

## UK PUBLIC GARDENS TO VISIT

BEAUTIFUL GARDENS TO VISIT IN THE UK BEFORE THE WINTER ENDS

**GOVERNMENT RECAP**  
A LOOK AT THE RECENT  
GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

**LONDON WINTER RUN**  
BIGGEST WINTER RUN OF  
LONDON SET TO TAKE PLACE

**ROMANTIC MOVIES**  
GET READY TO WATCH THE  
PERFECT MOVIE FOR FEB

**SIX NATIONS RUGBY**  
GET READY FOR THE  
RUGBY SIX NATIONS



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## WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION!

The month of love is here with Valentine's day just around the corner and while temperatures are typically at their lowest this month, property market activity is quite the opposite, as we explore on pages 2&3 the many ways the industry is booming this month, while a complementary recap on recent government activity is covered on pages 4&5.

Though temperatures are low, this means many public gardens in the UK are perhaps at their most beautiful, and we guide you through all the best of them on pages 6&7, to help ignite those romantic sparks. Another reason to embrace the bitter winter weather is for health and fitness, and for charity, as pages 8&9 promote the up-and-coming Cancer Research London Run with all fundraising details provided.

But whether you'll be indulging in the above ideas or not, we all appreciate the warm and cosy indoors most of the time during weeks like these, and what better way to enjoy it than with some delicious food and cocktails? Pages 12&13 enlighten you to some lesser-known romantic recipes and drinks. Pair that with some on-screen entertainment and you're set – pages 10&11 cover the newest TV and a big film release for this month, while pages 14&15 preview the England games for the Rugby Guinness Six Nations, as well as the UK Athletics Indoor Championships.

So, take a sip of your Rose & Raspberry Fizz to stir those romantic juices, take a spot next to the fireplace, and enjoy this month's magazine!

**Daniel Evans**  
Editor

Despite the difficulties it has faced recently, the UK property market is exhibiting signs of resilience and recovery

With many favourable factors influencing the market's trajectory, this month may be an exciting time for investors, buyers, and sellers alike. These include the emergence of sustainable housing, changing lifestyle trends, and the possible reduction of inflation and interest rates.

### STAMP DUTY DEADLINE CONTINUES TO STIMULATE MARKET ACTIVITY

The property market is still being stimulated by the upcoming stamp duty changes scheduled for 1st April. This spike in activity is especially noticeable among first-time buyers and those buying more expensive properties, as buyers are scrambling to finish transactions before the deadline in order to avoid higher costs. Because of the increased demand in the market, there is more competition and a rise in property prices.

Buyers and sellers are strongly encouraged to act now to take advantage of current climate conditions.

### INTEREST RATE STABILITY AND POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS

The Bank of England may start lowering interest rates again this year following a period of high rates intended to control inflation. This could significantly improve the housing market by making borrowing more accessible and affordable. Mortgages would be more appealing with lower interest rates, especially for first-time buyers who have had difficulty with high rates in recent years. Since buyers are more likely to buy property when borrowing costs are lower, a decrease in interest rates may result in an increase in housing transactions.

As monthly payments go down, homeowners who currently have variable-rate mortgages may find relief from this change. Additionally, knowing that the financing cost would be more favourable would give developers greater confidence when starting new projects. For those wishing to move up the property ladder, this possible stabilisation or decrease in interest rates could be a major plus this month.





# TOP 6 REASONS WHY THE UK PROPERTY MARKET IS BOOMING THIS MONTH

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR HOMEBUYERS

Through a number of initiatives aimed at helping homebuyers, the UK government may continue to support the property market this month. Government programs like the First Homes initiative and stamp duty exemptions continue to be essential to the stability of the market. First-time purchasers and others who might find it difficult to obtain a mortgage or pay the entire cost of a property can benefit from these programs' financial assistance.

For example, the First Homes program gives first-time buyers discounted homes, which may make it easier for families and young professionals to enter the property market. The process of buying a home could also be made more affordable by maintaining stamp duty reductions or thresholds for first-time buyers and specific regions.

## RECOVERY OF THE RENTAL MARKET

Demand for rentals in the UK has been consistent in recent years, and this pattern is anticipated to continue throughout this month and the rest of the year. Due to the affordability issues associated with home ownership, many people continue to choose to rent rather than buy, especially younger people and those who are temporarily working away from home.

This offers landlords the chance to generate consistent rental income, especially in major cities like London, Manchester, and Birmingham where

there is still a high demand for rental properties. Increased availability of purpose-built rental developments, which provide premium, strategically located properties with amenities that draw in long-term tenants, could be advantageous to the industry. Although rents may still be somewhat high for tenants, the rental market is anticipated to stabilise this year, with rents increasing at a more moderate rate.

## SUSTAINABLE AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES

The move towards energy efficiency and sustainability is one of the expanding trends in the property market. Demand for homes with higher environmental standards and energy efficiency is predicted to increase throughout February and beyond. Government rules and incentives that push developers and homeowners to prioritise sustainability are partially responsible for this. Homes with high energy ratings will become increasingly more desirable as a result of the implementation of more stringent energy efficiency regulations, such as the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), and continuous efforts to address climate change. Homes with green features, such as solar panels, energy-efficient insulation, and ecologically friendly heating systems, are becoming increasingly popular among buyers and renters. These residences provide residents with considerable energy cost savings in addition to helping to lessen carbon footprints.

This gives developers a chance to satisfy consumer demand by making investments in environmentally friendly building practices and providing residences that suit buyers' inclinations for sustainability. As more purchasers and renters learn about the long-term advantages of energy-efficient living, homes that meet or surpass energy performance certificate (EPC) requirements will have a competitive advantage in the market.

## CONTINUED URBAN REGENERATION

In 2025, urban renewal initiatives are still gaining traction throughout the country. New property developments are anticipated to draw a lot of interest from both buyers and investors because many cities and towns are making large investments in redeveloping former industrial areas and enhancing public infrastructure. Capital growth is usually possible in areas that are being revitalised, particularly as they become sought-after destinations. Cities such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, for instance, are seeing large investments in housing, transport, and cultural facilities. Property values are expected to increase as these neighbourhoods gain appeal, giving investors and homeowners the chance to profit from both capital growth and rental yields. February may offer a fantastic chance for buyers in emerging neighbourhoods to purchase property in areas that will soon reap the benefits of revitalisation initiatives.





# RECAP ON RECENT GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

The UK government is presently working to address important issues in a number of areas, such as political reforms, historical remembrance, social care, online safety, and healthcare infrastructure. Despite criticism and worries about implementation schedules, budgetary limitations, and public opinion, these initiatives show a dedication to addressing complicated problems.

