



GUIDE TO.....

SELLING YOUR HOME AS A FIRST-TIME SELLER





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INTRODUCTION: IS IT TIME FOR A BIGGER HOME?

We all reach the point where our life outgrows our first home and it's time for something bigger. You may be thinking of starting a family, your family is growing, you're moving closer to work or you simply feel the time is right for a little more space.

The fact is, selling your first home can be daunting, especially as the whole process can seem a little overwhelming as you try to sell one home while also buying another.

We have helped hundreds of first-time sellers to sell quickly and for the right price, whilst also helping them to find that perfect next property to move to.

We created this guide to share our experience to help you to understand the process and make the right decisions. We want to make the process as simple and enjoyable as possible for you.





1. GETTING YOUR HOME READY FOR SALE

Before you do anything, our advice is to spend some time getting your home ready for sale, to make sure potential buyers see your house in the best possible condition. This can save time later, help you sell quicker and ensure you maximise the sale price you achieve.

Remember how you felt when you were looking to buy your first house. People viewing your house must be able to imagine themselves living in your home, so focus on:

- Cleaning
- Tidying
- Decluttering
- Repairing
- Decorating (if needed to freshen up)

Make sure that viewers can see your house as ready to move into straightaway.

If you're thinking of selling in the distant future, there are many upgrades you can do to your home to increase its value. These include modernising your kitchen, upgrading the bathroom or even adding an extension, like a small home office.



2. SETTING THE RIGHT PRICE

Our advice is to do some research before inviting agents to value your home. Visit [Rightmove's Sold House Prices Service](#). This can help you see what houses in your postcode have been selling for. So, find a similar property and get an idea of what to expect.



Now you can invite an estate agent in to value your property to give you an honest opinion of the current local property market.

You should choose an agent who:

- Is transparent with their fees
- Is honest about how they will market your home
- Offers different marketing packages and a fixed fee option (one size does not fit all here)
- Has a list of buyers already looking for a property like yours

Pro tip: If you do your research, you'll have a rough value for your property, so don't fall for the old trick of someone who values your house too high to get you to instruct them. A genuine agent will advise you of a fair price to expect.

3. GETTING YOUR HOUSE ON THE MARKET

When you are new to selling a house, there seems to be a bewildering array of ways to get your home on the market or sold. These include:

1. Local estate agent.
2. Online estate agent.
3. Part-Exchange with a builder or developer.
4. Property auction.
5. Multi-Agency – using multiple estate agents.

To achieve a fast sale for a good selling price, it will probably come down to:

- Working with a local agent who knows the area who should also help you negotiate a better price on your next purchase;
- Using an online agent such as Purplebricks who will offer a fixed fee convenient service but expect you to do the viewings and negotiations.

In the next section we'll dig a bit deeper into these two options and the pros and cons of each.





4. LOCAL ESTATE AGENT VS ONLINE AGENT

Over the past decade, on-line estate agents and property marketing companies such as Purplebricks have revolutionised how people can sell their houses. However, in recent years there have been a number of horror stories such as this [“I lost £10k because of Purplebricks”](#) which casts doubt on the “money saving” you actually make by using such an agent.

In short, an on-line agent will get your property marketed on the main property portals, allowing your home to be noticed by the masses. When it comes to arranging viewings, getting feedback, verifying the position and affordability of your potential buyer, negotiating the best price and successfully progressing your sale through to completion – well, that’s where you’re on your own – but you get what you pay for.

It’s for the very reasons above that a genuine ‘local’ estate agent still thrive in the marketplace and will continue to do so.

Let’s be honest, if this is the first time you’ve sold a house, you really do need the experience and guidance of an expert in the field.

One final point to note is that many on-line agents charge their largely discounted fee upfront. They’ve now had their money, regardless of whether you sell or not. Always ask how their commission is paid.

A traditional estate agent will be paying out of their own money for all of the marketing and work, and will be more incentivised to obtain the best price and see the sale through. They will more than likely be on a percentage fee of the sale price achieved and on a no sale – no fee agreement.





