Home + Castle Estate Agents
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HOME + CASTLE *above and beyond...*

Your complete guide to selling your home

Helpful advice for every stage of your move.

Selling your home is an exciting step, but there is much more to the process than simply putting a property on the market and waiting for a buyer.

From understanding what your home is worth and preparing it for sale, to choosing the right estate agent, managing viewings, considering offers and navigating the legal process, there are plenty of important decisions to make along the way.

At Home + Castle, we understand that every move is different. Whether you're upsizing, downsizing, relocating or moving just around the corner, our helpful Selling Guide has been created to give you a clearer understanding of what to expect.

We'll guide you through the key stages of selling your home — from those first thoughts about moving right through to handing over the keys.

Understanding Your Home's Value - getting the price right from the start.

One of the first questions most homeowners ask is:

"What is my property worth?"

The value of your home can be influenced by a wide range of factors, including:

- Location
- Property type and size
- Number of bedrooms
- Condition and presentation
- Parking and outside space
- Local schools and amenities
- Transport links
- Energy efficiency
- Recent sales of similar properties
- Current buyer demand

Getting the asking price right is an important part of creating a successful sale.

A property priced too high can struggle to generate early interest, while pricing it too low could mean missing out on your home's full potential.

At Home + Castle, we'll provide honest advice based on our local knowledge, current market conditions and evidence from comparable properties.

Our aim is to help you make an informed decision and create the right strategy for your move.

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Preparing your home for Sale - first impressions start before the viewing.

Before your property is marketed, it's worth taking a step back and looking at it through a buyer's eyes.

Small improvements can often make a surprisingly big difference to how your home is perceived.

Consider:

- Decluttering rooms
- Completing small repairs
- Freshening up tired décor
- Making the most of natural light
- Tidying gardens and outside spaces
- Cleaning entrances and pathways
- Removing unnecessary personal items

You don't necessarily need to spend thousands of pounds renovating your home.

Often, simple preparation, good presentation and attention to detail can make the biggest difference.

The aim isn't to create somebody else's home, it's to help buyers see the potential in yours.

Getting your paperwork ready - a little preparation can help avoid delays later.

Selling a property involves more than preparing the home itself.

It's helpful to gather important paperwork early, particularly documents relating to the property's ownership, improvements and any work that has been carried out.

Depending on your property, this could include:

- Details of your tenure
- Planning permissions
- Building Regulations documentation
- Guarantees and warranties
- Window certificates
- Electrical documentation
- Party wall agreements
- Information about boundaries and rights of way
- Leasehold information, where applicable

The more information you can provide early in the process, the easier it can be to answer buyers' questions and help your sale progress.

The government also advises sellers to gather relevant property documents before marketing and to be prepared to disclose material facts that could influence a buyer's decision. Read more about Material Information, **here**.

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Your EPC (energy performance certificate)

An important part of preparing to sell. In most cases, you'll need a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when selling your home. An EPC provides information about the energy efficiency of a property and gives it a rating from A to G. EPCs are valid for 10 years, although there may be circumstances where obtaining an updated certificate makes sense, particularly if significant energy efficiency improvements have been made since the previous assessment. If you're unsure whether your property has a valid EPC, Home + Castle can help point you in the right direction. In England, sellers need to have an EPC arranged before marketing a property, subject to certain exemptions.

Marketing your home and making the right first impression.

For many buyers, their first experience of your property will happen online. That's why the way your home is presented matters.

Your photography, property description, floorplan and video content can all influence whether a buyer decides to take the next step and arrange a viewing. Great property marketing should do more than simply show people what a house looks like.

It should help buyers:

- Understand the space
- Appreciate the layout
- Discover your home's best features
- Imagine themselves living there
- Feel encouraged to arrange a viewing

At Home + Castle, we believe every property deserves to be presented at its best.

Professional photography - your home deserves to look its best.

Great photography can make an immediate difference to how buyers respond to your property. Professional images can capture the light, space, character and features that make your home special.

Before photography takes place, it can help to:

- Declutter rooms
- Put away everyday items
- Open curtains and blinds
- Make beds neatly
- Clear kitchen worktops
- Tidy gardens and outside spaces

You don't need to make your home look like a showroom. The goal is simply to make it feel welcoming, spacious and easy for buyers to imagine themselves in.

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Floorplans & virtual tours - helping buyers understand your home.

Photography is important, but buyers also want to understand how a property works. A detailed floorplan can help them visualise:

- Room sizes
- The layout
- The flow of the property
- Bedroom arrangements
- Living spaces

Virtual tours can take this one step further, helping buyers experience your home in a more engaging way. This can be particularly useful for people relocating to East Sussex or buyers who are unable to visit immediately. The more effectively buyers can understand your property, the more confident they can feel about arranging a viewing.

Reaching the right buyers - local knowledge with a wider reach.

