



# d&g&your property's sold

A step-by-step guide to  
selling your property.



Douglas  
& Gordon  
HOMES & PROPERTY



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A photograph of a desk lamp and a cup of coffee on a wooden table. The lamp is on the left, casting a warm glow. The cup of coffee is on the right, with steam rising from it. The background is a dark, textured wall.

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# d&g&you

Selling your property can be daunting. Along the way you'll need to make some important decisions about a hugely valuable asset. You, and your agent, will need patience, persistence and attention to detail. So it pays to have the right one by your side, right from the very start.

As one of London's leading estate agents, the D&G team are here to help you maximise the value of your property - doing everything we can to make the process run smoothly. Preparing carefully, using our years of expertise, and working closely with you every step of the way.

To help guide you through each step of the process, we've compiled our top tips for a successful sale into this handy guide. Keep hold of it. Refer back to it. And please don't hesitate to ask if you need help or advice.

Because selling your property doesn't have to be daunting when it's d&g&you.

# valuing your property

Our property valuations are always carried out by an NAEA qualified, senior member of our sales team. Deeply knowledgeable on the local market, they'll be able to show you recent sale prices for properties like yours in your area.

They'll also be able to provide you with area-specific research, compiled with the help of D&G Asset Management - a company that advises some of the leading residential property investment funds in London.





# getting ready to sell

Before you place your property on the market, there are six key areas to take care of:

## 1. Paperwork

The following documentation will be needed:

### For all properties

- Guarantees – copies of guarantees for work carried out on the property, e.g. timber, damp, roof, etc.
- Proof of any remedial works carried out to the property.
- Copies of service guarantees, e.g. 5-star boiler maintenance.
- The title deeds.
- An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

### For leasehold properties

- Lease – we will need to have confirmation in writing, either from you or your solicitor, of when the lease was granted and for what term (documentary proof will be required).
- Ground rent – confirmation of the amount payable per annum.
- Service charge – the amount payable per annum and also the percentage share of any outgoings payable by your property. It would be helpful to have the previous two or three years' accounts where available.
- Copies of freehold certificates (where applicable).

## 2. Solicitor

We advise that you instruct a solicitor when you first put your property on the market. This is so that when you accept an offer, they're already in possession of your title deeds and can promptly send out a draft contract. Failing to instruct a solicitor can lead to delays, due to lack of information being readily available for the purchaser's solicitor. This is particularly frustrating if you need a speedy exchange of contracts.

We also advise that you choose a local solicitor who has had experience of the intricacies and nuances of the respective local councils, and also one who specialises in conveyancing.

At D&G, we work closely with Laurus London and have included a SaleReady service pack. This gives you the peace of mind that you will be fully prepared to proceed with an acceptable offer and reducing possible delays. Please let any of the team know if you'd like more details.

## 3. Anti-Money Laundering

In order to comply with money laundering regulations and in accordance with the law, we will need you to provide us with ID verification, for our records.

#### 4. Maintenance checklist

Making sure that basic and essential maintenance has been carried out on your property can make a big difference to a surveyor's report. With it your property is more likely to pass its survey with flying colours – reducing the risk that you'll be put under pressure to lower your agreed price.

- Maintenance to check before putting your property on the market includes:

##### a. Roof

Replace any damaged or slipped tiles.

Check the 'flashings' – in old properties. These are 'fillets' made of cement and sand. If these have cracked, they should be repaired or even replaced.

Rafters – check that the timbers inside your roof space have not become detached through rot.

Flat roofs – a felt roof should be covered with white stone chippings to reflect the heat of the sun. Check that the felt has not split at the junction between the walls and the eaves. If asphalt has become cracked or blistered, it can easily be repaired by reheating it.

##### b. Gutters

Check all gutters carefully, particularly if they are old and made of cast-iron. They should slope slightly towards the downpipe. Signs of a cracked gutter could be splash marks on the base of the wall or staining on the brickwork.

Check the hopper heads (top of drainpipes) are not blocked by leaves.

##### c. Doors and windows

Modern timber-framed windows are made of 'soft wood' and are more likely to suffer from rot at the bottom of the frame, sills and mullions. This is another hot spot for surveyors, so make sure your windows are painted regularly (every four or five years).

