

Affordable Housing

Frequently Asked Questions



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How does the Scheme work?

The main points of the scheme are as follows:

- The scheme is for first time buyers who cannot afford to purchase a home at its market value. **Some exceptions apply.*
- Applicants who are married, in a civil partnership or in a committed relationship with a partner with whom he/she intends to live in the affordable dwelling, may not apply for an affordable dwelling on his/her own but must apply jointly with his/her spouse/partner.
- To participate in the scheme, applicants will be required to maximise their mortgage drawdown capacity (4 times a household income), from a participating lender or Local Authority Home Loan. **Participating banks include AIB and its Haven subsidiaries, EBS, Bank of Ireland, Permanent TSB & Community Credit Union Limited.*
- The maximum financial support (equity share) available on each home will be established by Galway City Council.
- All purchasers will sign up to an 'Affordable Dwelling Purchase Agreement' with Galway City Council. Under this agreement, the Council will take a percentage equity share in the dwelling, equal to the difference between the market value of the dwelling and the price paid by the purchaser.
- The purchaser can buy out this equity share at a time of their choosing but there will be no requirement to do so.
- The Council may not seek realisation of its affordable dwelling equity for a 40-year period (other than for breach of the agreement). However, the purchaser may choose to redeem or buy out the affordable dwelling equity at any time by means of one or a series of payments to the Council. The minimum amount of redemption payment is €10,000.
- If the purchaser chooses not to redeem the equity share while living in the home, the local authority can do so when the property is sold or transferred, or after the death of the owner.

How do I prove my right to reside indefinitely in the State?

- For non-EU/EEA applicants:
- Please submit a copy of your Irish Resident Permit (IRP or GNIB Stamp 4) card, indicating which permissions you have.
- Single/joint applications where both applicant(s) are Non-EEA/EU, applicants must be legally resident in Ireland for a period of 5 years; or have leave to remain extending to potentially permit 5 years reckonable residence; or have indefinite leave to remain in the State.
- An application from a non-EEA/EU national, who is a spouse or civil partner of the EU /EEA national, may be considered as part of a joint application for that household, provided they have a valid residence card or permanent residence card with a valid Stamp 4EUFam.
- UK citizens will be regarded as being legally resident in Ireland. (This accords with the Common Travel Area requirements).

How is purchasing power calculated?

The purchasing power of applicants will be calculated as the combined total of:

- Maximum mortgage capacity, i.e., 4 times gross household income, plus,
- A minimum deposit of 10% of the affordable purchase price, plus,
- Relevant savings. *

**Where the applicant has excess savings or money in excess of the 10% deposit plus an additional €30,000.*

How will successful applicants be determined?

As well as the above eligibility criteria, a Scheme of Priority for households deemed eligible will apply to the scheme in the instance where there are more applicants than properties.

First-time buyer

Affordable Purchase Scheme is designed for First-Time buyers, however, certain exemptions will apply under the Fresh Start Principle, including:

- Applicant(s) that previously held a legal interest in a residential property but is divested of this legal interest through any of the following mechanisms may be eligible to apply:
 - Legal Separation
 - Divorce
 - Bankruptcy
 - Insolvency
- Applicant(s) that previously owned, was beneficially entitled to, or have had an interest in a dwelling in the state and that this dwelling, because of its size, is not suited to the current accommodation needs of the applicant's household i.e., an overcrowded house, may be eligible to apply.

***Please note: If applying as a joint application, both applicants do not need to have the same Buyer Status. One applicant can be a first-time buyer and the other can qualify under the Fresh Start Principle, however both must also meet all the other eligibility criteria.*

How do I apply for the scheme?

The application process will be via an online portal. All schemes will be advertised two weeks in advance of the live portal. All advertisement will be on local newspapers and social media. The system will allow for the input of all relevant data and uploading of all supporting documentation.

