Step By Step Guide To Buying a Property

Welcome to Your Property Guide 🏡

Buying a home is often described as one of the most stressful things you'll ever do – but I believe it should also be one of the most exciting.

I've created this guide to walk you through the process step-by-step, making it easier, clearer, and (hopefully) a lot less stressful.

While this guide covers most situations, no two journeys are the same – so if you have any questions at any point, I'm here to help.

📲 DM me on Instagram: [@your_property_mate](https://instagram.com/your_property_mate)
📩 Or email: yourpropertymate@hotmail.com

Let's make your home-buying journey exciting and less stressful.

What You'll Learn:

1. Speaking to a Mortgage Adviser

2. Viewing Properties the Right Way

3. Making an Offer with Confidence

4. Submitting a Full Mortgage Application

5. Choosing the Right Solicitor

6. Understanding Your Mortgage Offer

7. Getting a Proper Survey

8. Moving Through Conveyancing

9. Exchanging Contracts Safely

10. Completion Day Tips

🟢 *Step One: Speak to a Mortgage Adviser*

This is the **first thing you should do** – not after you've found a property.

A mortgage adviser will help you understand **how much you can borrow**. It's not as simple as 4, 5 or 6x your salary.

Lenders look at:

- Your income
- Credit commitments
- Deposit size
- Spending habits
- Age

💡 **Tip:** Every lender is different – that's why using a mortgage adviser (not just going direct to a bank) is so important.

🔍 Use a Whole-of-Market Adviser

Look for someone who's **Whole of Market** – this means they can search across all lenders, not just a select few.
This gives you the **best chance of getting the right deal** for your situation.

✅ Want a recommendation? Just ask – I'll connect you with the adviser I trust.

💰 What About Fee-Free Brokers?

I'd avoid them. As an ex-mortgage adviser, I know how much time goes into:

- Finding the right deal
- Submitting the application
- Sorting the compliance paperwork

Fee-free brokers often work on volume – so they may have big workloads and less time for you.
Expect to budget **£499–£799** for a good adviser. It's worth it.

🕒 Speak to an Adviser Early

The earlier, the better.
Don't wait until you've found a property – by then it might be too late if:

- You've got too much outstanding credit
- You've been dipping into your overdraft
- There's an issue with your income or credit file

If you speak to an adviser early, they can help you:

- Plan ahead
- Improve your chances
- Avoid common mistakes

🎯 You're not expected to know all this — that's their job. And mine now too. 😉

📝 Get an AIP Before Viewing

Once you're ready to start looking at properties, your adviser will:

- Research lenders
- Apply for an **Agreement in Principle (AIP)**

An AIP isn't a mortgage offer, but it's a strong signal that you're ready to buy.
Most lenders do a **soft credit check**, so it won't affect your score. Once you have this, you'll know exactly **what you can afford** — and estate agents will take you more seriously.

🟢 *Step Two: Viewing Properties*

Be prepared. Be sharp. Look beyond the surface.

🤝 Build Relationships with Estate Agents

You want agents to take you seriously. Here's how to stand out:

✅ Be clear on what you're looking for
✅ Bring your **Agreement in Principle (AIP)**
✅ Have **proof of deposit** ready
✅ Show that you're a confident and committed buyer

This helps agents understand your situation — and makes them more likely to tip you off on properties.

🔎 What to Check During a Viewing

Don't let fresh paint and nice furniture fool you. Look deeper:

- **Boiler** - Age, condition, service history. If unsure, get a gas engineer in.
- **Electrics** - Check the fuse board/consumer unit. Rewiring is messy and costly.
- **Storage & Extension Potential** - Is there space to grow? This could save you from moving again later.
- **Damp** - Look for signs on walls and ceilings. Some damp is easy to fix, others aren't.
- **Windows & Seals** - Poor seals mean drafts and high heating bills. Replacing windows is expensive.

- **Roof** - If safe, check the loft for light or damage. Compare roofs nearby – if everyone else has had a new one, you might need one soon.
- **Cracks** - Diagonal cracks (inside or out) may point to structural issues. Get these checked by a professional.

🧠 Pro Tip:

Even though a **survey will cover most of these**, it's smart to spot issues early – you can factor them into your offer.

🚩 Don't Be Fooled by Looks

Nice décor doesn't mean the place is sound. Always look beyond the surface.
If in doubt, ask a professional.

🟢 *Step Three: Making Your Offer*

Be prepared. Be strategic. Stay positive.

🎯 Do Your Research First

Before you make an offer:

✅ Check recently sold prices in the area
✅ Compare the condition of those properties to the one you want
✅ Understand why you're offering what you are

If your offer is below asking, **explain your reasoning**. This shows you're serious – not just throwing out random numbers.

