

What to do once you have exchanged

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After exchanging contracts to buy a house, it is important to have a plan in place to ensure a smooth and successful completion of the transaction.

By being prepared and having a plan, you can stay organized and prioritise tasks such as arranging the transfer of utilities, booking a removal company, or managing necessary repairs to make sure everything is in order before completion day.

Additionally, planning ahead can help reduce any stress or anxiety that may come with the home buying process. It provides a sense of control and helps you feel more prepared for the big day.

Use our framework to ensure a successful and stress-free home buying experience.

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Step 1

Confirm the completion date

Once you have exchanged there are many things to organise when moving home. The first is to confirm the completion date with your solicitor and the house seller.

If you are renting you may have the added flexibility of spreading the move over a few days, enabling you to reduce the stress of the move but also to clean and paint the property and organise boxes without a strict deadline.

It is important to know the length of your chain you're involved in. If there are several links to the transaction, completion could be late in the day and it's sensible to plan accordingly.





Step 2

Perfect time to declutter

Moving home is the perfect opportunity to declutter. Over time the spare rooms, loft, garage, shed and outbuildings become dumping grounds. Many items haven't been used for years and it's time to ask yourself if they ever will again.

It's also worth looking at clothes and furniture as many charity shops would love these items.

Once you have decluttered, boxing everything up becomes so much easier and quicker.





Step 3

Book a removal company

Hiring a professional company that specialise in moving will take a lot of stress out of the move. Ask people you know for recommendations and get a few different quotes for comparison. Remember to confirm what the quote includes; will the removal company provide the boxes, will they help to pack or unpack the boxes, is insurance included, if you're taking white goods with you will they disconnect and reconnect these for you?

If you're looking to save money you can do the removal yourself. It's worth being aware it usually takes much longer than you think, takes a monumental effort and your new buyers will be looking to move in, so you can't stay in your existing property longer than specified.





Step 4

Plan Ahead

Don't over fill boxes, make sure they're not too heavy to safely lift. Mix heavy items with cushions or other lighter objects.

Clearly label boxes - what's in it and where it is to go in the new property. If using the removal company's boxes, they'll probably want them back, so it's best to write labels using markers or colour code them on paper and stick them to the boxes.

Mark boxes as high priority if you need them immediately and low priority for items which can be dealt with in the coming weeks.

Seal boxes securely!!!





Step 5

The Essentials

On moving day it's imperative that the essentials are easy to reach. Keeping the removal team, as well as friends and family fuelled up is vital. As Napoleon said "An army marches on its stomach". Keep the following close to hand:

- o Kettle, cups, tea, milk, sugar, biscuits, toaster, sandwich ingredients
- o Cleaning products, Hoover, bin bags
- o Phone charger
- o Solicitor and estate agents contact details
- o Light bulbs, batteries, loo roll, kitchen roll
- o Screwdriver
- o Bedding for the first night, temporary furniture, television, radio

Make sure important documents like your passport and mortgage paperwork are close to hand, as you may need ID when collecting the keys.

Start using up cool or frozen foods and do smaller shops until moving day. Remember to defrost the freezer a few days before and give it a deep clean





Step 6

Let people know you're moving

You need to let everybody know that you're moving house from friends and family to the utility companies and doctors (if you are moving out of the area you will also need to apply to a new surgery). Other examples are the DVLA, insurance companies, banks and building societies, your work, Amazon and other Internet shopping companies, National Insurance, as well as TV licensing. Websites such as iammoving.com can help with this.

Send a bulk email round to friends to let them know your new address and the date you are moving.

Don't forget to set up a redirection service with Royal Mail. Cancel any deliveries such as newspapers, milk and subscription boxes. If you use food subscription services like Gusto or HelloFresh, remember to update your address as they'll likely need a few days' notice before your next delivery is due.





Step 7

Children & Pets

Moving can be a stressful time for the entire family. Consider having someone else look after your children and pets so that you can focus on the task at hand. It's also worth discussing with your new and existing neighbours about parking arrangements for your removal van—you could save yourself some hassle in the long run and it's always worth starting a new relationship on the right foot.





Step 8

The Stopcock

You don't want a leaking pipe before you think about the stopcock.

Plan ahead, ask the vendor of your new property where the gas and electricity meters, stopcock, thermostat, fuse box are, as well as instructions for appliances and how the heating works.





Step 9

The Day Before

Contact your removal company to confirm timings. Write down a to-do list for completion day that you can check off as you go. Keep any essential items (see point 5) you need for the day away from the main boxes.

Clean the property, unplug any electrical appliances (you may need a specialist to disconnect certain items) and finish packing the final bits and pieces, leaving just a change of clothes and toiletries out. For breakfast I would suggest something easy that doesn't create too much mess or use any kitchenware.

Confirm with your agent and solicitor the expected completion time. Typically it will be early afternoon to allow funds to clear.



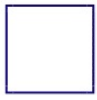


Step 10

Moving day

Turn off any electrical appliances and central heating. Take a photo of your utility meter readings. Double check each room to ensure nothing has been left behind and lock all the windows and doors. Don't forget to hand your keys over to the estate agent before leaving to pick up your new ones.





Step 11

Moving in

Once you've unloaded everything, deep clean the property before you start unpacking. This is unquestionably the best time to do it.

- o Unpack room by room, starting with the kitchen.
- o Confirm the utilities are up and running.
- o Make sure you have keys to every cupboard, door, window, shed and outbuilding.
- o Find out what day your bins are collected.

It's impossible to unpack everything on day 1. Take it easy, keep stress as low as possible, stop at a sensible time, order a takeaway, relax and enjoy the first night in your new home.



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