

Property Checklist for Homebuyers

- Is there evidence of alterations to the property eg. Conservatory, loft conversion, extensions?
- Does the Seller have the necessary planning permissions, building regulation approvals?
- Some alterations can be carried out under Permitted Development rules but it depends if the property has been extended before. More details can be obtained on permitted development from each local planning authority.
- Look out for rights exercisable by adjoining or neighbouring properties over the property. Tell tale signs such as a gate in the garden fence. Are these rights in the deeds or are they exercised informally? Ask the Sellers for as much information as possible.
- Does the property adjoin an adopted public highway or do you have to pass over private land to get to the property? Does the Seller have the necessary rights to pass over the land?
- Do the drains for the property come straight from an adopted highway or do they pass over private land? Does the Seller have the necessary rights of drainage over the private land?
- Is there any evidence of commons land next to or as part of the property? This is land over which commons rights are exercised. This can be a right to use land for recreational purposes or to graze cattle (eg. Cows and sheep). Often seen with old rural villages or in places of historical significance.
- Is the property next to a church or situated in a road with a name like Church Road, Glebe Way? Glebe rights indicate a historical liability of landowners to repair the church in particular the chancel roof (the area over the altar in a church).
- Are there any developments planned near to the property which could affect its use and enjoyment eg. A large new supermarket which could dramatically alter the amount of traffic in the road of the property or a residential property being used by the authorities for housing drug rehabilitation users. Is there a large undeveloped field at the bottom of the garden? What is the likelihood that this might be developed into housing? Speak to the local planning authority to see whether the area is designated for housing or is it agricultural.

- What are the noise levels like at night? Try visiting the property at 9pm on a Friday. Are there gangs of youths hanging around and creating a nuisance? Are the neighbours blasting out loud music or having noisy parties in the garden? Are the motorbikes and mopeds speeding up and down the street?
- Speak to local shops and neighbours if possible to build up a picture of the neighbourhood.
- What schools are in the catchment area of the property? What is their admissions policy? Do they have any spaces left?
- Is there a neighbourhood watch scheme in place? Do other properties all have burglar alarms which appear to be active? Speak to the police about local crime levels. Do research on the internet.
- Does the property have new double glazing/conservatory ie. installed since 2002? If so, does the Seller have a FENSA certificate (a self certificate issued by the large double glazing companies who belong to the trade association, FENSA) or a building regulation approval for the works? This can cause massive delay if the Seller does not have it and it is vital. So get the Seller to track it down or apply for it now when viewing the property.
- Is there any evidence of subsidence, landslip and heave in the property eg. Cracks in the walls, trial pits for subsidence works? Ask to see any specialist reports, surveys. Full details of any insurance claims etc.
- Is there evidence of dry / wet rot in the window sills (if an older property)? Get a full structural buildings survey carried out to cover damp, timber infestation, settlement issues.
- **Leasehold flats:** Who is the Landlord of the building? Who manages the building? How well do they manage the building? What sort of levels of service charge has the Seller paid for the last 3 years? Have the managing agents indicated there are some major items of expenditure in the immediate future?
- **Leasehold flats:** Does the flat have an allocated parking space or is parking done a first come first served basis? How easy is it to get a parking space? How often does the Seller have to drive around trying to find a parking space?
- **Leasehold flats:** What garden can be used by the Seller? Is it exclusive or shared use? What about storage of bicycles , garden equipment, lawnmowers? Where can these be kept? Is there a right to store them in the Lease?

- **Leasehold flats:** Is there a tenant above the flat with laminate or hard wood flooring? This will drive you mind without proper noise insulation.