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### NEWS

## Brokers' Christmas wishes – an election, affordability help, and a cure for gout

By John Fitzsimons

22/12/2023 0



**An early election and more support on affordability would be on the wishlist for brokers, were they able to make a request from Santa.**

With just three days until Christmas, thoughts are no doubt turning towards what Santa might have in his sack for the world's little children. But what are brokers' Christmas wishes? What do hard-working intermediaries want from Father Christmas? And will their dreams come true on Christmas morning (or next year)?

### Please Santa, may I have a new government?

A host of brokers said they would look for Santa's help in tackling the political situation, both in the UK and overseas. For example, Lewis Shaw, owner of Shaw Financial Services, said he would ask for "a General Election, and if that failed, a cure for gout", while Graham Cox, founder of Self-Employed Mortgage Hub, called for a government with a "coherent housing policy" which does not "pander to nimbys, housebuilders and its own backbenchers".

Gary Bush, financial adviser at MortgageShop.com, turned his sights abroad, noting that the knock-on effect of peace overseas would be that calm could return to the UK. "We've seen endless dramas since 2015, and this in turn would help the property and financial services sector."

On a related note, stability would be top of the wishlist for Scott Taylor-Barr, financial adviser at Barnsdale Financial Management.

He explained: "People tend to make big decisions, like buying property, in a stable environment; if they think that costs may rise or fall significantly, they delay and wait to see what happens". I have been a good boy this year Santa, so I'd like a bit of market stability, please."

### Help for brokers and borrowers

Craig Fish, director of Lodestone Mortgages & Protection, said that as a new monetary policy committee and an early General Election were likely beyond Santa's capabilities, he would instead look for help with mortgage rates.

He said: "I'd ask for the same rates for those wishing to remortgage as those who are purchasing, and it would be nice to have a five-year fixed rate below four per cent and a two-year rate below 4.5 per cent."

James Miles, director and mortgage adviser at The Mortgage Quarter, said that he would ask for improved income affordability for first-time buyers who have a small deposit.

He explained: "They're the base of the market, and with more confidence here it should have a positive knock on effect to the rest."

For Bob Singh, founder of Chess Mortgages, tackling his frustrations with technology would be a priority for Santa. He said he would ask for "a CRM that does what it's meant to, an end-to-end solution. It hasn't happened yet".

### More common sense

Michelle Lawson, director of Lawson Financial, said she would ask Father Christmas for a return of "common sense", particularly the removal of "restrictive red tape" in the rental sector.

She continued: "The industry needs a massive overhaul and there is so much duplication where process overtakes the task. There must be ways where all the different cogs can join together and make for a smoother, quicker transaction for all as it is so clunky and inefficient."

"We have more technology at our feet however transactions are taking longer than ever from start to finish- this just can't be right in this day and age."

### Tax on landlords is too taxing

David Sharpstone, director of CIS Mortgage Advice, said he would welcome a reversal of the removal of landlords being able to claim tax relief on mortgage interest.

He said it was time for a "rethink" on this, adding: "I have many landlords that are making a loss on their business and still paying tax – that's utterly ridiculous."

### What really matters?

Finally, Sebastian Riemann, director of Virtus Private Finance, said his priority would be for good health and well-being for everyone in the industry.

He said: "It's easy to lose sight of what is really important, and at this time of year switching off and spending time with our loved ones is the thing that matters most."

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John Fitzsimons is a freelance journalist and has been writing about money since 2007. A former editor of Mortgage Solutions and loveMONEY, he has written for titles including the Mirror, the Sunday Times, the Sun and Moneyweek, covering everything from bank accounts and mortgages to football season tickets and rare coins.

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