In the online application process, applicants will have to:

- provide personal details (e.g., name, address, date of birth, PPSN),

- confirm and provide proof that they are a First-Time Buyer or that they qualify under the Fresh Start Principle,
- declare the total gross annual income for their household for the preceding 12 months,
- provide evidence of their 10% deposit and any savings, i.e., bank statements,
- provide evidence of how they intend to Finance the property in the form of a mortgage approval-in-principle.
- prove that they have the right to reside indefinitely in the State.

Your submission will ONLY be awarded a date and timestamp when you submit a COMPLETE application. All application details and data submitted will only be retained for this scheme and will not be carried forward for any future affordable housing scheme(s).

Applicants who submit multiple applications and/or include any false or misleading information on their application will be disqualified from this process.

Do I need to be approved for a Mortgage to apply?

Applicants must submit a **Mortgage Approval in Principle** letter from their proposed lender confirming maximum mortgage available to the applicant when applying for affordable housing. Purchasers can use a mortgage from any approved private lending institution, such as Bank of Ireland, Permanent TSB, AIB and its Haven subsidiaries and Community Credit Union. Alternatively, finance can be sourced via Galway City Council by way of a Local Authority Home Loan. Please visit [Applying for a Local Authority Home Loan | Galway City Council](#) for more details.

What documentation is needed to support my application?

Mandatory documentation required at the time of application.

1. **Proof of Income Documentation required:**

- If EMPLOYED, please provide your most recent Employment Detail Summary (previously known as P60) which is available via www.revenue.ie/MyAccount.

AND

Please also arrange to have your salary certificate completed by your employer. Payslips are NOT acceptable evidence.

- If SELF EMPLOYED, please upload Accountants Report/Audited Accounts (2 Years Required), Current Tax Balancing Statement & Current Preliminary Revenue Tax Payment Receipt.

- If NOT EMPLOYED, please upload Statement of total benefits received from Social Welfare which can be requested via email from your local Social Welfare/Intreo office.

2. Proof of Citizenship:

- Passport or Birth Certificate.

*In the event you upload a Birth Certificate as proof, you must also upload photographic ID such as valid passport, EU Identity Card, EU/EEA Driving Licence (must contain a photo) for every applicant.

3. Proof of the Right to Reside in Ireland (if applicable):

- For non-EU/EEA applicants:
 - Please submit a copy of your Irish Resident Permit (IRP or GNIB Stamp 4) card, indicating which permissions you have.
 - Single/joint applications where both applicant(s) are Non-EEA/EU, applicants must be legally resident in Ireland for a period of 5 years; or have leave to remain extending to potentially permit 5 years reckonable residence; or have indefinite leave to remain in the State.
 - An application from a non-EEA/EU national, who is a spouse or civil partner of the EU /EEA national, may be considered as part of a joint application for that household, provided they have a valid residence card or permanent residence card with a valid Stamp 4EUFam.
- UK citizens will be regarded as being legally resident in Ireland. (This accords with the Common Travel Area requirements).

4. Evidence of Ability to Finance the Purchase:

- A mortgage letter of approval in principle from a Bank / Building Society / Local Authority stating the maximum mortgage available to applicants,

and

- Proof of savings and deposit in the form of a current bank statement on headed paper dated within the last 6 months. (If applicable, please include proof of Help-to-Buy).

**If you are yet to receive your mortgage approval in principle, please upload a letter from your broker/ mortgage calculator screenshot stating the amount that you will likely to be able to borrow.*

5. Proof of Buyer Status:

For First Time Buyers –

- Confirmation of eligibility for Help to Buy Scheme (HTB): Printout from Revenue portal (myAccount for PAYE applicants / ROS for Self-assessed applicants) confirming names of applicant(s) and maximum

entitlement under the scheme), **OR** a printout from Revenue portal showing application submitted/acknowledged and “Under Review”.

