



COOKE & CO

A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

# Six steps to a **successful** sale

**Come Live By The Sea**

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## **Welcome,**

Hello, my name is Damien Cooke and I'm the Managing Director of Cooke & Co Estate and Letting Agents.

At Cooke & Co, we genuinely love helping people move home successfully.

During the many years we've been in business, we've experienced pretty much everything that can, and sometimes does, happen during the process.

In this guide, we share everything we've learned so that you can feel confident about successfully selling your property.

It's a myth that moving home is always a stressful experience.

With proper planning, a good estate agent and excellent professional services, such as a good solicitor, your dream move should go, well, just like a dream.

This guide is designed to answer your questions in plain English (we don't like jargon, either).

However, we are always delighted to answer any other questions you have and to keep you informed at every step of the process.

Here's to a happy move,



**Damien Cooke MNAEA MARLA**  
**Founder and Managing Director**  
**Cooke & Co Estate and Letting Agents**

## Choosing an Exceptional Agent

So, you've made the decision to sell your property.  
**What next?**

**When selling your home, there are four things that are critical;**

The Price,  
The Agent,  
The Property,  
The Location

Of these four things, you are in control of three of them, the **FIRST** three.

Before the dawn of the internet, you only really had one option – to use an estate agent. Today, there are other choices, such as using an online-only agent or taking the even bigger step of marketing the property yourself.

Both alternatives offer savings on fees. **BUT**, and it's a big but, there's a huge difference between cost and value.

We suggest getting a Cooke & Co valuation expert to visit your home, along with two other agents, so you can compare approaches and valuations and discuss your needs.



## Choosing an Exceptional Agent Continued

**Here's what to look out for when choosing an agent to market your property.**

**1) Do they have a track record in selling properties like yours?** Ask for evidence of homes similar to yours that they have sold and achieved a good price on

**2) Do they have client testimonials?** A good agent will always have previous clients who will vouch for them or have positively reviewed them.

**3) Do you like them?** You'll be working closely with the agent you choose, so it's important that you like and trust them. If in doubt, go with your instinct.

**4) Fees and costs.** Remember the old saying, 'If you pay peanuts you get monkeys'? Well, it's never truer than in the world of estate agency. Those agents who offer very low fees are often desperate for instructions so they advertise very low commission fees to win your business. Agents work off commission, so they need to feel your property is worthwhile for them to work hard and get a quick sale.

**5) Where do they advertise?** Most buyers begin their search on the internet. So, ask the agents which portals they advertise on. It's also worth asking an agency how its marketing strategy differs from its competitors. What makes it stand out from the crowd? How will they ensure your property achieves a premium price? How do they handle enquiries?

**6) Do your homework.** Check how the agents are currently presenting properties. Are the photos of exceptional quality and eye catching? Do the property descriptions grab your attention?

**7) What kind of contracts do they offer?** Ask the agents about the length of their standard contracts. It can be as much as three to six months. Ours is 12 months.

## Preparing Your Property to Sell

Once you've chosen the agent you are comfortable with and confident in, it's time to prepare your property to go on sale.

You might have heard much of what we're about to say already. BUT it's definitely worth having a read, as what follows could be the difference between a quick sale at a great price or finding your property gets 'stuck' on the market.

### Top Tips:

#### 1. Clutter kills a sale.

Get organised and make sure anything that you no longer need or use is out of sight. It's time to be ruthless, so whether you are going to put it in storage, sell it or give it to charity, just make sure you do it.

#### 2. Clean every corner.

A tidy, clean, fresh smelling home has an instant appeal. If you can't face doing a major clean yourself, call in a cleaning company to do it for you.

#### 3. Lighten up.

Unless your home is blessed with natural light beaming in through floor-to-ceiling windows, there's a chance your home could benefit from some light therapy. Paint dark walls light, neutral colours; this alone will make any property feel more spacious.

