

## MOTHER'S DAY GIFT IDEAS

FIND THE PERFECT GIFT FOR YOUR MUM THIS MOTHER'S DAY

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

**STEP INTO MARCH**  
A CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE,  
LET MARCH BE THE MONTH

**RECIPES SEASON**  
BE PREPARED TO COOK UP  
A STORM THIS MARCH

**RUGBY SIX NATIONS**  
AN UPDATE ON ENGLAND  
IN THE RUGBY SIX NATIONS

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## WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION!

As we spring forward into a new season, we see the sun beginning to glimmer and nature coming alive, and so too is the property market blooming as we explore on pages 2&3, with a complementary summary on all the latest government highlights on pages 4&5. Our leaders have a tough job, but so do we all, and we all need tips to stay motivated in our jobs from time to time, which we divulge on page 10.

With Mother's Day fast approaching, now is the time to start thinking about what you're going to bless your mum with later in the month, with all our recommendations on pages 6&7. If you need to get up and get active, Step into March On 2025: A Challenge for Change is

perfect for you, and you'll see why if you read pages 8&9.

On page 14 we look at how England are doing in the Rugby Six Nations so far and how they are looking for their final games, while on page 15 it's the Cheltenham Festival for all you horse lovers.

Page 11 celebrates the best TV and film has to offer this month, while on pages 12&13 we rustle up the best recipes in season for March.

So, take a sip of your iced tea sangria to welcome in the new season of spring, snuggle up on the corner of the sofa, and enjoy this month's magazine!

**Daniel Evans**  
Editor

This month, the UK property market presents several favourable conditions for sellers, landlords, and buyers

## BIGGEST UK PROPERTY MARKET POSITIVES OF TODAY

Recent developments, including regulatory reforms and market dynamics, have created a landscape that offers numerous advantages. Regulatory reforms have enhanced property rights, market activity in key areas like London is robust, house price growth remains stable, and the rental market continues to thrive.

### BANK OF ENGLAND'S INTEREST RATE CUT TO 4.5%

The Bank of England's interest rate cut last month will benefit the property market substantially by making mortgages more affordable for buyers, potentially increasing demand. As borrowing costs decrease, more prospective homeowners may enter the market, which could lead to quicker sales for sellers. This boost in demand might help maintain or even increase property prices, especially in competitive areas. Additionally, as mortgage payments become more manageable, homeowners may feel more financially secure and more likely to purchase new properties, further stimulating the market. Sellers should be encouraged by this more favourable environment for attracting buyers.

### REGULATORY REFORMS BENEFITING SELLERS AND LANDLORDS

A major regulatory reform is the removal of the two-year leasehold rule, which took effect from 31st January. Previously, homeowners had to own their property for two years before being eligible to extend or purchase their lease. This change enables homeowners to extend or buy their lease

from the first day of ownership, granting them greater control over ground rent and service charges. This reform forms part of wider efforts to strengthen property rights and enhance market stability.

### ROBUST MARKET ACTIVITY IN LONDON

London's property market has seen a revival, with house sales reaching their highest levels since the 2016 Brexit vote. This growth is largely due to a recovery from almost a decade of challenges, with revenues and profits in 2024 exceeding market expectations. The number of homes under offer is now at its highest since before Brexit, driven by a surge in first-time buyer activity ahead of stamp duty changes scheduled for 31st March. This trend reflects strong demand for properties, providing significant advantages for sellers in the capital.

### STABLE HOUSE PRICE GROWTH

Nationwide reports that UK house price growth eased to a modest 0.1% in January, with annual growth recorded at 4.1%. The average property price now stands at £268,213. Although affordability remains a challenge, the market continues to demonstrate resilience, with mortgage repayments for an average first-time buyer now accounting for 36% of take-home pay—above the long-term average of 30%. However, improving mortgage rates and rising wages are encouraging more buyers to return to the market, ensuring sellers have a consistent pool of prospective purchasers.

