

First-Time Buyer Mortgage Guide (Cardiff 2025)

Your complete guide to buying your first home in Cardiff — explained clearly and simply.

Buying your first home is exciting, but the mortgage process can feel overwhelming. This guide breaks everything down step by step, helping you understand how mortgages work, what you'll need, what to expect in Cardiff, and how to get prepared.

Why Cardiff Is a Great Place for First-Time Buyers

Cardiff continues to be one of the most popular cities for first-time buyers in the UK due to:

- A wide range of affordable properties
- Good transport links
- Vibrant neighbourhoods like Canton, Pontcanna, Roath, and Cardiff Bay
- A strong rental market for those considering future investment
- Lower average house prices than cities like Bristol or London

Whether you're buying an apartment in the Bay or a terraced home in Canton, Cardiff offers variety at more accessible prices.

1. How the First-Time Buyer Mortgage Process Works

Step 1: Speak to a Mortgage Advisor (Recommended)

A broker can tell you:

- How much you can borrow

- How much deposit you'll need
- What deals you qualify for
- Whether you can use any schemes

Step 2: Get a Decision in Principle (DIP)

This is a lender's initial confirmation of how much they may lend.

Step 3: Start Viewing Properties

Once you know your budget, you can begin viewing homes.

Step 4: Make an Offer

If accepted, the property becomes Sold STC.

Step 5: Full Mortgage Application

Your advisor submits your application and documents.

Step 6: Valuation & Underwriting

The lender checks affordability and assesses the property.

Step 7: Mortgage Offer Issued

Official confirmation of your mortgage.

Step 8: Conveyancing

Solicitors complete legal work and property checks.

Step 9: Exchange & Completion

You get the keys!

2. How Much Deposit Do First-Time Buyers Need?

- 5% deposit – minimum
- 10% deposit – better rates
- 15–20% deposit – best rates

Example: A £200,000 property:

- 5% = £10,000
- 10% = £20,000
- 15% = £30,000

3. What Documents You'll Need

- Passport or driving licence
- Proof of address
- Last 3 months' payslips
- Last 3 months' bank statements
- Credit report
- Proof of deposit

4. How Much Can You Borrow?

- Lenders typically offer 4–4.5x income.
- Some professions may access 5–6x.

Examples:

- £30k income → £135k mortgage
- £45k income → £200k mortgage
- Couple earning £55k → £240–280k mortgage

5. Common Costs First-Time Buyers Forget

- Survey fees
- Solicitor fees
- Mortgage fees
- Moving costs
- Home insurance
- Protection insurance

Most first-time buyers in Wales pay no LTT on properties under £225,000.

6. Protection Insurance for First-Time Buyers

Types of cover include:

- Mortgage Protection Insurance
- Income Protection
- Critical Illness Cover

7. Best Cardiff Areas for First-Time Buyers

- Roath – cafes, parks, vibrant
- Cardiff Bay – modern, waterfront living
- Canton – trendy & creative
- Adamsdown – good value
- Llanishen / Thornhill – great schools

8. Tips for Mortgage Approval

- Keep credit clean
- Avoid new borrowing
- Save as much deposit as possible
- Prepare documents early
- Use a mortgage advisor
- Register to vote

9. How a Mortgage Advisor Helps

- Access to more lenders
- Tailored recommendations
- Faster applications
- Clear guidance
- Support at every stage

10. First-Time Buyer FAQs

How long does approval take?

2–6 weeks.

Can I buy with 5% deposit?

Yes.

Should I get a survey?

Highly recommended.

Need First-Time Buyer Advice in Cardiff?

Book your free consultation today and take the first step toward owning your first home.