



FIRST CHOICE
Credit Union

MAKING MORE POSSIBLE

ACHILL - BALLA - BALLYHAUNIS
CASTLEBAR - KILTIMAGH - SWINFORD

HOME LOAN MEMBERS GUIDE
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW



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1. PLANNING TO BUY OR BUILD A HOME

We know that buying or building your home is a huge decision, and the mortgage process may seem overwhelming.

Our Home Loan has been designed for members buying or building their home, or seeking to switch their existing mortgage, so rest assured you can rely on us to help you every step of the way.

Step 1: Preparing for your Home Loan Application

If you are buying your home, you will need a deposit of at least 10% of the house price, plus enough savings to cover the cost of stamp duty, legal fees and any other ancillary costs.

If you are building your home, you will also need to have a deposit towards the project, plus enough savings to cover the cost of stamp duty, legal fees and any other ancillary costs. (See Question 4 in the Frequently Asked Questions section below).

- Through paying rent and/or saving regular amounts equal to the amount of your proposed monthly repayment, you can show us that the proposed mortgage will be affordable for you.
- The Government Help to Buy incentive may be availed of by first time buyers purchasing a newly built home. Find out more on www.revenue.ie.

Step 2: Find Out what information you will need to provide

Full details of the information you will be required to provide are outlined in Section 3 of this Guide. Our mortgage advisers can also provide you with details of the information you will need to bring to your home loan meeting.

Step 3: Apply for your Mortgage

To submit your application you'll need to provide the information outlined in Section 3 of this guide.

Bring these with you to your appointment and we'll talk you through every step of the paperwork.



2. HOW LONG DOES AN APPLICATION TAKE?

Every mortgage journey is different, but here's an overview of the broad timelines our members experience for a property purchase and we look forward to supporting you every step of the way.

Your appointment to Approval in Principle: Two to three working days.

- Once you have gathered your Home Loan Supporting Information, make an appointment to meet one of our mortgage advisers at a time that suits you.
- At the mortgage appointment, we will examine your Supporting Information and the details of your proposed transaction.
- After the mortgage appointment, we will assess your supporting information against our main Home Loan criteria:

Affordability	(your net income is compared to your proposed commitments).
Loan to Valuation	(maximum 90%).
Loan to Income	(maximum 4.0 times gross annual basic income for first time buyers; 3.5 times gross annual basic income for second or subsequent buyers).
Our Product Limits	(minimum loan €50,000; maximum loan amount €400,000).

This assessment is normally complete within two to three days after the mortgage appointment. If successful, you will receive a letter confirming your loan has been Approved in Principle, subject to our satisfaction with the property you intend to provide as security. On the strength of your Approval in Principle decision, you will then be asked to provide a Valuation Report and a survey report for the property.

Providing the required property reports: Two weeks

- Even if you already have a property in mind at this point, it can take up to two weeks to arrange the property reports and return these to us for examination.
-

Full approval decision and Letter of Offer: Two to three working days

- Within two to three days of our receipt of the property reports, we will provide you with our decision on formal Loan Approval.
 - If your loan has been approved, the Letter of Offer and Credit Agreement will be issued to your solicitor, together with any other required information you will need to complete the loan draw down.
-

Legal Timeline: Four to six weeks

- You should discuss this with your solicitor.
 - In the case of a property purchase, it can take four to six weeks to complete.
 - This reflects the work your solicitor must complete on your behalf to ensure that you are receiving the correct title to your property with no hidden liabilities.
 - During this timeline you should be arranging (where appropriate) your property insurance cover and life assurance cover in line with the loan requirements.
-

Loan Drawdown

Once the mortgage documents have been completed, your solicitor should agree a date with the vendor or seller for closing the purchase and handing over the keys.

HOW DOES THE PURCHASE OF A COMPLETED HOME DIFFER FROM A CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL?

