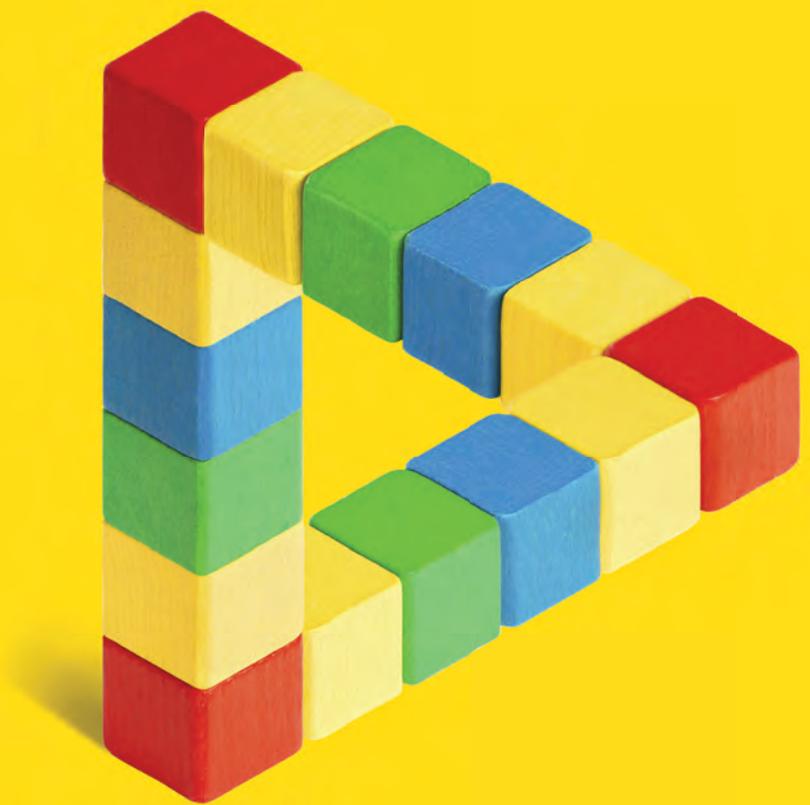


# A fresh look at equity release

How you could add an extra dimension  
to your business



# A fresh look at equity release

## How you could add an extra dimension to your business

- ✓ [Download templates for your equity release marketing activity](#)
- ✓ [Get tips on opening new routes to market – including social media](#)

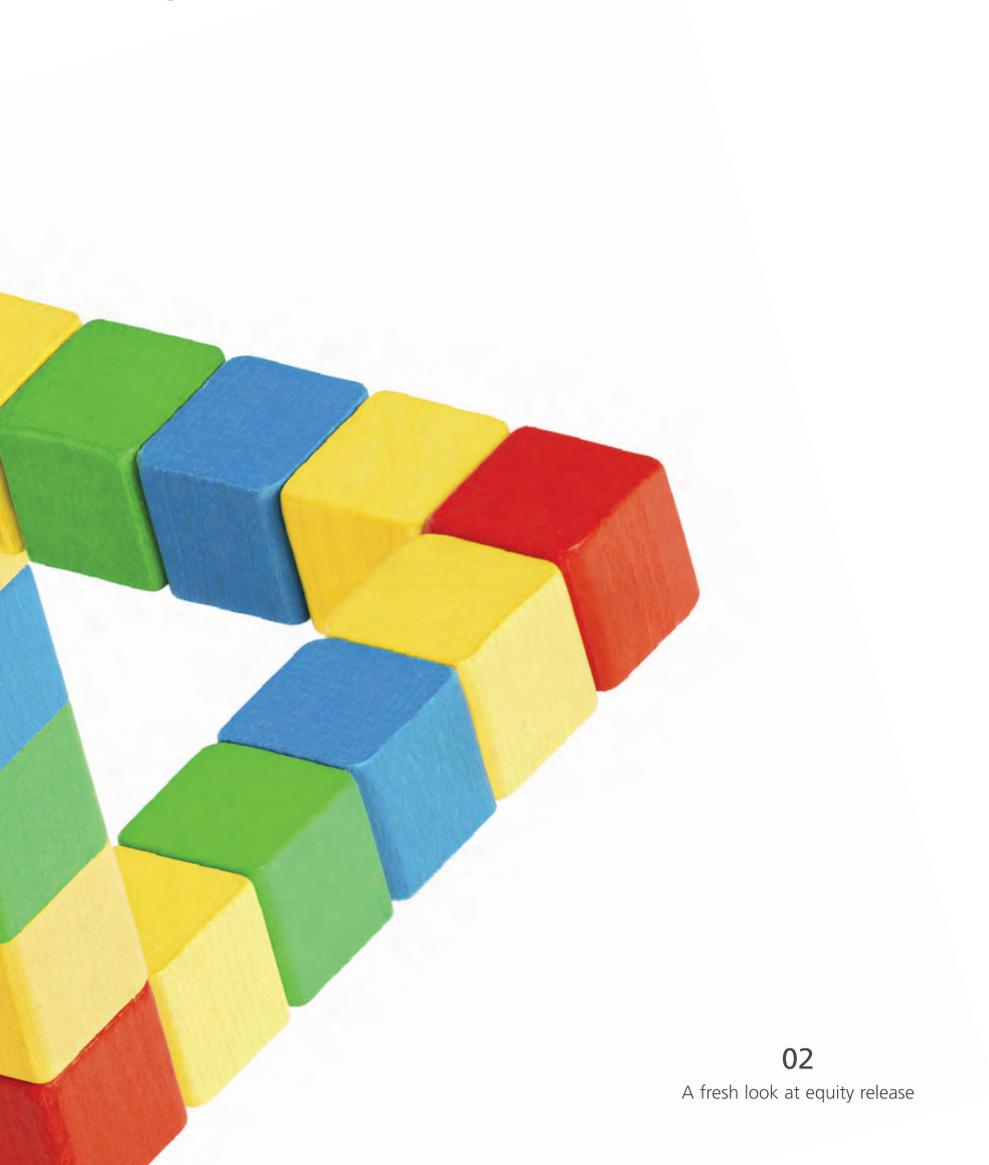
Marketing is key to helping you find new clients, keep existing ones and increase profitability. But it can take a lot of effort – and thinking time – to refine your messaging. It isn't easy to include all the points you need to make in a succinct and engaging way.

