

# Press release: More than 400,000 first time buyers step onto the housing ladder with Help to Buy

Over 458,000 completions have taken place overall using one or more of the Help to Buy schemes. Some 402,000 of which were first time buyers.

Quarterly Help to Buy statistics released today (Friday 30 November) also show that:

- first time buyers have now opened 1.2 million Help to Buy: ISAs, offering government bonuses of up to £3,000 on top of their savings
- the average house price purchased through the schemes is £201,881
- over 93% of completions across the Help to Buy schemes have taken place outside of London

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

We want to help as many people as possible experience the fantastic feeling of pride you get when you collect the keys to your first home. That's why we offer the special Help to Buy: ISA for them to save, cut their Stamp Duty and introduced a new Help to Buy Equity Loan to run until March 2023.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

I am committed to making the housing market work for everyone and restore the dream of home ownership for a new generation.

It's great news that since 2010 we have helped over half a million people get on the housing ladder, through programmes such as Help to Buy.

We are determined to do more, which is why we have dedicated over £44 billion of investment to help deliver the homes communities need.

The most completions using the Help to Buy: ISA have taken place in the North West and Yorkshire & the Humber. In total, 169,980 completions have taken place across the UK since its launch in December 2015.

The London Help to Buy scheme – which provides an equity loan of up to 40% for buyers in the capital with a 5% deposit – has helped 13,697 buyers across 33 boroughs purchase their own property between February 2016 and June 2018.

More than 183,000 completions have now taken place through the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme, which offers buyers up to 20% of a newly built home's costs so they only need to provide a 5% deposit. By March 2021, the government expects to have invested around £22 billion in the scheme, supporting up to 360,000 households into homeownership.

Find out more about all the different ways the Government can help you to buy your own home [here](#).

---

## **Press release: More than 400,000 first time buyers step onto the housing ladder with Help to Buy**

Over 400,000 people have been able to buy their first home thanks to the Government's Help to Buy schemes, new figures show today.

---

## **Speech: Launch of TheCityUK legal services 2018 report: David Gauke speech**

It's a real pleasure to be here today as TheCityUK launches its annual report on our legal services sector. It's so important right now that we know and understand the sector's strengths.

We are living through a critical time in our nation's history. As Britain prepares to leave the European Union, we must take every opportunity to build on our successes, remain competitive and continue to be a global, outward-looking nation.

I do want to start by saying something about the EU political declaration and withdrawal agreement.

The prime minister has been clear from the beginning of this process that the government's goal is to secure a deal that is in the best interests of the

whole of the UK.

We believe the deal on the table does that. The agreement is an unprecedented one – establishing the parameters of an ambitious, broad, deep and mutually beneficial future relationship across trade and economic cooperation, law enforcement and criminal justice, foreign and security policy and wider areas of cooperation.

The Political Declaration commits to ambitious arrangements for services and investment that go well beyond WTO commitments, and build on recent EU Free Trade Agreements, alongside new arrangements on financial services, and a basis for recognition of qualifications.

The deal also recognises the importance of certainty for businesses.

The implementation period secured through the Withdrawal Agreement provides that legal certainty for citizens and businesses alike during the implementation period, with clear arrangements for UK citizens living in the EU and vice versa and giving businesses time to prepare for the new arrangements.

The UK also remains committed to future cooperation on civil and commercial matters with the EU. We are prioritising commencing preparations to join The Hague 2005 convention on choice of court agreements. We also intend to seek to accede to the Lugano Convention in our own right during the implementation period.

It is a deal upon which we will build on as we agree a longer-term future relationship with the EU.

What is certain right now is that our legal services sector is in good shape. As your report demonstrates, the UK continues to be the world leader for international legal services and dispute resolution; and at £26 billion per year, the sector's contribution to our economy is vital.

But its wider economic influence – underpinning trade and building confidence for businesses both here and abroad – is probably inestimable. A small window into its wider value is that we know English Law is used in 40% of all global corporate arbitrations.

And as employment rates in our country continue to hit record highs, the report tells us that legal services have been a part of that – increasing the number of people working within the sector by the tens of thousands.

For those of us who know the sector, none of this comes as a surprise. English Law, with its history, its reliability, and its predictability is the envy of the world. When that is complemented by world class talent both in our renowned law firms and our independent judiciary, it is easy to see why the world looks to us to be their counsel and courtroom.