## SOCIAL CARE REFORM

In order to find a national consensus on the matter, the government has decided to postpone the planned overhaul of social care until 2028 and has commissioned an independent review headed by Baroness Louise Casey. It is anticipated that the first phase of the review, which will concentrate on medium-term issues, will be completed by mid-2026. The second phase, which will address long-term challenges, will be completed by 2028. The NHS is greatly impacted by the social care sector's persistent underfunding, understaffing, and rising demand, all of which are factors in this decision.

The UK government has been aggressively tackling a number of important issues in recent weeks, such as social care reform, online safety laws, historical remembrances, and difficulties facing the National Health Service (NHS)





## ONLINE SAFETY REGULATIONS

In contrast to Australia, the UK government has chosen not to impose age restrictions on the use of social media by those under the age of sixteen. While online safety is still a top priority, the UK will not follow Australia's example of enacting age restrictions, said Technology Secretary Peter Kyle. The emphasis will be on upholding current laws under the Online Safety Act of 2024, which imposes hefty penalties on social media companies that neglect to delete offensive material. Kyle also emphasised the value of social media as a tool for kids who need assistance or want to communicate.

## COMMEMORATION OF WORLD WAR II ANNIVERSARY

In 2025, to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, the government has chosen not to offer another bank holiday. Given the high expenses of additional bank holidays, financial considerations played a role in the decision, even though the public supported a four-day weekend. Rather, the government intends to incorporate current celebrations into the early May bank holiday by allocating £10 million for events commemorating Victory in Europe (VE) Day and Victory over Japan (VJ) Day. WWII veterans who are still alive have expressed dissatisfaction, saying that they felt their sacrifices should have been honoured with a special bank holiday.

## CHALLENGES WITHIN THE NHS


Since 2019, Scottish health authorities have spent £4.3 million to deal with a variety of pest infestations in hospitals, such as rats, wasp nests, cockroaches, and maggots. According to reports, there are major problems with ageing NHS buildings, and areas like NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have incurred large costs. Critics contend that these issues are the result of inadequate funding for healthcare facility maintenance, and they demand more money to fix the failing infrastructure. The Scottish Government has defended the costs as necessary and pointed out that the draft budget includes a record £21 billion for health and social care, including infrastructure investments.

## POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

As it works to carry out the bold reforms outlined in its manifesto, the Labour government, led by Prime Minister Keir Starmer, faces a difficult year ahead. The industrial strategy, NHS reconstruction, apprenticeship reform, and important housing development goals are among the main areas of focus. These efforts, however, are being undertaken in the face of severe budgetary constraints, and the forthcoming zero-based spending review is anticipated to be especially difficult. Furthermore, the government has to handle intricate foreign policy dynamics, especially when it comes to overseeing the UK's ties with the EU and the incoming Trump administration in the US. Due to controversial policy choices and budgetary allocations, Labour's popularity has decreased domestically since the election. In the face of growing unpopularity, the party's true test will be holding true to its principles and waiting for the benefits of its reforms.







Here are the top public gardens in the UK to see this month, highlighting their seasonal highlights and winter charm

# BEST PUBLIC GARDENS TO VISIT BEFORE THE WINTER'S OVER

The UK's varied landscape and skilled horticulture guarantee that there is always something to see, even during the colder months. Numerous gardens throughout the nation are made to flourish in the winter, providing a display of icy foliage, vivid early blooms, and evocative strolls.

## ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW (LONDON)

In February, Kew Gardens, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, provides a singular fusion of indoor botanical marvels and outdoor beauty. The Winter Garden, which features plants selected for their texture, colour, and fragrance, is especially striking. In addition, visitors can be in awe of the early-blooming cherry trees, crocuses, and snowdrops.

With exotic plants from all over the world, the Temperate House—the largest Victorian glasshouse in the world—offers a cosy haven. Do not miss the Palm House, which is close by and offers a lush, tropical setting that is ideal for getting away from the cold of February.

## RHS GARDEN WISLEY (SURREY)

In February, RHS Wisley, one of the Royal Horticultural Society's flagship gardens, is transformed into a winter wonderland. The purpose of its Winter Walk is to showcase plants that thrive during the colder months, like witch hazels, winter honeysuckle, and dogwoods with their fiery red stems. Additionally, Wisley is home to the cutting-edge Glasshouse, where tropical plants, orchids, and a stunning variety of other species thrive all year long. At this time of year, the snowdrop display in the garden is especially impressive.

## BODNANT GARDEN (CONWY, WALES)

Bodnant Garden, which is famous for its breathtaking winter scenery, is tucked away in

the North Wales hills. The Winter Garden, which features a thoughtfully chosen assortment of seasonal plants like hellebores, camellias, and eye-catching white-stemmed birches, is in full swing in February.

The garden is made more appealing by its dramatic location with views of Snowdonia. Warm up and take a leisurely stroll through its terraces and forests.

## ANGLESEY ABBEY AND GARDENS (CAMBRIDGESHIRE)

For those looking for winter colour and charm, a trip to Anglesey Abbey in February is essential. Visitors are led through a pathway of colourful dogwoods, spectral silver birches, and aromatic winter-flowering shrubs in the immersive Winter Garden.

This National Trust property is perfect for a full day out because it has acres of parkland and a historic abbey. Watch for snowdrop carpets that turn the grounds into a mystical setting.

## DUNHAM MASSEY (CHESHIRE)

With a breathtaking display of more than 1,600 winter plants, Dunham Massey's Winter Garden is the biggest of its kind in the United Kingdom. Early daffodils, cyclamens, and snowdrops are all at their best in February. Further visual interest is added by the soft colours of hellebores and the vivid stems of cornus (dogwood).

This National Trust-managed site blends natural beauty with historical elegance. For history buffs, the Georgian mansion on the property is an extra draw.



## EDINBURGH BOTANIC GARDEN (SCOTLAND)

Although Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden is open all year round, its winter attractions are particularly captivating. Delicate early flowers like crocuses and snowdrops bring the Alpine House to life in February. Another highlight is the Winter Garden, which has colourful berries and evergreens. With expansive views of Arthur's Seat and Edinburgh's skyline, the garden is as much about the surroundings as it is about the plants. Visit the tropical Glasshouses, which are home to exotic plants from all over the world, to warm up.

## SHEFFIELD BOTANICAL GARDENS (YORKSHIRE)

In February, the Winter Garden Glasshouse and a thoughtfully chosen assortment of seasonal plants at Sheffield Botanical Gardens provide a tranquil haven. The crocuses and snowdrop displays give the chilly winter air a touch of spring.

One notable feature is the Victorian glasshouse, which houses plants from various climates. It is a great option for a winter outing because admission is free and there is a welcoming café nearby.