Finding the right buyer isn't simply about waiting for someone to discover your property. A proactive estate agent should work to connect your home with suitable buyers. At Home + Castle, our knowledge extends across the East Sussex property market, including: **Polegate • Hailsham • Eastbourne • Pevensey • Bexhill • St Leonards • Hastings**

We combine local knowledge with our buyer database, property portals and digital marketing to help introduce properties to the people most likely to be interested. Every property is different and every buyer is different too. Our job is to help bring the right people together.

Preparing for viewings - turning interest into opportunity.

A viewing is your property's opportunity to make a real connection with a potential buyer. Before a viewing, try to make your home feel clean, welcoming and comfortable.

Simple things can help:

- Open curtains and blinds
- Make the most of natural light
- Keep rooms tidy
- Avoid unnecessary clutter
- Make entrances welcoming
- Tidy gardens and outside spaces
- Keep pets comfortable and safe

You don't need to completely change your lifestyle every time someone visits.

But a little preparation can help buyers focus on what makes your home special.

During a viewing - give buyers room to imagine themselves there.

Every seller is different when it comes to viewings. Some homeowners prefer to be present, while others are happy to leave the viewing to their estate agent. There are advantages to giving buyers the space to explore a property and imagine themselves living there without feeling rushed or uncomfortable. Your estate agent can guide the viewing, highlight important features and answer questions. If buyers ask something that only you can answer, your agent can come back to you. At Home + Castle, communication is key to helping ensure buyers receive the information they need.

Understanding buyer feedback - not every viewer will make an offer and that's completely normal.

Feedback can provide useful insight into how buyers are responding to your property. Comments may relate to:

- Price
- Presentation
- Location
- Layout
- Condition
- Outside space
- Parking

One person's opinion doesn't necessarily mean you need to make changes. However, if similar feedback is repeatedly coming through, it may be worth discussing with your estate agent. Patterns can sometimes provide valuable information and help you make informed decisions about your marketing strategy.

When an offer arrives - it's exciting, but take the time to understand the full picture.

Receiving an offer is an important moment. Of course, the amount being offered matters. But the highest offer isn't always automatically the strongest offer. It's important to consider the buyer's overall position.

Questions worth asking include:

- Do they have a property to sell?
- Are they already under offer?
- Are they a first-time buyer?
- Have they arranged their mortgage?
- Do they have an Agreement in Principle?
- Can they provide proof of funds?
- How long is their chain?
- What is their preferred moving timescale?

A cash buyer, for example, may have a different position from someone whose purchase depends on several linked transactions.

Your estate agent should help you understand the complete picture before you make a decision.

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Negotiating your sale - it's about more than simply accepting a number.

Negotiation is an important part of the selling process. Your estate agent can negotiate on your behalf, communicate with interested buyers and help you understand the strengths and potential risks associated with different offers. Sometimes the strongest offer may be the highest. Sometimes a slightly lower offer from a buyer in a stronger position may be more attractive.There is no single answer that's right for every seller.

The important thing is having the information you need to make the decision that's right for you.

Accepting an offer - the next stage of your journey begins.

Once you accept an offer, the property is usually described as **Sold Subject to Contract (SSTC)**. This means an agreement has been reached, but the sale is not yet legally binding.

There are still several important stages to complete, including:

- Instructing solicitors
- Mortgage arrangements
- Property searches
- Surveys
- Responding to legal enquiries
- Managing the property chain
- Agreeing an exchange and completion date

Your estate agent and solicitor will both have important roles to play during this stage.

Understanding property chains - why communication matters.

A property chain is created when several property transactions depend on one another. For example:

Your buyer may need to sell their home before they can buy yours or their buyer may also be purchasing another property.

Meanwhile, you may be buying a property that depends on another sale.

The longer the chain, the more people and transactions are involved.

This doesn't mean a sale won't progress smoothly, but it can mean that good communication becomes even more important.

Delays involving one property can sometimes affect several others.

That's why keeping everyone informed and identifying potential issues early can make a real difference.

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Conveyancing - the legal side of selling your home.

Conveyancing is the legal process involved in transferring ownership of a property. Your solicitor or licensed conveyancer will deal with the legal paperwork and communicate with the buyer's legal representative.You may be asked to provide information about:

- Property boundaries
- Fixtures and fittings
- Neighbour disputes
- Planning permissions
- Building work
- Guarantees and warranties
- Rights of way
- Shared access
- Services and utilities

If you're selling a leasehold property, additional information may be required relating to:

- The freeholder
- Managing agent
- Ground rent
- Service charges
- Lease documentation

Providing information promptly can help avoid unnecessary delays.

Surveys & Buyer concerns - try not to panic.

Your buyer may arrange a survey as part of their purchase.This can sometimes identify issues that the buyer wasn't previously aware of. It's important to remember that surveyors are there to identify potential concerns and risks. A survey report can sometimes sound alarming, particularly when it lists a long number of recommendations.This doesn't automatically mean your sale is going to fall through. Your estate agent can help communicate between you and the buyer if questions or concerns arise.Sometimes further information, quotations or professional advice may be needed. **Good communication can often prevent small concerns from becoming bigger problems.**

Keeping your Sale moving - communication really does matter.

