

Re-Opening the Home Moving Market Safely May 2020

A cross industry guide to re-opening the housing market, enabling people to move safely will published today. The collaborative industry guide sets out in detail how home moves can take place while still fully complying with social distancing measures and Public Health guidance.

“Re-Opening the Home Moving Market Safely” delivers practical advice for all involved in the home moving process and focuses on physical contact points and times when professionals would need to enter private residential properties.

The guide was developed collaboratively by the residential sector and professional organisations’ representatives. Specifically, it is relevant to property agents, mortgage advisers, property managers, property lawyers/conveyancers, surveyors, energy assessors, home removal, and also associated professionals, such as those contractors involved in property development, management, and the home moving processes in the UK.

The guidance approved by the Property Energy Professionals Association is the first in a series and will be followed by consumer guidance and further sector specific guidance. The contents have been shared with Government, industry regulators and Public Health authorities. As the situation is constantly evolving, information will be updated regularly, and sector specific guidance will be continuously added.

Recommendations include those for individual behaviour, client engagement and transparency, how ID checks can take place, and only allowing office attendance from clients by personal appointment. Consideration must also be given to video viewing and checking the COVID-19 status of occupants. It also states that ideally one professional and two adults maximum can take part in a physical viewing, and that these should take place outside of commute times. Terms of engagement/client letters must be amended to confirm restrictions or information on the physical inspection/visit.

The guidance will also help industry professionals and firms advise clients and/ or occupiers on how to prepare for a viewing/inspection/ visit. In accordance with public health guidance, it advises high risk category clients and occupiers, not to be present at viewings wherever possible. There will be a separate document published later aimed at consumers wishing to buy and sell property.

Andrew Parkin, Chairman of the Property Energy Professionals Association (PEPA) commented:

This pan-industry guidance complements that which has been issued by Government and is fundamental to ensuring the controlled and safe reactivation of the property market. With energy assessors routinely visiting all properties listed for sale or rent they can play an important role in ensuring that not only are they conforming to the new ways of working but that consumers are fully aware of and complying with all the relevant guidance.

Consumer quote:

Kate Faulkner, Chair of the Home Buying & Selling Group

The re-opening of the property market is incredibly important for those currently stuck in properties which are no longer suitable for them. However, both property professionals and consumers need to make sure they adhere to these new guidelines so everyone can move safely. The property sector has worked incredibly hard to ensure these guidelines allow buying, selling and renting a home to be done safely, which is of paramount importance. Consumers will need to be patient while the industry gears up to move them.