

First Time Buyers Guide



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There's a lot to think about and to remember when you are looking to buy your first home. You need to be organised and make sure you are well prepared.

We have set out some of the key stages that you will need to consider which will help your purchase run as smoothly as possible. Remember to do your research and ask questions along the way.

Check Your Finances

Buying your first home is an exciting time but is also the biggest financial commitment you will made so far. Before you make an offer on your dream home make sure you have worked out all the costs that you may have to pay such as legal fees, searches, stamp duty, mortgage valuation or survey fees, mortgage application or arrangement fees. Work out a budget for the costs you will have to pay including the deposit and when they are payable. If you are getting help with your deposit then you need to make sure you let everyone know up front which includes your conveyancer, mortgage broker and mortgage lender. This will save time later in the transaction if all the information is available.

Mortgage

Most first time buyers need a mortgage to buy a property. Make sure you do your research and check the best deals available and make sure the products offered are right for you. There are different types of mortgage for example fixed rate, variable, tracker and discounted. Get advice from a financial adviser if you are unsure and they will be able to help you decide which mortgage is right for you. Always check that any financial advisor is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority.



Survey or Mortgage Valuation

Buying a house is the biggest financial investment most people would every make. It is important that you are aware of any works that may need to be done to it. Your mortgage lender would usually do a mortgage valuation survey which would confirm if the property is worth the amount you are paying for it. This would not give you any indication of any repair works that may be required that could cost you money in the future. A Homebuyers survey would be more expensive, but it would give you lots of information about the condition of the property and if there are urgent items of repair required. By having the information before you buy the house you are not in for any surprises when you get the keys and you could always try and negotiate the price you are paying with the seller.

Instruct your Conveyancer

Make sure you instruct a Solicitor or Licensed Conveyancer as soon as possible. They will need information about you and the property and will be able to confirm details of the fees that are payable. Ensure when choosing a conveyancer that you have done your research and that they are regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers or the Law Society. Make sure you let them have as much information as possible at the beginning including your financial arrangements and dates when you are hoping to move.



Signing Paperwork

There will be lots of information to provide to your conveyancer, the estate agent, your mortgage broker and mortgage lender which will include documents that you need to sign. Make sure you read everything carefully and understand what you information you need to return. If you have to sign any documents, then make sure that you are signing everything correctly and if necessary, your signatures are witnessed. You will be advised which documents need to be signed and witnessed but if you are unsure pick up the phone and check. This will avoid having to resign documents or re send information.

Communication

Keep in touch with everyone to make sure everything is moving ahead as it should be. This includes your mortgage broker, lender, conveyancer and the estate agent. If you have direct contact with the seller then make sure you have regular communication with them to see how things are going and if you are on track for any completion date agreed. Delays can occur because of simple misunderstandings but regular communication means you know what is outstanding at all times. Your conveyancer should be able to give you estimated timescales for each part of the transaction as it proceeds.

Deposit

Make sure you have all your deposit in an account in your name and ready to send to your conveyancer as soon as you get an exchange and completion date. If you are getting a gifted deposit the funds will need to be paid by you so ensure that you have had the money transferred to your account first. You must understand the risk of cybercrime and fraud when sending large sums of money and you should always ring and check the bank details before sending any funds. Always use the main number provided on any correspondence or check out the information on the website. Never act on an email providing bank details particularly if someone is suggesting the bank details may have changed this is likely to be an attempted fraud. You have worked hard to say your money to make sure you protect it with a simple phone call.

Insurance

You will need to make sure you have buildings insurance in place on Exchange of contracts so make sure you have got some quotes and you can arrange to put the policy on risk at short notice. You will be expected to take the property in the condition it is in on completion, so you need to be insured against anything happening to it between exchange and completion.

Exchange Of Contracts

Exchange of contact will be done by your Conveyancer on your behalf. You need to make sure that are happy with all the documents and have answers to any questions you may have. Once you have committed to a legally binding contract it is difficult to resolve any issues or concerns you may have. Try and agree a completion date with the seller directly or through the estate agent. This will save time with phone calls backwards and forwards trying to agree a date acceptable to everyone.

Completion

Your conveyancer will sort out he transfer of the money on the day of completion and you will get a call to confirm you can collect your keys. This means you are now the proud owner of your new home and can start to move in.