

BUYER'S GUIDE:

What Is The Procedure For Buying A House?

Buying a home can be a daunting experience, especially if you are doing it for the first time. Often, it will be the largest purchase you ever make, and as such, it's essential that you have all the right information at the right time so that you can make informed decisions. This buyer's guide is a helpful overview of the procedure involved with purchasing a property and will outline everything that you can expect at every stage of the process.

Understanding Your Finances

When buying a house, it's important that you understand your finances so that you have an idea of how much you can afford to spend on a property. Most buyers will require a mortgage in order to purchase a home.

As well as this mortgage, you may also have to pay:

- ▶ Stamp duty
- ▶ Getting up to date surveys / reports
- ▶ Conveyancing fees
- ▶ Search fees
- ▶ Building insurance
- ▶ Moving costs
- ▶ Essential home repairs or improvements
- ▶ Mortgage costs and life insurance
- ▶ Service charges and ground rent, if you are buying a leasehold property.

To properly understand your finances, it's important that you receive specialist advice from a professional mortgage adviser. You should start by checking your credit score. This figure will illustrate how likely you are to be accepted for credit. The higher your credit score, the more likely you are to be offered a good range of mortgage deals.

At Taylor Cole Estate Agents, we have an inhouse mortgage adviser who can offer you full support in finding the right mortgage when purchasing your first home. We will assess how much you may be able to borrow, what your monthly repayments will look like as well as the terms of your mortgage. We will also look at products offered by a considerable number of mortgage providers. At this stage, you will need to provide proof of income, which would normally be in the form of a minimum of three of your most recent payslips.

We will obtain for you a document which is known as an Agreement in Principle or Decision in Principle. This is a written statement from a lender which gives you an estimate of how much you can borrow. It will give you an indication of your budget and will signal to sellers that you are serious about buying a property. You can book an appointment with our mortgage adviser to support you in the purchase of your property by calling **01827 311412**.

Registering With An Estate Agent

With financial advice obtained regarding your mortgage requirements, you are now in a great position to start searching for your first home. When searching for your ideal property, it is important that you register with a local estate agent such as Taylor Cole, who will get to grips with your requirements. You will be able to discuss what type of property you would like to purchase, the area where you would like to live, the accommodation that is going to be important to you and how much you are looking to pay for your first home. There are also a range of other factors you may wish to consider, which includes:

- ▶ Transport links
- ▶ New build vs second-hand
- ▶ Number of bedrooms you desire
- ▶ The energy performance rating of the property
- ▶ Amount of living space
- ▶ Internet speed
- ▶ Car parking
- ▶ Scope for extending
- ▶ Garden
- ▶ Conservation or listed building status
- ▶ Condition
- ▶ Drawbacks

We will then match your requirements with properties that are available and make you aware of any other suitable properties that become available. As your local estate agents, Taylor Cole Estate Agents can organise viewings that match your requirements.

The Different Types of Properties

Buying A New Build Property

When buying a new-build property, the process can be very different from that of purchasing a second-hand home. Firstly, you may need to pay a reservation fee and deposit in order to hold the property. There is also likely to be additional charges associated with a new build property such as estate facility charges. The timescale for a new build property is likely to be different. Your developer may give you a date as to when the property should be finished, but this date may be delayed or brought forward, so you should be prepared. If the build is taking longer than expected, you may also need to get your mortgage offer refreshed as they usually only last for a limited period.

You will also need to undertake a snagging survey, which should be completed after the property has been built but prior to completion. You may decide to undertake this yourself or hire a professional snagging company.

Leasehold vs Freehold

It is important that you understand whether the property you are interested in purchasing is freehold or leasehold. A freehold property means that you own the property and the land outright, however a leasehold property means that you will only own the property for a fixed number of years. With a leasehold property, you have the right to live in the property, but you will need to follow any rules laid down in the terms of the lease. You may also need to pay regular ground rent and service charges to the freeholder.

Hiring Legal Representatives

At this stage, we also advise getting advice and a quotation from a local firm of solicitors or conveyancers. You will need a legal representative when you have found your new home, so we are here to help you by providing recommendations.

By working alongside solicitors and conveyancers, our friendly local estate agents can organise a no-obligation quotation for you.

Ask yourself:

- ▶ Are you happy with their prices? Are there any hidden extra costs?
- ▶ Does the conveyancer have any reviews? Are they mostly positive?
- ▶ How will communication work between you and your legal representatives? Are they easily available if you have any problems or issues?

