

MILNE MOSER

SOLICITORS + ESTATE AGENTS

Whilst estate agents have been given the green light to enable home moves, it is essential that government guidelines are followed, if we are to do so, safely. This is not just for safety of our staff, but for your safety, too.

Things to consider

Before deciding to move, you should consider the following:

- The home moving process has not returned to normality.
- You cannot move home if you have coronavirus or are self-isolating.
- You will be encouraged to be as flexible as possible during the period of the pandemic, dates may have to change if one party becomes infected or has to self-isolate.
- You will be required to comply with government health and safety guidance which can be found using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#advice-to-industry>
- The government has advised that it may become necessary to pause all home moves for a short period of time to manage the spread of coronavirus.

How will things work?

Our offices

- ✓ Our offices remain closed to the public until further notice. In the meantime, we are working remotely and continuing to do business as usual.

Viewings

- ✓ Initial viewings of properties should be carried out virtually by visiting our website www.milnemoser.co.uk, Rightmove or On the Market.
- ✓ Physical viewings should only take place if you have a strong interest in the property and where you are seriously considering making an offer on a property.
- ✓ Physical viewings of a property are by appointment only.
- ✓ We will ask you whether you are showing symptoms or have been asked to self-isolate, before allowing a physical viewing of a property to take place.

- ✓ Where our staff are accompanying viewings, they will wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules.

Sellers

- ✓ If your property is being viewed, you should open all the internal doors and turn on all lights, prior to the viewing.
- ✓ Before a viewing, wipe down surfaces, such as door handles and light switches, with standard household cleaning products.
- ✓ You should allow access to handwashing facilities and ideally separate towels/paper towels.
- ✓ We encourage you to vacate your property whilst a viewing is taking place, in order to minimise your contact with those not in your household. Otherwise, ensure that you follow social distancing rules.
- ✓ After a viewing, ensure all surfaces, such as door handles and light switches, are cleaned with standard household cleaning products and that towels are washed or safely disposed, as appropriate.

Buyers

- ✓ When viewing a property, wash your hands/use hand sanitiser immediately after entering the property.
- ✓ Avoid touching surfaces where possible.
- ✓ You should ensure that you restrict the number of people that accompany you are from your household and are kept to a minimum.
- ✓ If you need to have young children with you, try to keep them from touching surfaces and ensure they wash/sanitise their hands regularly.
- ✓ Follow social distancing rules at all times.

Making Offers

You can still make offers on properties, as usual, by telephone or by email.

- ✓ Buyers may wish to carry out a further viewing of a property, which is permitted, but all of the above viewing guidelines should be followed.
- ✓ Buyers can still arrange for tradespeople to visit a property. If this is necessary, social distancing rules should be observed by the tradesperson and the seller and if possible, the seller should stay in another room.

- ✓ Surveyors and EPC Assessors are now able to visit properties and carry out surveys. Social distancing rules should be followed and the seller should try to remain in another room, to minimise contact.
- ✓ Surveyors and EPC Assessors should also follow government guidance for professionals working in other people's homes.
- ✓ If a survey is taking place, the seller should ensure that the surveyor has access to all the parts of the property they need to inspect.
- ✓ Visits cannot take place if anyone in the seller's household is showing symptoms of coronavirus or are self-isolating.

Conveyancing

Solicitors and other conveyancers will be aiming to conduct as much of your conveyancing transaction, remotely. Where face to face visits are absolutely necessary, social distancing rules should be followed and hygiene measures should be put in place.

You should also note:

- ✓ Solicitors and other conveyancers are required to promote flexibility when making provisions for exchange of contracts and completion.
- ✓ Solicitors and other conveyancers are also required to prioritise support for anyone who is clinically vulnerable or shielding, or with symptoms of coronavirus or self-isolating, which may involve changing a completion date.

Agreeing a Date

This is where it gets tricky. Ordinarily, sellers and buyers try to leave a gap of a week or two between contracts being exchanged and completion. This gives both parties time to get organised, with the certainty of a definite date for completion.

Due to the risk of any party (and this will apply up and down the chain if there are many parties to a chain) becoming ill with coronavirus, most home-moves are now carried out with simultaneous exchange and completion (where both events occur on the same day). This means that none of the parties have the certainty that completion will take place on the agreed date but does mean that contracts will not be breached if one party is suddenly unable to move due to coronavirus infection. Whilst the government is recommending special contractual conditions, these are untested and therefore viewed as being riskier to both buyer and seller.

Moving your belongings

Removal firms have also now been given the green light to carry out home moves, although they will have to following government guidance. We encourage you to:

- ✓ Contact removal firms as early as possible in advance of your move.
- ✓ Clarify what, if any, cancellation fees they will charge.
- ✓ Do as much of your own packing, as possible.
- ✓ Clean your belongings and all surfaces with standard domestic cleaning products before they are handled by others, including your removal firm.
- ✓ Your removal company should contact you in advance to check that no one in your household is showing symptoms of coronavirus or self-isolating.
- ✓ Whilst the removers are in your home, ensure that all internal doors are open.
- ✓ Seek to minimise contact with the removal crew, following social distancing rules.
- ✓ Wash your hands and avoid touching surfaces where possible.
- ✓ Although tempting, do not provide refreshments. The removal crew should bring their own.
- ✓ Ensure that you provide access to hand washing facilities, using separate towels or paper towels, which should be washed or disposed of safely, afterwards.
- ✓ Removers should wash their hands on entering your home.

Milne Moser Property Limited

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