## THE LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN (CORNWALL)

Even in February, the Lost Gardens of Heligan, which are renowned for their enigmatic and romantic ambiance, captivate visitors. While the seasonal displays feature snowdrops and camellias that bloom in the winter, the Jungle Garden provides a subtropical haven.

A haven for nature lovers, the mild Cornish climate guarantees an abundance of greenery even during the winter months. The Woodland Walk is a must-see; it is particularly atmospheric in the winter.

## STOURHEAD (WILTSHIRE)

In February, Stourhead, which is well-known for its charming lake and classical architecture, is a pleasure to visit. With frost-covered trees and serene reflections in the lake, the winter scenery is just as captivating even though the region's well-known rhododendrons will not bloom until later in the year.

During this time, early daffodils and snowdrops start to appear, bringing vibrant bursts of colour to the otherwise subdued winter palette. The estate's walking paths are ideal for a brisk winter stroll.

## HARLOW CARR (NORTH YORKSHIRE)

Harlow Carr, another RHS treasure, is a great place to visit in February. The Winter Walk features fragrant witch hazels, sculptured grasses, and colourful dogwoods. The grounds are covered in a carpet of seasonal interest made of snowdrops and hellebores.

The creative design of the garden guarantees its appeal throughout the year. Following their exploration, guests can unwind at the well-known Bettys Café Tea Rooms, which are situated on the premises.





# CANCER RESEARCH UK LONDON WINTER RUN

The Cancer Research UK London Winter Run is set to return on Sunday 23rd February

**T**his yearly run through central London, which is celebrating its tenth year as the largest 10k event in the UK, has grown to be a vital component of the fight against cancer by fusing fundraising, community spirit, and fitness to support the important work of Cancer Research UK.

## EVENT OVERVIEW

Participants will travel ten kilometres through the centre of London, passing famous sites like Trafalgar Square and St. Paul's Cathedral. With live music and characters with a winter theme that inspire and amuse runners throughout the course, the event is well known for its lively atmosphere. Participants receive a unique snowflake medal upon finishing, signifying their accomplishment and support of cancer research.

## FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

A major part of the London Winter Run is fundraising, with participants working together to raise £1,000,000 for Cancer Research UK. The community's commitment and generosity are evident in the thousands of pounds that have already been raised thus far.

Participants are encouraged to set up individual fundraising pages, which are automatically created upon entry. To get support, these pages can be customised and distributed to friends, family, and coworkers. Every pound raised directly supports Cancer Research UK's efforts to better prevent, identify, and treat cancer.



## IMPACT OF DONATIONS

Every contribution, regardless of size, plays a crucial role in advancing cancer research. For instance:

- £12 could buy a new bulb for a microscope, essential for examining cancer cells.
- £32 could buy four boxes of microscope slides, fundamental for laboratory research.
- £24 could fund Cancer Research UK's online forum, Cancer Chat, for one hour, providing support to those affected by cancer.
- £56 could buy nutrients that cells need to grow in the lab, aiding in vital experiments.



## HOW TO DONATE

The official London Winter Run website is where donations can be made directly. Supporters have the option of contributing generally to the event's fundraising target or sponsoring specific participants. The website offers a safe way to donate, guaranteeing that money goes towards Cancer Research UK's research projects. Visit this page to donate: <https://www.winterrun.co.uk/>

## PARTICIPANT SUPPORT AND REWARDS

Cancer Research UK provides a range of incentives based on fundraising milestones to recognise the efforts of fundraisers. These rewards act as both a thank-you gift and an incentive to increase fundraising efforts. Participants also get all-encompassing support, which includes access to a community of other runners and supporters, training guidance, and fundraising pointers.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering at the event is a great way for people who want to help but would rather not run. From staffing water stations to encouraging attendees, volunteers are essential to the event's seamless running. The official event website has information about volunteer opportunities.

## SAFETY MEASURES

The safety and wellbeing of all competitors, volunteers, and spectators are given top priority by the organisers. There are numerous safeguards in place to guarantee a safe atmosphere, such as medical assistance, clear signage, and personnel who have received ongoing training. It is recommended that attendees follow any health precautions that may be in effect at the time of the event.

## TRAINING AND PREPARATION

The secret to a fun and successful run is adequate preparation. Training schedules, dietary recommendations, and advice for novice runners are all available on the official event website. By using these resources, competitors can boost their self-esteem and perform better on race day.

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

A strong sense of community is fostered by the London Winter Run, which unites people from all walks of life who are motivated by the same goal. To increase the overall impact, participants are urged to tag the event's profiles and use official hashtags when posting about their experiences on social media.

## WHY GET INVOLVED?

A decade of commitment to defeating cancer via research and community involvement is symbolised by the 2025 Cancer Research UK London Winter Run. Every person's involvement, whether as a volunteer, donor, or runner, is crucial to furthering the goals of Cancer Research UK. As the occasion draws near, everyone's combined efforts will not only make the tenth anniversary unforgettable, but also move us one step closer to a future free from the threat of cancer.

For more information, registration, and donation options, please visit the official London Winter Run website: <https://www.winterrun.co.uk/>







# TV SHOWS STREAMING THIS MONTH

With the release of the newest TV shows for home streaming, February looks to be another exciting month for television

## INVINCIBLE – SEASON 3

As a young superhero juggling his developing abilities and personal life, Mark Grayson encounters more and more difficulties in *Invincible* Season 3. He must face the unpleasant realities about his family while working to defend Earth against strong adversaries and new allies. As betrayal, love, and loyalty clash in unexpected ways, tensions increase.

***Invincible* Season 3 premieres 6th February on Prime Video**

## YELLOWJACKETS – SEASON 3

The eerie dual timelines persist in *Yellowjackets* Season 3. As new information comes to light, survivors of the plane crash in the 1990s struggle with the lingering effects of their wilderness ordeal. Dark realities are revealed as their current lives continue to fall apart. The psychological drama is heightened in this season as it delves deeper into the depths of human darkness and resiliency.

***Yellowjackets* Season 3 premieres 14th February on Paramount+**

## THE WHITE LOTUS – SEASON 3

A new cast of affluent visitors and resort employees negotiate complicated relationships, unspoken secrets, and unanticipated drama in the third season of *The White Lotus*, which takes place in an opulent resort in Thailand. This satirical examination of human nature and privilege promises surprises, humour, and a memorable plot.

***The White Lotus* Season 3 premieres 16th February on HBO and MAX**

## WIN OR LOSE

In the week before their championship game, *Win or Lose* chronicles the entwined tales of a coed softball team. With Pixar's trademark charm, each episode tells the same story from the viewpoint of a different character, providing poignant and humorous insights into their relationships, lives, and particular struggles.

