



A GOOD MOVE
Achieving a successful sale



Welcome

At Strutt & Parker, we believe our job is not just about selling bricks and mortar, it's about helping people to move, and we use all of our experience to make the process as smooth and efficient as possible. We know that selling your home is an important decision. With financial, legal and practical issues to consider, it is vital to obtain expert advice and support.

In this booklet, you'll find useful insights into the key stages of a property sale, from appointing an agent and deciding the guide price through to exchange and completion. There's also helpful advice to make sure your property attracts the right buyers and the best price, whether it's clever tips on presenting your home or ways to make your move as stress-free as possible. We hope you'll find it a valuable guide to selling your home.

How should I appoint an agent?

You'll probably want to invite two or three estate agents to visit and value your property before deciding which to go with. While it's easy to be tempted by the highest valuation, a solid reputation in delivering results and establishing a positive relationship are what really count. Recommendations are a good place to start, or look for an agent with a strong presence in your area. Most importantly, choose someone you feel comfortable with, who understands your priorities and will work with you to create a plan to get the best result. We are incredibly proud that 97% of our clients would recommend us, and we use all of our expertise and experience to make the process as smooth and efficient as possible.

Choosing sole or joint agency

***Sole selling rights:** Most people appoint just one estate agent to market their property. The advantages are that commission rates will generally be lower and you will only have one agent to deal with.*

***Joint selling rights:** This is when two estate agents are appointed to market your property at the same time. You will generally pay a higher commission fee, which the agents will split between them, regardless of which introduces the buyer.*



When should I instruct a solicitor?

We believe it's important to instruct a solicitor as soon as possible so that they can begin compiling the necessary paperwork, which can be a time-consuming task. This will ensure you're ready to start the conveyancing process as soon as you've accepted an offer. Look for a solicitor who has extensive property experience and knowledge of related subjects such as boundaries, leases and planning consent. A recommendation from a friend or colleague is a good place to start, or you can search for a local firm via the Law Society's website at solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk (for Scotland visit lawscot.org.uk/find-a-solicitor). Your solicitor can then start drawing up documentation – the draft contract, including Land Registry titles, property information form, map of the property boundaries, details of services such as drainage and energy supplies, and any planning or legal restrictions that may apply to the property.

Looking after the paperwork

Before your home goes on the market, you'll also need to obtain an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), which gives an energy rating from A (the best) to G, and suggests ways to improve it. Listed properties are exempt, but lawyers can often request a certificate. Sellers in Scotland are required to provide a Home Report, which contains a similar Energy Report, a survey (with a valuation of the property) and a property questionnaire.

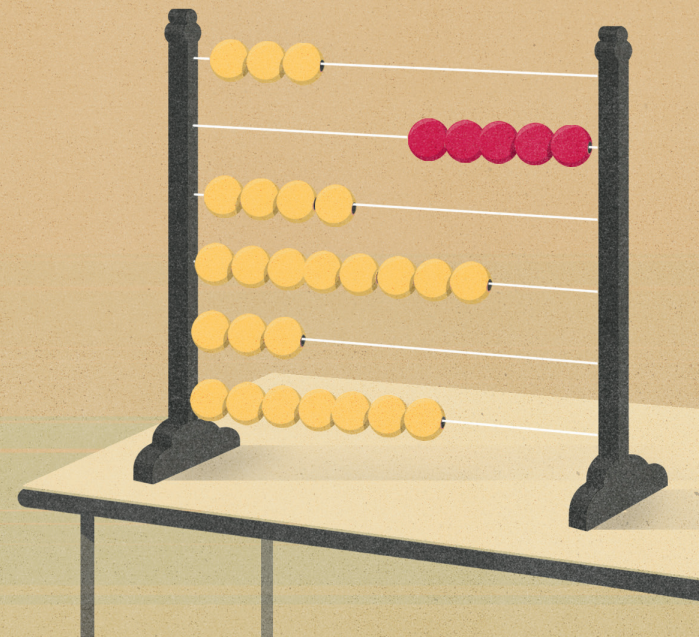


How is the guide price agreed?

