

### Introduction:

The FSA (Financial Services Authority) has established 6 principles for the fair treatment of financial services customers.

Joint Equity Ltd cannot register with the FSA as our activities fall outside their scope. However, we feel that Treating Customers Fairly is extremely important, and so we aim to comply with the FSA intended outcomes.

The 6 outcomes are listed below, along with the actions that we carry out in order to ensure that we comply with each outcome.

These outcomes are supported by the Joint Equity Treating Customers Charter, which is led by our CEO, Brad Bamfield, and signed by every employee of Joint Equity Ltd.

### **Outcome 1: Consumers can be confident that they are dealing with firms where the fair treatment of customers is central to the corporate culture;**

Our fair and open approach is the cornerstone of Joint Equity Ltd's business. Here's how we do this:

- Our website, information packs and personal illustrations clearly show the costs and benefits for both our Owner and Investor Partners.
- We do not have any hidden costs or fees.
- We protect our customers' personal information carefully.
- We have developed the Joint Equity Partners Contract, which protects the interests of the Owner and the Investor, and regulates the role of Joint Equity Ltd in the purchase & ownership process.
- The Joint Equity Partners Contract has been written in plain English for ease of understanding.
- We require both our Owner and Investor Partners to receive independent financial AND legal advice before signing The Joint Equity Partners Contract.
- Joint Equity has dedicated Owner and Investor support teams, available by email to answer any query that a partner or potential partner may have.
- We also have a dispute resolution procedure, which is clearly detailed in The Joint Equity Partners Contract.

### **Outcome 2: Products and services marketed and sold in the retail market are designed to meet the needs of identified consumer groups and are targeted accordingly;**

- We clearly state on our website and in our Information Pack that Joint Equity is not for everyone, and provide scenarios where other options could be more attractive to the customer, for example: a family loan.
- If our team considers that a potential Partner could purchase their property without Joint Equity we always tell the customer. We use our affordability model to assess this likelihood, and then refer the customer to a whole of market mortgage broker and/or IFA who will be able to look at all their options with them.
- We always provide personal illustrations based on the property price and ownership percentage requested by the customer AND on the maximum potential purchase percentage, which is usually a lower cost.

[www.jointequity.co.uk](http://www.jointequity.co.uk)

## Treating Customers Fairly Policy

- We state clearly in all our publicity materials that our main customer groups are:
  - First Time Buyers
  - Divorced & Separated Individuals
  - Key Workers
  - Parents/Guardians of struggling first time buyers
- Taking independent financial advice is a requirement of The Joint Equity mortgage and Partners Contract, so we are able to ensure that a better option for the customer is not available.

### **Outcome 3: Consumers are provided with clear information and are kept appropriately informed before, during and after the point of sale;**

- Our website ([www.jointequity.co.uk](http://www.jointequity.co.uk)) and Information Pack are extremely information-rich, and customers must confirm that they have received and read our Information Pack before a request to become a Joint Equity Partner is approved.
- Once a person decides to become a Joint Equity Partner, they receive a checklist detailing the purchase process, and telling them what will happen next.
- The checklist is updated and reissued to the customer every time another step is taken.
- Joint Equity's Estate Agent, Mortgage Broker and Legal Partners are all trained in the Joint Equity process to ensure that customers are provided with consistent and clear information, whoever they are dealing with at the time.
- Our new online system will mean that all information and process documentation etc is available to customers 24 hours a day and can be downloaded by them.
- Our dedicated Owner and Investor Support Teams are available by email, which means that customers can ask their questions 24 hours a day. We respond to 95% of all customer emails within 1 business day.

### **Outcome 4: Where consumers receive advice, the advice is suitable and takes account of their circumstances;**

- We clearly state on our website and in all our documentation that Joint Equity Ltd is not registered with the FSA (Financial Services Authority) and cannot provide financial advice.
- We provide prominent links and contact details for Independent Financial Advisors (IFAs) and whole of market Mortgage Brokers that can provide advice.
- Should a person decide to become a Joint Equity Partner, we require that they receive advice from a Mortgage Broker to ensure that Joint Equity is an appropriate option for them, AND from an Independent Legal Advisor to ensure that they understand the Joint Equity Partners Contract and all its implications.

**Outcome 5: Consumers are provided with products that perform as firms have led them to expect, and the associated service is both of an acceptable standard and as they have been led to expect;**

- We offer a choice of mortgage products including fixed and tracker mortgages.
- We operate a triple-check process made up of:
  1. Our own dedicated Owner and Investor Support Teams
  2. The network of brokers and advisors providing independent legal and financial advice
  3. Our lenders

At each of these 3 levels we check that the Joint Equity product is appropriate for the individual, and reiterate what they can expect from it.

- We work only with FSA regulated Mortgage Brokers, Financial Advisors and Lenders.
- We select our brokers, advisors and lenders, in part, according to their customer service philosophy and practices.
- Accordingly, our brokers supply our customers with Key Facts documents etc, which leads their expectations of their chosen product.
- We provide all our partners with a checklist that explains the Joint Equity process and what will happen next.
- The checklist is updated regularly and re-issued to the partners and they progress with their purchase.

**Outcome 6: consumers do not face unreasonable post-sale barriers imposed by firms to change product, switch provider, submit a claim or make a complaint.**

- The Joint Equity mortgage product range is limited, because it is a specialist product, so it may not be as easy for a Joint Equity Partner to switch to a mainstream mortgage at any time. We make this clear to our Partners at the outset.
- However, in The Joint Equity Partners Contract, the 'buying out' process is clearly defined for both Owner and Investor Partners.
- For 'in purchase' issues and disputes between Partners, a process including arbitration is set out in The Joint Equity Partners Contract.
- For complaints against Joint Equity Ltd or to do with the operation of The Joint Equity Scheme itself, we have a simple 2 stage process:
  1. The customer is asked to contact their dedicated Partner Support Team.
  2. If the Partner Support Team cannot resolve the issue to the customer's satisfaction, they are referred directly to Joint Equity's CEO, Brad Bamfield, who will contact them by email and/or telephone to resolve the problem.