



Marketing tips and templates

Helping you to grow your equity release business

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This guide looks at how you can use marketing techniques to grow your business as an equity release qualified adviser. We'll show you how to market to existing clients, and how to find new ones.

It also includes some helpful letter and email templates to help give your marketing a head start.

1. Identifying your prospects

You won't need telling that it's easier to build business with existing clients than to find it from scratch. Your best source of new business may be the clients you already have.

Your own clients

- It's worth mentioning equity release routinely in reviews held with any appropriate client aged 55+ who owns their own home.
- You could also send out emails or letters to selected clients from your database – you'll find some helpful templates on page 6 of this document.
- A regular newsletter can be an excellent way to introduce new topics to existing clients.
- Holding seminars or other informative events can provide the opportunity to explain more about equity release, whilst helping to maintain good client relationships. You could invite clients to attend a seminar in person at a specific venue, or you could host an online webinar.
- Remember – one size doesn't fit all. Split your database into segments and vary the message according to the known priorities and areas of interest.

Target new prospects

What to talk about

Sometimes a single issue – such as the possibility of releasing value from the home – can be a good way to lead into a communication with people whom you have not previously contacted. But you may prefer to use a more general message for prospective clients – after all, you need to introduce yourself and the services you offer.

One option is to expand the equity release message to embrace the idea of property as an asset which could be used in retirement planning. This can encourage prospects to begin to think in broader terms and act as an introduction to the holistic nature of the advice you offer.

Where to start looking

It's useful to consider the attributes of existing clients in order to find fresh prospects who may share the same needs and characteristics. Think about:

- **Locations** within your area where demographics and property values match those of existing equity release customers.
- **Partnerships** – do you have contacts, such as estate agents or solicitors, who could introduce you to prospects within an area you haven't previously considered? Networking – whether face-to-face or online – could be a good way to make connections. Read our 'Growing your equity release network' guide to learn more about this area.

Use your website

Does your website cover equity release in any detail? A dedicated section on the subject will help to demonstrate your credentials and experience. Remember to use equity release related key words and phrases to help increase your prominence in searches. And don't forget to include your equity release qualification, not only on your website, but on your business card and social media channels too.

The power of referrals

Your best source of new business may be your existing clients – but don't forget that they could also be your best source of **new prospects**. Even if you know that equity release wouldn't be appropriate for a particular client, they may have friends or relatives in a different position – and a happy client will always be willing to pass on leads and recommend your services to others.

2. Getting the message across

Word-of-mouth, referrals and networking will always be excellent ways to gain new leads. But to really make the most of the growing opportunity to build equity release business, you need to think about the routes to market which will be most effective for you.

This section contains some useful tips and templates to help you get the most from your marketing tools.

Adapting your messages to different formats

- **Email campaigns** allow you to reach a large number of people simultaneously at a fraction of the cost of more traditional direct mail.
 - Get the subject line right - it's your chance to grab the reader's attention.
 - Keep it short - research has shown that people devote less time to reading emails than they would a letter.
 - Think about how the email appears on screen - the reader shouldn't have to scroll down to see the most important messages and links.
 - Use links effectively - take them straight to the area of your website that's relevant to the subject matter.
 - Have a clear call to action - let the reader know what you want them to do as result of reading the email.
- **Direct mail** can still be effective, especially when you're dealing with an older audience. If you decide to buy mailing lists make sure they're checked against Mailing Preference Service Data.
 - Try to keep letters to a single side
 - Use subheadings, boxes and indented text to break up the letter visually and make it easier to read. Most people scan marketing communications rather than reading word for word, so make key points stand out.
 - Personalise your letter - make a personal connection by using the recipient's name.
- **Telephoning clients** directly will be effective if you have a very specific proposal, or if you're very confident your contact will be interested in what you're offering. In the case of equity release, you could consider contacting a small number of carefully selected existing clients rather than taking a more 'blanket' approach.
- **Social media** is a powerful and personal way of building relationships with new and existing clients. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube are likely to be an important part of clients' lives and therefore important for your business too.

Twitter tips:

- Set up a business Twitter account using your business name and logo.
 - Keep your description brief and include the hours the account will be monitored.
 - Keep to 280 characters or less.
 - Use Twitter Analytics to monitor impressions and engagement of your content.
 - Put your Twitter name on emails and your website.
 - Add images, video and #hashtags to help increase engagement.
- **Starting a blog or podcasting** (creating audio messages) is a good way to raise your profile and demonstrate your expertise in particular areas. A blog can be a good vehicle to introduce specific areas of advice such as equity release – but it needs to be entertaining and not 'salesy'.

