

A clear, impartial guide to...

Selling your home

Marketing | Exchange | Completion

**FOR
SALE**

**UNDER
OFFER**

SOLD



RICS

The mark of
property professionalism worldwide

www.rics.org/usefulguides

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"Buying, selling or extending a home is one of the most exciting things you'll ever do – its also one of the biggest financial commitments you'll make. More than ever before, property means big money – YOUR money. It will pay for you to seek the best advice possible from professional experts who really know what they are talking about. It's my opinion that you can do no better than accept 'a helping hand' from RICS."

Phil Spencer



How an RICS estate agent can help you sell your home

When you want to sell your home, you can take advantage of expertise by choosing an estate agent who is an RICS member.

Many estate agents throughout the UK are RICS members. Here are the advantages of using an RICS member:

- They give you clear, impartial and expert advice
- They act in your interest
- They are tightly regulated and have to follow strict rules of conduct – including having in place insurance to protect you
- RICS members have to update their skills and knowledge throughout their careers, so you can rely on their expertise
- You are protected by a complaints procedure.

Look out for firms that are 'Regulated by RICS'. Estate agents and surveying firms that are regulated by RICS will be easier to spot as they will be using 'Regulated by RICS' on their stationery and advertising material.

Decided to sell

If you have decided to put your property on the market remember it can take anything from four weeks to several months to sell if a chain is involved.

The process

1. Choosing an estate agent

Once you have decided to sell you need to employ an estate agent to put your property on the market for sale.

2. Marketing your property

An estate agent will discuss the best way to sell your property and will discuss with you the price to expect from the sale. You will need to sign a contract with the estate agent marketing your property.

3. Agreeing the sale

You will have to negotiate around making and accepting an offer on your property. It is up to you, the seller, on how much you are willing to accept.

4. Preparing documents

Your estate agent will help prepare the documents required to put your property on the market for sale.

4. Instruct your solicitor

Your solicitor or conveyancer will assist through to the exchange of contracts and completion of sale.

5. Exchange of contracts

Both parties will sign contracts and agree a date for moving. At this stage the sale becomes legal and binding.

6. Completion

Date of moving. The funds will be exchanged and the keys will be left with the estate agent.

1. Choosing an estate agent

The estate agent sells your house for you – and they try to make sure they get the best possible deal in the specified time.

You pay them a fee for acting on your behalf, so you need to make sure you employ a reputable firm. Ask the estate agent if they are an RICS member and, look out for the RICS logo and 'Regulated by RICS' designation.



Using local agents

It's a good idea to choose a local RICS estate agent with experience of selling homes like yours. Here are some points to follow before you make a decision:

- When getting valuations from different agents – bear in mind the highest figure may not be the most realistic
- Check their terms and conditions – charges may vary
- Find out exactly what you're paying for – how the agent will advertise your property, and where
- Home Information Pack – check how this is paid for and when
- You may be able to negotiate fees, although most agents charge a standard fee based on a percentage of the selling price
- Agree a maximum selling time. If you're happy with the service, you can always extend it – and if you're not, you can change agents when the time's up
- Last but not least, try and choose an agent you like – selling a house can be a long process, so it's important you get on.

Types of agency

There are different types of agency contracts which you can enter into. These are:

Sole agency

This is where one estate agent takes full responsibility for selling your home, and you pay them the agreed commission on completion. If you agree a sale privately you might also be required to pay commission, so check the contract.

Joint agency

This is an arrangement where two or more agents sell your property and share the commission when the sale goes through – regardless of which agency makes the sale.

Multiple agency

This is an arrangement where you sell through more than one agent, but instruct them independently – so whoever sells the house gets the commission.

2. Marketing your property

The government has introduced reforms that change the way we buy and sell our homes in England and Wales. All homes put on the market need to have a Home Information Pack (HIP) prepared on behalf of the seller.

It is most likely that your estate agent will arrange for the HIP to be prepared. The HIP will then be provided to buyers so that they have information about the property up front and can make a more informed purchase decision.

The HIP aims to introduce greater certainty into the home buying and selling process by providing searches and other information at the start of the process, when a property is put on the market.



What will the HIP contain?

- An Index of contents
- A sale statement (summarising terms of sale)
- Evidence of title
- Searches
- Leasehold or commonhold documents where appropriate.
- An Energy Performance Certificate.

