

Most frequently asked questions on low-cost housing opportunities in York

1. What is a Discounted Sale home?

The Discounted Sale scheme is where City of York Council has negotiated for a proportion of homes, on new development sites, to be sold at substantial discounts. The discount is off the open market property price. The buyer obtains a mortgage for the discounted price and does not pay rent on the remainder. As you do not pay any rent, you cannot purchase additional shares in the property. The property is a Fixed Equity Home. The additional shares are retained by the Housing Association.

2. What is a Shared Ownership Home?

The 'Shared Ownership' home is often referred to as a "part-rent, part-buy" property. You buy a share in a property whilst renting the remainder from a Housing Association. Under this scheme you can purchase more shares in the property at the open market value at that time. This process is known as "staircasing". This process can lead to you eventually buying your own home outright. Currently, most Shared Ownership homes are not brand new but resale properties where home owners are selling in order to move up the property ladder.

3. What is HomeBuy?

If you can obtain a mortgage in excess of that required to buy a Discounted Sale home, but cannot afford to buy outright on the open market, you could consider applying for the Homebuy schemes. The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust runs these schemes. If you qualify for one of these schemes, you will need to contribute between 55 per cent and 75 per cent of the purchase price of a home through a mortgage and personal savings. The Housing Association will lend you the remaining amount. To find out more about the Homebuy scheme please contact Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust 0800 633 5670.

4. Mortgage application: Are guarantors acceptable in the Discounted Sale and Shared Ownership schemes?

Guarantors are acceptable but the mortgage does need to be in the name[s] of the person[s] applying. To find out more on this issue, it is best to talk to a financial advisor or your mortgage lender. Remember to tell your lender that you are applying for a Discounted Sale or Shared Ownership home as this may affect the amount you can borrow and may also restrict your choice of mortgage lenders.

5. How long will I be on the housing register?

It is difficult to say exactly how long you will be on the register, it could be a few months or it could be over a year or more. It really depends on the homes that become available, whether you can match the requirements financially, how many other people are looking for a similar property and how flexible you are in terms of location.

6. What happens if my details change?

If your details change, either in terms of contact telephone numbers/address, income or household circumstances, it is very important that you inform the council. This is to ensure that we match you correctly with a home and can contact you once a suitable home becomes available. We have to give everyone a chance to be offered a home so if you have declined a number of homes it might be some time before you are contacted again. If you do not respond to an offer we will remove you from the register.

7. Will I get a car parking space?

The majority of affordable sale homes have a parking space. However, as on private developments we occasionally have homes with none. In such circumstances homes are generally well served by public transport or within easy walking distance of the city centre. Parking for affordable sale homes, like their private counterparts, is generally subject to a covenant preventing the parking of commercial vehicles and caravans in front of dwellings. You must therefore advise the Housing Association if you own and/or regularly use either of these.

8. What happens if I want to sell my Discounted Sale or Shared Ownership home?

If you intend to sell your home, you must first inform your Housing Association. They will then contact City of York Council. Whether your home is a Discounted Sale home or a Shared Ownership home, an open market valuation will have to be carried out by a chartered surveyor at your cost. As with any home, the value of Discounted Sale or Shared Ownership properties will change depending on market conditions. This is a risk that you take in any home purchase.