#### 4. Think outside.

A common mistake people make when preparing their property for sale is to focus all their attention on the interior, overlooking the outdoor areas. So, with that in mind, make sure your garden lawn is cut, the barbeque is covered up, and that the outdoor space is neat and tidy in general.

#### 5. Repair and replace.

Whether it's a dripping tap, a crack in the plaster or a wonky blind, get it repaired or buy new ones. Try to look at your property from the perspective of a potential buyer.

At Cooke & Co, we will always advise you how to prepare your property in the best way.

## Strangers in YOUR House

Your home is now ready to sell and you've chosen an agent to market and sell it for the best possible price. That agent, we hope, is us

We will then visit the property, take clear photographs, create a detailed floor plan, and let you know when the property will go on the market.

It's quite an odd feeling having strangers turn up at your door and walk through your home. A warm welcome goes a long way. The more comfortable a person feels in your property, the more time they will take to look around and see if it is one they are really interested in.

Unlike many agents, we always aim to be present at viewings so that you have the minimum of disruption. Remember, these 'strangers' are all potential buyers.

## Top Tips:

### 1. The first impression is the only impression.

Make sure the front of your property is tidy. Even take a look near your home and ensure there's no windswept litter sending out the wrong message.

### 2. It's always worth having a tidy up...

when you know people are coming to view. Dirty dishes in the sink don't help a property's appeal.

### 3. If you have pets...

make sure they are somewhere safe. You want the viewer to focus on the appeal of your home, not your dog bowl or cat litter.

### 4. If you are selling in the winter...

make sure your home is kept warm. If you are selling in the summer the opposite applies; keep your windows open and make sure the property is cool.

### 5. Remember...

we're here to help so call us with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you might have.





## An Offer You Can Refuse

You've followed all the steps so far and people are coming through the door and sizing up your property.

An accurately priced property in an excellent location will get offers very quickly. It's not how long your home has been on the market, but how long the buyer has been in the market looking for a home just like yours. The ideal scenario is for people to want your property so much that they offer the asking price.

If buyers are competing for your property, this will drive the price up yet again.

However, there are several factors to consider aside from which buyer is willing to pay the most.

### 1. What's their situation?

Your agent needs to give you as much information as possible about the people making the offer. Do they have a property to sell? Would they be in a chain if they did?

### 2. Do they have a mortgage offer already approved?

The ideal buyer is a cash one. This scenario often sees the whole process take far less time to complete.

### 3. As the seller...

you are often in the strongest position, but always treat the buyer the way you would like to be treated.

### 4. The 'offers' part of the sale ...

is where a good estate agent proves their value. So, you should have a relationship with them that means you are in constant contact and that you feel totally informed about what's happening.

### 5. Remember...

that accepting an offer is just another part of the process and there are a few more hurdles to overcome yet.





## The Legal Stuff aka Conveyancing

Even before you have agreed the sale of your home to new buyers, it's time to get the legal ball rolling.

Appointing a solicitor early and getting the standard forms completed and copies of guarantees, certificates etc in order can shave 2-3 weeks off your conveyancing timeline. This goes a long way to preventing unnecessary hold ups later on down the line.

Conveyancing involves legally transferring home ownership from you to the buyer. It begins when the offer on your house is accepted and ends when the buyer receives the keys.

**Understanding the process will help ensure there are no nasty surprises along the way.**

- 1) You'll need to instruct a solicitor, ideally one who specialises in conveyancing work. Beware, as not all solicitors are as experienced in this field as others.
- 2) Most people choose a conveyancing solicitor who has been recommended to them by a friend or family. This is a wise move.
- 3) Your appointed solicitor will then draw up a draft contract or terms of engagement with you, setting out their charges and deposits required.
- 4) Your solicitor will write to your buyer's solicitor to confirm they are instructed and prepare a copy of the draft contract and any other details, such as the property's title and the standard forms.
- 5) You'll be asked for several items of paperwork, including warranties, any relevant planning permissions etc. Start preparing these once you know you've accepted an offer. It will speed up the process.
- 6) All being well, it usually takes around 16 weeks to complete the legal side of a sale.
- 7) Once contracts have been exchanged and a completion date has been set, it's time to look at who you need to tell that you're moving.