**Note that applicants are considered first-time-buyers only if BOTH are buying their home for the first time.*

**To be eligible to claim HTB, a qualifying loan must be taken out by the eligible applicant, with an approved private lending institution.*

As of the 11th of October 2023, the combined value of your mortgage and your affordable dwelling contribution can now be used to calculate your loan to-value ratio in a Help to Buy application. The loan-to-value ratio must be a minimum of 70% of the full market value.

- If you are a First Time Buyer and not availing of the Help to Buy, please provide an affidavit from a Solicitor confirming that you have never previously owned a dwelling in Ireland or any other State.

For Fresh Start Applicants

- Court Decree / Solicitors letter confirming the applicant is divorced/separated or otherwise and have left the property and divested themselves of their interest in the property.
- Where the applicant has been divested of a previous property through insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings, proof of the applicant’s status on the bankruptcy register is required. Proof that any property you previously owned or built has been sold, or given as part of a personal insolvency, bankruptcy agreement or other legal insolvency process.
- For applicant whose dwelling because of its size, is not suited to the current needs of their household, please provide an up-to-date valuation of your current property.

Other Documentation (not mandatory at time of application but will be requested at a later stage if successful)

6. Proof of Residency in Galway City Administrative area for applicants to qualify under the 30% Residency

- Series of utility bills
- Bank/Credit Union statements **see note below.*
- Documents issued by any government department that shows your address, i.e. Statement of Liability from Revenue clearly showing name and address of applicant.
- If not a first-time buyer - Confirmation of eligibility for HTB Scheme.
- Documentation from schools/colleges
- Employer Reference.

***Please note, if the ‘Date of Statement’ is ‘forward’ as circled below, the document will not count as part of your proof of residency. This part of the document should include an actual date in order to be valid, for example: 3 April 2020.*



Personal Bank Account

Statement of Account with Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c.

Branch _____ National Sort Code _____ Account Name _____

Telephone _____ Account Number _____

Page Number _____ **Date of Statement Forward**

This is an eligible deposit under the Deposit Guarantee Scheme. For more information, please see the 'Deposit Guarantee Scheme - Depositor Information Sheet' which is available from your branch or on our website - www.aib.ie

Date	Details	Debit €	Credit €	Balance €
8 Jul 2019	BALANCE FORWARD			
9 Jul 2019	Interest Rate			

What file types will be accepted on the application portal?

The portal will accept the following image files:

- PDF,
- JPEG,
- PNG.

Editable documents such as Word (.doc), or Excel (.xls) are not accepted.

Can I avail of Help to Buy Scheme?

The Help to Buy (HTB) Scheme helps first-time buyers purchase a newly built house or apartment. You can also get it for once-off self-build homes. It only applies to properties that cost €500,000 or less.

The Help to Buy Scheme gives a refund of the income tax and Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) you have paid in Ireland for the 4 years before the year you apply.

The HTB Scheme was increased in July 2020. This increase is known as the Enhanced Help to Buy Scheme. The Enhanced Help to Buy Scheme is available until 31 December 2025. The scheme was also amended to allow applicants using the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme to buy their home to qualify for the Help to Buy Scheme.

Do I Qualify for HTB?

- You must be a first-time buyer who buys or self-builds a new residential property between **1 January 2017** and **31 December 2025**.
- You must take out a mortgage with a qualifying lender. The mortgage must be at least 70% of the purchase value of the property if you are buying a newly built home. If buying under the Affordable Purchase Scheme, your mortgage and the Council's equity share combined must be at least 70%.
- You will not qualify if you have previously bought a house or have no mortgage.

How much can I claim?

The current amount available is €30,000 and applies until 31 December 2025. If you sign a contract for a new house, or draw down on a self-build mortgage, before **31 December 2025**, you can claim relief on **the lesser of:**

- €30,000
- 10% of the market value of a new build property
- 10% of the approved valuation of a self-build property
- The amount of income tax and DIRT you paid for the 4 years before the year you apply. (You cannot claim relief on PRSI or USC).

