

ADVISER CASE STUDY
**GETTING TO
GRIPS WITH
GENERAL
INSURANCE**





General Insurance (GI) has become big business for mortgage advisers looking to offer clients a more complete service. But even experienced mortgage firms sometimes need a little help getting started.

Edward Jackson knows all about the value GI can bring to a mortgage business. He's been selling it for over 7 years now and has seen the benefits first hand. He has also acquired a great deal of knowledge along the way, which is why 18 months ago, he was invited to join Key Solutions Mortgages in Weston-Super-Mare, as their new GI Manager.

Key Solutions is one of the larger mortgage advisers in the region, covering clients from across the South West, London and even further afield. The business has always taken an active interest in GI, but previously outsourced all of its referrals to a third-party partner. With Edward on board, it now offers a holistic service in-house, which is proving extremely successful.

"We currently have around 20 advisers in the business and 49 staff in total" he confirms. "We're quite a big company and growing all the time. Since I joined, we've already taken on an apprentice to offer some additional help on the GI side."

While Edward acknowledges that GI is good for strengthening client relationships, he also maintains that it has a significant impact on business earnings. "There are a lot of advisers out there who focus entirely on mortgages and see GI as small change, but I don't think they're fully aware of what they're missing out on. It's not just the initial commission; it's the renewals as well - that's when the numbers really start to get exciting."

POTENTIAL COMMISSION EARNINGS

The average Home Insurance policyholder stays with Paymentsshield for 5 years.



Figures based on 10 cases per month with an average monthly Buildings & Contents premium of £28.50 (increasing by 5% per annum) with average annual attrition of 16% over five years on Annual Indemnity commission rate of 27.5%. Figures do not include the impact of any monthly attrition or clawback.

PERFECTING THE PROCESS

What works well at Key Solutions is the wealth of experience of the advisers and the set-up of specialised teams for new-build, first-time buyers, pre-loved, specialist mortgages and re-mortgages, all offering a dedicated and customer focused service. But despite the individual priorities of the advisers, they all work very closely as a unit, which Edward accepts makes his life much easier when picking up cross sell-business.

"We all share the same office and have processes in place for just about everything. When our advisers are arranging a mortgage, they explain to their clients that GI is part of the service and once they're done, they pass the lead on to me. The people I speak to are always expecting my call, which means they don't see it as an imposition - they know we're just trying to help. And because they've already experienced a great service, they're generally happy to listen."

Edward's specialist product knowledge is also a big advantage. It gives him confidence in his recommendations and is equally reassuring for clients. They know they are being supported by someone who understands the market and can provide insurance solutions that suit their needs. And as he is quick to point out, "The risks online are too high. It's important for customers to know what they're looking for and what they're covered for - it makes a big difference."

TICKING ALL THE RIGHT BOXES

Key Solutions offers a 'whole-of-market' mortgage service and works with a number of different providers on the GI side. "The product, the price and the customer service have always impressed me with Paymentsshield. The cover levels are fantastic too; they include all the key benefits to a really high maximum, which makes my life a lot easier."

Like many advisers, he believes the Defaqto 5* rating now plays an important role with consumers. "The Defaqto brand means a lot more to the public these days", he explains. "It is often a deciding factor because customers know they're getting a great product at a great price. Without the five stars, I'm not sure we'd write nearly as much business. The household names on Paymentsshield's panel give me a lot of confidence and allow customers



to choose their insurer based on both reputation and price."

It's fair to say that Edward couldn't be much happier with the options available to him from Paymentsshield and in many ways, the service is simply the icing on the cake. But it's also an area that can't be understated, as it cements the working relationship.

"The support we get is second to none", he observes. "Mark, the Business Development Manager, comes to see me on a regular basis and is extremely pro-active. We look at conversion rates and he always wants to know if there's anything he can do to help. I also speak to the telephone staff regularly, and they're great too - they couldn't do anything more."

ONLINE SUPPORT IN JUST A CLICK

While he is quick to praise individual members of the team, a key part of Paymentsshield's service comes through the company's online offering. Not just the quoting tool - which Edward accepts is easy to navigate and great for efficiency whilst speaking with clients over the phone - but through the tools and resources that are available on the website.

"I really like the website", he enthuses, "Especially since it's been re-vamped. There are all kinds of useful items on there. The first-time buyers guide is great and the contents calculator often comes in useful - I regularly send it on to

customers to help guide them on better estimating their contents insurance needs. Plus, the 'Harmony Home' tool is brilliant. It makes it much easier to talk through the options with customers. I use it a lot."

Many of Edward's clients are first-time buyers who are new to the mortgage process. So, these tools help him bring the GI benefits to life, as do the customer case studies, which include real life examples of how claims are handled.

"I visit the site regularly and find all of the bits and pieces useful", he remarks, "They give me lots of new ideas that come in handy. I use some items while on the phone speaking to customers. Others, like the contents calculator, I send as a prompt for them to get back to me with further information. And, of course, once they've taken out a policy, I'll forward on all the policy documents, along with anything else that might be relevant."

Obviously, every adviser approaches GI in their own way and different tools work better for different people. But Edward believes that these sales aids are a great way to get clients thinking about their needs and requirements. "This really supports our ethos, as a business, to make life easier and better for everyone." Plus, when you consider that Key Solutions' GI conversion rates have gone up from 40% to around 75% since he joined - he may well be onto something!

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