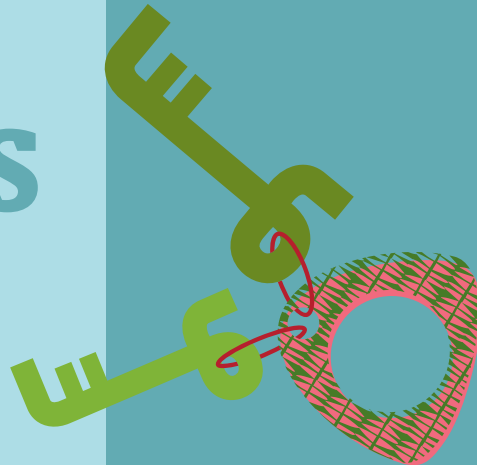


Home seller's checklist



DOs & DON'Ts

Do use the local paper and estate agents to research prices being asked for similar properties in your area. If you want a quick sale, ask for less.

Don't sell in a traditionally slow month if you can help it. Among these are November and December, and July and August when people are away on holiday.

Do ensure photographs of the property are in colour and picture it in sunlight – ideally in summer. Provide interior as well as exterior shots.

Don't be tempted to totally redecorate – potential buyers may suspect you are trying to disguise problems.

Do answer questions openly and honestly. If the buyer sees you as a friendly and co-operative person they may be more inclined to make an offer.

Don't hover behind viewers while they look around, but let them inspect things on their own at their own pace – they will find you if they have a question.

If you plan to sell up and move home there are a number of things you can do to ensure a successful sale

Putting your property on the market

- Choose an estate agent**
Talk to friends who have sold recently and count the 'Sold' boards in your area to find out which agents have the highest success rates
- Get valuations from two or three estate agents**
Don't choose an agent simply because he has given you the highest valuation, unless you are sure the price is realistic
- Make sure the estate agent's description is correct**
Check the dimensions given for rooms and make sure features such as French windows, walk-in wardrobes and double-glazing are mentioned

- Put any unnecessary furniture in storage**
Avoid letting the place appear cramped or cluttered. Remove a few unnecessary pieces of furniture and the property will seem more spacious

- Clean the kitchen and bathroom**
Traditionally viewers pay most attention to these rooms, so make sure they appear bright and clean

- Treat any serious problems such as damp or dry rot**
If for any reason you are unable to do so, do not try to hide their existence from viewers, as they will be uncovered when the property is surveyed

Showing the property

- Make a list of answers to the questions viewers are likely to ask**
These are likely to concern amenities nearby, the standard of local schools, and public transport

- Create a pleasant atmosphere**
Consider buying some freshly cut flowers to brighten up the property

- Have bills on hand to show buyers**
Some buyers will ask about the cost of gas and electricity. Have other facts available, such as whether the property carries a National House-Building Council ten-year guarantee, or if there are any damp-proofing or timber treatment guarantees

Before a viewing

- Tidy the garden**
Focus on any outdoor space in front of your house and make sure the front of your home has 'kerb appeal'. Potted plants are inexpensive and you can take them with you when you move
- Do any minor repairs**
Fix faulty door latches and squeaky hinges. Make sure windows do not stick. Mend guttering and fix loose roof tiles

- Make clear what you are leaving**
Tell the buyers what carpets, curtains and/or electrical appliances you intend to leave behind