##### d. Movement

This is often found in bay windows as they impose less ground pressure than the main body of the house, or because they have inadequate foundations.

Cracks – often diagonal ones – can be caused by trees being close to the house. Be aware that removing the tree may not always solve the problem.

Subsidence – always look for cracks close to door and window openings.

Cracks will always be found by a surveyor, particularly on the outside of a building. If cracks exist, you should take advice from a building surveyor or structural engineer. It's worth doing this before marketing your property, so that if the cracks are found not to be serious, documentary evidence to this effect can be shown to prospective buyers.

##### e. Wiring

Electric wiring does wear out, and should be tested every five years.

##### f. Plumbing

Central heating and boilers should be serviced on a yearly basis.

##### g. Damp

Penetrating damp – look for damp patches and staining where rainwater has found its way into the structure of the building.

Rising damp – found in rotten skirting boards or damp at the base of the walls. This is caused by a break in the damp proof course, allowing the moisture from the ground to be drawn up through a break in your existing damp proof course. A new damp proof course can be installed very easily.

Condensation – caused by poor ventilation and often found in houses with double glazing.

##### h. Drains

Ensure your drains are regularly rodded. Also check for cracks which can allow roots to grow, eventually blocking the drain.

#### 5. Decoration

Before you pick up a paintbrush, talk to one of our agents about our Refurbishment and Interior Services department. They'll be able to give you good, clear advice on when and where to make investments in your property. Redecoration may be a good idea in some instances, but not so profitable in others. They'll also be able to provide full interior services from furniture rental and interior dressing, to larger refurbishment projects.

#### 6. Decluttering

To make sure your property's looking its best, it's a good idea to tidy, and perhaps even remove, some of your possessions to give your house a spacious and airy feel.



# preparing for viewings

Before prospective buyers arrive to view your property, we recommend you think about:

## 1. First impressions

A clean front door and litter-free entrance gives an excellent first impression. Any communal areas within the property should also be cleared of junk mail and vacuumed regularly.

## 2. Lighting

Clean windows and open curtains are essential in maximising natural light. In the winter months, good lighting is equally important — consider using lamps to add extra warmth and charm to a room. If the property is empty, ensure that the mains power is on and all light bulbs are working.

## 3. Temperature

Appropriate temperature for the season helps prospective buyers imagine themselves in the home. Open windows in the summer, and use a working fireplace or regular bursts of central heating in the winter.

## 4. Freshness

The damp smell that's often prevalent in cellars can be kept to a minimum by good ventilation or a dehumidifier.

## 5. Cleaning

Regular cleaning is essential. It doesn't take long for dust and dirt to gather on shelves and window sills, which could easily put off potential buyers.

## 6. Garden

Gardens, front and back, should be kept tidy and attractive, with well-mown lawns, hedges cut and colour emphasised where possible.



# marketing your property

At D&G, we have a dedicated marketing team who work closely with your local agents. Our years of experience have taught us that different properties often need different marketing strategies – so we'll use the latest marketing techniques, alongside more traditional methods, to help your property achieve its full potential.

## 1. Photography and floor plans

When selling your property, it's important we present it in the best possible light. To make this happen, we have a team of professional photographers who are experts at capturing the correct property features. We also use experts to construct accurate and detailed floor plans.

## 2. Brochures

So that potential buyers have everything they need at a glance, we combine well-written property descriptions with photography and relevant technical information in our brochures.

## 3. The Internet

Today, at least 90% of buyers start their property search online. We therefore use a number of digital marketing techniques to make sure your property's seen by as many potential buyers as possible. All of our properties are listed on the D&G website, along with leading property search sites, Rightmove, Zoopla and OnTheMarket.

## 4. Our buyer network

We have an ever-growing black-book of potential buyers which can be accessed from any area. This enables us to instantly match your property to a plethora of people and to individually tailor. We have long-standing relationships with relocation and property search agents so are at the top of their list for when they have a new client.

## 5. Corporate services

This specialist department is dedicated to creating and maintaining long-lasting relationships with major blue chip

companies, relocation and property search agents, who regularly consult us on briefs. Our professionalism and responsiveness, as well as our honest approach to property, means we're frequently their first port of call during a search.

