes England work in collaboration with local government, housebuilders, developers, housing associations, infrastructure providers, landowners and lenders.

They support greater social justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home.

1.3 Our brand

We must create communications that match Help to Buy: Equity Loan's mission, values and practices.

By following this guidance we can make communications consistent, trustworthy and instantly recognisable.

These guidelines will help you use our logo, colours, fonts, imagery, tone of voice and written style.

When our identity is consistent it:

- allows us to appear more professional and reliable

- makes it easier to maintain the quality and integrity

- helps to increase trust, value and reassure stakeholders

- increases the brand's perceived value.

2.0 Help to Buy logo

This section outlines the correct use of our core logo and provides the guidance you need to choose the right logo and its application at all times.

The logo is for use by government organisations only.

If you are a non government organisation, such as media or a partner, please seek permission to use the logo by emailing the Help to Buy Communications team at: helptobuycomms@homesengland.gov.uk.

2.1 Help to Buy logo

Our logo consists of the roundel containing our distinctive Help to Buy logotype.

The Help to Buy logo is available in different formats including CMYK, RGB and greyscale and in eps, jpeg and png.

We also have a box logo for use on complex backgrounds.

To use this logo, please contact helptobuycomms@homesengland.gov.uk.

This version of the logo is for use by government organisations only.

The logo consists of the roundel containing our distinctive Help to Buy logotype

Never recreate the 'box' surrounding our logo, this has been set to provide an equal distance around the roundel

2.2 Logo size

All elements of the logo should remain legible at all times.

To ensure logo legibility we given minimum sizes to be used in print and online use.

We have recommended sizes for use.

Please take care to be consistent in how the logo is sized across all your communications.

Recommended sizes for print formats (w)

For A3

30mm

For A4

25mm

For A5 or DL

20mm

Absolute minimum size for print:

20mm

Absolute minimum size for online*:

100px

* Exceptions are made for items such a favicons, which by their nature, are limited to smaller sizes

2.3 Exclusion zone

The exclusion zone is a defined area of space around the logo, into which no other graphic element may intrude.

It is equivalent to the height of the **H** in the Help to Buy logo and runs around the outer edges of the logo.

The exclusion zone must be maintained at all times.

It is important to be use of the exclusion zone when our logo is used alongside other organisations.

Exclusion zone for the logo

Exclusion zone for the box logo

2.4 Logo colour

The logo is available in full colour and greyscale.

The greyscale version uses a tint of the black. It must not be altered in any way and must not be reversed white out of a colour background.

The logo can be used on a white background and coloured backgrounds. The box logo must be used on complex backgrounds for clarity.

The logo can be used on white, dark or light colour backgrounds

Complex backgrounds require the box logo

2.5 Logo positioning

Always try to place the logo in the top left of your communications. Remember to leave equal spacing above and to the left. This will give the logo space and include the exclusion zone.

These positioning rules apply to both landscape and portrait formats.

For documents with a spine we recommend that you leave an extra 5mm of space to the left of the logo to ensure that it is clear of the binding

On some digital channels, like social, the top left position may not be possible. If you have any questions about where to place the logo please contact helptobuycomms@homesengland.gov.uk.

2.6 Homes England and Help to Buy logo

Where Help to Buy is the lead message, it should be placed in the most prominent left hand position for this purpose. This is often dependent on the format of the communications piece, e.g. print advert or online banner.

Where it is important that the Help to Buy logo is prominent, the logo should be placed top left with the Homes England logo placed bottom left – see Fig. 1.