The Index should explain the reason why any of the required documents are missing.

A number of other useful documents can be included within a HIP on a voluntary basis. These include a Home Condition Report.

More information on the home buying reforms can be found on the Department of Communities and Local Government website at www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk

“Your agent is working for YOU so keep a close track of what is going on. Never ever think that no news is good news; poor communication is a deal breaker.”

Phil Spencer

When you've decided which agent (or agents) to go with, ask them to come round to discuss the sale with you. An RICS estate agent will offer good advice on the best way to sell your particular property, whether by negotiated contract, auction or sealed bid. This may include advising whether a Home Condition Report may assist the sale.

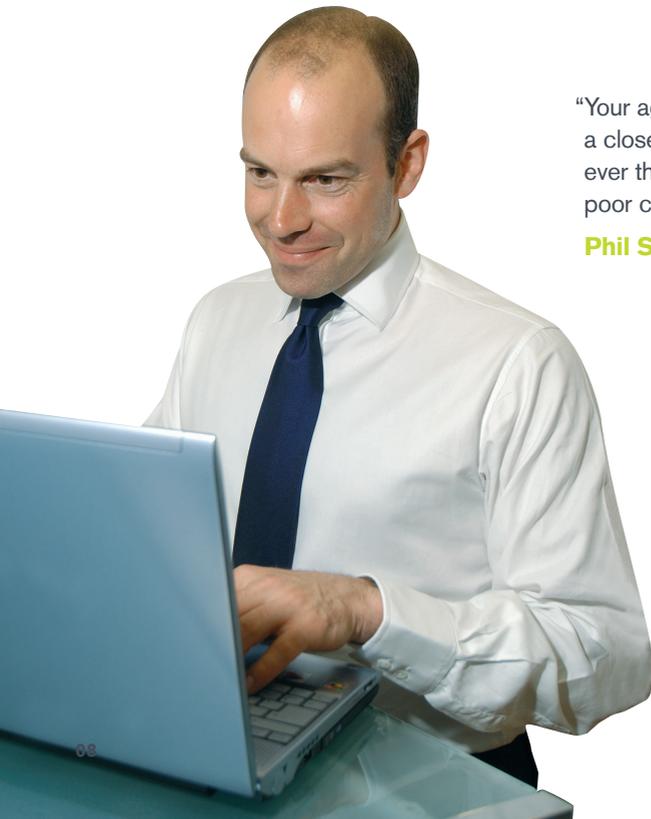
They'll also tell you how much you can realistically expect to get after you've paid all the fees and taxes, and whether smartening up your home will increase the selling price.

Let the agent know how quickly you want to sell, as this could affect their advice. An RICS estate agent can also help you look for a new home if you haven't already found somewhere and can arrange for it to be surveyed for you.

Once you enter into a contract with an agent, they have to give you details in writing of their charges and the length of contract. Make sure you understand the contract fully before you sign. You don't want to sign into a lengthy tie-in.

Your RICS estate agent can advise on ways to get the best price for your property. Here are some tips for showing round potential buyers:

- First impressions count, so make sure your house is always clean and tidy
- Buyers like light airy rooms, so open windows and put lights on if the weather's dull
- If it's winter, put the heating on so it feels warm and inviting
- If possible don't have your pets in the house when potential buyers come round and try to get rid of any pet smells
- When you show people round, don't talk too much. Let them ask questions
- Make viewing easy, so they feel comfortable about coming back.



3. Agreeing the sale

Most property is bought and sold through estate agents. Once a marketing figure has been put on the property, you will find that most buyers will put in offers.

You will find negotiation around making and accepting an offer can be a lengthy process. You should ensure that you answer any queries that may be raised during negotiations.

All offers on the property must be forwarded onto the seller by the estate agent. It is up to the seller how much they are willing to accept. Your estate agent is pivotal in the negotiation process in ensuring that you reach an agreed price with the buyer.

For more information on selling your home at auction, please see the RICS property auction guide by visiting www.rics.org/propertyauctions



4. Instruct your solicitor

You will need to employ a solicitor or conveyancer to handle the legal aspects of selling your home.

Once a buyer has been found for the property your solicitor or conveyancer will liaise with the estate agent and the buyer's solicitor.

5. Exchange of contracts

After all the enquiry forms and contracts have been signed and returned, this is the point at which it is time to exchange.