***Win or Lose* premieres 19th February on Disney+**



# ROMANTIC FILMS TO GET YOUR JUICES FLOWING!

## BRIDGET JONES: MAD ABOUT THE BOY

Release date: 14th February

Heartfelt laughs, relatable moments, and a novel perspective on love and second chances are all promised in *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy*. This endearing tale of romance and resilience is ideal for Valentine's Day and demonstrates that love can blossom at any age. After Mark Darcy's untimely death, *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy* follows Bridget as she navigates life as a single mother. She is now in her 50s and balances managing her career, taking care of her two young children, and getting back into dating after a long break. Her path is replete with amusing blunders, moving introspection, and romantic complications, such as a developing romance with a younger man who rekindles her enthusiasm for life. Bridget rediscovers herself and discovers that, despite heartbreak, life can still bring unexpected joys as she strikes a balance between motherhood, friendship, and love.

Top three facts about *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy*:

1. **Hugh Grant's Return:** Hugh Grant plays Daniel Cleaver again after missing the third movie. Grant was so moved

by the script that he started crying, and he even helped write some of the scenes.

2. **New Cast Members:** New characters are introduced in the movie, such as Leo Woodall as Bridget's new, younger love interest Roxster and Chiwetel Ejiofor as Mr. Wallaker, a teacher at Bridget's children's school.

3. **Filming Locations:** Scenes were filmed in Haverstock Hill and Hampstead in North London, which are renowned for their quaint pubs and high streets and give the movie's setting a truly British feel.

Other modern romantic films to watch this Valentine's weekend:

**About Time (2013)** – Tim finds he can relive moments to make his love life better in this Richard Curtis masterpiece, which is a charming mashup of romance and time travel. A heartwarming and underappreciated tale of love.

**Juliet, Naked (2018)** – This endearing story, which is based on Nick Hornby's novel, centres on Rose Byrne and Ethan Hawke and explores themes of love, second chances, and the transformational power of music.

**The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society (2018)** – World War II serves as the backdrop for this exquisitely filmed historical romance about a writer making unexpected friends on Guernsey Island.



# PIGEON EN CROÛTE WITH RED WINE JUS

This sophisticated dish is ideal for a romantic evening meal. Wrapped in buttery puff pastry and baked until golden, pigeon is a delicate game bird. It is a surprising substitute for more typical meats when served with a rich red wine jus.

**Serves: 2**

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 pigeon breasts
- 200g puff pastry
- 1 egg (beaten, for egg wash)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 shallots (finely chopped)
- 200ml red wine
- 200ml chicken stock
- 1 tsp butter

## METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C (fan 180°C). Sear the pigeon breasts in olive oil for 2 minutes on each side and let them cool.

Roll out the puff pastry and wrap each pigeon breast. Brush with egg wash.

Bake for 15–20 minutes, until golden. Meanwhile, prepare the jus: sauté shallots in butter, deglaze with red wine, and reduce. Add chicken stock and simmer until thickened.

Serve the pigeon en croûte with the jus drizzled on top.







## BEETROOT RISOTTO WITH GOAT'S CHEESE

### INGREDIENTS

- 150g arborio rice
- 1 medium beetroot (roasted and puréed)
- 1 small onion (finely chopped)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 700ml vegetable stock
- 100ml white wine
- 50g goat's cheese (crumbled)
- Fresh thyme (for garnish)

### METHOD

Heat the olive oil in a pan and sauté the onion until translucent. Add the rice and toast for 1–2 minutes. Deglaze with white wine and stir until absorbed. Gradually add the stock, one ladle at a time, stirring frequently. Mix in the beetroot purée towards the end, cooking until the rice is creamy but retains a slight bite. Top with goat's cheese and fresh thyme before serving.



## ROMANTIC COCKTAILS

### ROSE & RASPBERRY FIZZ

This cocktail combines floral and fruity notes, making it perfect for a romantic toast.

#### INGREDIENTS (MAKES 2):

- 50ml gin
- 25ml rose syrup
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 6 fresh raspberries
- Prosecco (to top up)
- Ice cubes

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Muddle raspberries in a shaker with the gin, rose syrup, and lemon juice. Add ice and shake well. Strain into Champagne flutes and top with Prosecco. Garnish with a fresh raspberry on the rim.

### ELDERFLOWER AND BASIL MARTINI

A light and refreshing cocktail with herbal undertones, this is ideal for a romantic evening.

#### INGREDIENTS (MAKES 2):

- 50ml elderflower liqueur
- 50ml vodka
- 25ml lime juice
- 4 basil leaves
- Ice cubes

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Gently muddle the basil leaves in a shaker. Add vodka, elderflower liqueur, lime juice, and ice. Shake until well-chilled. Strain into chilled martini glasses and garnish with a basil leaf.





# 2025 GUINNESS SIX NATIONS

Under head coach Steve Borthwick, England's rugby team is ready to make a big impact as the 2025 Guinness Six Nations arrives

## FIXTURES

England's campaign features a balanced schedule with three home matches at Twickenham Stadium

### IRELAND vs ENGLAND

1st Feb - Aviva Stadium, Dublin

### ENGLAND vs FRANCE

8th Feb - Twickenham Stadium, London

### ENGLAND vs SCOTLAND

22nd Feb - Twickenham Stadium, London

### ENGLAND vs ITALY

9th March - Twickenham Stadium, London

### WALES vs ENGLAND

15th March - Principality Stadium, Cardiff

This sequence offers England the advantage of hosting key matches, including the Calcutta Cup against Scotland, providing a platform to capitalise on home support.

**B**orthwick is committed to boosting the team's performance and re-establishing England as a dominant force in international rugby after a difficult 2024 campaign.

## KEY PLAYERS

It is anticipated that key players will be relied upon by head coach Steve Borthwick to propel the team's performance. Along with flanker Tom Curry's dynamic presence, Maro Itoje's leadership and adaptability in the lock position will be essential in the forwards. Henry Pollock, an up-and-coming artist whose recent performances have drawn notice, might also be in the back row.

Alex Mitchell, a scrum-half, is expected to direct play in the backs with his lightning-fast decision-making and distribution abilities. The fly-half England's offensive tactics are probably going to be guided by George Ford's experience and tactical sense. In midfield, centres Ollie Lawrence and Henry Slade are anticipated to contribute a combination of physicality and inventiveness. Immanuel Feyi-Waboso's speed and agility on the wings could seriously jeopardise the defence of the opposition.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

It is critical to address the psychological obstacles and defensive weaknesses that beset the previous season. In order to successfully handle high-pressure situations, Borthwick seeks to restore an aggressive defensive approach and foster a resilient mindset. England's tactical play will depend heavily on the players at fly-half.