## 6. 'For Sale' boards

Although simple, 'For Sale' boards are a surprisingly effective marketing tool for vendors. A large number of potential buyers register as a direct result of seeing one of our boards, so we would always recommend displaying one, where possible.

## 7. Brand, advertising and PR

We invest heavily in the D&G brand ensuring that we are at the top of people's minds when they are looking to buy. The D&G marketing team give wide community support, work closely with charities and are thoroughly embedded in local communities. We also work to maximise PR exposure of properties to potential buyers.

## 8. Office windows

Many of our enquiries come from potential buyers walking into our offices. We therefore regularly update window displays with our latest listings.

# viewings

When it comes to viewings, the most successful vendors are those who make sure their property's looking its best – adding finishing touches, such as fresh flowers and good lighting.

We recommend that restrictions on viewings be minimised, wherever possible. Potential buyers may have multiple properties to look at, and if they can't access yours at a time that suits them, you may miss out!

We'll always provide you with details and feedback from each viewing. You'll also be able to access information about the viewings of your property via our website in the 'My Property Tracker' section.



# the offer process

Receiving an offer for your property is an exciting moment. At this point the help and support of your D&G agent will be more important than ever. With some properties in London going to 'best and final offer' or even sealed bids, it is important that this stage is handled carefully, fairly and ethically.

We're bound by law to tell you of all offers as soon as is reasonably possible (as well as confirming them in writing).

Closing a sale and seeing it through to exchange can be a difficult process. We provide advice and support during negotiations and all the way to completion. Close communication and teamwork will be key for a successful outcome.

# accepting an offer

Once you've accepted an offer you'll receive a Memorandum of Sale. This confirms to you, your buyer and both solicitors, the terms of the sale. This will include any special conditions including time frames for exchange and completion.

Make sure you check the Memorandum of Sale carefully. Although it's not legally binding, mistakes can slow down the sale process.

Your solicitor will send a draft contract to your buyer's solicitor, who in turn starts the conveyancing process. This will include surveyors visiting your property.

Negotiations can occur throughout the conveyancing process and we will be on hand to advise you from start to finish. Remember, there are no legal obligations until you exchange contracts.





# exchanging contracts

Before you exchange contracts, a number of points will be discussed and agreed by both solicitors:

## Prior to exchange

- Enquiries: these are any questions that the purchaser's solicitor may have about your property.
- Lease: if your property has a lease and/or is share of freehold, there might be specific questions that need to be raised. Often leases were written many years ago and don't always comply with modern interpretation of the law or wordings.
- Assigning the lease: sometimes the purchasers need permission to have the lease assigned to them by the freeholders or their agents.
- Title: the purchaser's solicitor will have checked that you have clean title to the ownership of the property.
- Local searches: these will have been received and checked.
- Fixtures and fittings: any fixture that you plan to take (i.e. wall lights, curtains, carpets) needs to be replaced with an equivalent product.
- Mortgage offer: the buyer will have received their mortgage offer.

## At exchange

This is when you become legally committed to the sale. You will have signed the contract and your solicitor will have reported to you and advised whether, in their opinion, you are sensible to proceed.

At this point the buyer should pay a deposit, usually around 10% of the sale price, to your solicitor. Some solicitors may exchange on less than this. It is normally transferred and held in your solicitor's account.

## Between exchange and completion

- Buildings insurance: both you and the purchasers (because they now have an insurable interest) will need to keep buildings insurance running on your property.
- Removals: you will be surprised how early you need to book a removal company.
- Utilities: these companies need to be informed of your sale and completion date. A meter reading will have to be taken on the day of completion.
- Council Tax: the local authority will need to be informed of your move.
- Post: all mail will need to be redirected to your new address.



# completion

This is where the keys to your property are handed over. We will give the set of keys we hold to the new owners and it is up to you to leave the remaining sets in the house.

The buyer's solicitor will send over the completion funds. If you are involved in a chain, it can sometimes take until mid-afternoon for the money to clear into your solicitor's account.

Your solicitor will call you and your agent to release the keys to your buyer.

Congratulations, you will have now sold your property!

# sales offices

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