Please note, this only covers the sale of your property and not your purchase. At Cooke & Co. we are always happy to help and share our experience with you if you have any questions.

## Let's Get Moving

Once you've exchanged contracts, there are still a lot of things to think about and to prepare.

When you get your moving date, this checklist will come in very useful. Expect to be given a period of time, usually a couple of weeks, between exchanging contracts and completion of your sale.

### Don't forget to:

- Check your home insurance – make sure you have cover from the day you move into your new home.
- Get written quotes from several removal firms. Get references and check the limits of their insurance.
- If you're not using professional removers, ask friends to help.
- Notify the relevant utility companies of your departure and take note of the meter readings.
- Start getting rid of possessions you no longer need. Decide which items can be taken to a charity shop, sold at a car boot sale, or offered to your friends.
- If you need new furniture or carpets for your new property, order them now and arrange delivery for when you move in.
- Start packing non-essential items such as books and non-seasonal clothing into boxes.
- Deregister from your doctor, dentist, and optician if you're moving out of the area.
- Visit the post office and arrange for your post to be forwarded (you will be charged a fee for this service).
- If you have children or pets, arrange for someone to look after them during the move.
- Make a list of everyone who should know about the move. Send out change of address messages via email or the post.
- Finalise arrangements with your removal company. Confirm arrival times and make sure your removers have directions to your new address.
- Arrange a time to collect the keys for your new home from the estate agent.
- Notify the bank of any changes to direct debits and standing orders.

## The Cooke & Co. Promise

We hope you enjoyed our guide to successfully selling your home. It is always our aim to help our clients and make the sale process as smooth as possible. That's why we created the guide.

We're an independent agency and we believe that's what gives us the edge over many of our rivals.

**We've set out our promises to our clients below.**

**1) Honesty.** Estate agents don't have the best reputation and sometimes deservedly so. However, at Cooke & Co., we will ALWAYS be honest in our dealings with you. In fact, honesty is one of our core values.

**2) Accessible.** You will be given the mobile numbers to the directors who are assisting in your sale. We take calls out of hours at times that suit you, not us.

**3) Experience.** Our team has a total of more than 120 years' experience in estate agency. There's hardly anything that we haven't seen or problems we haven't solved.

**4) Passion.** It may sound corny but it's true. At Cooke & Co., we are all passionate about property, otherwise, we'd be in different careers. We bring that enthusiasm and passion to the process of selling your property successfully.

We would love the opportunity to meet you, discuss your needs, and help you achieve your property dreams.

Contact us today at your nearest branch.

Thanks for reading,

**Damien Cooke**

## Why We Can Help You

Selecting the best agent to help you sell your property is a big decision, especially with so much already going on in your life.

**Here's why we like to think you'd be wise to choose us to work for you.**

### Experience

We've been helping the people of Kent buy and sell their property since 1992. And collectively, our team has more than 120 years of experience.

### Results

94% of our new clients are recommended to us by past clients.  
74% of our sales achieve asking price or above

### Reviews

We are 5 Star rated on Google and 4.7 Star rated on Facebook and would be happy to put you in touch with some of our past clients so you can hear their experiences with us.

### Always Looking Ahead

We have invested heavily in virtual viewings, video tours, and a raft of other new technologies. This means you know your property will be expertly marketed, which leads to achieving premium prices.

### You Focused

We are focused on you. That means getting you the results you are looking for. And we don't just talk the talk, we walk the walk. We will be with you every step of the way to advise, support, and celebrate with.

We've built our reputation on the quality of our relationships rather than the number of transactions. This has led to most of our business coming from word of mouth.

### Thank you

Thanks for taking the time to read our guide.

**If you want to chat about anything contained in this guide or have any questions, please don't hesitate to call us.**