## EXPECTATIONS

Securing four wins out of five games is the challenging but doable goal for the 2025 Six Nations. Restoring England's standing in the top divisions of international rugby and creating momentum for upcoming tournaments are the goals of this target.

The Guinness Six Nations 2025 offers England a chance to bounce back from past disappointments. England is positioned to put on an impressive display in the tournament with strategic changes, careful squad selection, and an emphasis on mental toughness.





# UK ATHLETICS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025

The Utilita Arena in Birmingham will host the UK Athletics Indoor Championships 2025 on February 22nd and 23rd

Prior to the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, in March, the country's best track and field athletes will compete for national titles and selection for the Great Britain & Northern Ireland team at this esteemed event.

The women's 800m, where Olympic champion Keely Hodgkinson will try to beat the world indoor record of 1:55.82, set by Jolanda Ceplak in 2002, is anticipated to be a highlight of the championships. Hodgkinson hopes to create history at home after surpassing this time outside.

Current national champions are expected to defend their titles in the sprints, while up-and-coming athletes will try to establish themselves. Athletes are vying for qualification standards and personal bests in the exciting men's and women's 60-meter races.

The field competitions will highlight Britain's prowess in events like pole vault, high jump, and long jump. In order to get selected for international competitions, competitors will try to win national titles.

Tickets for the championships start at £10 for juniors and £20 for adults, depending on the category. Concessions and family tickets are also available.

Spectators can look forward to a weekend of high-calibre athletics, witnessing the nation's best athletes compete in an indoor setting renowned for its vibrant atmosphere.

For athletes hoping to compete internationally for Great Britain, the UK Athletics Indoor Championships are an essential first step. The 2025 edition is expected to produce outstanding performances and unforgettable moments in British athletics, with both national pride and international selection on the line.

Keep up with all the action here: <https://www.britishathletics.org.uk/events-and-tickets/uk-athletics-indoor-championships-birmingham-2025/>





Bunkers Hill, Sporle, Kings Lynn

OIRO £535,000



Extremely well presented, substantial, spacious detached four bedroom house situated on a select development of just three sizeable properties. This superb property has much to offer and includes gardens, double garage, parking, utility room, three reception rooms two en-suites and much more.....  
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## Burrells Meadow, Beeston, Kings Lynn

£350,000



Very well presented, spacious, link detached three bedroom bungalow, tucked away on a small development in the popular Norfolk village of Beeston. This fantastic property offers lounge/dining room with vaulted ceiling, two log burning stoves, larger than average garage and well presented gardens.

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## Ormesby Drive, Swaffham

£400,000



Spacious, detached five bedroom house situated in a cul-de-sac location on a popular development in Swaffham. This fantastic sizeable property offers three reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, garden room, garage, parking, gardens, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

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## Bishy Barny Bee Gardens, Swaffham

**£250,000**



Very well presented, modern semi-detached three bedroom house, situated on a popular development on the outskirts of Swaffham. This fantastic property offers open plan living to the ground floor, integrated appliances to the kitchen, utility cupboard, cloakroom with WC, gardens and off road parking.

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## Greenhoe Place, Swaffham

**£280,000**



Recently refurbished, extremely well presented, detached three bedroom bungalow situated on a popular development in Swaffham. This superb property offers two reception rooms, conservatory, gardens, garage, carport, parking, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing. Viewing Recommended.

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## Talisman, Chalk Hill, Great Cressingham

OIEO £350,000



A very well presented detached four bedroom house, situated in the sought after popular village of Great Cressingham. This superb property offers garage, conservatory/utility, gardens, parking and UPVC double glazing. Viewing highly recommended.

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## Blenheim Way, Watton, Thetford

£300,000



Well presented, detached four bedroom house situated in Watton. The property offers garage with remote control door, en-suite bathroom, modern replacement kitchen and utility room, cloakroom with WC, parking, gardens, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing. Viewing recommended.

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## Fairholme Close, Ashill, Thetford

£200,000



CHAIN FREE! Semi detached bungalow with garage, gardens and two bedrooms situated within the popular village of Ashill. The bungalow would benefit from an element of TLC but offers great potential. Boasting Sitting/dining room, double glazing and gas central heating. Viewing recommended.

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## Merton Road, Watton, Thetford

£575,000



Very well presented, spacious, substantial detached four bedroom house situated with open countryside to both front and rear on the outskirts of Watton. This superb property has a lot to offer and includes three reception rooms, two en-suite shower rooms, cloakroom, utility room, double garage.

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Ploughboy Lane, Saham Hills, Thetford

£750,000



Extremely impressive, spacious detached modern four bedroom house situated with open countryside views to both front and rear. This superb property has a huge amount on offer and includes kitchen/family room, two reception rooms, two en-suite shower rooms, large gardens, under floor heating and much more..

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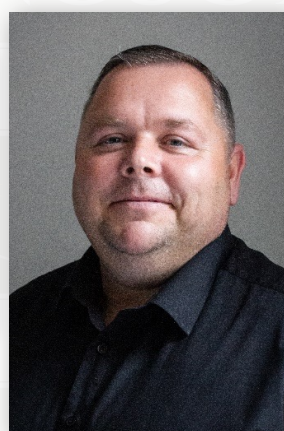


# MEET OUR TEAM...



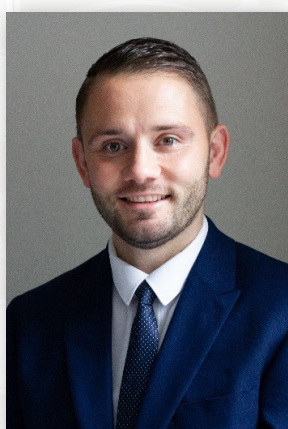
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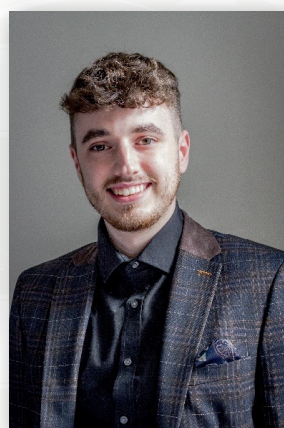
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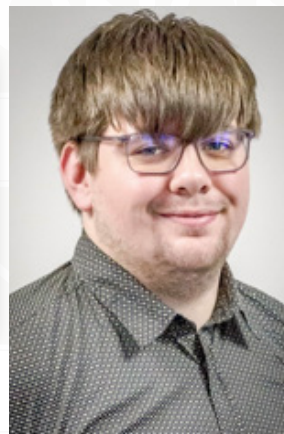
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HOW MUCH  
**IS MY**  
PROPERTY  
WORTH?







# Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

Maximise your home's potential and create spacious rooms enticing potential buyers – simply by de-cluttering!

“ De-cluttering allows you to... maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important ”

If you are looking to sell your house, or have had your home on the market for a while now, then you probably want to get the maximum sale price in the quickest time. There are a few things you can't control – but the one thing that is in your control, is the look and feel of the interior and exterior.

While it's worth spending time fixing and cleaning your house before potential buyers come and view, it's also important to de-clutter. This creates spacious rooms and also allows you to decrease and organise your personal items before you move yourself. Of course it's understandable that you don't want to spend money, time and energy on a home you are about to leave, however, a lot of people are looking for a house in which they can move straight into. Maintaining your

property might even save you thousands of pounds; it could even reduce added expenses of living in your home whilst waiting for a sale. And it might even help avoid possible reductions in the asking price.

The main reason in which people move house tends to be because they lack space in their current home. They want a home that is spacious and in which they can grow into. If a potential viewer comes to your home and sees that there is lack of space, then this will turn them away.

De-cluttering allows you to remove any unnecessary items in an untidy or overcrowded place. It will help maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important.







#### SO WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

You need to create a great first impression and focus on the rooms themselves. You will notice that the first things you see in each room are personal items. Where possible you want to create the look of a

them into things you want to keep and things you want to get rid of. You may even find that you have collected a cupboard full of paper work. Get yourself organised! Don't just throw it all away, but file it and go through it thoroughly. This will also make it easier when you move.

De-personalising can also be a great way to de-clutter. Too many personal effects can be distracting to buyers. They want to see a house in which they can make their own memories rather than seeing yours. Again, personal items can be stored away. Remember

“Where possible you want to create the look of a lifestyle that the potential buyers want”

lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a 'show home' feel, rather than a 'lived in' feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

So, what do we mean by clutter? There are two types: genuine clutter, and items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property.

**GENUINE CLUTTER:**  
You need to go through the space and sort out each item, categorising

You also want to focus on little things like DVDs, books and trinkets. These items may have some small value so sell them or donate them to charity. Get rid of any old shoes and coats that are lying about in your porch or hallway. You might want to hide away the coats and shoes you do currently wear. Store them in your wardrobe while you have viewings.

**ITEMS THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP BUT DON'T WORK FOR THE SALE OF YOUR PROPERTY:**  
You may want to consider putting some items in storage while you sell your home. Sometimes items are too large or even too small for some spaces and can make the room look odd. If you want to keep these particular items, then store them until you move into your new home.

that this is only a temporary way of living and hopefully it won't be for long! If you find you are keeping more things than you are throwing out, then think about whether or not it's in the right room or do you even need it now?

As previously mentioned, you can attempt to sell some of the things you have acquired over the years. Use sites like eBay, Gumtree and social networking sites to try and sell items. You may want to even hold a house sale for the remaining items that you can't sell. Failing that, why not donate to charity.

The end goal is still the same and it's important to help potential buyers envision your house as theirs. So remember, de-cluttering will make your home more spacious and entice potential buyers!

## Top Tips!

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If you are throwing away paperwork, shred anything that is confidential

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De-clutter before agents come and take photos of your property. This will help attract more potential viewers online and get that first good impression

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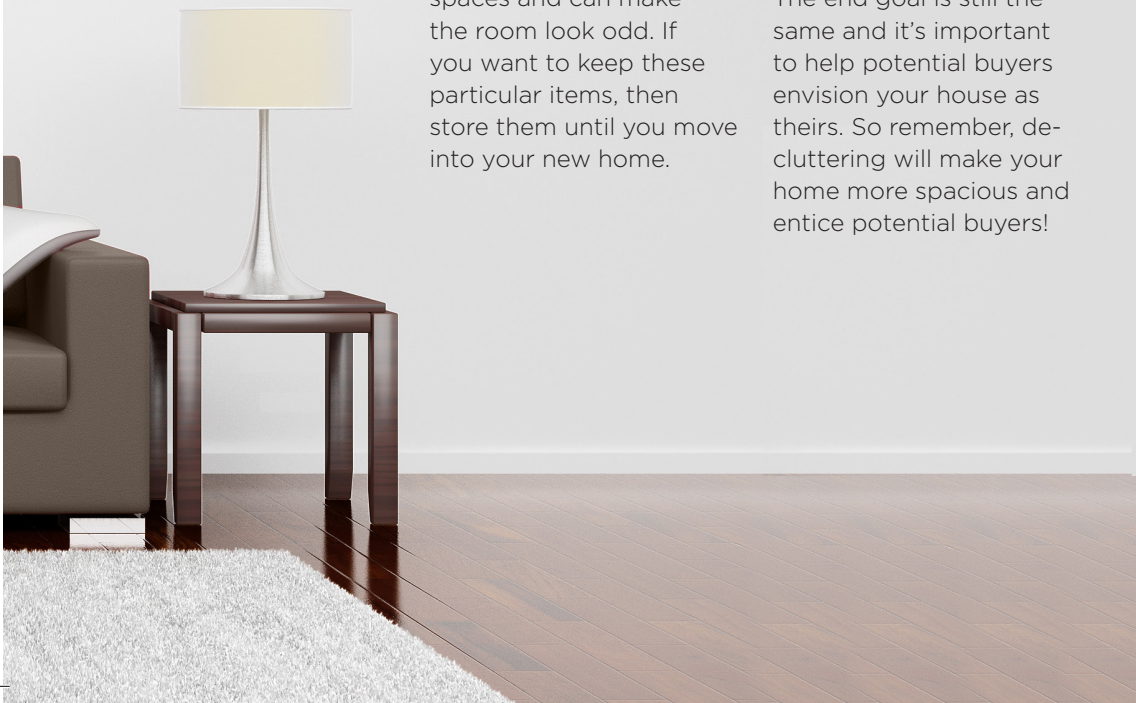
Don't spend too long on certain items and don't get distracted. Keep yourself motivated and race against the clock!

.....

.....

Make it fun! Play some music or watch TV while you de-clutter

.....







## Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

Once a sale has been agreed and is in the hands of your solicitor, it will go through the following stages. Sometimes additional work will be needed – for example, if the property is leasehold or is yet to be registered with the Land Registry. It is also important for buyers to discuss the availability of their deposit with their solicitor early in the transaction, and we strongly recommend that you contact your solicitor regularly so that they can keep you fully up-to-date with the progress and the latest timescales.