#### Favourable Rental Market Conditions

The rental market remains in high demand, largely due to rising interest rates making mortgages less affordable. Increasing numbers of young professionals and families are seeking rental accommodation, resulting in a highly competitive market. This trend is advantageous for landlords, as greater demand can lead to higher rental yields and lower vacancy rates.

### POSITIVE OUTLOOK FOR 2025

Looking ahead, the UK property market is set for growth and resilience in 2025. Declining interest rates have enhanced the outlook for the residential sales market, with mortgage rates expected to

continue decreasing, leading to a further recovery in sales volumes and house prices. However, despite planning reforms, the supply of new housing is anticipated to remain subdued and below target, which could further advantage sellers due to reduced competition.

March also offers a conducive environment for buyers too, characterised by improved affordability, stable prices, supportive government policies, favourable market conditions, and regional investment opportunities.

**Improved Affordability:** The Bank of England has reduced interest rates, resulting in more favourable mortgage rates. This development improves affordability, especially for first-time buyers and those looking to upgrade their homes.

**Stable House Prices:** House price growth has slowed, with a modest 0.1% increase in January. This stabilisation gives buyers more confidence and reduces the urgency to make rushed purchasing decisions.

**Government Initiatives:** The government is actively working on measures to stimulate economic growth, including plans to streamline planning processes and reduce regulatory barriers. These initiatives are designed to increase the housing supply and make homeownership more accessible.

**Favourable Market Conditions:** The current market dynamics favour buyers, with a greater number of properties available and homes taking longer to sell. This environment offers buyers more choice and enhanced negotiating power.

**Regional Opportunities:** Certain regions, especially in the North of England, are seeing strong growth in rental yields and property values. Investing in these areas can provide promising returns and more affordable entry points for buyers.





# RECAP ON RECENT GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY



**T**hese developments reflect the government's ongoing efforts to address key issues in technology, public sector innovation, international relations, social inclusion, defence, immigration, public services, housing, consumer protection, and education.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) STRATEGY

The Prime Minister has introduced the AI Opportunities Action Plan, designed to leverage the potential of AI to enhance productivity and drive economic growth. The plan involves a £14 billion investment from technology firms to develop AI infrastructure, generating around 13,250 jobs. Furthermore, a new National Data Library will be created to maximise the value of public data, while an AI Energy Council will be set up to tackle the energy requirements linked to AI advancement.

## PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION

Gareth Davies, the head of the National Audit Office, has urged the public sector to foster a culture of experimentation to tackle challenges such as climate change more effectively. He supports managing AI risks through a portfolio approach to research and development, encouraging civil servants to take carefully managed

risks without fear of criticism if projects do not succeed.

## BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS

Nigel Farage has stated that the UK's Brexit deal with the EU could be improved, though he has found it difficult to outline specific details on how. This comes as discussions continue regarding the future relationship between the UK and the EU.

## EU COOPERATION

UK Minister Nick Thomas-Symonds is hopeful about strengthening collaboration with the EU on security, law enforcement, and trade ahead of the forthcoming May summit. The Labour government seeks to reset relations with the EU, prioritising practical cooperation to ensure shared safety, security, and prosperity.

## ISLAMOPHOBIA ADVISORY COUNCIL

Angela Rayner is establishing a government advisory council on Islamophobia and is considering former Conservative minister Dominic Grieve to chair it. The 16-member panel will develop strategies to tackle anti-Muslim discrimination and formulate an official definition of Islamophobia.

## MILITARY EQUIPMENT RECALL

The Ministry of Defence has urgently recalled 120,000 body armour plates after detecting microscopic cracks. This recall underscores concerns about the previous government's delay in replacing ageing combat body armour, which may have compromised troop safety.