Making An Offer

Once you have found a property that you would like to buy, make sure you consider the following before you make an offer:

- ▶ What fixtures and fittings will be included?
- ▶ What is the property worth?
- ▶ What can you afford?
- ▶ What is your appeal as a buyer?
- ▶ Is there a lot of interest in the property?

Don't be afraid to make a lower offer than the asking price, as this begins the negotiation process. You should, however, refrain from putting in an offer unless you are serious about buying the property. Pulling out of a purchase once a verbal offer has been accepted will cause delays, extra costs and frustration.

If your offer has been accepted – congratulations! We will send you a memorandum of sale from the estate agent which will outline your offer in writing and provide details of the legal representatives for each party. The legal representative you choose will carry out the appropriate legal checks on the property and organise local authority searches on the property. These searches will let you know of any restrictions relating to the land and property and will advise you on any additional searches you should undertake.

After your offer has been accepted, make sure you check with your legal representative to confirm that the seller has instructed their own legal representative and the purchase is moving forward.

Complete Mortgage Application

You will need to complete a full mortgage application for the lender you wish to use. You will need to provide:

- ▶ Identification
- ▶ Proof of address
- ▶ Proof of income (if you are self-employed, you may need to provide extra assurances of this)

Your mortgage provider will also carry out a thorough mortgage valuation to confirm that they are happy to lend against the property you have chosen.

Getting A Survey

You will need to decide if you want to carry out a survey of the property you are buying. With Taylor Cole as your estate agent, we can support you throughout this process so that you can acquire advice about how to rectify any issues that are identified.

We will be able to refer you to a range of surveyors, but it is your decision as to who you appoint. It is important that you read the survey report carefully to ensure you fully understand what the problems are with your new property, how serious they may be and what remedies you can organise.

If any significant issues are uncovered, we can ask the seller to pay for them to be fixed before purchase or you can negotiate your offer further.

Exchanging Contracts And Paying The Deposit

The next step involved with the procedure for buying a new property is exchanging signed contracts with the seller. Once this has been exchanged, it's important to note that the purchase becomes legally bound. If you change your mind, there is likely to be consequences and you may be liable for breach of contract. If this happens, you are likely to lose your deposit and you may have to pay compensation to the seller for other losses.

Pack Up Your Belongings

Consider how you are going to move your belongings into your new home. As your local estate agents, Taylor Cole recommends that you should start planning by writing down what you need to do and when you need to make a start. By breaking down your packing into reasonable and manageable amounts, the task will seem less daunting, and you can be ready ahead of time.

Depending on your own circumstances, you may decide to pay a removals company to do this for you. If, however, you want to do it yourself, moving out of your existing home gives you a great opportunity to have a spring clean. By clearing out unwanted objects, you can reduce the amount of clutter in your new property.

Finalising The Sale

Before the sale is complete, it's important that you contact your utilities, water and internet providers in order to close or move your existing accounts. You should also find out where the fuse box, energy meters and water supply valve are located and organise for your post to be forwarded to your new address.

Your legal representative will transfer the remaining funds to the seller's legal representative. They will also register the change of ownership of the property and settle any other payments including Stamp Duty and Land Tax.

The process of buying your home can take, on average, between 10 and 12 weeks, although this can vary. Taylor Cole Estate Agents and your legal representative will advise you on the approximate time scales before getting the keys to your first home.

Buying A House – The Checklist:

- ▶ Understand your finances
- ▶ Register with Taylor Cole
- ▶ Instruct conveyancers or legal representatives
- ▶ Contract received from solicitors
- ▶ Search fees agreed
- ▶ Enquiries raised with other parties' solicitors
- ▶ Environmental search starts / flood searches / local authority searches / draining search
- ▶ Mortgage offer received
- ▶ Sign mortgage documents
- ▶ Pay deposit
- ▶ Complete purchase
- ▶ Pick up keys

As your local estate agent, we would be delighted to offer you professional advice regarding the procedure involved with purchasing a new home. If you are interested in buying a new property, give us a call on **01827 311412** or send us an email to sales@taylorcole.co.uk.

If you are also in the process of selling a property, let us take the stress out of the situation. Our experienced and friendly team can provide you with bespoke advice, arranged at a time and date that best suits you.