



STRATTON OAK ESTATES

It's a good idea to set yourself up a separate email address for the sole use of selling / searching for a new property, it only takes five minutes and when you register with agents use this address. This allows you, once you have moved into your new home to delete the account and be safe in the knowledge that you won't be continually bothered by all the agents you were associated with along the way.

Research your solicitors and / or surveyors at the start, speak to three of each and work out from the conversations who will serve your best interests. Remember, you may be able to save money by using online solicitors but the majority of them work on a call centre basis and if your in a complex chain or an issue arises they are not always best placed to sort the problems and that £100 you saved could cost you 10X more. Don't ever be persuaded to use a certain solicitor or surveyor because of what your agent says, you are free to make your own choice and many corporate agents will insist you use their own in house people and this is often not looking after your best interest but just helping their statistics.

You may have already signed a contract with an agent so it might be too late to negotiate the length. However, it is always worth double checking and cross checking the fine print. You have chosen your agent but you need to remember they work for you. If you have been told they can sell it quickly or they will hold another property until you have sold, this is all great but what is the length of the contract. Many agents will try and sign you into a 8 week / 12 week or even a 16 week contract and they may then also have 28 cancellation period on top. You can negotiate the length, they want your business and they should always be concentrating on doing the best possible job and often this is not the case once the contract is signed and then you are stuck in a rut until the end. Push them to change it down to 4 weeks, if the property is not sold after 4 weeks and they are doing a good job you will continue, however if they have not delivered everything they promised you then you will not be tied up in knots whilst your property loses appeal on the portals. Don't forget you do have a 14 day cooling off period from signing so if you are in this and you are signed in for a long term contract get it amended whilst you still can.

You should have also had a marketing report provided to show you what your agents plan is over the coming weeks to ensure they target the correct buyer type and get you the best possible price. Ensure that this is referred back to each and every week, are targets being hit and if not why not.

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Be wary of your agent presenting you with manufactured viewings, many agents believe that creating footfall through the door of your property is the way to keep their clients business and ultimately this will just waste your time. You should always get in depth feedback from each viewing and if the reasons seem obvious this could be what is happening. You will no doubt get initial feedback very quickly and then further feedback if the buyer needs following up with in 24 hours - quiz the agent on this to ensure you are getting genuine viewings rather than manufactured footfall.

You will now get hounded by other agents as you are on the market, it is part and parcel of the way the industry works, some will try and help some will just bombard you with rubbish. Be wary of any agent that tells you they have a buyer for your property. Let's be honest , it isn't likely that any agent has a buyer in their back pocket that no other agent knows about, that has not looked on any property portal and has not already seen your property for sale through your current agent?

Always leave your property in the best possible condition when you leave for a viewing to be taken place. Ultimately if you have children it doesn't mean that all toys need to be hidden and you make it look like its not lived in, however clearing sides, putting washing away or a quick tidy up and putting the toilet seat down will all help you on your way. A good agent will always arrive early and set the property but your best to take matters into your own hands as well.

Always ask the situation of the person viewing, do they need to sell?, or are they a first time buyer or in rented? Do they require a mortgage?, is it agreed in principle? Are they local or relocating?, are they looking at other properties in the area? This is all basic information any agent should take when a buyer registers or requests a viewing. you are entitled to know exactly who is being brought to your home and this will also help to ensure you know the quality of the people viewing. There is nothing worse than getting a call from an agent asking if they can do a viewing in an hour, for you to then run round sorting the house out just to find on feedback they are from out of town and down to just get a feel for the area and they need to sell their property in Timbuktu and its not even on the market.

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Your agent works for you! never forget this. if things are not going to plan and they start talking to you about your price refer back to the marketing plan, has it been followed?. Look at your marketing material, has it or can it be refreshed? has it been produced at the highest level? Can new pictures be taken? There are often a multitude of factors that can be looked at and changed before price is brought into the equation, and lets be honest that's the price they said they could sell the property for.

When the offers start flooding in this is the point to take a bit of time to consider all the options. The value of the offer is a key point but the situation of your buyer, their stipulations and time scales are also vital. On some occasions the best buyer for you is not necessarily the highest offer or the one that's trying to out bid everyone else. If they have a property to sell you need to make sure the chain has been properly checked. Your agent should be able to provide you with all the estate agents in the chain, names of all buyers and the solicitors that have been instructed. If the chain is over a week or two old then solicitors should at least be instructed and it's always worth asking what mortgages are in the chain and if surveys or mortgage valuations have been carried out. Getting the whole picture before you make the call on accepting an offer is vital to ensure you stand the best chance of securing your forward purchase.

It's also worth analysing your agent, remember they will want to close the deal to ensure payment. Is your agent getting you the best offer possible? You can always go back to the buyer and ask if they would up their offer a little more. The answer to this question will always show if your agent has negotiated to the highest level for you. Let's be honest, even an extra £1000 can help towards the high cost of moving.

There are two types of people when it comes to offering, those that wish to offer low and then increase over 2 - 3 further offers and those that have a price they will pay and that's it and they don't want to mess around. Whichever type of person you have offering on your property, your agent should be able to advise you which one your dealing with in their opinion as they should have asked all the correct questions at the point of offer.

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Once the offer is agreed you can refer back to your research on solicitors and get the ball rolling. Get them to send out the property information pack as soon as possible, the small deposit you have to pay is never wasted. Ultimately you have made the decision to sell, if for any reason this buyer does not proceed then you will have another one before you know it and the same paperwork will be used.

Getting this paperwork back quickly will enable your solicitor to get the contract pack to the buyer's solicitor and give you feedback as to whether they have instructed them fully or put money on account. This is a key way to check you buyer is putting money down and getting on with the purchase as they should.

In addition keep checking with your agent to see when the survey / mortgage valuation is going to be booked. They should be able to liaise with the buyer and their broker to give you feedback on this. Again this is a good signal to how serious your buyer is, putting money down for solicitors, surveys etc. shows they are intending to get on with things and that's what you're looking for. It is vital that you do not spend any money on your forward purchase until your buyer has spent money on your sale.

Now the sale is moving forward as it should you need to prepare yourself that in general terms the conveyancing process takes 8 - 12 weeks, this can be shorter on occasion but if you're prepared for that time line then anything shorter is a bonus.

Selling a property is not stressful, using good agents and good solicitors should make the process enjoyable and stress free and give you the chance to get to where you want to be without pulling your hair out along the way!

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The key points to tick off on the countdown to exchange are as follows:

- Buyers solicitors instructed
- Mortgage valuation booked and carried out / Proof of funds being acknowledged for cash purchase.
- Survey carried out and your agent giving you feedback from buyer after the buyer has received it. It's vital to get this feedback, you don't want to get to the end of the sale and then something come up.
- The buyers mortgage offer being received
- Enquires being raised by your buyer.
- Enquiries being answered by your solicitor - this could be repeated a few times back and forth.
- Buyer's solicitor reporting to their client
- Buyer returning signed contract to their solicitor
- Buyer placing deposit funds with solicitor.

Your estate agent can and should be checking every week on all these points and reporting back to you.

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