5. GETTING YOUR PROPERTY PARTICULARS RIGHT

Now you've decided on and instructed an estate agent, they will draw up the particulars of your property including:

- **Measurements** - Accurate measurements of each room to see how furniture will fit.
- **Description** - Notes on each room will help it appeal to the buyer.
- **Photographs** - Ask if these are being done by a professional.
- **Video Tours** - A good agent will be able to provide a quality video tour of the property.
- **Floorplans** - Buyers love to see the layout and potential options for the property.

Pro tip: Check the particulars thoroughly and make any changes or additions before the property is marketed, especially the photographs, which are so important.



6. THE COSTS OF SELLING YOUR HOUSE

When selling your house, remember to factor in these costs:

- **Estate Agent Fees** – including advertising your property, conducting viewings and negotiating with the other party to get the sale to completion.
- **EPC** – As the seller you must provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) to potential buyers.
- **Mortgage Exit Fees** – You probably still have a mortgage at this stage, so check on the 'redemption fee' for leaving the mortgage early.
- **Conveyancing Fees** – You will either have to choose your own solicitor to deal with the legal aspects of selling your property or be provided with a panel solicitor as part of a fixed fee contract.
- **Removal Fees** – Don't forget to factor in the costs of moving home. These will vary depending on how much and how far you are moving, so get some quotes in for this. We recommend two to three quotes from firms.

Benefits of using a fixed cost service

The other route for you to consider would be a fixed cost service that includes all of the above fees and can often save you considerable time and money. Make sure you discuss this option with your estate agent.



7. HOW THE PROCESS OF SELLING YOUR HOUSE WORKS [CHECKLIST]

Understanding what is involved in selling your home can prepare you for the road ahead. Here are the steps for you to check off:

	Value your home.
	Work out selling costs (see above).
	Arrange an EPC.
	Put your house on the market.
	Get it marketed on the property portals - the usual ones are Rightmove, Zoopla, On The Market and, most recently, Boomin.
	Prepare for viewings (see below).
	Hold viewings.
	Receive offers.
	Accept offer.
	Agree a sale.
	Instruct a solicitor.
	Negotiate on onward purchase.
	Arrange finances with a mortgage lender.
	Mortgage lender will arrange a mortgage valuation visit.
	Lender issues a mortgage offer.
	Solicitor handles enquiries.
	Solicitor drafts contracts.
	Buyer solicitor performs searches - Land Registry / Local Authority.
	Agree moving dates.
	Exchange contracts.
	Removals.
	Advise all your utilities you are moving to get final readings and cancel contracts.
	Completion - the day you actually move home.
	Crack open the champagne and say you're never doing that again (until next time!).



8. GETTING READY FOR VIEWINGS

Remember, if you choose an online estate agent you may be conducting the viewings yourself. But even if a local estate agent is carrying out the viewings, presentation matters, and you must make every effort to show your home at its best.

Here are our 7 tips to prepare your home for a viewing:

- **Kerb appeal** – Remember that many buyers will make a drive-by visit to your property, whether they have a viewing or not. So make sure you cut the lawn, trim hedges, remove any weeds (especially from pathways), wipe down the front door and windows, or re-paint if needed.



- **Entrance Hall** – This is the first impression of the interior, so declutter and make sure it starts a viewing right.
- **Living Areas** – Make sure you maximise space in the living areas by decluttering and allowing the buyer to imagine living in your home. Open curtains or blinds to allow maximum light into the rooms and open windows to let fresh air in. In winter, remember to turn the heating on so the home is warm and inviting.



