



Delivering A Consumer-Focused Later Life Lending Sector for 2026 and Beyond

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the year where one in eight (12%) of new lifetime mortgages were being taken out by owners of properties worth at least £700,000.

Additionally, when analysing the gender breakdown among male and female single life applicants, we've found that men are more likely to release funds for debt repayment, while women are twice as likely as men to take out a lifetime mortgage for gifting purposes. The research found that men are also more likely than women to take out a plan on a lump sum basis, and to be owners of a high-value property.

With the data undoubtedly showing a wide array of demographic profiles served by later life lending understanding both the underlying trends, as well as the circumstances and priorities of each individual customer, continues to be vital to offer a tailored experience. As a consequence, a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't have a place in the modern landscape, and a more nuanced and considered approach is vital for sustained – and sustainable – market growth that puts the consumer first.

Utilising expertise for ongoing market development

The Equity Release Council's ongoing quest throughout 2025 and beyond to embed best practices within the sector has undoubtedly been gratifying to witness, and reaffirms the commitment to offering consumers the best possible experience.

The partnership with Fairer Finance earlier this year on the report, *How can housing wealth bridge the later life funding gap?* served to identify the underlying market opportunity, with 51% of over-60

households could benefit from accessing housing wealth by 2040. The report also offered recommendations, including the FCA using Consumer Duty to eliminate product bias and ensure consumers are supported to achieve the best outcomes for their needs.

Additionally, there's been significant ongoing work with Inclusive Outcomes, working to ensure that both vulnerable consumers are effectively catered for, but also that later life lending is a welcoming environment for those with accessibility needs, and that literature and documentation are geared to maximise the necessary understanding to ensure consumers are able to make informed decisions.

Looking to the new year

With positive figures emerging in terms of market growth so far in 2025, culminating in a 10% annual uplift in total lending in Q2 according to the Council's figures, there's reason to be hopeful of a continued upward trajectory in 2026.

The work that's already been done, and continues to be done, cross-industry behind the scenes to help deliver best outcomes for consumers is also positive (as has been the reaction and supportive noises from the sector's biggest players), and will continue to mean that those who choose to explore later life lending in the near future can do so with confidence that their interests are being prioritised.

In association with



Over the past couple of years there's been an undoubted focus within the later life space to further embed a consumer-first culture. Even ignoring the implementation and embedding of the FCA's whole-of-financial services Consumer Duty, the later life lending sector has benefitted from the introduction of new standards from the Equity Release Council (including a new Consumer Charter), as well as a mystery shopping exercise to ensure advice standards are consistently meeting consumer needs.

The question is: how can later life lending continue to evolve into the new year and beyond?

The importance of understanding customers

One of the key facets of the Council's Consumer Charter is the ability to expect to receive tailored advice, and this becomes ever-more important when we consider the diverse consumer profiles that products such as lifetime mortgages continue to serve – something which has been underlined on several fronts by our own research.

For example, while we've seen the average property value among new lifetime mortgage customers consistently sit at around £400,000, there have been several points over