## BORDER SECURITY LEGISLATION

Under the new Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill, migrants in the



In recent developments, the UK government has undertaken several significant initiatives across various sectors

Channel who decline rescue efforts by the French authorities could face up to five years in prison. The bill establishes criminal offences to tackle people smuggling, with the aim of deterring hazardous crossings and dismantling smuggling networks.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICY

A petition with more than 4,900 signatures is urging the expansion of England's National Concessionary Travel Scheme to provide free bus travel for everyone over 60, bringing it in line with Scotland's policy. Campaigners argue that the current scheme, which grants this benefit only to those who have reached the state pension age of 66 outside London, is "unfair."

#### HOUSING POLICY

The majority of Londoners support the construction of new homes on grey belt land, according to research commissioned by London Councils. The survey highlights public opinion on housing affordability and land use in the capital.

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

In Staffordshire, more than £25 million in potential consumer losses were prevented, over 220,000 illegal goods were confiscated, and support was provided to 70 victims of scams. Thirteen defendants were prosecuted and ordered to pay fines and court costs amounting to £32,000.

#### EDUCATION POLICY

Lancashire County Council is considering proposals to raise the starting age from three to four years old at two primary schools. A consultation on these proposals is due to be discussed by county councillors.



These developments reflect the government's ongoing efforts to address key issues in technology

# THE BEST MOTHER'S DAY GIFT IDEAS



Mother's Day is a wonderful opportunity to express love and appreciation for your mum, not just through gifts but also through thoughtful, handmade creations

**W**hile shop-bought presents are lovely, there is something uniquely special about a personalised, handcrafted gift. It shows extra effort, care, and thoughtfulness, making the gesture even more meaningful.

Creating a gift yourself allows you to tailor it specifically to your mum's tastes and preferences. Whether it's a heartfelt handwritten letter, a scrapbook of cherished memories, or a homemade batch of her favourite treats, these personal touches make the present truly one-of-a-kind. Handmade gifts also carry sentimental value, often being treasured for years to come. Here is a selection of ideas to create some special, personalised gifts for your mum ready for this Mother's Day, plus some already-existing gifts on the market right now.

## PERSONALISED JEWELLERY

A piece of jewellery with a personal touch can make a cherished gift. Consider a necklace with her initials, birthstone, or a pendant engraved with a special message. Another beautiful idea is a bracelet featuring the names or birthstones of her children or grandchildren. If she has a favourite quote or a phrase that holds special meaning, having it engraved on a locket or bangle can make the piece even more special.

## CUSTOMISED PHOTO GIFTS

Photos are a great way to capture memories, and there are many ways to incorporate them into a personalised gift. A custom photo book filled with family pictures, special moments, and heartfelt messages will be a keepsake she can treasure forever. You could also create a framed collage or a printed canvas featuring a favourite family

photo. For something a bit different, personalised photo cushions, blankets, or mugs make lovely and practical gifts.

## HANDMADE MEMORY JAR

A memory jar is a heartfelt and simple gift that your mum will love. Fill a jar with small notes, each containing a reason why you love her, a favourite memory, or an uplifting quote. Decorate the jar with ribbons, stickers, or a custom label. She can open one note each day or whenever she needs a little boost of love and appreciation.

## BESPOKE RECIPE BOOK

If your mum enjoys cooking or baking, a custom recipe book can be a fantastic idea. Compile her favourite family recipes, along with a few of your own, and create a beautifully designed book. You can include handwritten notes, photos, and stories behind each dish. Some online services allow you to design and print a professional-looking book, but a handmade version can be just as meaningful.

## PERSONALISED SCENTED CANDLES

Candles make a lovely gift, but a personalised candle adds an extra special touch. Choose a scent that reminds you of home or a fragrance you know she loves. You can find companies that allow you to customise the label with her name, a heartfelt message, or even a short poem.

## PERSONALISED GARDENING SET

For mums who love gardening, a customised gardening set could be a wonderful gift. You could personalise tools with her name, create custom plant markers, or even gift her a set of engraved flower pots. Pair these with her favourite seeds or plants for a thoughtful touch.



Handmade gifts also carry sentimental value, often being treasured for years to come.

