

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 will re-open from 19th July 2021. We have a maximum number of clients in our offices at any one time.
- ✓ Although Government guidance has changed, we ask that you wear a mask when entering our premises.
- ✓ We will have sanitisation stations located at our doorways, for you to use on entry.

Viewings

- ✓ Initial viewings of properties need to be carried out virtually by visiting our website www.milnemoser.co.uk or Rightmove.
- ✓ 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 where possible.
- ✓ Only your household, plus one other household, can attend a viewing. We ask that this is kept to a maximum of 4 adults.
- ✓ If you need to have young children with you, try to keep them from touching surfaces and ensure they wash/sanitise their hands regularly.
- ✓ Please wait outside until our team have entered the property, wiped down and carried out a pre-viewing inspection.
- ✓ You will be asked either by a team member or the owner to sanitise or wash your hands prior to entering a property. If you wish to bring your own gloves this is fine but they must be new and only used for the viewing to avoid any cross contamination.
- ✓ Our staff will have opened all doors where possible, wiped down with standard household cleaning products and turned on lights where required. We ask if you do touch anything to please let our staff member know so we can wipe the area down.
- ✓ Advice is to keep viewings as short as possible and for discussions to take place outdoors. To help with this we will be aiming to have a 15 minute appointment. These will end in the garden or outside where any questions can then be answered.

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 and wear a mask.
- ✓ 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 the appointment. We ask that this is limited to your household and one other household. We ask that this is kept to a maximum of 4 adults.
- ✓ If you need to have young children with you, try to keep them from touching surfaces and ensure they wash/sanitise their hands regularly.
- ✓ Please wait outside until our staff members invite you into the property.
- ✓ Always wear a face covering and follow social distancing where possible.

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.
- ✓ Surveyors and EPC Assessors are able to visit properties and carry out surveys. Social distancing rules should be followed where possible, 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 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 are able to carry out home moves, although they will have to following government guidance. (Please check with your removal firm if you are moving to a different area as their policies may be different). 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 where possible.

- ✓ 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 and be wearing a mask.

Milne Moser Property Limited

19th July 2021.