🗣️ How to Submit Your Offer

1. **Speak** to the estate agent first
2. Then follow up in writing (email is best)
3. Always ask for confirmation that your offer has been passed to the seller

Remember: estate agents work for the seller – not you. Their job is to get the best price possible for the seller.

🤝 If Your Offer Is Rejected

Ask if there's **room to negotiate**.
If there's no flexibility and you're not willing to pay the asking price, **move on**. Don't waste time.

💬 Final Word: Stay Positive

You might not get the first house you offer on – or even the second or third.

But trust the process.
✅ I've seen it happen time and time again – buyers end up in the home that's *meant* for them.
Keep your head up. Your time will come.

🟢 *Step Four: Submit Your Full Mortgage Application*

Time to get things moving. Speed matters here.

📞 Speak to Your Adviser Again

Once your offer has been accepted, go straight back to your mortgage adviser.
They'll now submit your **full mortgage application** to the lender.

This is where things start to get real – and delays can be costly.

📑 Send Documents Quickly

Be responsive and organised.
✅ Send any documents requested as soon as possible
✅ Don't make your adviser chase you – it slows everything down

The process can already take time, so don't be the reason it takes longer.

🔍 What Happens Next?

1. Lender reviews your application and documents
2. It goes to underwriting – where more checks may be done
3. They might ask for more paperwork – respond fast
4. A valuation is booked (timing of this depends on the lender)

💡 Choosing the Right Mortgage Product

👉 **One big tip: ask about a *portable mortgage*.**

This means you can move your mortgage to a new home later without paying Early Repayment Charges (ERCs).
I've had clients who wanted to move just a year or two into a 5-year deal – luckily, we made sure they had a portable option.

You don't know your neighbours yet. Or how life might change. **Give yourself flexibility.**

📊 It's Not Just About the Rate

Yes, interest rate matters – but look at the full picture:

✅ Is it portable?
✅ Are there early repayment charges?

✅ What's the term and flexibility like?
✅ How will it affect you in 2-5 years?

Your adviser will guide you – but make sure you ask questions and understand the terms.

🟢 Step Five: Choose Your Solicitor

This is important – choose wisely.

🔎 Get at least 2 Quotes

While you're sorting your mortgage paperwork, start gathering quotes from solicitors (also known as conveyancers). They handle:

✅ All the legal work
✅ Contracts and property checks
✅ Transferring ownership

💡 Don't Start Too Early

Once you've picked your solicitor, **accept the quote** but tell them **not to begin any work until your mortgage offer is confirmed**.

Why?
If your application is declined and the solicitor has started searches or paperwork, **you'll still have to pay** for that work – even if the deal falls through.

📤 Inform Your Mortgage Adviser

Once chosen, give your solicitor's details to your mortgage adviser – they'll need it for your full application. Don't delay this step.

📞 Pick Someone Responsive

A slow solicitor can delay everything. Make sure you choose someone who's:

✅ Recommended
✅ Easy to get hold of
✅ Clear in their communication

Want a solid recommendation?
DM me and I'll connect you with the solicitors I use for my clients.

🟢 Step Six: Mortgage Offer & Protection Cover

You've got the offer — now protect what matters.

📄 Your Mortgage Offer

If your documents check out and the valuation is fine, the lender will issue your **formal mortgage offer**.

✅ Read it carefully
✅ Double-check all the details
✅ If anything's unclear, ask your mortgage adviser to explain it

This is a legally binding agreement – make sure it's spot on before moving forward.

🛡️ Protection Cover (Don't Skip This)

This bit often gets overlooked – but it's just as important as your mortgage.

Speak to your adviser about cover options like:

- **Life Insurance** - pays off your mortgage if the worst happens
- **Critical Illness Cover** - supports you if you're diagnosed with a serious condition
- **Income Protection** - helps cover your bills if you can't work due to illness or injury

It's not about fear – it's about making sure you and your family are financially secure, no matter what.

💬 **If you need a trusted protection adviser, just let me know.**

🟢 Step Seven: Instruct a Surveyor (After Mortgage Offer)

Don't skip this. It could save you thousands.

🏡 Book the Survey After Your Mortgage Offer

Only instruct a **RICS-qualified surveyor after** your mortgage offer has been issued.
If you pay for a survey and your mortgage falls through, you've wasted your money.

You can use the lender's surveyor, but I recommend using an **independent one**.
Why?
If a lender sees issues in the report, they might **pull your mortgage offer**.

The lender carries out a valuation report regardless, but this is for them, not you.

A separate survey gives you full control – and the insight is just for you.