This is especially true when you're dealing with a product like equity release. Not only do you have to guide your clients through the different products available, but often enough you also need to overcome misconceptions caused by defunct equity release products of the past.

Aviva can help.

We've produced a suite of materials to help you make the most of the opportunity which equity release offers you. This includes hints on using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to their best effect. But we aren't just passing on tips, useful as they may be.

We're also providing practical help in the form of templates for your marketing activity – so you won't have to spend hours struggling to find the right words, or the most effective layout for a letter or email. They're written in plain, simple English without 'puffery' or 'hard sell' – and you can easily tailor them to reflect your own personality and way of doing business.



# Using the templates

We know how busy advisers tend to be, so we've designed templates for letters, emails and press advertising to save your valuable time. Download them now, and you'll see we've prepared formats for follow-up letters as well as an initial letter to send to your clients.

You can also adapt them to your own needs, perhaps to incorporate conversations or previous meetings which you will have had with individual clients. It's important to retain your own tone of voice to make the communications personal and relevant to the relationships you have, the templates simply provide a starter for you.

It's also important to remember that the letters contain some mandatory wording which shouldn't be omitted or changed. If you do want to change anything which you suspect may involve mandatory content, you should always check this against the MCOB rules, but you need to bear in mind that you will remain responsible for the content of your communications - however much or little of the template material 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, to make sure your marketing information includes only messages which are appropriate to the people who receive them.

## Talking to prospective new clients

Unlike your own clients, people whom you haven't previously contacted will need an introduction to you and your services. The templates show an area in which you can insert a short paragraph mentioning who you are, where you work and highlighting any specific qualifications, areas of specific interest or relevant experience.

When talking to prospects, you may consider that mentioning equity release alone may be too specific for a first contact. This said, it's always good to 'hang' your marketing communications on a topical issue or a single point which sets the reader thinking.

Our template copy does this by introducing 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 – broadening potential discussions to include options such as downsizing and letting as well as equity release.



# Adapting your messages to different formats

## Letters

- 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 them word for word, so make key points stand out.
- Use a clear call-to-action – the reader needs to know what you'd like them to do.
- Avoid specialised language or financial services jargon.
- Keep sentences short.
- A letter is a personal communication – don't be afraid to use 'I' and 'you.'
- It's important that follow-up letters are recognisably different to the original, so the recipient doesn't think "Oh, I've read this already". A fresh headline, shorter content and stronger calls-to-action will help to do this.

## Emails

Many of the guidelines for writing emails are the same as those for letters, with some important differences:

- Get the subject line right – not too long and always consider 'what's in it' for the reader. Why should they open it? The subject line should also make it clear that the email is a marketing communication.
- Keep it short. Research has shown that people devote less time to reading emails than they would to a letter.
- Consider how the email is likely to appear on the screen. Make sure the recipient won't have to scroll down to see the most important messages – and links. You can always repeat a link once more towards the end of the email, so they're clear on what they need to do.
- Use links effectively – take them straight to the area of your website that's relevant to the subject matter.
- Finally – apologies if we're stating the obvious, but it's always worth remembering that emails are cheap! Unlike letters there are no postage, printing or stationery costs. They are a highly cost-effective way to reach a number of contacts instantaneously.