The maximum payment is €30,000 per qualifying property under the enhanced scheme. This cap applies regardless of how many people are involved in buying the property.

What else do I need to know?

For further information about your mortgage and shared equity schemes, whether your new home qualifies for HTB, tax requirements and how to apply please consult the Revenue website at <https://www.revenue.ie/en/property/help-to-buy-incentive/index.aspx>

How is the affordable purchase price calculated?

Galway City Council, in line with the Affordable Housing Regulations, will set a minimum price that the affordable properties can be sold for. The affordable purchase price to be paid by an applicant will all depend on that applicant's purchasing power and their ability to raise the relevant finances.

How is a decision made on my application?

The decision on your application is made by Galway City Council in accordance with the eligibility criteria and the Council's Scheme of Priority. Homes will be allocated on a First-Come, First-Serve basis.

What is the Scheme of Priority?

A Scheme of Priority was approved by the Elected Members of Galway City Council on 09th October 2023. The Scheme of Priority outlines a methodology to be applied to determine the order of priority accorded to eligible households where the demand for such arrangements exceeds the dwellings or resources available.

The main points are as follows:

- The property must be suited to your household's needs.
- In relation to 100% of the dwellings, the date and time of application will be one of the criteria on which eligible applications will be prioritised under the Council's Scheme of Priority i.e., properties will be allocated on a first come first served basis.
- In relation to 30% of the dwellings, priority will be given to eligible applicants based on any person living or working at a current address in the Galway City Metropolitan areas and/or within a 15km radius of the Galway City Council boundary. Map link below:
- <https://galwaycityco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2b7d2385de7841baa2fd0a66ba24f013>

GALWAY CITY COUNCIL SCHEME OF PRIORITY FOR AFFORDABLE DWELLING PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS

Introduction:

The purpose of this Scheme of Priority is to set out the manner in which affordable dwelling purchase arrangements are made available by Galway City Council (the Council), and the methodology that will be applied to determine the order of priority to be accorded to eligible households where the demand for such arrangements exceeds the number of dwellings available.

The legislation sets out a requirement for the establishment of a Scheme of Priority by which affordable dwelling purchase arrangements are made available by Local Authorities.

This Scheme of Priority is made under Section 11 of the Affordable Housing Act 2021 (No. 25 of 2021) and is in accordance with the Affordable Housing (No. 2) Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 21 of 2023).

Eligibility of households will be assessed in accordance with Section 10 of the Affordable Housing Act 2021 (No. 25 of 2021), and the Affordable Housing Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 20 of 2023).

For the purpose of this Scheme of Priority, the definition of "Dwelling" includes: any building or part of a building occupied or intended for occupation as a normal place of residence and includes any out-office, yard, garden or other land and any easements, rights and privileges appurtenant thereto or usually enjoyed therewith and includes a house, flat, apartment or maisonette. (Section 4 Affordable Housing Act 2021)

Part 1: Manner in which Affordable Dwellings will be made Available

1. Where the Council intends to make dwellings available or facilitate the provision of dwellings in a particular location or locations for the purpose of sale to eligible applicants under affordable dwelling purchase arrangements, in accordance with the Act, it will:

1.1. Calculate, in accordance with relevant legislation, the relevant income limits for the purposes of determining a household's eligibility for each type of dwelling that will be made available.

1.2. In advance of the date when the particular dwellings are scheduled to be completed, the Council will advertise the availability of the dwellings in at least one newspaper circulating within the administrative area and on the Council's website.

1.3. The information that will be provided in the advertisement shall include:

1.3.1. the location/s, numbers and details of the type/types of dwellings that are to be made available;

1.3.2. that the dwellings shall generally only be available to first-time buyers, with certain exceptions;

1.3.3. that the dwellings will be sold at a price that is lower than market value, such price to be determined in accordance with the income of the purchaser, and the Council will take a percentage equity share in the dwelling equal to the difference between the market value of the dwelling and the price paid by the purchaser, expressed as a percentage of the market value of the dwelling;

1.3.4. that the Council's equity may be subsequently redeemed by the purchaser by making payments to the Council. Minimum repayment amounts, in accordance with Section 16 (1) of the Act and Regulation 7 of the Affordable Housing (No. 2) Regulations 2022 shall apply.

