

VALUATIONS AND HOME REPORTS FOR EMPTY PROPERTIES



Summary

This guide aims to assist owners to research the value of their empty home, and on preparing the property for sale.

How much is my property worth?

If you are planning to sell your empty home, you will need to know how much the property is worth, to ensure that you set a realistic asking price.

The currently accepted way to get a clear idea of what "market value" might be, is to look at what similar properties have actually sold for in the very recent past and then to adjust for property condition and area between that house and yours.

The market is not the same day after day, and it can vary from one week to the next. As an example there are not as many buyers in the market during the Easter and summer holidays or the few weeks before or after. There are not as many buyers in the market before Christmas until after the New Year. So "market value" is a variable, depending on time of year.

Another important variable is the number of similar properties already for sale in that area. If there are four similar properties on the market at the same time and only two active buyers - then two properties won't sell. If there is only one property on the market and two buyers, then it might sell in competition and achieve a higher price.

You need to do some research of what is currently on the market and what has recently sold, then take into consideration how many buyers there seem to be for your type of property and the market timing to determine what would be a fair market value. It is then up to you to decide upon an 'asking price' strategy.

Getting this first step right can make the difference in getting a prompt sale and a fair price. Selling your property promptly reduces the cost of bills such as mortgage repayments, utility bills, buildings insurance and council tax.

Estate Agents

Usually when you are considering marketing your property a valuation from an estate agent is free. The agent can take into account property condition and location. They may also have similar properties on the market which will give a good price comparison. Because Agents do want you to market your property with them, they will advise you of the upper limit of the valuation. It would be advisable to get a number of valuations. You should also consider the level of service the agent is offering, including the coverage that your property will have in newspapers and online. Once you obtain the valuations you will be able to consider the viability of selling or retaining the property and possibly letting it for a period of time.

Online house price calculators

Online house price calculators can provide an initial, very rough estimate of the likely market value of your property. They don't take factors such as the condition of your property into account, and may be based on sales activity that is historic.

Zoopla sold price comparison

<http://www.zoopla.co.uk>

Our Property House Sale Price Data

<http://www.ourproperty.co.uk/>

Nationwide House Price Index Calculator

<http://www.nationwide.co.uk/about/house-price-index/house-price-calculator>

Professional valuations

You could appoint a Royal Institute of Chartered Surveys (RICS) surveyor. A surveyor may provide a more accurate valuation based on property condition and location. This can give a more accurate figure for setting an asking price. A RICS valuation can be less expensive than obtaining a Home Report, but you could consider having both services done at the same time.

To find a RICS surveyor in your area, go to the RICS website at <http://www.ricsfirms.com/>

Home reports

Homes in Scotland which are marketed for sale are required to have a Home Report. This is a pack of three documents: a Single Survey (which includes a professional valuation), an Energy Performance Certificate and a Property Questionnaire.

Producing a home report is likely to cost between £500 and £700 plus VAT, depending on the size and value of your property.

The Home Report contains detailed information, and can identify works that the owner might carry out before marketing the property, or pricing the property to take into account works identified in the Home Report. Purchasers and their representatives will take into account any concerns raised within a Home Report, and therefore you are advised to either carry out works, or obtain estimates in order to increase your chances of a successful sale.

There are companies who will defer the cost of a Home Report until the point of sale, or the owner decides to remove the property from the market. The companies listed on this guide are an example of the services on offer, however there will be other companies who offer this service and you are encouraged to carry out your own research.

Further information on Home Reports for buying and selling properties in Scotland can be found here on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/BuyingSelling/Home-Report>

The Consumer Focus Scotland guide can be downloaded here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/BuyingSelling/Home-Report/HomeinScotland>

Exceptions

If your home is unsafe, unsuitable for habitation or scheduled for demolition then you do not have to provide a home report. More information is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/BuyingSelling/Home-Report/buyers/advice

Lists of companies/starting points

There are many ways to market your property. Some companies are suggested below, but you should do your own research.

Finding an Estate Agent

Rightmove

<http://www.rightmove.co.uk/estate-agents.html>

Zoopla

<http://www.zoopla.co.uk/find-agents/estate-agents/directory/a>

Prime Location

<http://www.primelocation.com/find-agents/>

Your Move

<http://www.your-move.co.uk/>

Online estate agents

Own Move

<http://www.ownmove.com/instant-valuation>

Express Estate

<http://www.expressestateagency.co.uk>

Scottish House Move

<http://www.scottishhousemove.com/>

S1 Homes

<http://www.s1homes.com/>

Home Reports

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) has an online directory of chartered surveyors in Scotland and guides to understanding property surveys and home reports.

Directory: <https://www.ricsfirms.com/>

Phone 0870 333 1600

Online Guide to home reports:

<http://www.rics.org/uk/knowledge/consumer-guides/home-surveys/>

Contact the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership

Contact the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership to discuss any of the above options. The Empty Homes Adviser can give you more information about how your local council may be able to help you.

- Email: emptyhomes@shelter.org.uk
- Telephone: 0344 515 1941