## Social media

Social media is a powerful and personal way of building relationships with new and existing clients. Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube may not have been on your radar several years ago, but they're becoming an increasingly important part of clients' lives, and their importance for your business has grown and grown.

Given the age profile of potential equity release customers, there is a perception that many will not be engaged with social media. In fact, one in every two adults aged 45 to 54 now report that they use social networking. (Office for National Statistics, Internet Access – Households and Individuals, 2013 - page 7).

Social media gives you an opportunity to show your expertise and personality through interesting updates and relevant posts. You can also use it as a quick, easy and inexpensive way to create awareness and possibly even generate leads.

### Twitter [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Twitter is an online and mobile service where users send and read messages of up to 140 characters, including links, videos and pictures. A #hashtag shows the subject of a tweet e.g. #avivanewthinking. It's great for sharing information quickly and building long-term followers.

Twitter offers their own hints on how to create a presence and use it to market your business. To find out more visit their [Grow your business page](#).



- Set up a business Twitter account using your business name, instead of your own. Then upload your company logo or image onto your Twitter profile background.
- Shorten your links on Twitter using a website like [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com), so you can say more in your tweet.
- Keep to 120 characters or less, leaving space for people to comment and retweet you.
- Aim for quality tweets, not quantity.
- Place your Twitter name on emails and your website.
- Add images – statistically, tweets with images get twice as much interaction as standard tweet. source: [smallbiztrends.com/2014/05/tips-using-images-on-twitter.html](http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/05/tips-using-images-on-twitter.html)
- Use #hashtags – another simple way to double engagement levels.
- Posting on Facebook can also be a worthwhile way to reach prospective clients. You can find out more on their website at [Marketing on Facebook](#)

### More hints from Aviva on marketing

Aviva has produced a detailed guide to help advisers to grow their business using the power of digital marketing. You can download a copy [here](#).

[>New Thinking – digital for advisers](#)

You can also read our general suggestions on ways you could make more of the opportunity offered by equity release:

[>Add a new dimension to your business with equity release](#)

# Letter templates

## initial letter to client

[Date]  
[Name]  
[Address]  
[Postcode]

Dear [handwritten 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 for yourself. [You'll probably remember that we touched on this during our meeting.]

Nowadays, a lot of people are thinking about different ways to fund their retirement. For some, equity release might be an option. Many people 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 can quickly increase 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.

When you choose a provider registered with 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 always make sure that people understand the benefits and considerations**. If you like, I can 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 the tax and welfare 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.

This is a lifetime mortgage. To understand the features and risks, ask for a personalised illustration.

### Please get in touch

If you'd like to meet up for 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 [handwritten 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 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, a lot of people are thinking about different ways to fund their retirement. For some, equity release might be an option. Many people 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 can quickly increase 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.

When you choose a provider registered with 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 always make sure that people understand the benefits and considerations**. If you like, I can arrange a meeting where I'll talk you through the minimum age and property values that apply, and whether it will affect the tax and welfare 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.

This is a lifetime mortgage. To understand the features and risks, ask for a personalised illustration.

## Please get in touch

If you'd like to meet up for 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 [handwritten 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 would still be the owner of your home with a lifetime mortgage, the most popular equity release product
- You may be able to unlock some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage
- You could use the money released for almost anything you like
- There are no monthly repayments.
- Interest is added each year to the loan and to any interest previously added to it. This can quickly increase 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.

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 always make sure that people understand the benefits and considerations**. If you like, I can arrange a meeting where I'll talk you through the minimum eligibility requirement, such as age and property values that apply, and whether it will affect the tax and welfare benefits you receive.

This is a lifetime mortgage. To understand the features and risks, ask for a personalised illustration.

If you'd like to meet up for a financial review – where we can talk about equity release or anything else you may want discuss – please just give me a call on [XXXXXX XXXXXXXX]. 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?

Dear [\[Name of client\]](#)

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

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 for yourself. [\[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 – the most popular equity release product.

- You would still be the owner of your home with a lifetime mortgage.
- You may be able to unlock some of the cash tied up in your home with a lifetime mortgage.
- You could use the money released for almost anything you like.
- There are no monthly repayments.
- Interest is added each year to the loan and to any interest previously added to it. This can quickly increase 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.

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.

This is a lifetime mortgage. To understand the features and risks, ask for a personalised illustration.

[>Contact me to pick a date and time](#)

Releasing equity from your home is a big decision, which is why **I always make sure that people understand the benefits and considerations**. If you like, I can arrange a meeting where I'll talk you through the minimum age and property values that apply, and whether it will affect the tax and welfare benefits you receive. Just follow the link above or give me a call on [\[XXXXXX XXXXXXXX\]](#).

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.

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

000000 0000 000000

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

We can chat through your options in a relaxed, pressure-free meeting at your home or our office.

[\[website address\]](#)

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