1.3.5. that the dwellings will be made available to eligible applicants in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Priority; date and time of application will be one of the criteria on which eligible applications will be prioritised. The public will be informed where the scheme may be obtained.

1.3.6. the minimum prices to be paid by eligible purchasers for dwellings and the typical gross income limits for eligibility for each type of dwelling;

1.3.7. the manner in which an application can be made, including where the application form and further details may be obtained, the date from which the Council will accept applications and documentation required to accompany the application form. The closing date for receipt of such applications will be stated.

2. Applications will only be considered for the dwellings which are the subject of the advertisement. A household must submit a separate application for each advertisement where it wishes to be considered for the properties in the advertisement.

Part 2: Order of Priority for Eligible Applicants

3. In cases where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of dwellings available for purchase, this Scheme of Priority shall be used to determine the order of priority for all applicants.

4. An order of application will be assigned to applications received before the closing date. Applications that appear to meet the eligibility criteria, on the basis of the information supplied by the applicant household, will be considered eligible for the purpose of applying this scheme of priorities, in accordance with Affordable Housing (No. 2) Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 21 of 2023), subject to later confirmation through the production of documentary evidence in relation to eligibility.

5. The Council will then decide which of the available types of dwelling would adequately cater for the housing needs of the applicant households. More than one type of dwelling might be deemed to cater adequately to the accommodation needs of a particular household, so that an applicant household may be prioritised for more than one type of dwelling where they indicated such interest in their application form.

5.1. Where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of affordable dwellings for which applications have been accepted, the priority for which type of dwelling is deemed to adequately cater to the accommodation needs of a household shall be assigned on the following basis:

Dwelling Type	Meets accommodation needs of
Three-bedroom dwelling	Household of at least 2 persons
Four-bedroom dwelling	Household of at least 3 persons

5.2. For 70% of the dwellings, where having applied the criteria in Section 5.1, the number of eligible applications still exceeds the number of dwellings for which applications were made, priority shall be given to the eligible applicants in the date and time order that their applications were received.

5.3 With regards to other dwelling types not provided for under the criterion in Section 5.1, where the number of eligible applicants also exceeds the number of dwellings for which applications were made, priority shall be given to the eligible applicants in the date and time order that their applications were received, providing these other dwelling types adequately cater for the housing needs of the applicant households.

6. Furthermore, in relation to the other 30% of the dwellings, the subject of applications accepted under Regulations 5(1) & 5(2) of the Affordable Housing (No 2) Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 21 of 2023), the Council will prioritise households in the following order:

6.1 Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of affordable dwellings for sale, the Council shall in relation to any particular type of dwelling, give priority to households whose accommodation needs would be adequately catered for by the type of dwelling in question as per section 5.1 above.

6.2 If, following the prioritisation of applicants based on household size as per section 5.1 above, it remains that the number of prioritised applicants still exceeds the number of affordable dwellings for sale, the Council will further prioritise households as follows;

6.2.1 Priority to be given to eligible households who live or work at a current address in the Galway City Metropolitan area and/or within a 15 km radius of the Galway City Council boundary.

<https://galwaycityco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2b7d2385de7841baa2fd0a66ba24f013>

6.2.2 Where having applied the above criteria in Section 5.1 and Section 6.2.1, the number of eligible applications still exceeds the number of dwellings for which applications were made, priority shall be given to the eligible applicants in the date and time order that their applications were received.

7. In addition to submitting evidence in relation to a household's eligibility criteria, additional documentation may be requested from applicants to assess their place in the order of priority under the criteria set out in this Scheme of Priority. This request to be made and satisfied prior to an Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangement being offered.