Once a sale has been agreed, it can sometimes feel like everything goes quiet. There are often periods when solicitors, lenders, surveyors and other parties are completing important work behind the scenes. However, communication remains important. At Home + Castle, we'll continue to support the progression of your sale by keeping in touch with the relevant parties and helping to identify potential issues where possible. While no estate agent can control every part of the legal process, proactive communication can help keep everyone focused on the same goal.

Moving you towards completion.

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The cost of Selling - understanding the full picture helps you plan with confidence.

Selling a property can involve a number of costs.

Depending on your circumstances, you may need to budget for:

- Estate agency fees
- Conveyancing and legal fees
- EPC costs, where required
- Mortgage exit or early repayment charges
- Removal costs
- Essential repairs or improvements
- Costs associated with buying your next property

If you have a mortgage, it's also important to understand how much remains outstanding and whether there are any charges for repaying it early.

Buying your next home - don't forget to plan for the other side of your move.

If you're selling in order to buy another property, you'll need to consider the costs involved in your onward purchase too. These may include:

- Your new mortgage arrangements
- Survey costs
- Conveyancing fees
- Removal costs
- Buildings insurance
- Stamp Duty Land Tax, where applicable

Planning ahead can help you understand your budget and avoid surprises later in the process.

Stamp Duty Land Tax - what you need to know about buying your next home.

Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) is a tax that may be payable when buying property or land in England or Northern Ireland.

It is important to remember that **Stamp Duty is paid by the buyer, not the seller**.

If you're selling your current home and buying another property, SDLT may therefore be one of the costs you need to consider when planning your move.

SDLT is calculated using bands, meaning different portions of the purchase price are charged at different rates.

You can read more here, or below on SDLT rates and what applies to you.

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Standard residential rates

Portion of property price	SDLT rate
Up to £125,000	0%
£125,001 to £250,000	2%
£250,001 to £925,000	5%
£925,001 to £1.5 million	10%
Over £1.5 million	12%

These are the current standard residential rates for a main home.

First time buyer relief, a helping hand for eligible buyers.

Eligible first-time buyers purchasing a property costing **£500,000 or less** may qualify for relief.

The current rates are:

Portion of property price	SDLT rate
Up to £300,000	0%
£300,001 to £500,000	5%

If the property costs more than £500,000, first-time buyer relief does not apply.

Additional properties - buying before you've sold? There may be extra costs.

Higher SDLT rates can apply when buying an additional residential property.

This may be relevant if, for example:

- You're buying a second home
- You're purchasing a buy-to-let property
- You've bought your new home before selling your previous main residence

The higher rates are generally **5 percentage points above the standard rates**.

In some circumstances, higher-rate SDLT may be refundable if you're replacing your main residence and sell your previous main home within the applicable time limit.

The rules can be complicated, so we recommend checking your individual circumstances with your solicitor or a qualified tax adviser.

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Capital Gains Tax (CGT) - something to consider for certain property sales.

If you're selling your main home, you will often qualify for **private residence relief**, meaning Capital Gains Tax may not be payable.

However, Capital Gains Tax may apply when selling:

- A buy-to-let property
- A second home
- An inherited property
- A property that has not always been your main residence

Tax rules depend on your individual circumstances.

For this reason, we always recommend speaking to a qualified accountant or tax adviser for specific advice, additionally, you can read more, **here.**

Exchange of Contracts - the moment your sale becomes legally binding.

Once all the necessary legal work has been completed and contracts are exchanged, the transaction becomes legally binding. At this stage, a completion date will usually have been agreed.

It's an exciting milestone because your move is now much closer to becoming reality.

Preparing for Completion

Getting ready for moving day.

As completion approaches, there are plenty of practical things to organise.

Your checklist may include:

- Booking removal companies
- Arranging utility readings
- Redirecting your post
- Updating insurance arrangements
- Informing relevant organisations of your new address
- Packing belongings
- Checking what fixtures and fittings are included in the sale
- Preparing keys for the new owners

It's also a good idea to make sure the property is left in the condition agreed as part of the sale.

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Completion day - the final step and the beginning of your next chapter.

Completion is the day the sale officially finishes and ownership of the property transfers to the buyer.

Once the buyer's funds have been received and the legal process is complete, arrangements can be made for the keys to be handed over.

And then?

It's time to move forward to your next home and your next chapter.

Choosing Home + Castle

Local people. Personal service. Modern estate agency.

Selling your home is personal.

That's why choosing the right estate agent matters.

At Home + Castle, we combine our knowledge of the local East Sussex property market with exceptional marketing, innovative technology and genuine personal service.

From Polegate and Hailsham to Eastbourne, Pevensey, Bexhill, St Leonards and Hastings, we understand the communities and property markets that make this part of Sussex such a fantastic place to live.

We'll be here to support you from the first conversation through to completion.

With professional photography, state of the art floorplans, virtual tours, extensive buyer reach, real time communication and experienced negotiation, we aim to make your selling experience as straightforward, transparent and successful as possible.

Because your home deserves more than simply being put online and waiting for a buyer.