The process for a ‘buy and build’ project (or the construction of your home on a site you already own) mirrors the property purchase journey outlined above up to the Approval in Principle stage. The loan-to-value calculation differs from that of a straight purchase of a completed house – see the Frequently Asked Questions below. Rather than a property valuation and structural survey in respect of a completed house being purchased, we will require different documents from you in respect of a construction proposal:

At approval in principle stage:

1. A report from a suitably qualified individual (e.g. engineer, architect or surveyor), which includes the following:
 - a. Confirmation of the planning permission in relation to the project, or a satisfactory confirmation that the project is exempt from planning permission (if that is the case).
 - b. Confirmation that the qualified individual has been engaged to act on your behalf to
 - i. prepare costings for the construction project in line with the planning permission.
 - ii. supervise the construction project.
 - iii. provide stage payment certificates at pre-agreed intervals during the course of the construction, which will confirm the cost of works completed to date and the cost of completion by comparison with the original budget, as well as confirmation that the works completed to date are in compliance with planning permission.
 - iv. along with the final stage payment certificate, provide a confirmation of completion and a certificate (in the RIAI format) of compliance with planning permission and building regulations.
 - c. A copy of the completed costings for the construction project.
 - d. A copy of their current professional indemnity insurance, adequate in amount and term to cover the project.
2. A Valuation Report which specifies the present property valuation, and the valuation after the completion of the proposed works, with reference to the costings provided by the supervising professional outlined above.

To Draw Down your Home Loan:

In addition to the accepted Offer Letter, Credit Agreement and security documents, we will also normally specify that draw down will be allowed in phases upon receipt of satisfactory stage payment certificates from the supervising professional engaged by you.

Note:

You should speak to your property insurance company before commencing works on a house construction project.

3. WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO PROVIDE?

The information we require to assess your home loan application depends on the source or type of your overall household income.

The different information requirements below reflect what we require if a member:

- Is in employment (or PAYE) income
- Earns self-assessment (or self-employment) income
- Earns proprietary director's income (if your business trades as a company)
- Is not currently in employment, or in receipt of Fixed Income

If your household income comes from more than one source (e.g. employment income plus self-assessment income), then you should provide details of both at your mortgage meeting.

Employment or PAYE Income

- A Salary Certificate, which has been completed and signed and stamped by your employer (please ask our mortgage adviser for a blank Salary Certificate form).
- Your Employment P60 or equivalent Revenue Annual Statement of Earnings document for the past two years.
- A copy of your last three payslips.
- A copy of your personal bank current account statements for the past three months (ended on a date no more than 30 days ago).
- A copy of your personal credit card statement for the past three months (if you have a credit card).
- Details of your current accommodation costs, i.e.:
 - Details of your present mortgage arrangement (if you have a mortgage)
 - or
 - Details of your rent payment arrangement if you are paying rent

Self-Assessment Income

- A copy of your three most recent Finalised Financial Statements (three years)
- A copy of your self-assessment return (Form11) for the past three years.
- A copy of your Chapter 4 Statement / Revenue Notice of Assessment form for the past three years.
- A copy of your personal bank current account statements for the past three months (ended on a date no more than 30 days ago).
- A copy of your business bank current account statements for the past three months (ended on a date no more than 30 days ago) – if you have a separate business bank account.
- A copy of your personal and business credit card statement for the past three months (if you have a credit card).
- Details of your current accommodation costs, i.e.:
 - Details of your present mortgage arrangement (if you have a mortgage)
 - Or
 - Details of your rent payment arrangement if you are paying rent

Proprietary Director (or director of your own trading company)

a. In respect of your company:

- A copy of the last three months company bank statements, ended no more than 30 days ago.
- A copy of the last three months Credit Card(s) Statements (if applicable).
- A schedule of all current borrowing commitments of the company, to include the lender name, borrowing amount, instalment amount and expiry date.
- A copy of last three sets of Finalised Financial Statements, together with permission to speak to the accountant, and the relevant accountant contact details.
- If the last signed financial statements are more than 12 months old, we will require a copy of the Management Accounts to within three months of the date of loan application.
- A copy of the company's most up to date Chapter 4 Statement / Revenue Notice of Tax Assessment.
- A satisfactory letter of confirmation from the company's accountant that the taxes of the company are up to date and current, and advising the details if applicable of any instalment arrangement with Revenue in respect of liabilities owing from previous years.
- A satisfactory description of the trade of the company, to include a breakdown of main components of turnover, and the key financial performance indicators.
- Details of payment arrangements or credit terms with customers and with suppliers (receivables and payables).

a. For the Director (i.e. the individual who is seeking the home loan):

- We will also require the individual's details set in the "Employment or PAYE Income" section above.