Walters Essential Guides

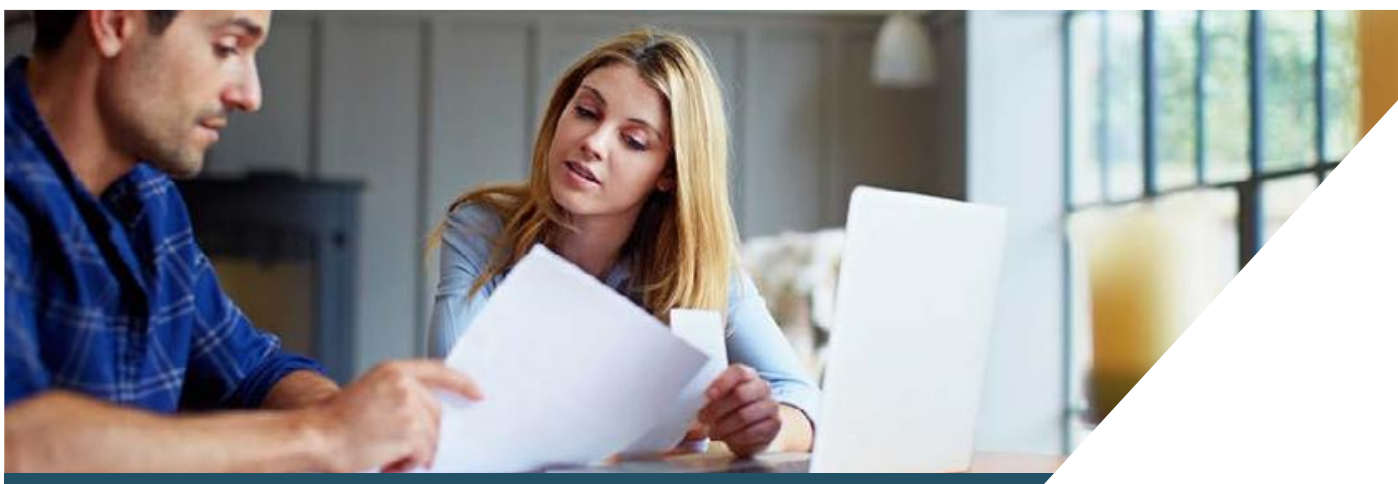
- **Kitchen** – This is a room that can often determine how much someone will love your home, so make sure it sparkles. Clean appliances, worktops, handles and cupboards – especially if you are including some appliances in the sale (people will open them). Remove any clutter from surfaces and clear away any pet bowls. Remember the smell of fresh coffee or fresh bread is still the most appealing aroma in a kitchen.



- **Bathroom and toilets** – Remove as many toiletries as possible, clear away bath toys and put out clean dry, folded towels. Check the bath, shower sealant and grout for any signs of mould and replace if required. Polish all taps, showers and fittings.
- **Bedroom** – Tidy away all clutter and give viewers the feeling of space. Clean carpets and put fresh bed linen on the beds. If you have children, clean up and sort out toys, clothes and shoes.
- **Garden** – Similar to the kitchen, the garden can be one of the biggest selling points for a buyer. So, cut the lawn, tidy away rubbish and clean the patio down ready for the viewing. It may be a small garden, but make it a place people would want to spend time relaxing.

Follow these tips and you'll sell your home quicker and for a better price.





9. HOW TO NEGOTIATE THE SALE OF YOUR HOUSE - CONSIDERING AND ACCEPTING AN OFFER

If you are using an online agent, much of the negotiating on price will be left with you. However, when selling through a local estate agent they will negotiate on your behalf.

Although having offers come through for your home can be exciting, remember to keep a level-head and realise that initially you will receive some low offers.

Our advice is to think things over and check back with your agent on the buyer's position. Can they move quickly? Do they need to sell their home to buy yours? Do they have a mortgage in principle agreed or are they a cash buyer?

Remember, as a first-time seller you will probably be selling to a first-time buyer or an investor. So, taking your time over considering offers is important.

Once you decide to accept an offer then this will usually be 'subject to contract' and a survey will be instructed. Provided the survey is fine and the buyer proves they have the finances - i.e a mortgage to buy - then the sale can move to 'exchange of contracts' which is when the offer is legally binding.

Remember that until exchange of contracts, the buyer or the seller can back out of the sale.



10. THE SECRET TO SELLING AND BUYING A HOUSE AT THE SAME TIME

Of course, selling your home is only half the story. You're also trying to buy a house at the same time. Many people will actually see a house they like first and that will be the trigger for selling their home.

This, in our opinion, is where the knowledge and personal service offered by a local agent will always beat an online agent. They can handle both ends of the deal for you, often making you what you want on the sale of your house and also negotiating on the new house you are buying.



The Walters Way!

At Walters, we simply have one goal – to help you sell your home in a straightforward and stress-free way, securing you the best possible price.

Selling a property doesn't need to be complicated and we are confident that we have the best team in place to move your sale forward positively and professionally. We look after you every step of the way, helping you make a move in the right direction.

