



The HomeOwners Alliance guide to:

Step-by-step guide to selling your home

The prospect of selling your home can be daunting – all the more so if you are looking for another property to buy at the same time. The decisions you make along the way could save you – or cost you - many thousands of pounds. Here's our step by step guide

Should you sell at all?

- If you are selling in order to move to a bigger place, have you thought about how changing house prices might affect that decision?
- Are you in negative equity? If so, can you afford to sell? See our guide *What can I do about negative equity?*
- Depending upon your circumstances, maybe you would be better off renting your home out rather than selling. See our guide *Should I sell my home or rent it out?*

Decide if you should also look for somewhere to buy or if you will rent for a bit

- Renting for a while can add to the overall expense, but reduces the critical time pressures of buying a new home
- You won't have to sell at a low price because you have found the home of your dreams
- You will not be rushed into buying a less-than-perfect new home because you have found a buyer for your current home
- You will break out of the housing chain which means you will be a more attractive buyer. See our guide *How can break out of the housing chain?*
- See our guide *Should I sell my house before I look for a new one?*

Decide who will sell the property

- You can sell your house yourself, use a traditional estate agent, or an online estate agent
- If you use an estate agent, you will need to do some research into which one to choose, and agree a fee with them. You will also need to decide whether to use a sole agent, or several agents. See our guides *How do I choose an estate agent?*, and *How much should I pay the estate agent?*
- More recently online estate agents have started becoming more popular – but they vary hugely in cost and quality. See our guide *How do I choose an estate agent?*
- If you have time and are organized, patient, and willing to work hard, then axing the estate agent and selling your home yourself can save you money. But it is not for the fainthearted – or inexperienced. See our guide *Should I sell my home myself?*

Decide what price to sell it for

- One of the most agonising decisions when selling your home is what price to put it on for
- So do your research and get to know the local market inside out
- Get a number of estate agents to do valuations, but don't necessarily go for the highest
- Remember that buyers will probably try to negotiate a discount, so add 5% to 10% to what you are prepared to expect



- Keep in mind the stamp duty thresholds. See our guide *Five things you should know about stamp duty*
- See our guide *What price should I sell my house for?*

Ready your home

- If you “stage” your home well you are not only more likely to sell your home faster, but you might make it more valuable too
- Tidy up, and get rid of excess clutter; give it a fresh lick of light coloured paint; fix those little snagging things; keep it clean
- Light a fire; bake bread; put up a mirror; get rid of bad odours
- Check out *HOA Top Tips: Making your home more saleable – and valuable*

Notify the mortgage company

- You should notify your mortgage company that you are going to sell your house, so they can prepare
- It will help plan your finances to get advance warning of any early redemption penalties that might apply
- You will need to pay off your mortgage from the proceeds of the sale of the house, and once you have a date of completion (see below), the mortgage company will give you a precise redemption figure for how much you will need to pay

Hire a solicitor or conveyance

- You need to choose a solicitor or conveyancer to handle the legal work to transfer ownership of the property to you (although you can do it yourself, you should only do so if highly experienced)
- To ensure as few delays as possible, you should decide which one you want to use before you agree the sale of your house – but you can obviously only instruct them after you have agreed an offer
- Don't necessarily go with company suggested by the estate agent
- You can stay traditional and choose a local solicitor
- Or, if it is a simple transaction, you could go for the cheaper option of an online conveyance, although they do vary in quality
- See our guide *How do I find a solicitor or conveyancer?*

Accept an offer

- You've been made an offer – hooray! The estate agent is legally required to pass all offers on to you, however ridiculous
- If you are not happy with it, you can either reject it outright, wait to see if a better offer comes along, or tell the estate agent to try to negotiate it upwards
- Once you are happy with an offer, you need to formally accept it. You should then instruct the estate agent to take the property off the market
- Remember that accepting an offer is not legally binding, and you can always change your mind or accept a higher offer later (gazumping)

Fill out the relevant questionnaires

- You will have a variety of forms and questionnaires to fill out, to give the buyer all the information about the property, and about the sale. See our guide *Conveyancy made easy for sellers*

Negotiate the draft contract

- You and the buyer will have to decide:
 - the length of time between exchange and completion (usually 7-28 days after the exchange of contracts)
 - what fixtures and fittings will be included – and how much will they pay for them



- any discounts due to problems flagged up by the survey

Exchange contracts

- When you exchange contracts with the buyer you become legally committed to selling the property – and they are legally committed to buying it from you
- If you pull out after this without due reason, the buyer's deposit will be returned to them and you may be sued
- For more information and to find out about the details of the process read our guide on *Exchanging contracts*

Move out

- You can move out whenever you like, even up until the day of completion (although clearly, you need somewhere to move to)
- It is less stressful to move out before hand, if that is possible
- At the time of completion, the property has to be in the condition agreed in the contract – including all the fixtures and fittings
- The buyer and estate agent may come round between your moving out and completion to ensure that everything is in place

Complete the sale

- Completion is when you accept payment for the property and hand over the keys
- A little like a duel, it takes place on a previously agreed date and usually at midday
- On the day of completion the money is transferred and the deeds of the property are transferred between each side's conveyancer

Pay off the mortgage

- The mortgage company will have given you and your conveyance/solicitor a precise redemption figure for your mortgage for the day of completion
- Now the buyer has transferred the money to your solicitor or conveyancer, they will pay off the mortgage for you

Settle up with the solicitor/conveyancer and estate agent

- After completion, your solicitor or conveyancer will send you an account, covering all their costs and disbursements, as well as the purchase price of the house and stamp duty
- Your solicitor/conveyancer will normally pay the stamp duty for you, and ensure that the change of ownership is registered with the land registry
- There is sometimes a small discrepancy, and you might even get a small refund

Links:

Citizens Advice Bureau advice on selling your home -

http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/housing_e/housing_moving_and_improving_your_home_e/selling_a_home.htm

DirectGov advice on selling your home -

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/homeandcommunity/buyingandsellingyourhome/sellingyourhome/index.htm>

See what other people are saying about selling their home in our forums - <http://hoa.org.uk/forums/>



Contact

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