When there is a requirement for the Homes England logo to establish credibility these positions can be reversed – see Fig. 2.
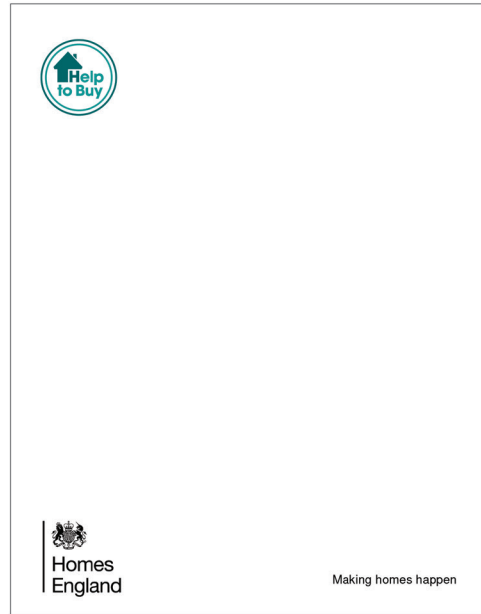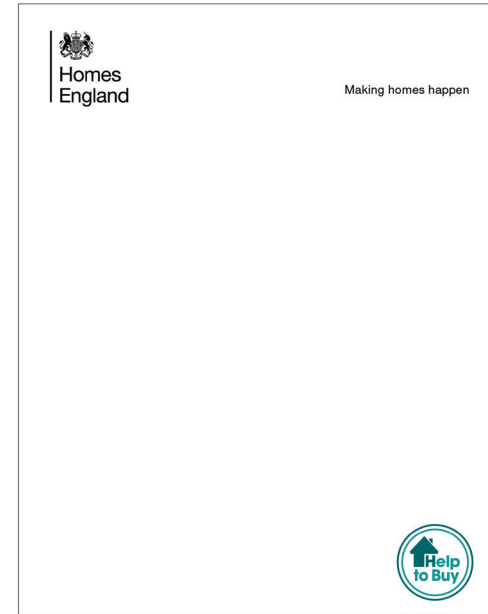
Fig. 1

Fig. 2

2.7 Examples of use

The logo must not be changed, altered or adapted in any way from the logo options provided.

Some examples of good and bad practice for the use of our logo are shown here.

You must never:

1. change the colour of the logo

2. place the logo on a background that does not have enough contrast in colours to make it easily visible

3. distort the logo

4. change the fonts

5. change the proportions of the logo

6. use the logo in place of the printed words (Help to Buy)

There may be exceptions to the rule, such as use on social media, where consistency may compromise clarity – in these circumstances please check with the Help to Buy Communications team before use at: helptobuycomms@homesengland.gov.uk.

Correct logo use for background colours

DO NOT reverse white out of a background

DO NOT change the colour

DO NOT remove any part of the logo

DO NOT place on a busy background or image

3.0 Visual style

Our visual style is made up of many elements.

When we use our colours, fonts, imagery and unique graphics in a consistent way can we create a visual style.

A strong visual style helps us to be unique and easily recognised by our stakeholders. It also makes it easier to spot the fraudulent use of our brand and to protect our customers.

3.1 Colour palette

Colour is an essential part of our visual brand identity. It reflects our personality and our values and it influences how we are perceived.

Help to Buy has a set of core colours that should be used in all communications. There are secondary colours that can be used to accent and define information.

Each colour set works together and have been chosen for accessibility and to add tonal depth to all our communications.

Only use the colour values specified in these guidelines.

RGB colours are used for digital communications – including PowerPoint, Word other on-screen formats.

CMYK colours are used for materials being professionally printed – including direct mail, banners and posters.

HEX colours are only used online.

Primary

HtB dark green
CMYK:
100/40/55/20
RGB: 0/100/105
HEX: #006469

Highlighter tone 5
Pantone: 166 C
CMYK: 0/70/100/0
RGB: 236/102/8
HEX: #EC6608

Body text
Pantone: Cool Gray 11C
CMYK: 63/52/44/33
RGB: 83/86/90
HEX: #53565A

Secondary

HtB light green
CMYK:
85/20/45/00
RGB: 0/146/146
HEX: #009292

Highlighter tone 3
Pantone: 137 C
CMYK: 0/35/100/0
RGB: 249/176/0
HEX: #F9B000

Highlighter tone 4
Pantone: 151 C
CMYK: 0/50/100/0
RGB: 243/146/0
HEX: #F39200

Online

HtB dark green
HEX: #006469

Call to Action's
HEX: #FFDD00

Body text
HEX: #4C4C4C

3.2 Photography

Our messages are enhanced by the use of images, illustrations, icons or photography.

The following points may help you choose the right images:

- Do not use clip art – it is unprofessional.