Not currently in employment, or fixed income recipients

- A satisfactory written confirmation from your income provider of your Social Benefit or Allowance or Pension or Other Income. (e.g. In respect of Social Benefit entitlements, a letter from the Department of Social Protection confirming the amount of the entitlement, and whether this entitlement is open-ended, or whether it has an expiry date).
- A copy of your last three Social Benefit Slips or Payslips from the income provider in respect of the income entitlement.
- A copy of your bank current account statements for the past three months (ended on a date no more than 30 days ago).
- A copy of your personal credit card statement for the past three months (if you have a credit card).
- Details of your current accommodation costs, i.e.:
 - Details of your present mortgage arrangement (if you have a mortgage)
 - Or
 - Details of your rent payment arrangement if you are paying rent

4. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What exactly is a mortgage?

A mortgage is simply a long-term loan, that's used to pay for a house, and is secured by a first legal charge over the house.

2. What is a Loan-To-Value (LTV) ratio?

LTV, or loan-to-value, refers to how much of a Loan or Mortgage you have versus how much your property is worth or valued. It's normally expressed as a percentage. For example, if you have a mortgage or loan of €150,000 on a house that's worth €200,000 the loan-to-value is 75% (because €150,000 is 75% of €200,000). The 'Value' that's used in calculating the LTV is the lesser of the Property Valuation Report amount or the actual cost of the property.

3. What is a Loan-To-Income (LTI) ratio?

LTI, or loan-to-income, refers to the maximum amount of a Home Loan you may borrow against: - your gross annual basic income in the case of an employee - your adjusted net profit after tax in the case of a self-assessment income.

4. How do I start the application process?

There are a number of easy ways to begin your application:

- Book an appointment online through our website with one of our mortgage advisers.
- Call us on **094 90 22969** to make an appointment to meet a mortgage adviser.
- Send us an e-mail at loans@fccu.ie.

5. What's a variable rate mortgage?

Variable interest rates offer flexibility. They allow you to increase your repayments, use a lump sum to pay off all or part of your mortgage, or re-mortgage without having to pay any fixed rate breakage fees. However, because variable rates can rise and fall, your mortgage repayments can go up or down during the term of your loan.

6. How much will my repayments be every month?

Your repayments will depend on how much you borrow as well as the term or length of your mortgage.

7. What's the minimum amount I can borrow?

The minimum loan amount you can borrow for a Home Loan with First Choice Credit Union is €50,000.

8. What's the maximum amount I can borrow?

The maximum amount you can borrow for a Home Loan with First Choice Credit Union is €400,000.

9. How long will my mortgage last for?

Every mortgage has a life span or term. Our minimum term is 5 years and you could also possibly qualify for the maximum term possible which is up to 30 years or the effective retirement age of the borrower, whichever is sooner. A shorter term means you'll pay your mortgage off quicker but it also means your monthly repayments will be higher.

10. What documents do I need?

There are various documents you'll need to complete during the application process, depending on your income type. The full list of initial documents is outlined in Section 3 above.

11. What is the stamp duty payable on mortgages?

Stamp duty is payable at 1% on properties up to the value of €1 million euro and 2% on properties over this amount.

12. What are lenders' normal lending criteria for a mortgage?

Every lender will look at various criteria before deciding whether to approve a mortgage. Some of the main factors that are taken into account are:

- Credit history.
- Aged 18 or over.
- Age not greater than effective retirement age at the end of the mortgage term.
- Ability to repay - as a rough guide, repayments on all loans including your mortgage should not exceed 40% of your after-tax income.
- Secure and permanent employment, or income that is sustainable for the term of the loan.
- Continuous employment or income for two years prior to the year of application.
- Good bank account management.

In all cases the primary focus is on your ability to meet your overall loan repayments, with sufficient available surplus left over to provide for reasonable living expenses.

13. How much of a deposit do I need?

Central Bank of Ireland deposit rules require a 10% deposit from the borrower towards the purchase price. So if the value of your property is €300,000, you'd need a deposit of €30,000, plus the cost of stamp duty, legal fees and any other costs of the transaction.

14. If I am constructing my family home how is the Loan to Value calculated?

If you own the site debt free (whether it was purchased or gifted to you), the maximum amount you can borrow is the lesser of:

a) 100% of the construction cost of the project.