### ENGRAVED KEEPSAKE BOX

A personalised wooden keepsake box can be a perfect place for your mum to store her precious mementoes. Engrave it with her name, a special date, or a meaningful message. You could also fill it with small sentimental items like letters, photos, or trinkets.

### DIY SPA KIT

Give your mum the gift of relaxation with a homemade spa kit. Put together a selection of bath salts, handmade soaps, face masks, and essential oils. You can personalise the packaging with custom labels or a handwritten note. Pair this with a soft robe or a personalised towel for the ultimate pampering experience.



Now for some already-existing products on the market today with brilliant customer review ratings:

*Luxury Candles:* High-quality candles, like those from The White Company, offer a touch of elegance and relaxation.

*Spa Gift Sets:* Pampering sets, such as the TempleSpa Spa Retreat (£42), provide a luxurious at-home spa experience.

*Afternoon Tea Experience:* Treat her to a luxe afternoon tea, like the Cutter & Squidge Mother's Day luxe afternoon tea (£39), for a delightful culinary experience.

*Fragrances:* Affordable yet delightful scents, such as Marks and Spencer's fresh mandarin eau de toilette (£10), can be a refreshing gift choice.

*Beauty Tools:* The Real Techniques au naturelle complete brush kit (£24) is ideal for mothers who enjoy makeup and beauty routines.

*Jewellery Boxes:* A classic two-drawer jewellery box (£60) from Stackers offers both style and practicality for organising accessories.

*Floral Gifts:* A fresh bouquet, like the Althea arrangement paired with Liberty chocolate truffles (£66), combines the beauty of flowers with the indulgence of chocolates.

*Skincare Sets:* Pampering skincare sets, such as the TempleSpa Spa Retreat (£42), offer a luxurious at-home spa experience.

A group of giraffes are in a living room. One giraffe is sitting on a green sofa, holding a guitar. Another giraffe is standing behind the sofa, holding a guitar. A third giraffe is standing in the background, holding a guitar. There is a television, a lamp, and a guitar in the background.



This exciting initiative, designed to coincide with the arrival of spring, is a month-long challenge encouraging individuals, families, and communities to unite for a shared goal: to create a positive impact on their own lives and the world around them. Whether you are passionate about environmental sustainability, improving your physical and mental well-being, or supporting vulnerable groups, March On offers opportunities to contribute in ways that are both impactful and inspiring.

March On is more than a challenge; it is a movement that combines the principles of collective action with individual determination. Participants commit to a series of daily or weekly activities tailored to their chosen theme, with options including:

developing a hobby, or spending more quality time with loved ones. By breaking these goals into manageable steps, March On empowers participants to cultivate habits that last well beyond the challenge period.

**Sign Up:** Participants can register online or through local community hubs, choosing a theme or combining multiple areas of focus. Each sign-up comes with a welcome pack that includes resources, goal trackers, and access to exclusive events.

**Set Goals:** Goals can be customised to suit your interests and abilities. For example, an environmental goal could be as simple as reducing energy usage at home, while a well-being goal might include running your first 5k.

**Take Action:** Throughout March, participants are encouraged to document their progress and share updates with the broader March On community via social media, fostering a sense of connection and mutual motivation.

**Celebrate Success:** The month concludes with celebratory events held nationwide, where participants can reflect on their achievements and explore ways to continue their positive impact.

### *A Fresh Start for Spring*

March marks the season of renewal,





making it an ideal time to embrace new habits and goals. The initiative provides structured support to help participants overcome inertia and turn intentions into action.

#### **A Collective Impact**

While individual efforts are valuable, the collective impact of March On is immense. For instance, thousands of participants pledging to reduce energy consumption or eliminate single-use plastics can make a tangible difference in combating climate change.

#### **Strengthening Communities**

By involving local groups, schools, and businesses, March On fosters stronger communities. Whether it's volunteering at food banks or organising neighbourhood events, these efforts bring people together and promote a spirit of collaboration.

#### **Personal Growth and Fulfilment**

March On isn't just about external change—it's about internal growth. Achieving goals, however small, builds confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose. Participants often find that the challenge serves as a catalyst for broader lifestyle changes.