An experienced estate agent with a good knowledge of your area and type of property will be invaluable when it comes to agreeing the guide price. As well as our understanding of the market, we can share details of any comparable local properties that are currently for sale or have sold recently. We will also factor in other considerations, such as how quickly you want to move, or features that are particular to your home. It's also about strategy – the highest guide price doesn't always lead to the highest selling price, and you may well attract more viewings and competition by setting it slightly lower. At the end of the day, it's your decision.

Do your research

To get an idea of the value of your property, browse for similar properties on the market in your area, or check sold prices at houseprices.landregistry.gov.uk (or via the Registers of Scotland and the Land Registers of Northern Ireland). Remember there are many factors, such as an uninterrupted view or the potential to extend a lease, that affect the price of a property.



What's the best way to get my property noticed?

The key to attracting buyers is the right mix of marketing. While the internet has undoubtedly transformed the way people look for homes, with a reported 96% of property searches now starting online, we believe there's no substitute for local offices with knowledgeable teams. Our offices are part of a national network, allowing us to share a database of 26,000 active buyers. We'll recommend the best ways to reach the right buyers for your property, using the latest online tools as well as traditional methods.

Brochure: This includes professional photography and details of the property with a floorplan and summary of the EPC.

Websites: As well as our website, access to leading property portals such as On The Market and Rightmove will help bring your property to the attention of the largest number of buyers.

For Sale board: This is an effective way of announcing a potential sale to local buyers. However, some councils restrict the use of boards outside properties.

Advertising and PR: High-profile, colour press advertising can generate strong interest. We also have excellent links with editorial teams on national and local titles, giving us the potential to secure coverage in leading property supplements. This is particularly suitable for properties with a story to tell, such as an interesting history or a celebrity connection.

International appeal: In an increasingly global market, your buyer could be in the next street or on the other side of the world. We have exclusive affiliations that provide international network coverage, giving you access to the most affluent and active buyers in over 100 countries.



How can I present my property at its best?

First impressions really do count, so making sure your property is well presented is key to attracting the best buyers. This doesn't have to mean major work – while a fresh coat of paint here and there might be a good idea, there is probably no need to replace kitchens and bathrooms as many buyers are keen to choose their own fixtures and fittings. With our extensive experience, we can advise you on how to show your property in the best way. Here are a few areas to consider:

Outside...

- Repair and repaint the front door and windows, if necessary
- Spruce up woodwork such as decks, fencing and trellises
- Mow lawns, weed flowerbeds and trim hedges
- Clear paths, drives and patios
- Make sure the house number or name is clearly visible

Inside...

- Declutter – but keep an appealing 'lived-in' rather than clinical look
- Consider repainting in neutral shades to help rooms feel larger and lighter
- Pull back curtains and blinds
- Clean all the windows
- Make any minor repairs such as fixing a dripping tap or a loose floorboard
- Ensure rooms are clean and well aired
- In autumn and winter, make sure the property is warm

Taking part in a Strutt & Parker Open House Day, held outside London, can be a very effective way to present your property. This enables buyers to view as many properties as they like on a particular day without having to make specific appointments. It can be a great way to help stimulate competition between buyers and means that all your preparation for viewings can be co-ordinated into a single day.



How should I decide whether to accept an offer?

We will discuss any offers received with you, as well as confirming them in writing, and help you decide whether to accept or not. It is not all about the highest price – the choice very much depends on your circumstances, such as how much you want to realise from the sale, or how quickly you want to move. Some buyers may be more attractive than others because they're not in a complicated chain, are cash buyers or simply because they're the type of people you can imagine living in your home. We will handle all the negotiations, whether it's dealing with competing offers from several bidders or agreeing any specific conditions, and present you with your options at every stage.

Sealed bids

If you attract a number of prospective buyers, the sealed bid system – where interested parties submit their best offer in writing by a specified time and date – can be a good option. Again, you don't have to accept the highest offer on the day and can consider the various buyers' positions before making your decision.



What happens when an offer is accepted?

