

SELLER'S GUIDE:

What Is The Procedure For Selling A House?

Putting your house up for sale can often feel like an overwhelming and unfamiliar process, especially as on average, we only move every 15 to 20 years. This guide is intended as a helpful overview of the process for selling a house and will outline everything that is involved. With this guide, we hope to support you in speeding up the process while helping you understand what questions you should ask, what your rights are and what responsibilities you have as a home seller.

Understanding Your Finances

When selling a house in the UK, it is important that you understand your finances because you will need enough money to cover the remainder of your mortgage if you have one. Whatever your circumstance, it is vital that you speak to your lender and get specialist advice on selling your house.

To sell a property, you may also need to pay:

- ▶ Other outstanding debts secured against the property
- ▶ Estate agent fees
- ▶ Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) fees
- ▶ Legal fees
- ▶ Land registry fees
- ▶ Removal costs
- ▶ Capital gains tax
- ▶ Essential home repairs or improvements

It's therefore fundamental that you know how much your property is likely to be worth. This way, you can compare that figure to the outstanding balance on your mortgage and the other costs of moving. Doing research into similar house prices in the local area will give you a good idea of how much you can expect.

Although it is currently a rare problem, you may find that you are in negative equity. This means your house is worth less than the amount you owe your mortgage provider and so you may not want to sell your property, as you will still be liable for the outstanding balance.

In this case, you may be able to take your existing mortgage with you to a new property. This process is known as porting. If, however, you're planning on moving to a more expensive property or your existing mortgage is coming to an end, selling your existing property offers you an opportunity to remortgage with a better deal on a new house.

We suggest that regardless of your circumstance, you seek professional and specialist advice from a professional mortgage adviser. At Taylor Cole, we have an inhouse mortgage adviser who is available to support you in finding the right financial solutions when selling your house.

Getting Your Home 'Sale Ready'

The next step is collecting the various pieces of information you will need throughout the process. This includes:

- ▶ Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
- ▶ HM Land Registry title documents
- ▶ Gas checks
- ▶ Electrical checks
- ▶ FENSA or CERTAS certificates
- ▶ Planning permission for any major work carried out
- ▶ Building regulation completion certificates and builder's guarantee certificates for alterations or additions
- ▶ Subsidence/damp guarantees
- ▶ Party wall agreements
- ▶ Conservation area consent for works (if your home is in a conservation area)
- ▶ Listed building consent for interior and exterior works (if a listed building)
- ▶ Any title insurance policies you may have taken out to solve title defects
- ▶ Documentation such as proof of identification and proof of address

When selling property, it's also worth making sure that your home is looking it's best. By investing a little time and money before you begin process for selling your home, you improve your chances of selling the property at a better price. **Ask yourself:** What would a potential buyer think of your property when they first arrive? If your walls need painting or your garden needs a tidy, make sure to do this before you begin listing your house for sale.

Deciding How Much To Sell Your House For

One of the most difficult decisions when selling your home is knowing exactly how much you should put it up for sale for. Buyers are likely to negotiate a discount, so you may want to add 5 to 10% extra to the price you are willing to accept to the listing price. The value at which you list your home should be informed by your own research and property valuations carried out by Taylor Cole, however it's important to remember that a property valuation is not necessarily the same as the price that your house will eventually sell for. After all, the price your house will be sold for is down to how much your buyer is willing to pay.

Choosing An Estate Agent

An estate agent will act on your behalf and negotiate the sale of the property between you and the buyer. Although tempting, you should refrain from choosing an agent based purely on who valued your property the highest. Their property valuation is not necessarily the amount you will receive for selling the property.

You should consider:

- ▶ Do you want an online or high street estate agent?
- ▶ How transparent is the agent with fees?
- ▶ Do you want to organise your own viewings?
- ▶ Does the estate agent have good reviews?

You need to tell your estate agent about any factors that are likely to have an impact on the sale of your house. For example, if your home is prone to flooding, you must let your estate agent know this. Your estate agent is then legally required to share this information with potential buyers.

We understand that you want to present your home in the best possible light, however it's important that you do not mislead potential buyers. If you refrain from mentioning problems, they are likely to come up later. This can severely impact price negotiations. If you do have serious problems which are likely to impact the price of which you can sell your home, you may want to consider getting the work done before listing your house for sale.

Hiring Legal Representatives

A conveyancer is a legal professional who will support you with the legal work of selling your property. Your estate agent may provide you with recommendations for legal representatives, mortgage brokers, energy assessors and surveyors. For example, at Taylor Cole, we have an inhouse mortgage adviser who is available to support you in finding the right financial solutions when selling your home. It is important to remember that when hiring legal representatives, it remains entirely your choice.

