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Seller's Guide

Introduction

Moving home is an exciting time but it can also be stressful at times. We have put together a brief guide which will hopefully give you some handy tips.

1. Do a little preparation

If you have decided you definitely want to sell, you may want to do some minor preparations. These aren't necessary, but they can help with the selling process

- De clutter your home of things you are sure you no longer want or need. You could even make some money by selling these on e-bay or at a car boot sale.
- Make minor repairs and redecorations. Most buyers will want to change something, but if you can quickly and cheaply make some changes that will make your home more attractive to potential buyers, it may be worth it.
- Thankfully, HIPs are no longer required, but you may want to put together a small information pack with information on council tax, gas and electrical certificate checks, utility bills and maintenance charges (for flats).

2. Valuing your property

If you are selling through an agent, they will advise you, but be aware that you may get a pretty wide spread of valuations which can be dependent on a wide range of things such as how confident they are of selling your property and how eager they are to market your property.

Fortunately the internet can also provide some help, with sites such as:

www.houseprices.co.uk and **www.ourproperty.co.uk**

providing information on recent sales in your area. At the end of the day, you will have a good idea of what value you are looking for, and what we would advise is to ask friends and family and try and be as realistic and objective as possible.

3. Selling privately or choosing an agent

We are unique in our approach, as our site is open to agents and people wishing to sell their property privately.

We recognise that with better use of technology and economic pressures, more people are marketing their homes privately. The obvious benefit in doing this is the commission fees that you can save. Some people also find it easier and more efficient to deal with prospective buyers directly.

However, other people feel comfortable using an estate agent as they may not want to handle viewings or negotiations.

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Although it is not an industry renowned for customer care, there are some good estate agents out there who will genuinely care about providing you with a good service and selling your home.

In choosing an estate there are some things you should consider:-

- Talk to family, friends and colleagues to see if they have any personal recommendations.
- Think about the for sale boards in your area. Is there an agent that stands out for having the most and also ones that have sold?
- Is there an agent focused on selling properties like yours, whether in terms of value or style.?
- Check if they are members of professional bodies.
- Once you have narrowed your list, why not drop in and visit a few and see which you get the best feel from.
- Don't be afraid to negotiate your commission rate. It is a competitive market, but remember as well, cheapest isn't always best, and selling your property is the most important thing.
- Check your contract in detail and ask for changes if you don't feel comfortable with any clauses.
- Ask about how often you will be given updates and feedback and generally how they will communicate with you.

Once you have decided upon an agent, they will visit your property and agree an asking price, finalise the contract and take some pictures and measurements

4. Getting the most out of your viewings

First impressions really do count when it comes to selling your home. Think of when you view properties and how you are affected by the initial impression.

So first of all, consider such things like how the garden looks, could the windows do with a clean, could the front door do with a quick lick of paint.

When a potential buyer comes to view, there are some obvious things to do to make your property more appealing.

- Keep it clean and tidy. De-clutter and create as much space as you can.
- Undertake any small and easy repairs that need doing.
- If you want to re-decorate, go for neutral tones.
- Banish smoke or pet odours. Open the windows, brew some fresh coffee and add finishing touches such as fresh flowers, to brighten the place up.

5. Conveyancing and the legal parts

Once you have agreed an offer with a buyer, you can move in to completing the legal side.

The good news is your solicitor should take care of the complicated legal parts and look after your interests. The legal aspect of home buying and selling is commonly referred to as conveyancing.

Once you have appointed a conveyancer, you should:-

- Give them some basic information to get started such as your mortgage roll number - so they can check you own the property and proof of your ID.
- Complete a detailed questionnaire on the property, covering things like who owns the boundaries and whether you have had any disputes with neighbours. It is a legal requirement to answer truthfully.
- Complete a form showing what fixtures and fittings are included in the sale.
- Answer conveyancing queries as soon as you can. Use registered post or deliver documents by hand.

Exchange of Contracts

In England and Wales, Exchange of Contracts is the last stage of the legal process after which a buyer cannot pull out (without losing their deposit).

A date for completion is usually set for at least two weeks after the exchange date, giving you time to arrange removals. Your conveyancer will call your agent to tell them when the buyer's money has arrived so they can give the keys to the new owner.

Check the conveyancer's completion statement carefully - it should reflect the original quotation.

Selling in Scotland

In Scotland, the legal process is slightly different and buyers are committed at an earlier stage.

Here, the seller usually sets a guide price and interested buyers put in bids and suggested completion dates. Once the seller accepts their preferred bid, there is a compensation penalty to be paid if one of the parties changes their minds. For this reason, buyers need to have arranged a mortgage before they put in a bid.

Unlike in England and Wales, many conveyancing solicitors in Scotland also have an estate agency part to their business.