

A blue-tinted photograph of a residential street. The street is lined with brick buildings, some with white-painted lower sections. There are trees and bushes on the right side, and a paved path leads down the street. The overall scene is a typical urban residential area.

How to buy the perfect property in ANY market

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With over 50 years of experience in the property market in the UK and overseas Prop Checker is perfectly placed to assist in your home-buying journey.

Whether you are a first-time buyer or a professional property investor the Prop Checker Homebuyer Toolkit is here to help you navigate and empower you on your property journey.

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- Determine your budget and needs:** Start by figuring out how much you can afford to spend and what kind of property you are looking for, such as a detached house in the country, a semi-detached in the town or a lock-up and leave apartment etc.

- Research different areas:** Look for areas that meet your needs and budget, taking into consideration factors like schools, public transport and amenities.

- Get pre-approved for a mortgage:** This will give you a good idea of what you can afford and help you make a stronger offer when you find the perfect property.

- ****Optional due to additional cost*******
Work with a buying agent/property consultant: An experienced agent can save you time, help you navigate the buying process and negotiate on your behalf saving you many £ thousands

- Look at properties:** View properties in person that meet your criteria and make a list of pros and cons for each one. Don't rely on Rightmove and Zoopla. You will learn so much more from visiting the house, learning what works and doesn't work for you and your family.

- Decide what you are looking for:** If you don't know what you are looking for, it is almost impossible to find it.

- Ignore the guide price:** The guide price has been set by the vendor and the estate agent. Usually after several agents have tried to outbid each other to win the business. This can often be "pushed" 20%+ above what the agent suggested.
Remember: The estate agents' price is a market appraisal NOT a valuation!

Be nice and build rapport: It's so important to build relationships, especially with the estate agents as they will be the contact between you and the vendor of the house you want. If you build a strong relationship with the estate agent, you have a better chance of being contacted first when new properties are launched and a good relationship increases the chances of your offer being accepted.

Go direct: Not all properties are sold with estate agents. If you know what you want and where it is, send some letters directly to the property owners. Professional buying agents buy approximately 80% of their properties through estate agents and 20% by going direct to the vendors.

Be visible: Sending your contact details via Rightmove may get you registered, but it definitely won't get you noticed or put to the top of the queue. Visit the estate agents more than once so they eventually remember who you are and what you are looking for. At the very least, call the agents once a week/fortnight to stay in touch and help them remember you when they have the perfect property.

Do your homework: Make sure you are buying the right property in the right location at the right price. When a surveyor or estate agent goes to appraise a property, they do extensive research looking at property comparables (sold, available, withdrawn etc) as well as checking price per square foot. They also look at Land Registry and check the boundary. They generally do a lot of homework on the property prior to their visit. If you are interested, you should do the same as it gives you a better understanding of its true worth and helps justify your offer.

Understand the market: if you're offering 10% less than the guide price, yet the agent is being swamped with interest and offers your offer is unlikely to be successful. On the flip side, if the market is slowing down and the mainstream media are being negative and predicting price drops, there is no need to offer the guide price. Our experience is it takes a long time before vendors start reducing their prices even in a falling market, but they tend to be more than willing to negotiate on the guide price stated.

Make an offer: Vendors are selling for a reason, and we don't know what that reason is. Once you have decided on a property, decide what it's worth to you, how much you're going to offer and what your strategy will be. Don't be afraid of submitting a cheeky offer.

Follow up the offer in writing: It adds gravitas to the offer. Estate Agents have a legal obligation to submit your offer in writing to their vendors within 24 hours. Most estate agents adhere to this timescale while others don't, and some may not even present your offer at all. Sending an official offer, in writing, increases the chances of the offer being submitted on time, and many agents may just forward your email across, so it's important to put your offer in the best possible light.

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