Our Team manages every detail of the sales process – from the day the property goes on the market, to the day the sale is completed. However, we never forget that property is all about people too, and that you want to feel involved and informed. That's our approach and it's what we believe makes Walters different.



Marketing

“Our aim is to give you an opportunity to have some control in the marketing of your home”.

So, we decided that we didn't want to tell you how we should market your home - you know it better than us: you know which features attracted you to the property, you also know the local residents and what local people want and the mediums they use.

So, we have created a service offering which is, in our opinion, far greater than any other agent. It is also flexible and allows you to add in additional services if you deem them important”.



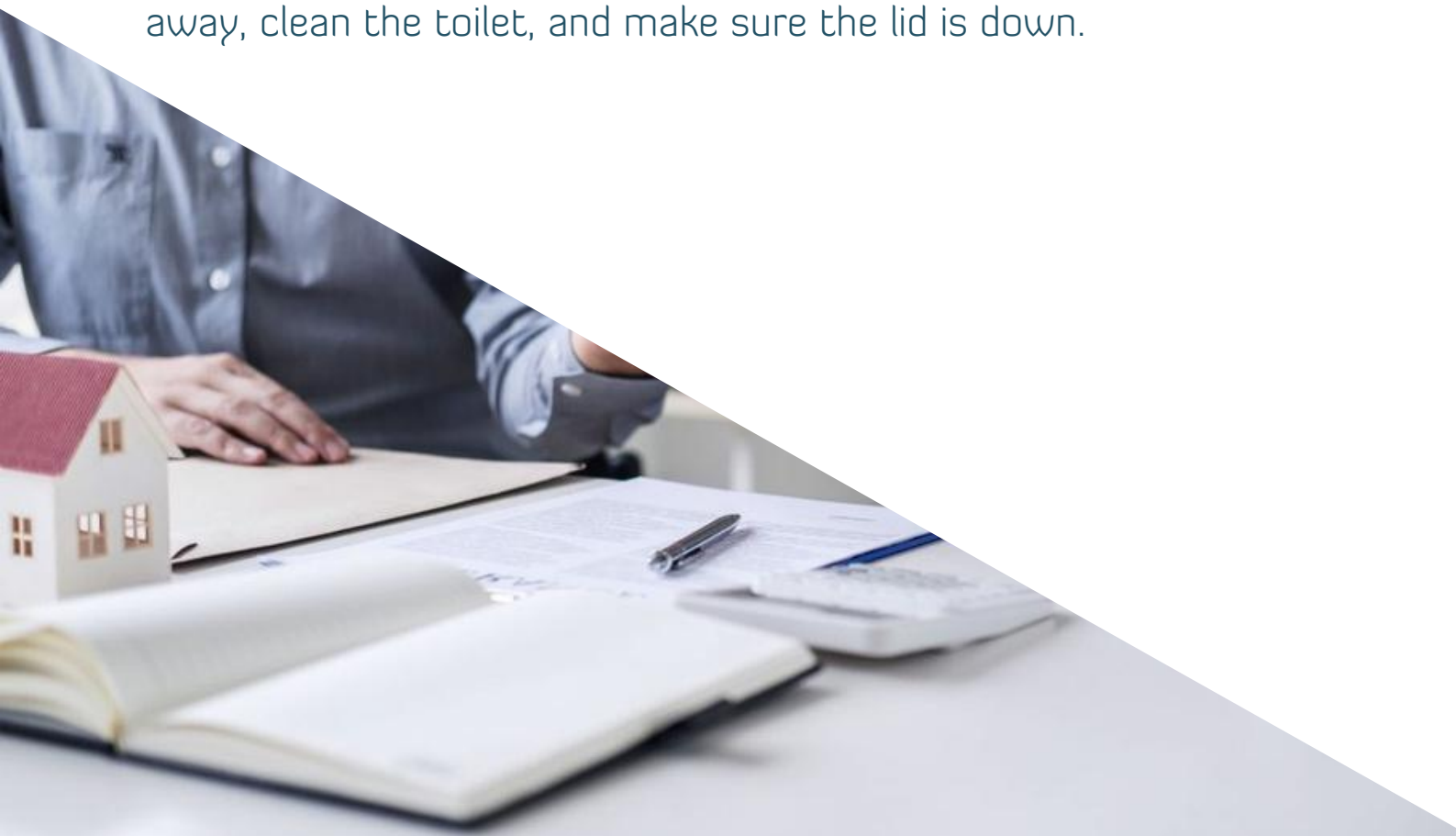
Getting it ready to sell...

