

## Property Selling Advice - Some Tips From The Experts

Brew up a pot of real coffee just before the doorbell rings and make sure the aroma of freshly ground coffee beans wafts through the hall and smacks likely buyers in the face - just as they walk through the door. That's one, but probably not the best one. Consider these:

A freshly painted front door is a good place to start. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.

A confident buyer sweeps into a room. An unconvinced buyer has had a sweep through litter, pizza menus, junk mail and last year's autumn leaves in the hall just to get in. Keep things tidy!

In winter, have lights on during the day time. They can add enchantment... or disenchantment, if light bulbs are missing.

Now there's a big difference between getting a feel of a place and having to feel your way around, which is why lighting in a room is important. In summer, natural light can liven a place up and give a feeling of freshness and cleanliness. So, draw back those curtains and open those windows. If you don't have curtains and it's still dark, check your windows; they may be in of a good clean - there's always a first time!

Air in, damp smells out; make use of 'plug-ins' or scented candles.

In vacant properties, always leave some furniture behind to give the place a lived-in feeling.

If a buyer sits down in a property, it's likely they feel at home, possibly even thinking of putting in an offer. For this reason, make sure there's space round sofas and armchairs so viewers don't have to step over coffee tables and magazines to get to them.

Peeling paint on a window, or a garden gate hanging off its hinges suggests that work needs to be done on the property. This could be used to re-negotiate the price, so make sure everything is in order.

If you have a garden, check outside the house is as neat and tidy as the inside.

In winter, if you have a fireplace, have a fire blazing. Hearths can move hearts.

To a nervous first-time buyer, a damp stain caused by a minor past leakage suggests an impending flood; get it fixed and painted over.

## **Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)**

### **What is an EPC?**

As of May 2010, a Home Information Pack (HIP) is no longer required when you sell your property. However, as part of a European Directive, an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is still mandatory if you intend to sell or rent your property.

EPCs will provide information on a building's energy efficiency using a sliding scale - "A" being the most efficient, to "G" the least efficient. In addition to the Energy Rating (relating to running costs), the EPC will also show the Environment Impact Rating (relating to the carbon dioxide emissions). An EPC report will make recommendations of how you can improve the rating of your property however; there are no statutory requirements to carry out any of the recommended energy efficiency measures.

Once your property has been given an EPC, it gets a unique number and is registered on a national database by the assessor. You can download extra copies by using the report reference number on the top right-hand side of the certificate.

Sellers are required to commission, but won't need to have received an EPC before marketing their property.

As from 1st October 2008, it is compulsory that all properties "For Sale or To Let" have an EPC.

An EPC is only required for a dwelling that is self-contained, meaning that it does not have an entrance via a separate unit or share any essential facilities (bathroom, kitchen etc.) Landlords are not required to produce an EPC when an existing lease is renewed, only when the tenant changes.

EPCs are valid for 10 years and can be reused for new buyers or new tenants, etc. as many times as required within that period. A vendor or landlord may choose to commission a new EPC if improvement works have been carried out, but there is no legal requirement to do so.

### **EPCs With Iconic Property Group**

Iconic Property Group use accredited DEA's (Domestic Energy Assessors) who are registered with the appropriate accreditation scheme.

If you are intending to sell or let your property through Iconic Property Group and require an EPC, then we can arrange this for you - the relevant selling or letting office will be able to provide you with full details. Likewise, if you are not selling or letting, and would like to order an EPC with Iconic Property Group, please contact us directly.

Selling your home can be a stressful and frustrating experience but it need not be as there is much you can do to make the process as smooth as possible and ensure you get the best price from a buyer that can meet your requirements. Set out below are some suggestions from our experience gained from assisting hundreds of clients to sell their homes.

## **Presentation**

Most buyers like a blank canvas, ensure your property is kept clean and tidy at the time of the viewing. They also expect a show home standard of presentation. Remove excess furniture and have a spring clean. Remember that buyers make their decisions no further into the property than the hall. Make sure your home has curb appeal and the first impressions when you open the front door are good ones.