The following pages contain some useful letter, email and press advert templates for you to use with your clients.

Using the templates

These templates, which allow you to copy and paste the content onto your own material, are intended as a framework so you can adapt them to your own needs. For example you might want to refer to conversations or previous meetings you've had with individual clients, and you'll no doubt want to retain your own tone of voice to make them personal and relevant to the relationships you have.

It's also important to remember to include any mandatory wording or information – you should check against the MCOB rules if you're unsure whether something is mandatory. It's important to bear in mind that you will remain responsible for the content of your communications, however much or little of the template content you choose to include.

Guidelines and regulations do change from time to time, so please make sure you keep your communications up to date with FCA and other relevant directives. Equally, you need to be selective in choosing which clients you contact - only contact those who are happy to receive marketing information and make sure your messages are appropriate to the people who receive them.

Talking to prospective new clients

When writing to people whom you haven't previously contacted, don't forget to include an introductory paragraph to give them an overview about you and your services.

When talking to new prospects, you might think that a letter about equity release alone may be too specific for a first contact. That's why our template introduces the idea of the home as a major asset in retirement planning, opening up the issue of how this might be used as a source of income. This can help to broaden potential discussions to include options such as downsizing and letting, as well as equity release.

Letter templates

Initial letter to client

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

[Postcode]

Dear [name]

Ever stopped to think about equity release? Now could be a good time to talk

When you're thinking about planning for your retirement, it's important to take a look at the whole of your finances, not just your pension, to see if you're on course for the kind of retirement you'd want. [You'll probably remember that we touched on this during our meeting.]

Nowadays, people are thinking about different ways to fund their retirement. For some, equity release might be an option. Many people might think this means having to sell your home, but that's not the case.

You may be able to unlock some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage – a form of loan which is the most popular equity release product. The money you release could be used for paying regular expenses, home improvements, occasional treats or even holidays. There are no monthly repayments - instead interest is added each year to the loan and to any interest previously added to it. This quickly increases the amount owed. The loan and interest are repaid, usually from the sale of your home, when you die or require long-term care, subject to the terms and conditions of the provider.

When you choose a provider who is a member of the Equity Release Council, there's a no negative equity guarantee. This means that neither you nor your estate will have to pay back more than your house is sold for, as long as it is sold for the best price reasonably obtainable.

I'd be pleased to explain everything clearly and simply

Releasing equity from your home is a big decision, which is why **I'll make sure that you understand the benefits, costs and risks**. I'd be happy to arrange a meeting where I'll talk you through the minimum eligibility requirements that apply, such as age and property values, and whether it will affect your tax position and any means-tested benefits you receive.

You should bear in mind that a lifetime mortgage is a lifetime commitment and the costs involved, plus the amount you release, will reduce the inheritance you leave. However it may be possible to guarantee that a share of the proceeds from the eventual sale of the property will always be paid to you or your estate.

Please get in touch

If you'd like to arrange a financial review – where we can talk about equity release or anything else you may want to discuss – please just give me a call on [XXXXX XXXXXXX]. I'd be happy to go through the options with you.

Yours sincerely

[IFA name]

Letter templates

Letter to client, meeting held in the past, no action taken

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

[Postcode]

Dear [name]

Your retirement planning... time to think again about equity release?

You'll recall we met [some time ago/(specific date)] to discuss whether releasing equity from your home was a suitable way to help fund your retirement. At the time you decided this wasn't the right option for you. Now that time has passed it's likely that your situation has changed, so now might be the right time to reconsider unlocking some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage.

Nowadays, people are thinking about different ways to fund their retirement. For some, equity release might be an option. Many people might think this means having to sell your home, but that's not the case.

You may be able to unlock some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage – a form of loan which is the most popular equity release product. The money you release could be used for paying regular expenses, home improvements, occasional treats or even holidays. There are no monthly repayments, instead interest is added each year to the loan and to any interest previously added to it. This quickly increases the amount owed. The loan and interest are repaid, usually from the sale of your home, when you die or go into long-term care, subject to the terms and conditions of the provider.