First impressions really do count. We have seen a great number of houses in our time, so we have compiled a list of handy tips to make your home stand out from the crowd.

Tidy the front garden, mend the gate, trim the hedges, and weed the flowers beds.

Make those minor repairs - fix that dripping tap, replace mouldy grout, repaint the cracks, replace the doors on cupboards that are broken, turn on the lights, open all the doors, and replace any lightbulbs that aren't working.

Kitchens and bathrooms are key rooms – clearing the surfaces will make them look larger. Do the washing up, put your laundry away, clean the toilet, and make sure the lid is down.





FAMILY

IS A GIFT THAT LASTS FOREVER

GIVE THEM THE HOME THEY DESERVE

Our award-winning Team are with you from the beginning. Our Valuer will visit your property and work with the office team to put a marketing strategy in place. They will then guide you through any interest, negotiate offers and then progress your sale all the way through, from when you accept an offer, to completion day.

As a local high street agent, our team of property professionals are here to help seven days a week, maximising interest and ensure we achieve the best possible outcome.



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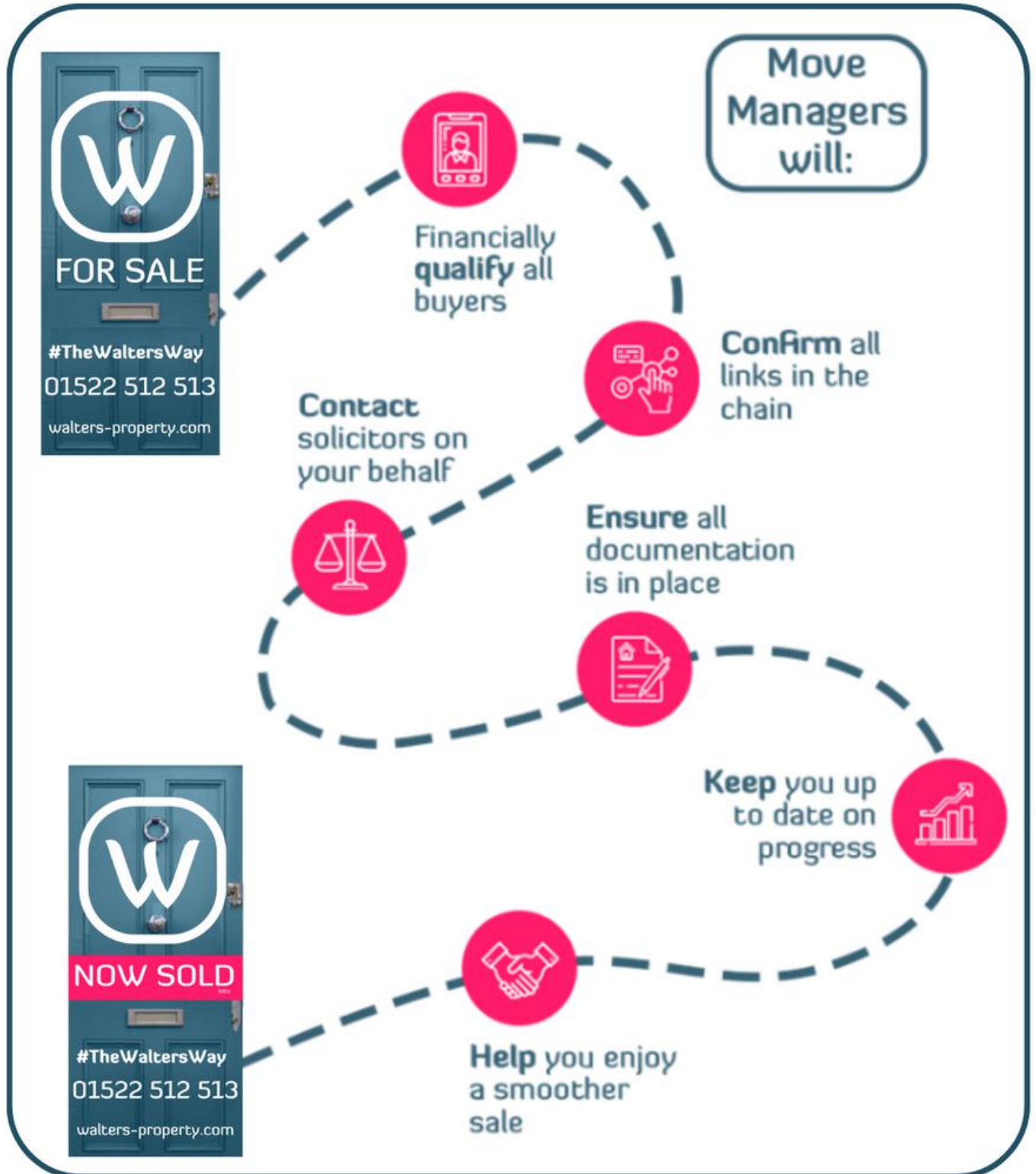
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End-to-end property experts