But we must never rest on our laurels. Through initiatives like the Legal Services are GREAT campaign the government wants to inspire law firms and chambers to export their services overseas, connect UK legal professionals to

new markets by harnessing our international networks, and encourage overseas buyers to choose the UK for legal advice.

Through the campaign we are able to publicise the benefits of English Law so that we can maximise our potential within more international markets, like Kazakhstan and Nigeria.

To do that – and continue winning business in our established markets – we must not only point to the certainty of our past and the excellence that undoubtedly exists in our present – we must also look to the future.

If we are going to protect and enhance the reputation and competitiveness of our legal services in the world then we must accept that the way the sector works is changing. The technological revolution that has changed the way we all live our lives is undoubtedly and inevitably changing our economy – and legal services is no exception.

As the report highlights, LawTech has the potential to lower the costs of litigation, improve the efficiency of the court system and drive innovation. The sector is growing fast with a global value estimated at £16bn, and I would wager this is an underestimate.

I was struck recently by the work of researchers at University College London, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Sheffield who developed a programme to analyse case text of European Court of Human Rights cases to see whether judgments could be predicted accurately. Using artificial intelligence and machine learning, the programme accurately predicted 79% of judicial decisions. For those of you in this room who have appeared before the ECHR, I am sure you will agree that is no mean feat!

As the report rightly points out, the technological shift and the need to be at the forefront of innovation so as to maintain our competitiveness in the digital age, is something that is well recognised here in the UK. That is absolutely crucial because we know that our international competitors – ever keen to get ahead of us – have made that same realisation. As one example, look no further than Singapore's Future Lawyers Innovation Programme.

Right across the legal services sector firms are utilising technology to reduce costs, scale economies, and allocate labour more efficiently. This allows them to spend more time doing what they do best – giving their clients high quality legal advice. I see Norton Rose Fulbright recently launched a chatbot named Parker. Powered by artificial intelligence, Parker helps clients from non-EU jurisdictions understand their GDPR obligations and determine whether it applies to their business.

And I'm pleased to see that firms are working together on LawTech.

The Accord Project, for example, brings together forty of the top law firms, the Law Commission, standards institutions, professional associations and blockchain companies with a view to creating a legal and technical framework for smart legal contracts. Self-executing smart legal contracts will radically transform commercial transactions and I am determined to see the UK

become a hub for their development and use.

Furthermore, while Barclays Eagle LawTech Lab provides a home for a LawTech ecosystem in London, LawTech is far from a London phenomenon. The University of Manchester has just launched a legal technology initiative with Freshfields and DWF ventures, the Law Society of Scotland has launched LawScotTech to stimulate innovation in Scotland, and Belfast is rapidly establishing its self as a centre for legal innovation hosting LawTech firms such as Axiom as well as legal services centres for Allen & Overy, Baker McKenzie and our hosts tonight, Herbert Smith Freehills.

The government is acutely aware that we have a role to play in ensuring that LawTech in the UK fulfils its potential to keep us competitive. That's why we recently provided £700,000 to support the Solicitors Regulation Authority's Data-Driven Innovation in Legal Services project, which will seek out and accelerate ethical AI-powered legal services.

And under the government's flagship industrial strategy we are investing £20 million to support innovation in legal services, accountancy, and the insurance sector. As part of the strategy, the UK Next Generation Services Challenge Fund is creating opportunities for businesses and researchers to collaborate in developing cutting edge service solutions.

I'm really pleased today to be able to announce almost £3 million of funding from the Fund for three new research projects, two of which are focused on legal services sector:

1. The University of Oxford's research – "Unlocking the Potential of AI for English Law" – which will examine the use of AI in the legal system and identify how constraints on implementation can be relaxed to unlock its potential.
2. And the University of Sheffield's research – "Innovating Next Generation Services through Collaborative Design" – which will focus on people's experiences of new products and services within legal services and accountancy – to generate insights into people's usage for innovation and the integration of AI technologies.

These projects will support the sector to better understand the use of AI and its application to businesses within legal services, as well as strengthening the UK's reputation as a global centre for new and emerging technologies.