- If taking your own digital photography make sure your pictures are high resolution.

- Avoid using images saved from the internet. You need to get permission to use them and the image quality is not good enough for use in print.

- Professional illustration is also a good solution to finding the right image.

- Images should be relevant to your text.

- When using pictures of people make sure they are representative of the community.

- If you are photographing people they must sign a consent form – these are available from the Help to Buy Communications team.

- If you are using a photographer, try to get them to take more creative pictures using unusual angles or different techniques.

3.3 Fonts

Fonts are an essential part of our brand toolkit.

Following the guidelines means you can create a clear and impactful message.

We use fonts consistently to help to drive recognition and credibility at every touchpoint in the customer's journey.

Help to Buy uses two brand fonts depending on the application and the communications being created:

- Nimbus - for body copy

- Avant Garde - for headers and titles

The weights used are regular for all body text and bold for headers, buttons and navigation items.

Arial is an alternative font that is to be used online or when the brand fonts are not installed in an operating system.

Brand fonts are to be used on all communications materials to make sure we have a consistent appearance. These include:

Nimbus (body copy)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@#$%^&*()

Avant Garde (headers and titles)

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@#$%^&*()**

An alternative font is:

Arial Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@#$%^&*()

Arial Italic

*ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@#$%^&*()*

Arial Bold

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@#$%^&*()**

Arial Bold Italic

***ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
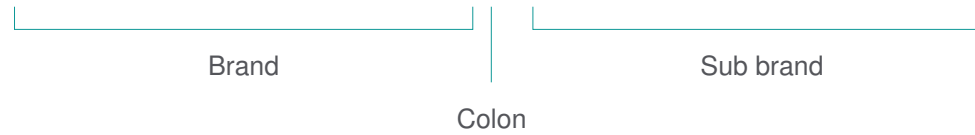abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@#$%^&*()***

3.4 How to refer to Help to Buy

When writing the name of the brand, the correct way is:

Help to Buy: Equity Loan

This is comprised of Help to Buy, with 'Help' and 'Buy' capitalised, followed immediately by a colon, then a space, then Equity Loan, which has a capitalised. 'E' and 'L'.

Help to Buy: Equity Loan

Brand

Colon

Sub brand

3.5 Graphic devices

To keep our communication pieces visually interesting we use graphic devices where appropriate.

Icons remain simple and relevant to the content, and where possible sit in a roundel to reflect our logo.

Important pieces of content may be highlighted using icons and colour blocks, ensuring there is enough contrast to make the content easy to read.

Keylines and swooshes can be created using circles and brand colours to hold images, information or just to create interest to the layout.

What you pay back may not be the same as what you borrowed

The amount you borrow is a percentage of the value of your new home when you buy it. The amount you repay is a percentage of the market value of your home at the time you choose to repay.

This means, if the value of your home rises, so does the amount you owe on your equity loan. And if the value of your home falls, the amount you owe on your equity loan falls too.
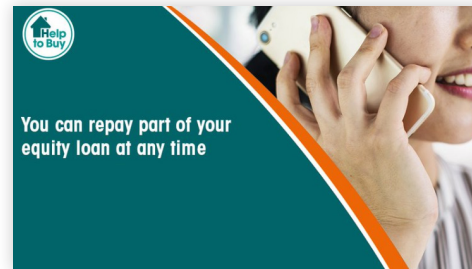
3.6 Online examples

Our online presence needs to remain consistent and onbrand, taking into account these guidelines and ensuring clarity for the audience.

Fonts should be large enough so the message can be read easily.

Sentences should be kept short and succinct, and when used in video, there should be enough time for the message to be read before it leaves the screen.

For support with the creation of online assets please contact our Help to Buy Communications team on helptobuycomms@homesengland.gov.uk.

3.7 Offline examples

Offline collateral should remain bright and clear, never overcrowding the layout and following easy to navigate content structures.

The graphic devices are used to:

- add visual interest to the communication piece

- pull out important content when relevant.

Printed literature examples

PowerPoint slide examples

4.0 Contact

If you need support using these guidelines,
or have any issues with the files linked in this document,
email **helptobuycomms@homesengland.gov.uk**