

## SERIOUS ABOUT FINDING THE RIGHT PROPERTY

In this section we assume you are no longer window shopping and have completed your preliminary investigations and now have a strong understanding of:-

- The costs involved. These include conveyancing costs, survey costs, mortgage fees, stamp duty and the size of your deposit etc,
- Your mortgage. This should be agreed in principle and you should know how much you can spend on a property. You also need to be confident that the mortgage payments are affordable with the right level of protection suitable to your circumstances.
- The value of your own property and marketing timescales involved.
- Which conveyancer/solicitor and where appropriate surveyor you intend to use. This will help to speed up your purchase if an offer is accepted.

If you are unsure about the above, then perhaps it is wise to take a step back and let us confirm these points for you. This will help to ensure that once you find the right property all the preparation is in place to move forward with confidence.

**Set yourself criteria** based on the information above and try to stay realistic. If you're not likely to get a house for your maximum price, don't disregard flats. Keep your criteria wide enough to get some real choice and comparisons. Remember to look a bit higher than your maximum intended purchase price as offers lower than the asking price can often be acceptable. Be careful not to make your search criteria too wide though. You don't want to waste your time trawling through all sorts of property marketing literature for properties you have no intention of buying.

### **Where to look?**

There are various marketing sources Estate Agents use to market properties for sale and it's therefore important you are aware of these to assist your search. You will need to decide which methods best fit your lifestyle and any time constraints you have conducting your search for the right home. Also decide on how much interaction you want with various Estate Agents and be prepared in many cases if registering on mailing lists to part with all sorts of personal information. Although some of this information may not seem relevant the Agent will use it to assess your motivation to buy amongst other things. Remember that the property vendor (seller) is the Estate Agent's customer and applicants are often treated just as a commodity by many Agents. If the Agent deems you to be awkward or uncooperative you may be disregarded at their discretion without your knowledge.

- **Websites** are by far the most easily accessible marketing source and have seen the greatest expansion in recent years. Many Agents have their own website and also utilise specialist third party property search websites to maximise exposure. Many Agents will have the ability to upload new properties to their own websites within 24 to 48 hours but there may sometimes be a few days additional delay in the uploading to third party websites. A key advantage of a website is that you can access the information during out of office hours and access more information on individual properties with limited Agent interaction if desired.
- **Local Newspaper Advertising** is an area which has been available for many years but due to space restriction only offers a sample of properties available with limited details on each. Due to the usual publication production timescales you may find that by the time a paper is distributed a property has already been sold.
- **Agents Mailing Lists** are still run by some Estate Agents but many have discontinued these as a means of reducing costs with Website and technological advances taking their place. If you expect to use these as a way of being made aware of new properties to the market, be sure you ask the Estate Agent how they update their mailing list. Again remember that there can be delays in producing and posting updates which can result in the property selling prior to you receiving details.
- **Telephone/Text Message updates** will be made by some Agents as a proactive method of marketing new properties, and this method can often be the fastest way to hear about a suitable property. However you will need to be fully registered with each Agent to receive such calls and who the agent chooses to contact first, if at all, is completely subjective on their part. You will also need to be readily available and prepared to accept various calls with only verbal information on each property.
- **Window Displays** are maintained by most Agents but few applicants have the time to visit every Agent on a regular basis to keep fully up to date on new properties coming onto the market. With most Agents preferring modern low level display space there is only a limited number of properties on show and these will be subject to a rotation policy.

**Once you have identified a suitable property, don't be afraid to arrange a viewing.** It's important to remember that the properties which usually sell fastest are the most desirable and at competitive prices. To avoid disappointment if the property fits your criteria and looks a possibility don't delay in making an appointment to view it. You can always disregard it if it doesn't meet up to expectations. Some websites have the added advantage of providing "Virtual Tours". These can really help to reduce wasted property viewings for both the applicant and the vendor. In the end though there is no substitute for an actual viewing of a property to gain a proper feel and to help you reach the correct decision. The best way to compare properties is to view more than one. It is therefore advisable to view at least say 3 properties before rushing into making your decision. Remember if you have made the right preparations as we discussed, then you will be in a position to act quickly and decisively with the right professional guidance to hand when you find your new home.