Once you've accepted an offer, we'll put the buyer's solicitor in touch with yours by sending out a memorandum of sale so that they can start drawing up contracts. The buyer or their mortgage lender will also arrange for a valuation and survey of the property. Delays in drafting the contract can hold up a sale or, at worse, result in it falling through, so it's vital that your solicitor has all the paperwork and information they need. Once both sets of solicitors have confirmed they are happy, final copies are signed. The solicitors exchange contracts (conclude missives in Scotland), normally with 10% of the purchase price as a deposit. The agreement then becomes legally binding. If you're part of a chain, several sellers and buyers are likely to be exchanging at the same time. At this stage, you'll also set a completion date, which is typically about 28 days after exchange.

Moving quickly

The best way of speeding up the selling process is to have instructed your solicitor right at the start so that contracts can be prepared and exchanged quickly when a buyer is found. Replying promptly to enquiries from your solicitor will keep the process moving forward. It is possible to shorten the period between exchange and completion, even to the same day in some cases, although this carries risks if you're part of a chain and something goes wrong elsewhere. Generally, solicitors are wary of this.



How can I reduce the stress of moving home?

Planning ahead as much as possible is the key to a smooth and stress-free move. Once you've exchanged contracts, you'll have a completion date to work towards and can prepare for moving out. One of the advantages of a longer period between exchange and completion is that it can give you a bit of breathing space to start organising.

Insurance: If you're buying another property, you should arrange for buildings cover to start as soon as contracts are exchanged. You can then transfer your existing contents policy from the date of completion – be sure to check whether it covers goods in transit.

Removals: Arrange for quotes from two or three removals firms and aim to book them by the time you exchange contracts. More

than 60% of moves happen on a Friday, so you might get a better deal by picking a different day. Visit the British Association of Removers website (bar.co.uk) to find out more.

Suppliers: Notify utility companies, the local authority, phone and broadband suppliers, and TV Licensing of your moving date. You'll also need to inform HMRC, the DVLC, your GP and financial services suppliers such as your bank, credit card company and pension provider. Many of these can be contacted in one go at iammoving.com.

On the day itself, make sure the property is clean and empty (apart from any items you have arranged to leave behind), gather together appliance manuals and spare sets of keys for the new owners, and take final meter readings.



What happens at completion?

Completion is the final stage in the process, when the balance of funds is transferred from the buyer's solicitor to yours, the property title is legally transferred to the new owner, and you must move out. Most solicitors aim to make the transfer of funds happen before midday. In a chain of linked buyers and sellers, the process may be happening simultaneously, a number of times over, so it can take several hours.

Settling outstanding payments

***Commission fee:** The estate agent's fee will be an agreed percentage of the sale price, plus VAT, usually paid direct to the agent by your solicitor.*

***Legal fees:** These are agreed with your lawyer at the start of the process but will be paid after completion. They will be itemised by your solicitor and deducted from the sale proceeds.*

***Stamp Duty:** Stamp Duty Land Tax (or the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax in Scotland), which is a percentage of the purchase price, will be included in the completion statement on your purchase and is paid directly by your solicitor, unless a separate arrangement has been made.*



What our clients say about us...

“You calmed us when everything seemed to be going wrong, empathised when we were raging and guided us skillfully and kindly through the whole process.”

Dr & Mrs James, Somerset

“Strutt & Parker were the cream of the crop. They were all professional, extremely diligent and knowledgeable.”

Ms Calamita, East Sussex

“The whole service provided by Strutt & Parker was in a different league and a breath of fresh air.”

Mr Sproston, Surrey

“Thank you and the team for a job well done and quality service.”

Mr Smith, London

“You have shown understanding, kindness, efficiency and tenacity during the whole process of our sale, from start to finish. Your relentless hard work and commitment have been second to none.”

Mrs Wakeman, Herefordshire

“Very many thanks for your sterling efforts in successfully selling our property. It was all done so impressively efficiently and quickly – and without hassle.”

Mr & Mrs Bruce, Edinburgh

“It has been a seamless process and everyone is happy. It has been nothing but a pleasure to deal with you.”

Mrs Grant, Wiltshire