

Quick House Sales

12 Top Tips for homesellers



In a quick house sale, a business (provider) offers to buy the property or find a third party buyer very quickly. In return, the seller usually accepts a 'below market value' price for their home.

You should think carefully before opting for such a sale. These top tips should help you when deciding whether you really need or want a quick house sale. If you decide to go ahead, they will help you to choose a provider, spot the things that could go wrong, and understand how to prevent problems.

1. Consider all your options

There may be more options than you think. They might help you to keep your home if you don't want to sell or to sell at a better price. See Alternatives to Quick House Sales - www.oft.gov.uk/shared_oft/market-studies/oft1499c.pdf.

2. Take time to find out about the process

What are the pros and cons? How does it compare to alternatives such as using a normal estate agent or negotiating with your lender? Will a quick house sale provider suit your specific needs?

3. Look for the services that work best for you

Not all providers are the same, so look at what different ones can offer. Don't accept their claims at face value. For example, if the provider says 'completion in days' or 'we pay close to full market value', ask how often they do this.

4. Check out providers' credentials

If providers say they have signed up to a code of practice, redress scheme, or are regulated by an official body, check this for yourself. Also check to see what protection the code of practice, redress scheme, or regulation offers you.

5. At each stage, make sure you have the information you need to make informed choices

If you don't understand something, ask the provider for answers and don't proceed unless you are happy with them.

- Who is buying the property?
- How will they pay?
- Is there proof that they have funds available?
- When will the sale happen?
- Who is valuing the property and how?
- What is the offer price? Will this change? If so, why?

- If the survey is given as a reason for a reduced offer, ask to see it.
- What fees and charges will you have to pay? Will you have to pay them even if you don't go ahead with the sale?

We would advise choosing providers who offer you the information listed above without having to be asked for it.

6. Don't accept verbal information or promises

Always get the provider to put them in writing.

9. Watch out for long tie-ins

Be wary about signing any agreement that ties you to the provider for a longer time than you are happy with. If you want a speedy sale, question why a quick house sale provider would need an agreement for more than four weeks.

11. Don't commit to the sale until surveys and legal checks have been carried out, you have a final offer in writing and you have independent legal advice

Be cautious of making major financial commitments, or other decisions you might regret if the sale did not go through as expected.

7. Don't be pressured into a decision you are not comfortable with

For example, the provider should not require you to use a particular solicitor.

10. Be honest and accurate when answering questions

Giving incorrect information or leaving important things out is likely to be uncovered later and may cause hold-ups and even reductions in the offer price.

If you are still unhappy, you can:

- Talk to Citizens Advice. They provide free, confidential and impartial advice. Visit www.adviceguide.org.uk or call the consumer helpline on 08454 040506, or Consumerline NI on 03001236262
- If the provider belongs to an approved Estate Agent redress scheme, refer the matter to them. There are two schemes: The Property Ombudsman at www.tpos.co.uk or call 01722 333306 and Ombudsman Services: property at www.ombudsman-services.org/property, 01925 530270.

8. Before you sign any agreement, read it carefully and obtain independent legal advice if you are at all unsure

Do you understand what you're being asked to sign and its implications? Don't sign an agreement unless you know what you are agreeing to. Also, never be shy about negotiating on price.

12. What if things go wrong?

If you are not satisfied with the provider's service, tell them and give them a chance to investigate and resolve your complaint.

- If the complaint is about the provider's advertisements, report the matter to the Advertising Standards Authority. Visit www.asa.org.uk or call 020 7492 2222
- Report the matter to your local Trading Standards Service
- Consider whether to take your own court action if you feel the provider may have: breached the contract, used an unfair term or misrepresented something that was important to your decision to sell to, or through, them. You should obtain legal advice first.