Or

b) 75% of the value in repair (i.e. the value of the completed property).

If you are purchasing the site and then constructing your home, the maximum amount you can borrow is the lesser of:

a) 75% of the site purchase price plus 100% of the construction cost of the project

Or

b) 75% of the value in repair (i.e. the value of the completed property).

15. What insurances will I have to arrange when taking out a mortgage?

You'll generally need to arrange home insurance and life assurance before drawing down your loan. Home insurance is a property insurance which covers private homes, buildings and contents. The cost of home insurance often depends on what it would cost to rebuild your house and how much it would cost to replace all of the contents of the house.

To get a quote today, simply call in to our office and ask for the Allianz Credit Union Home Insurance leaflet, visit our website at firstchoicecreditunion.ie/car-home-pet-insurance/ or contact Allianz directly on 01-4484848 (be sure to ask for your exclusive Credit Union discount).

In the event that the member qualifies for the ECCU Assurance DAC Loan Protection Insurance for this Home Loan, this will suffice as life assurance. In relation to the ECCU Assurance DAC Loan Protection Insurance, members should note:

- i. The ECCU Assurance DAC Loan Protection Insurance is not a mortgage protection policy, nor is it comparable to a mortgage protection policy.
- ii. Loan Protection Insurance is issued in the name of, and for the benefit of the credit union.
- iii. The credit union is the policy holder, and the cover lapses if the credit union fails to pay premiums.
- iv. Any successful claims are paid to the credit union and not to the member or their dependents.
- v. The cover is not guaranteed for the borrower for the term of the loan.
- vi. Exclusions may be applied depending on a borrower's medical history that could result in a claim being declined if death is as a result of an excluded clause.
- vii. The policy is a group life policy which is a monthly renewable policy with a contract term of three years.
- viii. In the unfortunate event of the death of a member before their mortgage is cleared, the credit union will apply the proceeds of a successful claim under the Loan Protection Insurance policy against the member's outstanding loan.
- ix. Should a credit union member decide to put a mortgage protection policy in place, or currently has a mortgage protection policy, this will not affect or dilute the benefits of the Loan Protection Insurance policy.

Members should avail of independent financial advice when considering whether to start, to continue, or to cancel a mortgage protection policy in respect of their credit union mortgage.

16. What other costs might be involved with a mortgage or Home Loan?

It is always advisable to list out all of the costs or 'Uses of Funds' involved in your transaction at the outset, and this will form part of your mortgage meeting. You may find the table(s) in Section 5 of this booklet helpful in this regard.

In order to work out the full cost of your transaction, you may need to contact certain service providers to ask for an estimate of the cost of:

- Legal fees
- Valuation fees
- Property structural survey costs
- Furniture moving costs
- Utility service initial connection costs (e.g. electricity, broadband, television, etc.)

17. Does the Credit Union provide mortgages for buying investment properties?

Our Home Loan products are only available for financing or part-financing a member's principal private residence (i.e. the family home). We do not currently offer an investment property mortgage.

18. Do I have to have a savings record with First Choice Credit Union to qualify for a Home Loan?

Our most important assessment for a home loan application is whether the applicant(s) can afford the proposed mortgage repayment, plus other costs of home ownership such as home insurance and local property taxes.

In some instances an applicant can provide evidence that they have been lodging a monthly savings instalments which more than cover their proposed loan repayments.

In other instances an applicant can make the case that their accommodation rent plus the amount they have been saving will cover their proposed loan repayments.

The home loan applicant does not have to have a specific savings record with First Choice Credit Union, but we will need to see that the proposed repayment is affordable, based on the applicants recent household payments and savings.

19. Does the Credit Union provide funding to cover Help To Buy Scheme or Derelict Homes Grant funds receivable by the applicant?

The Help To Buy Scheme funds are usually received up front and can form part of the applications "own funds". We do not provide bridging finance in respect of the Derelict Homes Grant, or any other Grant Scheme. If the proposal satisfies this Central Bank of Ireland Home Loan criteria, we may provide borrowings subject normal lending criteria.