But we know that funding alone is not enough to support the development of LawTech, which is why I convened the LawTech Delivery Panel – to bring together people in the sector who have the experience and expertise to ensure that it reaches its true potential.

I want to take this opportunity to thank TheCityUK for their role in the Panel and Gary Campkin in particular for his work on the regulatory taskforce. And I want to encourage all of you here today to consider how you

too could contribute to the Panel's work in supporting the sector.

One particular area of focus that I believe the Panel can help to shape over the coming years is how legal education and training can embrace the change that is happening within the legal services sector – so that the lawyers of today and tomorrow not only survive but thrive during this technological revolution.

There is one final observation I want to mention and which I believe is easy to overlook. This year we have seen Deloitte join the other “big four” accountancy firms and enter the legal sector. We have also seen PwC's UK legal practice reach a headcount of 320 and generate revenue of £60 million. That puts it just outside the UK's top 50 law firms in its own right! The entrance and growth of alternative business structures has provided additional choice for consumers, driven competition and fostered innovation, and in part played a crucial role in maintaining the attractiveness of our judication. As the report highlights none of this would have been possible without our open, progressive, and consumer oriented regulatory regime.

It has been a real pleasure to be here today. What TheCityUK's 2018 report shows us is that the UK's legal services sector continues to flourish and grow. It is undoubtedly embracing the technological revolution that is changing every facet of our lives.

The government is keen to work with the sector and support it to maximise the opportunities technology offers. By working together, I have no doubt we can ensure that UK legal services will protect and cement its position as a global leader – so that the world continues to look to the UK to be its counsel and courtroom through the digital age and beyond.

---

## [Press release: Northern Powerhouse triumphs at National Apprenticeship Awards](#)

- 80% of apprentice award winners are from the Northern Powerhouse
- Joe Buck from the North West picks up prestigious 'Rising Star' award
- Northern Powerhouse based BAE Systems wins 'Employer of the year' and 'Recruitment Excellence' awards

Businesses and apprentices from across the Northern Powerhouse have swept to victory in nearly all of the hotly-contested categories of this year's National Apprenticeship Awards 2018.

Now in its 15th year, the awards are the largest and most prestigious

celebration of apprentices and apprentice employers across the country.

The 'Excellence in Apprenticeships' themed Awards ceremony showcased individual and employer success stories, recognising apprenticeships as a fast-track to a great career and enabler of business growth.

An impressive 4/5 of the winning apprentices' categories were from the Northern Powerhouse including:

- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star: Joe Buck, Mitchells & Butlers, Liverpool
- The British Army Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year: Muhammad Uddin, Yorkshire Housing, Leeds
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year: Jordan Coulton, Weightmans LLP, Liverpool
- Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year: Natalie White, National Nuclear Laboratory, Preston

BAE Systems – a world-leading manufacturer and Northern Powerhouse employer – also collected The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence (selected from the Employer of the Year award) and The Centrica Award for Macro Employer of the Year (for organisations with 5,000+ employees).

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry MP, said:

It's been a record-breaking year for the businesses and apprentices of the Northern Powerhouse in this year's National Apprenticeship Awards. Our region has a proud record on apprenticeships with over 1 million apprentice starts since 2010.

The Northern Powerhouse accounts for 35% of all apprenticeship starts in England despite only making up 25% of the UK's workforce; I'm determined to see that figure climb to 50%, as we establish the Northern Powerhouse as the world-leader in vocational training.

Many congratulations to the winners of this year's National Apprenticeship Awards – they have done the Northern Powerhouse proud.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Apprenticeships are an excellent way for anyone to gain new skills and forge a career in anything from aerospace engineering to nursing. The National Apprenticeship Awards is a fantastic event to celebrate the achievements of apprentices, employers and training providers, and I want to wish all the winners and nominees congratulations on their incredible efforts.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

I want to say a big well done to all the winners, finalists, 'rising stars' and all the apprentices up and down the country who I also think are stars! What stands out to me when I meet apprentices is their passion for what they do, and their determination to really get things done. All of these winners as well as anyone going out of their comfort zone, taking steps to learn new skills and change their life should be very proud.

---

## **Press release: Northern Powerhouse triumphs at National Apprenticeship Awards**

80% of apprentice award winners are from the Northern Powerhouse.