Your solicitor will also get involved in the contract negotiation, exchange of contracts and ensure completion through transferring the legal title and funds.

The buyer and the seller will agree a date for completion, i.e. the date that the seller will need to move out of the property. This is the stage at which the sale becomes legal and binding.

6. Completion

The date of moving will have been agreed by both parties.

On completion day the funds will be exchanged between solicitors and the keys should be left with the estate agent for collection by the buyer.

Seller's checklist

Here's a brief summary of the various costs you have to consider when you sell your home:

Estate agent's fees

Charges vary from one agent to another, so it's worth checking on fees in your area. You should consider how the Home Information Pack will be paid for, as this will vary from agent to agent.

Legal fees

These vary from place to place. Expect to pay the solicitor about 1% of the total agreed price – but check the range of services they'll provide for the fee, and ask if they offer a no sale, no charge deal. It's often worth choosing a solicitor or conveyancer on the recommendation of a friend or colleague – otherwise contact the Law Society to find firms in your area.



Useful links

Here are some useful website addresses for advice when you're selling a home:

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

www.rics.org

Which?

www.which.net

Homecheck

www.homecheck.co.uk

Inland Revenue

www.hmrc.gov.uk

Land Registry

www.landreg.gov.uk

Land Registers of Northern Ireland

www.lrni.gov.uk

General Consumer Council Northern Ireland

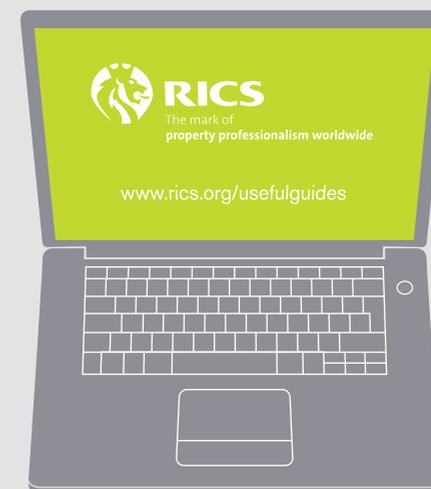
www.gccni.org.uk

Council of Mortgage Lenders

www.cml.org.uk

Law Society

www.lawsociety.org.uk



Free RICS guides



RICS have a range of free guides available for the property issues listed below.

- Buying a home
- Selling your home
- Property surveys
- Extending your home
- Subsidence
- Boundary disputes
- Party walls
- Right to light
- Compulsory purchase
- Letting a property
- Renting a property
- Flooding
- Property auctions
- Buying and selling art and antiques at auction

To order your free copies, visit www.rics.org/usefulguides

alternatively email contactrics@rics.org

or call the RICS Contact Centre **0870 333 1600**

For more information

We hope this guide is useful to you. If you'd like to know more about selling your home, or how RICS can help, please contact us.

Visit our website www.rics.org/sellingyourhome

alternatively email contactrics@rics.org

or call the RICS Contact Centre **0870 333 1600**

Consumer helplines

RICS offers telephone helplines giving you 30 minutes free advice on:

- Boundary disputes
- Party walls
- Compulsory purchase

Just call **0870 333 1600** and you will be put in touch with an RICS member local to you, willing to provide a free 30 minute initial consultation. Lines are open 0830 - 1730 (GMT), Monday to Friday.

Find an RICS member

If you want to find independent, impartial advice from a qualified professional with good local knowledge, contact us.

Look out for firms that are 'Regulated by RICS'. Estate agents and surveying firms that are regulated by RICS will be easier to spot as they will be using 'Regulated by RICS' on their stationery and advertising material.

To find a chartered surveyor in your area visit www.ricsfirms.com

alternatively email contactrics@rics.org

or call the RICS Contact Centre **0870 333 1600**

RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) is the leading organisation of its kind in the world for professionals in property, land, construction and related environmental issues. As part of our role we help to set, maintain and regulate standards – as well as providing impartial advice to Governments and policymakers. RICS has 140,000 members who operate out of 146 countries, supported by an extensive network of regional offices located in every continent around the world. To ensure that our members are able to provide the quality of advice and level of integrity required by the market, RICS qualifications are only awarded to individuals who meet the most rigorous requirements for both education and experience and who are prepared to maintain high standards in the public interest. With this in mind it's perhaps not surprising that the letters RICS represent the mark of property professionalism worldwide.

Your local RICS member



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