The selling journey and milestones.



Notes and Actions

Two months to go...

- ✓ Talk to a van hire or removals company to get initial feedback and quotes.
- ✓ Buy your boxes, packing, and storage supplies.
- ✓ Start sorting out your belongings. Get rid/donate things you don't need.
- ✓ Begin packing non-essential items.
- ✓ Do you need kennels or a cattery for the move? Book it in advance.
- ✓ Think about putting items of excess furniture into storage until you've settled in.

One month to go...

- ✓ If you're moving a long way, get your car serviced and tyres checked well before the trip.
- ✓ Register with local Doctors and Dentists if you are moving to a new area.
- ✓ Inform your local council of your change of address and cancel council tax payments.
- ✓ Inform your phone and internet providers of your change of address.
- ✓ Update the DVLA.
- ✓ Notify your bank of your change of address.
- ✓ Inform Inland Revenue.
- ✓ Update your insurance providers, ensure you have home insurance sorted for the day you move in.
- ✓ Confirm your moving arrangements with moving firms.
- ✓ Start putting items you don't use every day into boxes and label them.
- ✓ Arrange for someone to look after the children and pets If possible.

Could some of those items go into longer term storage to free up more room in your new home?

Two weeks to go...

- ✓ Let people know about your change of address, including friends, online shops, mail order, milk, newspapers, and magazine subscriptions.
- ✓ Clean your house as you pack.
- ✓ Organise your mail to be re-directed for at least three months.



Notes and Actions

One week to go...

- ✓ Confirm with your solicitor and estate agents that the move is going to plan.
- ✓ Notify TV Licensing of your new address.
- ✓ Make sure your packing is nearing completion - double-check the loft & garage.
- ✓ Ask your neighbours to make sure there is room outside your home for the removal van.
- ✓ Empty and defrost / dry out your fridge / freezer.
- ✓ Clear out your kitchen cupboards.
- ✓ Work out the moving route.
- ✓ Remind friends and family you'll need a hand next week.
- ✓ Pack valuables and important documents in a safe place to take in the car with you.

The day before...

- ✓ Charge your mobile phone.
- ✓ Put everything practical you'll need to one side in a clearly marked box, tape measure, extension lead, step ladder etc.
- ✓ Get a box of first night essentials together.
- ✓ Collect your hire van or confirm tomorrow's schedule with your removal firm.
- ✓ Move all your packed boxes into a downstairs room if needed.

Things to do on moving day...

- ✓ Record all utility meter readings for Water, Electricity, and Gas. Take a photo of the meter and let your providers know you are moving today.
- ✓ Strip the beds, curtains, and pack into clearly marked bags.
- ✓ Check the bathrooms for toiletries.

Loading the van...

- ✓ Instruct your movers on what is moving and what is not.
- ✓ Check everywhere and do a final house clean.
- ✓ Leave all the sets of keys as arranged for the new owners.

Say goodbye and then hello to your new home.



Notes and Actions





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