

A step-by-step guide to selling your family home



EXPERT
ADVICE
INSIDE



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Family noun

A group of individuals related by blood, marriage or adoption.

- Where life begins, and love never ends.

Home noun

Relating to the place where one lives.

- Where you trust the toilet seats (most of the time).

Hello,

I'm Damien Cooke, Managing Director at Cooke & Co.

We've created this step-by-step guide to selling your family home using our 30+ years of experience helping Thanet's homeowners navigate the property market.

It's a must-read for anyone considering selling their family home this year.

Every property sale is different, with many factors and feelings involved, especially when the property you're selling is the place your family calls home.

In this guide, we'll look into the following:

- The things to consider before making a decision
- Questions to ask an estate agent
- Insights on how to attract the best buyers
- Seven steps to the successful sale of your family home
- The real-life experiences of a family of five (six, including Lincoln, the dog) who have gone through the selling process

And plenty more valuable, detailed information and quick tips.

We'll also explain why choosing the right estate agent is vital.

Moving home is a big deal and can be daunting. But it's also exciting and life-changing, and we're proud to have helped hundreds of people move on to the next chapter of their family's story.

We'd be delighted to answer any questions you have. Just get in touch.

But for now, grab a cuppa, find a comfy chair and let's get started.

Thanks for reading.



Damien Cooke MNAEA MARLA
Founder and Managing Director
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*Disclaimer: The information in this guide does not constitute legal or financial advice.

Family first – Things to consider before selling your home

At Cooke & Co, we know from personal and professional experience that selling a family home is something people need to think about carefully.

Deciding to move significantly impacts every household member.

It's the first step of the journey.

So, it's essential to approach this process thoughtfully, considering both the practical and emotional aspects to ensure the move matches your family's needs, dreams and goals.

Financial considerations

Begin by evaluating your family's financial situation. Assess any existing mortgage obligations, potential selling costs and the economic implications of buying a new home.

Timing

Timing is important, especially for families with school-age children. Planning your move around the academic calendar can prevent disruptions to schooling.

Space requirements

As families grow and change, so do their space requirements. Will the new home accommodate changes in family dynamics, like children moving out or even your parents moving in?

Emotional readiness

Your home may hold significant sentimental value, making it difficult to move on. Have family discussions to ensure everyone is emotionally ready for the sale and the subsequent move.

Community ties

Consider the impact of leaving your current neighbourhood, especially if you rely heavily on local support networks, schools and community services. How will relocating affect these relationships and your family's daily life?

Quick tip



Gather the family for a chat about the move. It's important everyone shares their feelings and thoughts to make sure you're all on the same page.



Five questions to ask an estate agent

Choosing the right estate agent is an important second step in selling your home. To help you make an informed decision, here are five essential questions to ask any estate agent:

1. What process do you use to value our home accurately?

How an agent values your property reveals their market knowledge and commitment to getting you the best possible price. An experienced agent should provide a comprehensive valuation, considering recent sales in your area, current market trends and your home's unique features.

2. Will we have a dedicated point of contact if we use your services?

Consistent communication is vital. Ensure you have a dedicated point of contact who understands your situation and can provide regular updates.

3. How do you get the correct type of potential buyers to view our family home?

This includes their strategy for advertising, conducting viewings and leveraging their network so the ideal potential buyers know about your property.

4. How long are your contracts? And what are the notice periods?

Make sure you understand the terms of your agreement with the estate agent. It should include the length of the contract and any notice periods, providing clarity and avoiding potential misunderstandings or contractual headaches later on.

5. How often will we receive updates from you while our property is on the market?

Regular updates on your property's status on the market, feedback from viewings and marketing efforts are essential to an open and successful selling process. This question helps gauge the agent's commitment to keeping you informed throughout your selling journey.

Quick tip

Don't be shy. Feel free to ask these and other questions - you're selling your family's biggest tax-free asset, after all.



Seven steps to successfully selling your family home

Step 1: Think about it

Before putting your home on the market, consider why you're selling and think about the best timing. Whether you are relocating for work, need a bigger space due to family growth, or even downsizing, it's a big decision. Talk it through as a family and weigh up the pros and cons together.



Step 2: Money, money, money

If you've decided to sell up and move on, set a realistic budget for buying your next home and review your financial situation in detail. This includes understanding what's left to pay on your mortgage, how much you can borrow towards your new home and estimating the costs of selling your home. Factor in estate agent fees, conveyancing expenses and moving costs.