🔍 Types of Surveys

Pick the right one for the type of property you're buying:

1. **Level 1 (Circa £200)**
   Basic check – for newer homes in good condition. No repair advice included.
2. **Level 2 Survey Only (Circa £500)**
   For standard homes. More detailed but doesn't include valuation.
3. **Level 2 Survey + Valuation (Circa £500+)**
   Same as above, but includes market value + rebuild cost (for insurance).
4. **Level 3 (Circa £800+)**
   For older or run-down properties. In-depth, structural-level detail.

💬 My advice? **At minimum, go for a Level 2.**
If there are any signs of structural issues, go for a Level 3.

⚠️ I Skipped a Survey Once...

I didn't bother with a survey and found **major damp issues** once we ripped the kitchen out. It cost more to fix than the survey would've.

Lesson learned. Don't make the same mistake.

💷 Use the Survey to Renegotiate (If Needed)

If problems are found, you can go back to the seller and renegotiate the price, for example, I saved £10,000 on one of my investment properties due to roof and structural issues found at survey.

Here's what might happen:

✅ **Seller knocks off the full cost** of repairs
✅ **Seller agrees to fix issues before completion**
✅ **You split the cost** (and reduce the price accordingly)
❌ **Seller refuses** – you'll have to decide if it's still worth it

Even if you walk away, be glad you got the survey – it could have saved you thousands down the line.

✔️ If the Survey's All Clear?

You've just bought peace of mind.
Knowing your home is sound = money well spent.

🟢 *Step Eight: Instruct Your Solicitor (After Mortgage Offer)*

Only start the legal work once your mortgage is confirmed.

📅 Timing Is Key

Once your **mortgage offer is issued**, it's safe to tell your solicitor to begin.
Before that, hold off – because if your mortgage falls through after they've started searches, **you'll still have to pay for that work.**

📄 Be Ready for Paperwork

You'll get a lot of documents. Some of it will be unfamiliar – that's totally normal.

✅ Set time aside to go through everything
✅ Don't delay – the faster you return documents, the quicker things move
✅ Stay organised and keep copies of everything

🤯 Feeling Overwhelmed?

You're not alone – this part can feel like a lot.
But that's **why you have a solicitor** – lean on them to guide you.

And if you're stuck, your mortgage adviser may also be able to help.

Don't let confusion cause delays. Ask. Clarify. Keep moving.

🟢 *Step Nine: Exchange of Contracts*

This is where it becomes legally binding.

🔁 What Is Exchange?

It's when both parties sign and swap contracts – either:

1. **Exchange & complete on the same day**
2. **Exchange, then complete a few days/weeks later**
   (This gives you time to sort removals, utilities, etc.)

⚠️ What Changes After Exchange?

Once contracts are exchanged:

✅ The seller is legally obliged to sell
✅ You are legally obliged to buy – **at the agreed price**

And that means **you now need to insure the property**.

🔥 Why Insurance Is Critical

If the house is damaged after exchange – even completely destroyed – **you still have to buy it.**

Let's say it burns down between exchange and completion...
You're still buying it. That's the law.

💬 *"I'm no expert in the going rate for a pile of ash, but I'm pretty sure it's not worth what you're paying."*

So the second you exchange contracts – **get buildings insurance in place**.

🟢 *Step Ten: Completion*

This is it – you get the keys! 🏡

🎉 What Happens Now?

You've officially completed the purchase.
You pick up the keys, step into your new home, and start the next chapter of your life.
Massive congratulations.

📋 Don't Forget These Final Jobs:

✅ **Take meter readings** as soon as you arrive (gas, electric, water)
✅ **Contact utility companies** to set up your accounts
✅ **Change your address** with:

- Your bank
- Your employer
- The DVLA
- Any subscriptions or service providers

✅ **Redirect your mail** with Royal Mail while you get everything updated.

🧠 *Final Words of Wisdom*

Don't overstretch yourself.

It's easy to get caught up chasing the *perfect* house – but remember this:
There's no point having your dream home if you can't afford to enjoy life inside it.

A house should bring freedom and pride – not pressure.

If you're skint every month, stuck in all the time, you'll end up resenting the very place you worked so hard for.

Be smart. Buy well. And always leave space to actually *live*.

🙌 *Stay Connected & Spread the Word*

If this guide helped you, please **share my page** @your_property_mate with friends and family — it might make their journey easier too.

Thanks for trusting me to guide you through the buying process.

If you'd like help with your own situation — or just want to talk it through — you can **book a free 30-minute Zoom call** with me here:
👉 🌐 Free Property Call by @Your_Property_Mate | Stan

Need trusted contacts? I can also connect you with **mortgage advisers, solicitors, surveyors**, and **protection specialists** I personally recommend.

Wishing you all the best in your property journey.

Your Property Mate – Kev 🏡