5. TRANSACTION INFORMATION

You can set out your proposed purchase or construction transaction according to the Use of Funds and Source of Funds as follows:

A. Property Purchase:

Use of Funds	€	Source of Funds	€
Purchase Price		Own Funds	
Stamp Duty			
Legal Fees		Gift	
Valuation Fees			
Survey Fee		Inheritance	
Furniture Moving Costs			
Utility Connection Costs		Proposed Home Loan	
		Other source of funds	
Other Costs of Acquisition			
Total		Total	

The proposed home loan must be less than or equal to 90% of the Purchase Price or Valuation to meet the Loan to Valuation rule.

B. Purchase and Construct:

Use of Funds	€	Source of Funds	€
Site Purchase Price or Value		Own Funds	
Stamp Duty			
Legal Fees		Gift	
Valuation Fees			
Survey Fee		Inheritance	
Construction Costs to date			
Construction Costs to complete		Proposed Home Loan	
Other Professional Fees			
Furniture Moving Costs		Other source of funds	
Utility Connection Costs			
Other Costs			
Total		Total	

For a construction transaction, you can apply for up to 100% of the construction cost or 75% of the value upon completion – whichever is the lesser amount. If you propose to purchase the site, you may also be entitled to apply for a portion of the site purchase cost (see Page 9 Q14).

6. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WARNING: IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP YOUR REPAYMENTS YOU MAY LOSE YOUR HOME.

WARNING: IF YOU DO NOT MEET THE REPAYMENTS ON YOUR LOAN, YOUR ACCOUNT WILL GO INTO ARREARS. THIS MAY AFFECT YOUR CREDIT RATING, WHICH MAY LIMIT YOUR ABILITY TO ACCESS CREDIT IN FUTURE.

Lending criteria, terms and conditions will apply.

Mortgage approval is subject to assessment of suitability and affordability.

Applicants must be aged 18 or over.

Security is required and credit agreement will be secured by a mortgage or by a right related to residential immovable property.

Life and Home Insurance are also required.

A maximum Loan to Value (LTV) of 90% will apply, based on the property's purchase price or valuation (whichever is the lesser).

Maximum loan amount will not exceed four times an individual's gross annual basic income for a first time buyer; or three and a half times the individual's gross annual basic income for a second or subsequent buyer.

The monthly repayment on a 20 year mortgage with variable borrowing rate of 3.85% on mortgage of €250,000 is € 1,495.26 for 240 months. Total amount repayable € 358,863.35. If interest rates increase by 1% an additional €133.98 would be payable per month. For this example, Annual Percentage Rate of Charge (APRC) of 3.92%.

Information correct as of 07/04/2026 but is subject to change.

WARNING: THE COST OF YOUR MONTHLY REPAYMENT MAY INCREASE.



Salary Certificate

This form must be completed by the employer in black font, and the original completed version returned to First Choice Credit Union.

Name of Employee: _____
 Address of Employee: _____

 Exact Location of Employment: _____
 Employee Reference Number: _____
 PPS Number: _____
 Position held within the business: _____
 Date of commencement of employment: ____/____/____

Has the employee completed his/her probationary period : Yes: No:

Is the employment

- Permanent: Yes: No:
- Pensionable: Yes: No:
- Temporary: Yes: No:
- Fixed contract: Yes: No: ***

***Terms of Contract: Is the contract renewable? If renewable, state the terms of renewal:

Gross Basic Wage / Salary per annum:	€ _____ p.a.	Please state which of these is guaranteed:
Overtime:	€ _____ p.a.	Overtime: _____
Bonus:	€ _____ p.a.	Bonus: _____
Commission:	€ _____ p.a.	Commission: _____

Is the employee on a salary? Yes: No:

If yes, what is the maximum of the scale? _____

As far as you are aware, will he/she continue in your service: _____

On behalf of _____ (please insert the employer name), I certify that the above information is correct.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Position: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Telephone Number: _____

Registered Number: _____

Please authenticate with company stamp / seal & date:

First Choice Credit Union Limited is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.



094 902 2969



firstchoicecreditunion.ie



Drop in to your local office

Castlebar Head Office, Market Square, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, F23 NW25.
Achill Office, Achill Sound, Achill, Co. Mayo, F28 DH68.
Balla Office, The Square, Balla, Co. Mayo, F23 WN22.
Ballyhaunis Office, Clare Street, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, F35 DA36.
Kiltimagh Office, Main Street, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo, F12 EN29.
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