Step 3: Select the right estate agent

The next step is choosing the right estate agent to work on your behalf. Because it can make all the difference between a horror story and a happy ever after. Talk to three agents and select one who gives you an evidence-based valuation, can show a track record of selling family homes, and who you feel you can build a rapport with.



Step 4: Prepare your home for sale

Get 'For Sale' ready by decluttering, deep cleaning, making necessary repairs and learning to think like a buyer. Consider your home's kerb appeal, as first impressions matter. Liaise with your estate agent to see what you need to do to attract attention, interest and, ultimately, offers.

Quick tip

Be wary of instructing an estate agent simply because they've advised that your home is worth much more than other valuations. Ask them for comparable evidence to back up their valuation.

Seven steps to successfully selling your family home (continued)

Step 5: Marketing matters – A lot!

A good estate agent will provide you with an effective marketing plan. This should include professional-standard photography, detailed descriptions of your property and making effective use of both online and offline platforms to reach a broad audience. An experienced agent knows how to emphasise features that appeal to families. These include a safe neighbourhood, proximity to good schools and family-friendly amenities.



Step 6: Viewings and offers

Aim to be flexible with viewing times to accommodate potential buyers' schedules. You'll also need to work with your agent to ensure minimal disruption to your family's routine. When your home attracts offers, carefully go through them with your agent. It's not just the offer price you need to consider but also the potential of the buyer's ability to proceed promptly. Sensible questions include: Do they have a mortgage in principle? Is their home already on the market? Are they in a rush to move?

Step 7: The happy ever after

Once an offer is accepted, your estate agent and solicitor will guide you through exchanging contracts and completing the sale. This includes ensuring all legal paperwork is correct, answering queries, communicating with all parties involved and arranging the moving date. Clear and consistent communication during this stage will avoid any last-minute complications. Then, when all is confirmed, and the move is completed, you can begin the next chapter of your family's story.



Quick tip

A good, well-connected estate agent can recommend a skilled conveyancer (property solicitor) to you, an essential member of your family's home-selling team.

It's a family affair – Moving experiences

One of the biggest things to consider when selling a family home is how the move affects everyone involved.

Over the following two pages, we share real-life moving experiences from a family of six. It's shared from the perspective of a mum, dad, teenager, tweenager, six-year-old and even their pet dog (we took some creative licence with that one).

Mum's the word

"I felt joy when our home was sold, and our onward offer was accepted. My husband and I were delighted yet nervous, and as parents, we wondered how our children would react to leaving their familiar surroundings.

"To our relief, the children responded with incredible positivity, highlighting the adaptable nature of young minds, even in the face of a big change."

- Amelia, mum of three.

Fatherly advice

"The best advice I can give any parent during a home move is to keep the kids informed, have a sense of humour and perspective, control what you can and employ the right agent to handle your sale. Aim to be over-prepared rather than the opposite."

- Dan, dad of three.

Child's play

"I was a bit sad to leave my friend next door. But guess what? There's a girl next door at the new house, too. That made me excited! I thought our new house would be bigger, and I was right! There's more room for my toys."

- Olive, six.

Quick tip: Create a memory book



Before you leave, take the time to document your memories associated with the home. You might take photos of each room, collect stories from each family member and put them together in a scrapbook. This can be a comforting keepsake that celebrates the home's role in your lives.



It's a family affair – Moving experiences (continued)

Now let's hear from a tweenager (12 years old), a teenager (17 years old) and the family dog (18 months old).

We asked our young movers for advice for anyone in their age group whose families are moving home. Here's what they shared.

Stay positive

“If you're worried about the move, talk to someone about your feelings. Think of the fun parts of moving – maybe a bigger room, nearer friends, a new home. But it was annoying when our house was all packed up, ready to move, because I couldn't find my stuff. Overall, I'd say always look for the positives as there are plenty.”

– Nancy, tweenager.

Teen spirit

“My first thoughts were a bag of mixed emotions. I was excited about the prospect of getting a bigger room. But when the decision was made that we were selling our old home, I thought, oh no, they are going to make me pack and tidy my room. Start tidying and packing your room the minute you know you're selling/moving, and make sure the wifi is strong in the new place.”

– Harry, teenager.

It's a dog's life

“I knew something was changing when all these strangers kept turning up and looking around my house. They even put me outside sometimes so these humans could walk around my home.

“They gave me more treats when this happened, so I was happy. Going to the new place was filled with new smells and walks, and I got a new bed. I want the strangers to come to this house so I can get more treats again.”

– Lincoln, the dog.

Quick tip

Rover.com has a great article featuring 23 ways to help your pets adjust to a new home.