Ask a friend or one of our team to inspect your home and get their honest comments of how it looks from a buyer's perspective.

## **Material Information**

We will ask you to complete a simple questionnaire that will provide us with Material Information that buyers will need to be able to make an Informed Decision about making your property their next home. In making a full disclosure you will help the transaction proceed at the required pace and help prevent the buyer being surprised later in the process that can lead to disappointments all round. We will agree with you when is the appropriate time to make the information available, with the full information being made available no later than when a potential buyer is identified and we confirm the offer details of a prospective sale.

## **Getting Legally Prepared To Sell**

Once a buyer has been found it is important that your solicitor can present all the documentation to the buyer's solicitors quickly for review. To ensure your solicitor can do this they need to have good notice of your intention to sell. We strongly recommend that they are instructed when we are asked to market the property. This is especially true if your property has not been sold for many years and the title to it is not registered at the Land Registry or if you have a leasehold property where management enquiries may take some time to bring out complex information.

We have a panel of solicitors who we have worked with for many years and with whom we have agreed service standards. We know they are proactive and we work well together to get our clients transactions smoothly through to completion. We will be please to introduce you to them.

## **What Is Your Property Worth?**

Make sure your target market is reached by agreeing with us your property's unique selling points so that its target market can be accessed. If your property is just like all the others on the road, you can make it the best presented home which should attract a premium from discerning buyers.

We will provide you with comparison information on properties that have sold which will help you decide on a suitable asking price given the timeframes in which you need to sell.

## **Viewings**

We believe that as your agent we should show buyers around as we can ask for feedback from them that they are often too polite to offer to sellers. Overcoming objections is what our staff are trained to do. Equally knowing why buyers do not favour a property enables us to adjust the marketing to secure a buyer from subsequent viewings.

It is good for buyers to pass each other on the drive. If someone else is interested this often prompts an offer that is that little bit better or comes a little bit quicker than it would have been if the meeting had not taken place! We will specifically arrange viewings in clusters where possible to try to achieve this.

## **Offers**

Leave these to us. We will ensure that we ask the right questions so you can have our best advice as to whether the offer will meet your requirements. Sometimes how much is not the deciding factor. Often the circumstances of the buyer are more important to sellers.

## **Accepting an Offer**

This is always done Subject to Contract so either party can withdraw before exchange of contracts at no penalty. This is standard legal practice across the UK, but can attract criticism if either party subsequently decide not to proceed with the agreed transaction, so to cement the sale an early exchange of contracts will ensure your buyer cannot change their mind, it will be important for you to instruct your solicitor to try to achieve this for you and we will assist where we can.

## **Instructing Your Solicitors**

Only you can do this and this needs to be done at the very latest as soon as you have accepted an offer.

In order for them to start work on your case, they will need to receive:

- Identification from you to satisfy the current money laundering regulations
- Signed Terms of Business
- A completed fixtures and fittings list
- Planning permission and building regulation sign offs for any extensions or alterations you have made
- Guarantees, warranties and certificates for works completed (double glazing, boiler servicing etc)
- Block manager and freeholder information and contact details if your property is leasehold
- Authority from you to provide the buyers solicitor with answers to their enquiries and payment for them to undertake the standard searches against any proposed purchase you are planning.

### **Notification Of Sale**

We will send a "Notification of Sale" to you, your solicitor, the buyer and their solicitor informing them that a sale has been agreed. It is important that you check our Notification of Sale document to ensure it meets your expectations.

### **Some Points To Remember:**

Once we have put the transaction in the hands of the solicitors they have custody and control of the transaction and we have a watching brief. It is therefore important that your solicitor checks all the information we will have provided in Good Faith and on which you will have based your decision to accept an offer.

Circumstances for us all change over time so you need regular updates from your solicitor to ensure matters are progressing in accordance with your requirements.