Ask yourself:

- ▶ Are you happy with their prices? Are there any hidden extra costs?
- ▶ Does the conveyancer have any reviews? Are they mostly positive?
- ▶ How will communication work between you and your legal representatives? Are they easily available if you have any problems or issues?

Organising Property Viewings

Your estate agent will organise property viewings for you. For this reason, it is important that you keep your house clean, tidy and welcoming. Tidy away any clutter or mess and clean up before any viewings so that you do not discourage any potential buyers from your property.

Viewers are likely to want to see your whole property. This includes garden space, the loft and the garage, so make sure your estate agent has access to all these spaces.

Make sure to ask your estate agent for feedback from any viewings that take place. This allows you to understand what viewers think and you can rectify any problems or adjust the price accordingly. At Taylor Cole, we will actively give you an update on the viewing process, chasing viewers for feedback and letting you know what they think about your home.

Choosing A Buyer

Estate agents are legally required to inform you of all offers made, regardless of whether they are below the asking price or if you have already accepted another offer. Try not to feel rushed into making any decisions.

Think: Are you happy with the amount offered? Do houses in the area seem to be selling for a similar amount?

If you are unhappy with the amount offered, you can reject it outright, wait to see if a better offer comes along or tell the estate agent to try and negotiate it upwards.

Once you receive an offer you are happy with, you need to formally accept it. Accepting the offer is not legally binding, and you can legally change your mind and accept a different offer later.

You will need to consider if the buyer is part of a chain. A chain starts with a buyer who isn't a seller and ends with a seller who isn't a buyer. If one transaction becomes delayed or fails, it can have a knock-on effect on the other transactions in the chain. The longer the chain, the more potential there is for delays.

It can be disheartening when you are struggling to get viewings or when the viewings are not generating offers. If this is the case, you should speak to your estate agent and discuss the feedback they have collected. You can then get advice from your agent on the price, condition and marketing of your property.

Negotiating The Draft Contract

After the buyer has been agreed, you will need to decide on the specifics of the agreement. This will include:

- ▶ The length of time between exchange of contracts and completion
- ▶ What fixtures and fittings will be included and how much they will pay for them?
- ▶ If there will be any discounts due to problems that have been flagged up

At this stage, your property is said 'sold, subject to contract'. Although neither you or the buyer is legally committed to the sale at this stage, you should bear in mind that pulling out after you have accepted an offer is likely to increase delays, costs and frustration for both you and the potential buyer.

Make sure you regularly check in with your legal representatives. If the buyer does not appear to be making any preparations for the purchase, ask your estate agent and legal representatives to check what is causing the delay.

Exchanging Contracts

When you and the buyer exchange the signed contracts, you become legally bound to the sale. If you change your mind and want to withdraw from the process, there is likely to be consequences. If you withdraw, you will be liable for breach of contract, the buyer's costs and even compensation. If the buyer withdraws, they may lose their deposit.

Once you have become legally obligated, it is likely that the buyer will want to return to the house in order to measure rooms and start planning how they will decorate the space.

Moving Out

You need to consider how you are going to move your belongings out of your home. You should start planning by writing down what you need to do and when to make a start so that you can be ready ahead of time.

We would also suggest that you start packing as soon as possible. By breaking down your packing into reasonable and manageable amounts, the task will seem less daunting.

You may also choose to pay a removals company to do this for you. If, however, you want to do it yourself, moving out of your existing home gives you a great opportunity to have a spring clean. Clear out unwanted objects – don't forget about the attic or garden shed.

Finalising The Sale

When putting your house up for sale, the process is complete when your legal representative receives the remaining funds from your buyer's legal representative. With these funds, your legal representative will pay off the mortgage and any other debts such as stamp duty, estate agent fees and service charges. You must then hand over ownership of the property.

The last steps of the process include:

- ▶ Leaving the property in a condition you would wish to find your next home
- ▶ Making a note of your energy readings and call your providers to close your account
- ▶ Transferring your council tax liability to your new home
- ▶ Updating your details for your GP, insurance company and the DVLA as well as any companies that have your old address on file.

Taylor Cole Estate Agents would be delighted to offer you professional advice regarding the sale of your property. This would not only incorporate advising of the price range of your property, but also to support you throughout the process and share with you our award-winning service.

If you are interested in putting your house or flat up for sale, give us a call on **01827 311412** or send us an email to **sales@taylorcole.co.uk**.

If you are also in the process of buying a property, let us take the stress out of shopping around. Our experienced and friendly team can provide you with bespoke advice, arranged at a time and date that best suits you.