Marketing your home to attract family buyers

A good, experienced estate agent will help your home appeal directly to potential buyers best suited to it.

In this case, families usually sell to families.

A skilled agent knows this and will maximise your property's marketability to help you achieve the best possible price.

Here are just three of the many ways we'd tailor our marketing strategy to showcase your home as the perfect family setting:

1. Highlight family-friendly features

We'll focus on the aspects of your home that most appeal to families. This includes spacious kitchens, open-plan living areas, multiple bathrooms and child-friendly gardens. We'll also emphasise extra spaces like studies or conservatories, which are ideal for family activities and homework.

2. Promote local schools and amenities

Families often choose homes based on the quality of local schooling and amenities. Our marketing materials will include detailed information about local education options, parks, play centres and leisure facilities. Highlighting these points can make your property significantly more attractive to buyers with children.

3. Professional-standard photography

We use professional-standard photography to capture the essence of a family home. Our photos will focus on creating a warm, inviting atmosphere that resonates with families.

By strategically marketing your home's family-oriented features and local benefits, we aim to attract serious family buyers ready to move. This tried-and-tested approach leads to a quicker sale and the best price.

Quick tip



Think about why you bought your current home. What attracted you is likely to be similar to what other potential family buyers are looking for.



Let's play - A moving home word search

It's time to get the kids involved with this guide. Can they/you find all the words listed below?

W	H	D	Q	T	C	V	E	A	C	Y	Y	E	R	F
E	T	E	E	O	U	Z	M	Y	J	L	P	X	O	B
L	E	-	R	N	K	Q	O	K	H	I	C	C	T	Y
C	S	C	U	A	S	D	H	W	I	M	A	I	I	R
O	U	L	T	E	V	O	M	J	G	A	T	T	C	R
M	O	U	I	Q	S	D	K	A	X	F	F	I	I	O
E	H	T	N	Q	A	U	U	H	Q	I	S	N	L	L
H	W	T	R	W	L	F	B	O	X	E	S	G	O	L
T	E	E	U	N	E	I	G	H	B	O	U	R	S	A
S	N	R	F	V	A	L	U	A	T	I	O	N	C	V
Z	O	H	O	R	G	A	N	I	S	E	R	N	Z	O
F	F	Y	K	N	T	Z	N	S	K	V	I	Q	V	M
Y	F	U	C	T	N	E	G	A	E	T	A	T	S	E
Q	E	X	A	K	G	B	X	C	Y	O	J	B	Y	R
M	R	N	P	I	F	F	P	N	S	F	X	I	R	S

Look out for:

BOXES

ESTATE AGENT

SOLICITOR

NEW HOUSE

HOME

WELCOME

OFFER

MOVE

KEYS

PACK

FURNITURE

VALUATION

ORGANISE

FAMILY

SALE

EXCITING

REMOVAL LORRY

NEIGHBOURS

DE-CLUTTER

Quick tip



Plan a farewell ritual - having a formal goodbye can provide closure. This might be a small farewell party, a final walk-through of each room to recount memories, or a quiet moment to say goodbye to the house with your family.

Your step-by-step selling checklist

This checklist provides a guide through the steps of selling a family home, ensuring a thorough approach to achieving a successful sale.

	Yes	No
Family discussion: Discuss selling the home together. Ensure everyone understands the reasons and agrees on the timing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial review: Review your current mortgage, understand potential costs and set a budget for your next property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose an estate agent: Select a knowledgeable agent with experience selling family homes in your area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home preparation: Declutter, deep clean and make necessary repairs to boost appeal and value.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare for viewings: A daily tidy-up at the start of each day helps prepare you for viewings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your estate agent will/should help you with the following steps.		
Marketing strategy: Develop a comprehensive marketing plan with your agent, highlighting family-friendly features.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staging: Arrange your home to showcase its potential. Get advice from your estate agent about this.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional-standard photography: Arrange for high-quality photos of your home to be taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For sale: Put your home on the market and across the property portals with an accurate and engaging listing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review offers: Assess all offers received with your agent, considering the price and the buyer's circumstances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negotiations: Engage in negotiations, guided by your agent, to achieve the best possible price. Once agreed, start getting removal quotes if required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exchange contracts: Finalise the sale agreement and exchange contracts with the buyer (your solicitor leads on this).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion: Complete the transaction, transfer ownership and handle any remaining administrative tasks (solicitors deal with this).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving day: Arrange childcare if needed. And finally, good luck in your new home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thanks for reading our step-by-step guide to selling your family home.