

Preparing to sell:

Different people have different reasons for selling. These can range from disposing of an investment property, marriage, divorce, or simply moving home. Your agent will provide you with a property information questionnaire which is a series of questions covering a number of topics, to provide buyers with a good understanding of your home.

If you are getting rid of items you no longer need, do it before you start marketing your property as the less clutter you have the better your house will look.

Many local councils will take large items away, sometimes for free. At this stage it may also be worth contacting your solicitors. If you have a mortgage on your property, they can request title documentation from the mortgage company and may even decide to carry out various searches in readiness for the sale.

Getting the most out of viewings:

First impressions count so put yourself in the buyer's shoes and think about how you can enhance your property's appeal. Consider its 'kerb appeal'. The first thing potential buyers will see before even getting past the front door.

Here are some things to look out for:

- ▶ Does the front of your house need smartening up?
- ▶ Could the front garden be tidier?
- ▶ Would the front door look better with a fresh coat of paint?
- ▶ Could the windows do with a clean?

Look at the inside with a critical eye too. Keep it clean and tidy. De-clutter and use sensible storage. Potential buyers will want to visualise how they can fill the space. Undertake any minor repairs that need doing so buyers will focus on the positives.

If you want to redecorate, use neutral tones which will appeal to a wider audience. Make your house comfortable; cool on hot sunny days and warm if it is winter.

Banish smoke or pet odours. Open the windows and add finishing touches such as fresh flowers to brighten the place up.

Ensuring the sale goes smoothly:

Conveyancing is very time consuming and complex so you will need to employ either a solicitor or a licensed conveyancer to do it for you. Unless you already have a solicitor in mind, try to get a few quotes. We are always happy to provide recommendations.

After you have chosen your solicitor, let them know what sort of time frame you would like to work to and any relevant information that may affect the sale of your property. You will need to complete a detailed questionnaire covering things such as boundaries and whether you have had any disputes with neighbours. It is a legal requirement to answer truthfully.

You will also need to complete a form showing which fixtures and fittings are included in the sale and which items may be available subject to separate negotiation. Answer conveyancing queries as soon as you can, use registered post or deliver documents by hand. This process leads up to what is known as exchange of contracts which is the last stage of the legal process, after which, a buyer cannot pull out (without losing their deposit). A day of completion is usually set for 2 weeks after exchange date giving you time to arrange removals.

Preparing to move out:

Moving out of the home you have lived in for a while, can be stressful but it is also a great opportunity to make a new start. Getting organised and planning ahead will minimise stress levels and make it easier to move on.

Useful moving day tips:

- ▶ Ask your friends or agents to recommend a professional removal firm. Your belongings are precious so ask for references together with membership of the British Association of Removers. If you can avoid moving on a Monday or Friday, as these are the busiest days for moving as well as for traffic on the roads. Remember to take meter readings on both properties on the day of the move.
- ▶ Set up your post to be redirected by Royal Mail a few weeks before you move.
- ▶ Prepare a note for the new owners explaining how things work and where they can find useful items, such as: the boiler, switches, aerial sockets, alarm codes, water stop cock, etc. A few kind thoughts will go a long way when it comes to mail redirection and inject some humanity into the whole process.