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I'd be pleased to explain everything clearly and simply

Releasing equity from your home is a big decision, which is why **I'll make sure that you understand the benefits, costs and risks**. I'd be happy to arrange a meeting where I'll talk you through the minimum age and property values that apply, and whether it will affect your tax position and means-tested benefits you receive.

You should bear in mind that a lifetime mortgage is a lifetime commitment and the costs involved, plus the amount you release, will reduce the inheritance you leave. However it may be possible to guarantee that a share of the proceeds from the eventual sale of the property will always be paid to you or your estate.

Please get in touch

If you'd like to arrange a financial review – where we can talk about equity release or anything else you may want to discuss – please just give me a call on [XXXXX XXXXXXX]. I'd be happy to go through the options with you.

Yours sincerely

[IFA name]

Letter templates

Follow-up to initial letter

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

[Postcode]

Dear [name]

Remember I wrote to you about equity release? Some information to bear in mind...

You may remember that I recently wrote to you to suggest we get together to talk about equity release. Today's equity release products have moved on a great deal since the old style plans of the 1980s and 1990s. Here are a few facts to think over:

- You may be able to unlock some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage, which is a form of long-term loan, the most popular equity release product.
- You would still be the owner of your home with a lifetime mortgage.
- There are no monthly repayments.
- Interest is added each year to the loan and to any interest previously added to it. This quickly increases the amount owed.
- The loan and interest are repaid, usually from the sale of your home, when you die or require long-term care, subject to the terms and conditions of the provider.

You should bear in mind that a lifetime mortgage is a lifetime commitment and the costs involved, plus the amount you release, will reduce the inheritance you leave. However it may be possible to guarantee that a share of the proceeds from the eventual sale of the property will always be paid to you or your estate.

Could we arrange a meeting?

Releasing equity from your home is a big decision, which is why **I'll make sure that you understand the benefits, costs and risks**. I'd be happy to talk you through the minimum eligibility requirement, such as age and property values that apply, and whether it will affect your tax position and means-tested benefits you receive.

If you'd like to arrange a financial review – where we can talk about equity release or anything else you may want discuss – please just give me a call on [XXXXX XXXXXXX]. I'd be happy to go through the options with you.

Yours sincerely

[IFA name]

Email template

To clients, equivalent of initial letter

From:	
To:	Click here to add recipients
Cc:	
Subject:	Ever stopped to think about equity release?

Retirement planning: could you release cash from the value of your home?

Dear [Name of client]

When planning for your retirement, it's important to take a look at the whole of your finances, not just your pension, to see if you're on course for the kind of retirement you'd want. [You'll probably remember that we touched on this during our meeting (in Month/on XX Month.)]

>Arrange a meeting to talk about equity release

You may be able to unlock some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage, which is a form of long-term loan – the most popular equity release product.

With a lifetime mortgage:

- You'd still own your home
- There are no monthly repayments
- Interest is added each year to the loan and to any interest previously added to it. This quickly increases the amount owed
- The loan and interest are repaid, usually from the sale of your home, when you die or go into long-term care, subject to the terms and conditions of the provider.

A lifetime mortgage is a lifetime commitment and the costs involved, plus the amount you release, will reduce the inheritance you leave. However it may be possible to guarantee that a share of the proceeds from the eventual sale of the property will always be paid to you or your estate.

Releasing equity from your home is a big decision, which is why **I'll make sure that you understand the benefits, costs and risks.** I'd be happy to arrange a meeting where I'll talk you through the minimum age and property values that apply, and whether it will affect your tax position and means-tested benefits you receive. Just follow the link below or give me a call on [XXXXX XXXXXXX].

>Contact me to pick a date and time

Yours sincerely

[IFA name]

Sample press ad

Home Sweet Home

When you're planning for your retirement, don't ignore your biggest asset

Worried that your pension pot might not be big enough? It's important to consider all your options. There may be ways you could use the value in your home to aim for a better retirement – without selling it or moving out.

It's important you consider the benefits, costs and risks before deciding if equity release is right for you.

Call [\[name of adviser/company\]](#)

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For independent financial advice based on **your** needs and priorities

We can chat through your options in a relaxed, pressure-free meeting.

[\[website address\]](#)

More help from Aviva

For more information on how Aviva can support your work please get in touch with your usual Aviva contact.

You can find out more about Aviva's equity release products on our adviser website.

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