### Seller's solicitor's steps

- Obtain a copy of the Title Deeds (or office copies if the title is registered)
- Obtain a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (if applicable)
- The seller(s) will return a completed Property Information Form and a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form to the solicitors
- Copies of the above documents, plus a draft contract – this is known as an 'Information Pack' – will be sent to the buyer's solicitor
- Answer the buyer's solicitor's additional enquiries (for example, specific questions about fixtures and fittings) and obtain copies of any planning consent documents
- Agree the contract and arrange for the sellers to sign it in readiness of the exchange (below)
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

### Between exchange and completion

- Obtain redemption figures from the mortgage lender and reply to requisitions on title
- Approve the transfer and arrange for the seller(s) and buyer(s) to sign
- Receive the agent's fee account and seek the seller's consent to settle this out of completion funds

### Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

### Upon completion

- Receive completion funds and (only when this has been completed) instruct your estate agent to release the keys to buyers. Redeem mortgage and forward the financial statement. Forward any surplus funds (unless these are being used to fund an onward purchase). Ensure all outstanding bills are paid
- Forward transfer documents and deeds to the buyer's solicitors
- Forward evidence of 'discharge of mortgage' to the buyer's solicitors





### Buyer's solicitor's steps

- Obtain the Information Pack, including a copy of the EPC (if applicable) from the sellers' solicitor and raise any additional queries
- Initiate any specialist searches (for example: a coal search). Submit local, environmental and water searches and a chancel check. This takes about 10 working days in total, and enquiries are then usually raised from the results
- Approve the contract when all enquiries are satisfactory and complete. (At this stage, a mortgage transfer deed will need to be signed and witnessed)
- Receive a mortgage offer and instructions from the lender and deal with any conditions set out by them. Make sure that life cover and buildings insurance is being arranged
- Request the deposit, report back to the buyer, and arrange for the contract to be signed. Place buildings insurance and life cover in force
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

### Between exchange and completion

- Raise 'requisitions on title' and prepare the draft transfer deed
- Report on title to mortgage lender and obtain funds for completion, including Stamp Duty (if appropriate)
- Prepare accounts, obtain signature to mortgage deed and undertake final Land Registry and Land Charges searches

### Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

### Upon completion

- Forward to the seller's solicitors the balance of funds – it is only then that they can authorise the release of the keys. Receive from the seller's solicitors, the transfer document deeds
- Stamp the Transfer Deed, register the buyer's ownership with the Land Registry and forward the deeds to the lender or client (where appropriate)



**Contract** - The agreement that sets out the main terms that have been agreed – for example: price, address, names, etc. Two copies are drawn up, and each party signs one in readiness for the exchange of contracts.

**Deposit** - The part of the purchase price (usually 10%) which the buyer pays on exchange of contracts.

**Exchange of contracts** - The swapping of signed contracts by the solicitors (together with the buyer's deposit). After this, the contract is binding.

**Energy Performance Certificate** - This contains information on energy use, energy performance, carbon dioxide emissions, and fuel bills.

**Land Registry** - The Government department that records who owns what land, and under what conditions.

**Local Authority Search** - A list of questions that are specific to the property and intended, for example, to discover if there have been any planning applications on the property, if the road to the house is maintained by the council, etc.

**Mortgage Redemption Figure** - The amount required to repay the outstanding capital/ interest of a mortgage.

**Property information form/fixtures, fittings and contents form** - Standard forms about the property that the seller answers for their solicitor (for example: what will be left behind, details of guarantees, etc.)

**Title Deeds** - Legal documents that prove ownership of land/buildings, and the terms on which they are owned.

**Transfer of Title** - The document that passes the ownership from the seller to the buyer.

**Stamp Duty for buy to let investors and second home owners** - An additional tax, paid by the buyer purchasing an additional property that is not their main residence. It includes buy to let landlords and those buying second homes and holiday homes. The higher rates will be 3 percentage points above the current rates of duty shown below.

**Requisition on title** - An enquiry relating to the completion arrangements.

**Seller's Pack** - This comprises a Property Information Form, a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form, a copy of the title deeds and the draft contract.

**Stamp Duty** – Currently, the Stamp Duty threshold for residential properties is £250,000. For first-time buyers you can claim a discount and won't pay Stamp Duty up to £425,000 on the purchase price and after that you will pay only 5% between £425,001 to £625,000.

However, how much you pay is also dependent on whether you already own another property or if you're a non-UK resident.



A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a beige sweater and blue jeans, is kneeling on a wooden floor, packing items into cardboard boxes. She is holding a purple container and a woven basket. There are several open cardboard boxes around her, some containing white bags and other household items. In the background, there is a white chair, a wooden table, and a grey suitcase.

# Moving house?

From meter readings to removal companies, there's so much to remember when moving house. Here's our checklist of what to do and when

First of all, congratulations on your new home! The excitement has probably now kicked in but moving home can also be one of the most stressful and emotionally draining things you can do. However, careful organisation and planning can help decrease the stress and anxiety of moving. This comprehensive and essential checklist will help you do just that.

## Eight weeks - Research

Ideally, you want to start packing away any non-essential items as early as possible. This includes any items stored away in the loft, garage and shed. If you are not using it, pack it. Looking into your new area is also important, try to do this around eight weeks before you move. You might need to think about transferring your children to different schools and ordering new uniforms too. At this point, ensure you are also documenting all your important information away: that includes contact details, dates, contracts and information regarding your solicitor.

## Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

Now would be the perfect time to decide on a local removal company. Or if you don't have too much to move, you may want to do it yourself. You could even look into different van hire companies. At this point you've probably started packing away some bits, but if there is anything you decide not to take, then look into selling these items or donating them to charity. This will also give you an idea on the volume of items you have to move.

## Four weeks - Notify utility companies

This would be a good time for you to notify utility companies and inform them about your move to switch over. This includes gas and electricity, council tax, internet, phone rental and TV. You should also consider changing any car insurance, tax, memberships, phone contracts and inform your bank about the move. Now's the time to also arrange a date to have your new house cleaned before you move

The buyers of our homes receive their very own property website to share via s





“It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush!”

in, and start ordering any new furnishings for your new property. Start packing away more items, that being, out of season clothes, books, DVDs and even bulky items, like TVs that aren't used often.

### Two weeks – Confirm all details

Confirm your move with your removal company or van hire, estate agents and schools. If possible, try to organise someone to look after your pets and children for the day of your move, as this can also be a stressful time for them too. If your removal company doesn't disassemble any furniture or sort out the un-plumbing for the washing machine, then now would be the ideal time to organise these. Remember to also cancel any local services you receive: this could be window cleaners, gardeners and newspaper deliveries. You should now also think about re-registering to vote and getting your post re-directed after your moving date. Continue packing away more furnishings, kitchen appliances and crockery that you won't be using for the next couple of weeks.

