

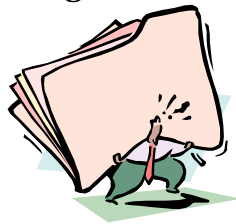


The BELLS abc guide to conveyancing

Moving house is a stressful business for everyone. It is much more stressful if you don't have a clear idea of what is going on – things can seem to move very slowly and you may wonder why. Here at BELLS we are committed to making the whole process as quick and painless as possible. We have prepared this guide in order to give you an overview of the transaction and to let you know how you can help us reduce stress and delay to the absolute minimum.

YOUR SALE

- 1) As soon as you contact us to advise that a buyer has been found, or you are optimistic that an offer will shortly be made, we can apply for the title deeds from your mortgage lender, to enable us to draft the sale contract. At the same time we can give you a breakdown of the costs involved.
- 2) We will then ask you to complete a sale questionnaire form to enable us to issue the contract. This will ask you detailed questions about the house that your buyer will want to know about.
- 3) We will also ask you to complete a Fixtures and Fittings list, giving details of the items to be left in or removed from the property. If these forms are dealt with promptly it will avoid delay in issuing a contract.



- 4) A draft contract will be issued to the buyers' solicitor, together with all the necessary supporting documents. Your buyer's solicitor may raise further

questions about the property and suggest amendments to the contract.

- 5) When the terms of the contract have been agreed, we will ask you to sign it in readiness for exchange of contracts. Your buyer will also sign one copy. Many people think that they have committed to selling/buying when they sign the contract. Don't worry! The contract is not binding until it is **exchanged** with the other party. Until that time we merely hold the contract on your behalf. (In case you are interested the legal term for this is holding the contract **in escrow**.)
- 6) Your buyers will want to conduct a Local Search with the local council to ensure that there is a proper right of way to the property, that it has proper water/sewer arrangements and that there are no plans to build a motorway through the front garden! This is where delays most often occur, if the council is very busy.
- 7) Your buyers will also probably need to arrange a mortgage and their mortgagees may have further, additional queries. Sometimes a buyer is too optimistic about the chance of getting a mortgage and this can lead to a delay or, sometimes, the failure of the entire transaction. Your buyers may not have sold their own house, and may take a long time to do so. It is not something over which you or we can



exercise any control. No amount of pressure will speed up the transaction in these circumstances.

- 8) Once your buyers have sold their house, have the funds and their solicitor is satisfied as to the title etc., we will negotiate a completion date and ask for a deposit. We will discuss the amount of the deposit with you – it is typically between 5 and 10%. Contracts can then be exchanged as soon as you are ready.
- 9) On the day of completion, you must vacate the property by 1.00pm, leaving the keys with the Estate Agents. We will pay off your existing mortgage from the purchase money and settle the Estate Agents' account on your behalf.

YOUR PURCHASE

- 1) When you have found a house to buy, please let us know as soon as possible and we will ask you to fill in a Purchase Questionnaire. We will use this information to help us ask important questions about the house that you want to buy. We will also ask you for some money on account, so that we can pay for the necessary pre-contract searches.
- 2) Most people need a mortgage when buying a property. As part of our initial enquiries, we will ask you for details of who is arranging the mortgage so that we can liaise with them if there are any problems.

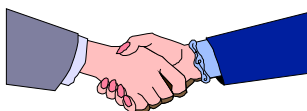


If you are arranging a mortgage through our own Financial Planning Department this is very simple. A firm mortgage offer needs to be received from your Lender before exchange of contracts.

- 3) You will need a survey of the property, both to satisfy you and your mortgagee that it is structurally OK and to reveal any hidden problems



- 4) We will receive a draft contract from the sellers' solicitor, and we will then apply for a Local Search, and any other searches we consider necessary. We may want to raise additional enquiries of the sellers' solicitor, and we may wish to amend the draft contract if we are not entirely happy with it.
- 5) If everything is OK we will report to you and ask you to sign the contract and mortgage deed in readiness for exchange of contracts. We will also ask you for the deposit to be used on exchange of contracts. If you have a related sale, we will usually be able to arrange that the deposit received from your buyers can be used for your purchase and passed up the chain, subject to a top-up payment from you if necessary.
- 6) If you are having any new endowment or life policies, the policy provider must accept risk before exchange of contracts.
- 7) At this stage, we are ready to arrange an exchange of contracts.



All that remains is to arrange a completion date. This is the hard part! Most people buying and selling are involved in a chain. This means that there is a linked series of transactions and everybody in the chain wants to sell and buy on the same day so that they do not have to pay for bridging finance or rented accommodation. We therefore have to wait until everybody in the chain has their mortgage, local search, title and contracts approved. Unfortunately a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Sometimes everything runs smoothly – sometimes it doesn't. We have been involved in selling houses in Farnham for nearly 300 years and we are very good at putting the chain together.

We will liaise with the Estate Agents and other solicitors until the exchange has been achieved. Obviously if you are buying or selling through our own estate agency communication is not a problem.

- 8) When exchange has taken place, the completion date is legally binding and you can now swing into action and organise your move. The following are just a few

reminders of the things you should deal with:-

- **Cancel or transfer contents insurance;**
- **Cancel or transfer buildings insurance;**
- **Contact Gas, Electricity, Water and Telephone Services. Arrange for meters to be read and accounts to be transferred;**
- **Book the removal van;**
- **Cancel Banker's Order for Mortgage payments, after completion;**
- **Notify Local Authority of move and arrange apportioned account;**
- **Notify all insurance companies, premium bonds office, employer, doctor, dentist, schools, church, clubs, relatives, and friends.**
- **Arrange for friends to look after the children and pets on moving day!**
- **Arrange for mail to be re-directed.**



A more detailed guide to the practicalities of buying and selling your home can be obtained from our web-site or any of our estate agency staff.

- 9) We will let you have a statement showing all the costs and expenses due and will draw this up as soon as possible so that you can arrange to let us have the balance five working days before completion. We need it then so that cleared funds are available.
- 10) On completion day, if you have a sale, we must wait for the buyers' solicitor to send us the sale proceeds by electronic transfer before we can send out the money by the same method for your purchase. We handle this in-house, unlike some other firms, which helps to speed things up. Even so, it is unlikely that you will get the keys to your new house before lunch-time on the day of completion.



- 11) We would suggest that you do not leave your old house before you have

checked with us that it is alright for you to do so. If you just have a purchase, we can usually send the money quite early on the morning of completion, but you are unlikely to get the keys before mid-day as you must allow the seller time to vacate the property.

We hope this guide has been helpful. Keep it to one side so you can refer to it if necessary And remember, if at any time you do have a question or problem, please telephone us. We are here to help you!

