

Right to Buy

You might be able to purchase your home if you qualify for Right to Buy.

Buying your home is a big decision and you need to think about several things like affordability, responsibilities, and the long term commitments which are involved.

Please find some frequently asked questions which may help you decide what to do.

What is the right to buy?

Right to Buy enables you to buy the property which you are currently renting. Properties are valued at current market prices but are usually offered for sale at a discounted price. The discount is calculated as a percentage of the years you have been a tenant for.

Do I have the right to buy?

It is possible that you have the right to buy already. You must either have been a Council tenant for at least three years or, if you were previously the tenant of another social landlord before moving to your Council property, you can add the years of both tenancies together; so long as you moved from one property to the other with no break between the tenancies.

Other tenancies, such as Armed Forces accommodation also count towards your qualifying tenancy.

However, there are a few reasons why you may not be eligible to purchase under the Right to Buy:

- If you are undischarged bankrupt, have a bankruptcy petition pending against you, or you have obtained a debt relief order.

Also if you have entered into an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA), where you have made arrangements with people/companies that you owe money to and still owe them money.

- You live in sheltered housing or other housing particularly suitable only for elderly or disabled people.
- You live in an exempt property.
- You have an outstanding possession order.

How much is the property worth?

As part of the Right to Buy process, we arrange a valuation of the property. The valuation is based on the current market value of the property.

What discount will I get?

There are a number of factors which can affect the amount of discount which you receive. Your discount is calculated as a percentage, which is based on how many years of qualifying tenancy you have.

The percentage is also different if you are buying a flat or a house. Another factor which can vary the discount that you receive is something called “Cost Floor”. Cost Floor is the value that has been spent on your property over a period of time.

The cost of those works will be deducted from the discount given to you. The discount percentage table can be found on the Government’s [Right to Buy website](#).

What other options do I have?

Buying your home under the Right to Buy is not right for everyone. You do have other options like shared ownership or Help to Buy. The [Help to Buy website](#) will give you more information about what is available in the local area.

What checks will be made as part of the process?

The Council will check that all the information that you supply is accurate. We will also check the identity of all the applicants including those who wish to share the Right to Buy with you.

We will ask to see original documents to confirm the identity, residency and tenancy history of all the applicants. We may also take copies of those documents and add them to your file. We may also check for proof of how you intend to fund the purchase of the property.

Can I get my tenancy back if Right to Buy does not suit me?

Once you have purchased under the Right to Buy you become a homeowner and it would not be possible to return your tenancy to you. If, for whatever reason, you realise that owning a property is not right for you then you would have to sell your property (possibly back to the Council). However, if you do this you would have to make a fresh application to the council for housing.

Can I afford it?

Buying your home is a huge financial commitment and whether you can afford it or not will depend on your individual circumstances. When thinking about the affordability it's important that you consider how much you can afford each month and how stable your income is. If you are unsure about this then please visit an independent financial advisor or obtain free information from the Citizens Advice Bureau.

What else will I have to pay for when purchasing under the Right to Buy?

Other things that you may have to pay for are solicitors, legal fees, mortgage advice and surveys. Some lenders also charge for giving you a mortgage. It is important that you get advice from an independent advisor so that you have a good understanding of all the costs associated with buying your home.

Will I have any ongoing expenses to think about?

Along with all your normal monthly expenditure like water, utilities, council tax you may also have service charges if you live in a flat. Service charges cover the services provided to the communal parts of the building and can include repairs, cleaning, grounds maintenance, major works and insurances. There may be other services depending on the building you live in. The details will form part of your offer notice, so it is important that you read the documents thoroughly so you understand what your responsibilities are.

So what is the process of buying under Right to Buy?

First you need to complete an application form and send it to the Council with all your supporting documents. You can obtain an [application form](#) through the [Right to Buy website](#) which you can complete electronically and then send it to the Council attached to an email, along with photos or scans of all your evidence attached to the email (see details below regarding evidence).

Please send emails to housing.service@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

You can also download and print the application form from the [Right to Buy website](#) and complete it by hand and post it with copies of your evidence to:

Housing Service

Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue
Folkestone, Kent CT20 2QY

The Council will then process your application, which may include arranging a meeting with you, or requesting to see your original documents, or extra documents. Once this part of the process is complete we will then send you confirmation that you have the Right to Buy and instruct a Valuer to come and assess the property.

When we have received the valuation we will send you an offer notice, which tells you the market value, the discount, and what you need to pay for the property. If, on receipt of the Council's offer, you wish to proceed you will need to instruct your solicitor.

Once all the legal work has been concluded the property will be yours and you will no longer be required to pay rent.

What evidence do I need to provide with my application?

As part of the application you need to provide:

- An Insolvency Declaration form.
- A UK Driving License or UK Passport for all applicants.
- A Marriage Certificate, if you intend to make a joint application with your spouse.
- Three of the following dated to the most recent financial year; a utility bill, bank statement, benefits agency letter or HMRC tax notification letter.

After I apply, what happens to the repairs to the property?

Once you submit your Right to Buy application only essential repairs will be undertaken by the Council. No other repairs will be undertaken, including scheduled improvements such as fitting a new boiler.

Further Information

The Government has published several guidance documents and set up a website about Right to Buy which you may find useful:

- [Your right to buy your home: a guide - GOV.UK](#)
- [Right to Buy - Own your home](#)
- [Right to Buy – Want to make your home your own? \(Right to Buy summary booklet\)](#)