### 24 hours – Final check and walk round

You now have only 24 hours before you move, so double check that everything is packed away and ready for transit. It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! You may want to create an inventory of your boxes and

furniture to help you keep track of what you have and to help you ensure it doesn't go missing.

### Moving day

Today is the day! You need to be ready for when your removal company comes. Ensure that you let them know if there are any fragile boxes that need extra care when handling. If you're moving yourself, then pack up your car or van and work out how many trips it may take. Before you leave, also take note of your final meter readings and send these off to your provider. Don't forget to leave your keys for the new owners!

### You have arrived at your new home!

Give your removal company instructions of which boxes go in which rooms and make sure you are happy with everything that has arrived. Ensure you check for any damage before the movers leave. Read your new utility meters and send your readings off to your supplier. Taking photos of them will also ensure you have the correct reading if you need them again in the future. Unpack your essentials such as bed linen and clean towels. Don't worry about the rest, it isn't going anywhere! Order a takeaway, have a cup of tea and enjoy your first night with your family.

Right, so now you're all moved in, it's time to settle down, unpack and enjoy your new place. Remember, planning is essential to ensure your move runs stress free.

## Checklist

### Eight weeks

- ☐ Pack non-essential items
- ☐ Research your new area (transfer schools and order new uniform)
- ☐ Keep all important documents

### Six weeks

- ☐ Decide on a local removal company
- ☐ Clear out any unwanted items
- ☐ Keep packing

### Four weeks

- ☐ Notify utility companies
- ☐ Start preparation for your new house
- ☐ Keep packing

### Two weeks

- ☐ Finalise all details
- ☐ Organise pet and child care
- ☐ Cancel local services
- ☐ Keep packing

### 24 hours

- ☐ Check every room and ensure everything is packed
- ☐ Pack a night bag so everything is to hand
- ☐ Collect your new keys
- ☐ Make sure your phone is fully charged so you can get in touch with the estate agents or removal company

### Moving in

- ☐ Prepare for the arrival of the removal company and give them directions/your contact details
- ☐ Ensure everything is ready to move
- ☐ Record meter readings

### On arrival

- ☐ Give removal company instructions of what goes where
- ☐ Check for any damage before they leave
- ☐ Read your new utility meters and send them off to your supplier
- ☐ Check if the previous owners have left anything behind
- ☐ Unpack essentials
- ☐ Order a takeaway and sit back and relax!

social media with its address and personal message!





Want to treat yourself to a proper removal company for your next move or are you prepared to do it yourself?

# Removal company or brave it yourself?

**Y**ou're excited about your new home and location but the process of packing, organising and actually moving all of your items is something no one really ever looks forward to. Not only that but you also have to contact utility companies, maintain a job, keep your children happy and clean your entire house. You do have super powers, right?

## Removal companies

Unless you live in a small property or flat, it could be worth hiring a professional removal company to help relieve some of the stress on the day. They have many skills and experience and some of the services they can provide include packing and

unpacking, dismantling and assembling furniture, loading your belongings quickly and securely, including those fragile and specialist items. They can even supply you with packing materials.

Hiring a removal company will also allow you the time to collect the keys to your new home. You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth. Some services are great if you don't have much time to plan and get these done yourself; however these do often come at a premium and may not be suitable for those on a budget. When choosing a removal company

You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth





it's key to look at those which have good recommendations and reviews, as you need a company you can rely on. You can use comparison sites, such as [comparemymove.com](https://www.comparemymove.com) and [reallymoving.com](https://www.reallymoving.com), to help find you the best deals.

### Getting quotes

You should aim to get at least three quotes from removal companies, preferably from firms which will come out to your property rather than those who just estimate the cost over the phone, as you don't want any nasty charges later on. Plus it will give the company an accurate idea of any restricted areas in your home, if they can park a van or lorry, and how many

items you have. You should also ask for the price to be broken down so you can see just how much you are paying for when it comes to certain aspects like insurance, packing, an hourly rate, mileage and any storage costs.

Once you have found a removal company, it can be useful to send them a briefing sheet that includes information about any items which need to be specially packed, any difficult or large items, plus any carpets and curtains which need moving. Finally, it can also be helpful to send them a floor plan of the new property so they can unload efficiently.

## Top tips for packing

When packing, ensure you don't overload your boxes with heavy items, as these will be difficult to lift and could cause a back injury.

Fill any empty gaps using old newspaper, clothing, socks or even tea towels. This will help secure any items when they are being moved.

Create an inventory and label all your boxes and write the contents on each box with a marker. That way you will know which room each box is to go in. And if you are super organised, you could even colour code each room!

Pack heavier boxes on the bottom. This might seem like common sense but it will ensure that any of your fragile items won't break.

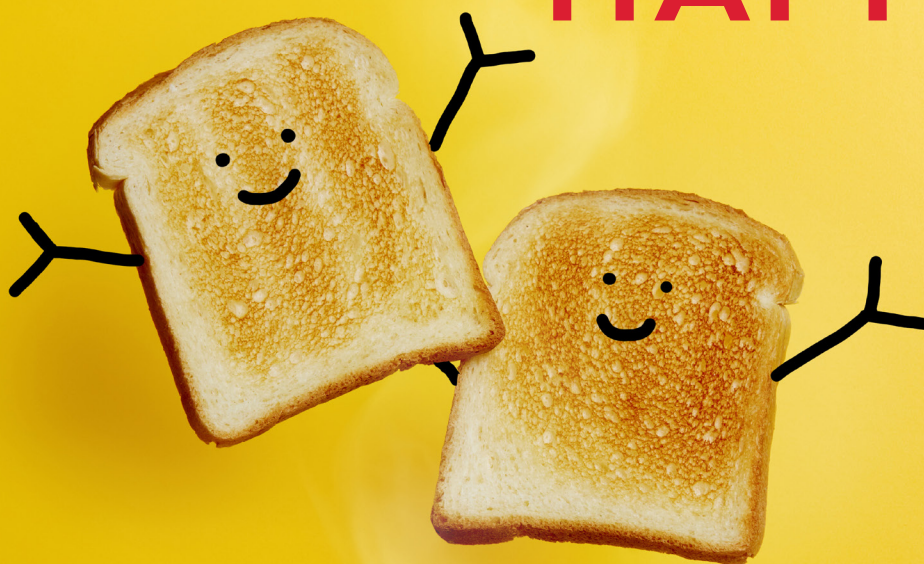
Pack a survival box. These are the things that you will need first and should include paper towels, bin bags, cutlery, the kettle, some mugs, tea, coffee, milk, sugar and finally, some toilet paper!







# WAKE UP HAPPY



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