

Buying in the UK

1. Register your interest

The very first step to finding the right property is to register with us, either by calling us on +852 2820 6553 or online at <https://www.cbresidential.com/hk/en-HK/register-your-interest>. You will be introduced to one of our specialist sales advisors, who will guide you through the process, at your preferred pace. Within our team we have colleagues who specialise in looking after the needs of buyers from around the world.

We can help you buy somewhere for your children to live while they study in London; or if you want a property to let out as a landlord; or if you want to live in it yourself. We will take the time to understand your needs. With thousands of properties to choose from across London and the UK, and the experience of selling to buyers from around the world, you can be assured we will give you personalised and intelligent advice.

3. Going on a viewing

The next stage is to meet us for viewings. We will either take you to the marketing suite of a new development; or to view a model of the development; or to the house or apartment.

We will give you comprehensive brochures, floorplans, and all the necessary buying information to make your purchasing decision.

We will be flexible to your diary, meeting at the most convenient time for you. We will accompany you throughout so that we can answer any questions immediately. We will act as your personal advisor from start to finish.

5. Instructing a solicitor

To make your purchase as smooth as possible, we recommend you instruct an efficient and experienced solicitor who has a good knowledge of UK residential property.

We can provide you with a list of established solicitors.

They will form one half of the legal team facilitating your purchase, and will liaise directly with the vendor's solicitors.

7. Offer agreed

Once your offer has been accepted, we will do the following:

- Write to all parties to confirm the agreed price
- Ask you to confirm details of your solicitor (and mortgage brokers where necessary)
- Prepare a Memorandum of Sale, which is a document that holds the details of the property, the agreed purchase price along with any conditions of sale, your details, the vendor's details, and both your solicitors' details

You will then need to instruct your solicitor to proceed with preparing the documents required for the purchase.

9. Survey and mortgage offer

We recommend you appoint a surveyor, who will look at the building to identify any structural problems, and will give an opinion on the property's value. We can help arrange this for you.

If you are arranging a mortgage, the surveyor's valuation report should be sent to the mortgage lender. The mortgage lender will then send you a formal mortgage offer, which you will need to sign and return.

11. Completion

Completion is when the balance of the purchase price is transferred to the vendor. This remaining sum will vary depending on the payment terms agreed, and could be between 70% to 90%. The sum payable is the total purchase price of the property, minus any reservation fees or deposits already paid.

We will release the keys once the money has cleared in the vendor's account. Congratulations, you are now the legal owner of your new home!

2. Finding the right property

Once we have a clear understanding of your requirements we will send you a selection of homes that match your criteria.

We will keep you up to date via email and SMS alerts when new properties become available. You will also receive invitations to exclusive launch events for new developments, so you can have first choice of the available homes.

Our user friendly website, featuring colour photographs and CGIs, detailed floorplans, location maps and 360 degree tours, will help you to visualise potential properties. Our local area guides and market research available on the website will also give you our insider insight, to help you make a wise choice.

4. Arranging your mortgage

When you are choosing your preferred property, it is sensible to think about how you will pay for your purchase.

A loan on a property is known as a mortgage. Mortgages are financial loans secured on a property, not on a person. If a lender agrees to give you a mortgage, the offer is usually valid for six months.

If you are buying a property that is not ready to move in to (off plan), you don't need a mortgage in place.

For any discussions about mortgages, it is a good idea to speak to a mortgage broker. They will have access to the entire mortgage market, and can advise you on the best mortgage deals available to suit your needs.

We can provide you with a list of established mortgage brokers.

6. Making an offer

Once you have selected your preferred property, we will present the conditions of your purchase to the vendor. This offer will be made verbally and in writing, stating any special conditions.

During the buying process there are several stages of legal commitment, which we will guide you through. These include:

- Reservation (on new build properties only)
- Exchange of contracts
- Completion of contracts

The timeframe for each of these stages will vary according to the property.

If you are buying in a new development, you will be required to pay a reservation fee when you reserve a property.

8. Conveyancing

As part of the conveyancing, which is the process of transferring the legal documents that show ownership of a property, your solicitor will do the following:

- Raise any enquiries on receipt of the draft contract from the vendor's solicitor
- Request their own local searches, for example land registry searches, environmental searches, and local authority searches
- Agree on a date for exchange and completion of contracts

We will assist your solicitor and negotiate on your behalf throughout the process, keeping you informed every step of the way.

10. Exchange

Exchange of contracts occurs when all enquiries have been answered and agreed.

Once the contract has been signed by both parties the deposit (usually 10% of the purchase price) will be telegraphically transferred or paid in the form of a banker's draft from your solicitor to the vendor's solicitor.

The completion date is then set by mutual agreement, or according to the development programme of a new build scheme. If you are buying in a new development, you may be required to provide staged payments between exchange and completion.

Upon exchange of contracts you are legally bound to purchase the property.

FAQs

What is Stamp Duty?

Stamp Duty is a government property tax you pay at the conclusion of your residential property purchase. The current stamp duty rates are:

Purchase price	Stamp Duty (% of purchase price) if the property will be used as your primary residence	Stamp Duty (% of purchase price) where the property will be a second investment
Up to £125,000	0%	3%
Over £125,000 to £250,000	2%	5%
Over £250,000 to £925,000	5%	8%
Over £925,000 to £1,500,000	10%	13%
Over £1,500,000	12%	15%

Source: gov.uk Stamp Duty Land Tax webpage, as at 19 July 2017

What other tax obligations do I have as an overseas purchaser?

We recommend that you speak with a specialist tax advisor to ensure you are compliant with current UK legislation. CBRE have worked with a number of specialist firms. As a landlord you will be liable for tax on your rental income, and capital gains tax if you sell your property. UK tax is very straightforward, and we will happily talk you through all the details.

How do I make an offer on a property?

An offer has to be communicated by the estate agent to the vendor verbally and in writing. You will need to demonstrate, if requested, proof of funds.

Do I need a solicitor?

Yes, a solicitor is an important part of the buying process. They will conduct enquiries on your behalf to ensure you have all the information you require to make an informed purchase. This commonly includes finding out about the land the property is built on, any legal obligations on the owner of the property, and the history of the building. At the point of exchange and then completion they will also handle your payments. You need to transfer your money to the solicitor's account, who will then transfer it to the vendor or developer. They will handle all the legal documents you need, and the process of transferring the title deeds (documents that prove your ownership of the property) to you. This ensures a smooth and transparent purchase.

Is an offer legally binding?

No – an offer only becomes legally binding on exchange of contracts.

Do you provide mortgage services?

CBRE have a preferred mortgage adviser we work with, who can give you detailed advice on your mortgage. Get in touch to find out more.

Can CBRE let out my property on my behalf?

CBRE offer a comprehensive lettings and management service, and can take care of all the details for you. Our dedicated in-house team will find a tenant, arrange the tenancy, and manage the property throughout on your behalf.

Darien Bradshaw
Executive Director – International Project Marketing Asia
 M +65 9671 1381
 darien.bradshaw@cbre.com.sg