#### **STORIES OF SUCCESS**

In previous years, similar initiatives have inspired remarkable stories:

A primary school class in Manchester set a goal to plant 500 trees, involving students, parents, and teachers. By the end of the month, they had exceeded their target,

creating a community orchard.

A group of friends in Bristol pledged to reduce their collective carbon footprint by cycling instead of driving during March. Their efforts continued long after the challenge, inspiring others to follow suit. An individual participant in Edinburgh used the challenge to focus on mental health, sharing daily mindfulness exercises online. Their journey resonated with many, sparking conversations about mental well-being within their community. These examples illustrate the potential of March On to spark meaningful, lasting change.

#### **GETTING INVOLVED IN 2025**

The 2025 iteration of March On promises to be bigger and more impactful than ever. Key highlights include:

**Launch Events:** Festivities in major cities will kick off the challenge, featuring guest speakers, workshops, and live entertainment.

**Partner Organisations:** Collaboration with environmental groups, fitness brands, and local charities ensures diverse opportunities to get involved.

**Digital Engagement:** An upgraded online platform will allow participants to track their progress, access resources, and connect with others across the UK.

**Recognition and Rewards:** Milestones achieved during the challenge will be celebrated with certificates, badges, and prizes.

A primary school class in Manchester set a goal to plant 500 trees, involving students, parents, and teachers.



#### **HOW TO START YOUR CHALLENGE**

Joining March On 2025 is simple:

1. Visit the official website to sign up and explore the range of themes.
2. Download your welcome pack to kick-start your journey.
3. Share your commitment with family and friends to build a support network.
4. Begin making small, purposeful changes each day.



# HOW TO ALWAYS STAY MOTIVATED AT WORK

**B**y incorporating the following strategies, you can boost motivation, enhance productivity, and find greater satisfaction in your work.

## SET CLEAR GOALS

Break down your workload into manageable tasks with clear objectives. Use to-do lists or productivity tools to track progress. Achieving smaller goals gives a sense of accomplishment and keeps you moving forward.

## PRIORITISE TASKS

Identify high-priority tasks and tackle them first. This approach, often called “eating the frog,” helps reduce procrastination and builds momentum for the rest of the day.

## MAINTAIN A POSITIVE MINDSET

Focus on the positive aspects of your work, whether it's the value you add, the skills you're developing, or the relationships you've built. Gratitude for these elements can enhance job satisfaction.

## TAKE BREAKS

Schedule regular short breaks to recharge. A quick walk, a chat with a colleague, or even just stepping away from your desk can help reset your focus and energy.

## KEEP LEARNING

Take advantage of training opportunities or explore new skills related to your role. Learning something

new can reignite your interest and provide a sense of progress.

## ORGANISE YOUR WORKSPACE

A tidy and comfortable workspace promotes focus and efficiency. Remove clutter and personalise your area with items that inspire you, such as photos or motivational quotes.

## CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Recognise and reward yourself for your achievements, whether big or small. Treat yourself to something enjoyable after completing a challenging task or project.

## BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Foster positive relationships with colleagues. Collaboration and camaraderie can make the work environment more enjoyable and provide emotional support when needed.

## MAINTAIN WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Avoid burnout by setting boundaries between work and personal life. Ensure you're getting enough rest, exercise, and time for hobbies outside of work.

## SEEK FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

Engage with your manager or mentor to discuss your progress and any challenges you're facing. Constructive feedback can help you improve and feel valued.

Staying motivated at work can sometimes be challenging, especially when facing repetitive tasks or high-pressure situations



# TOP PICKS FOR TV AND FILM IN MARCH

## THE ALTO KNIGHTS (FILM)

Originally titled *Wise Guys*, *The Alto Knights* is an upcoming biographical crime thriller directed by Barry Levinson. The film features Robert De Niro in dual roles as Frank Costello and Vito Genovese, two influential Italian-American crime bosses in 20th-century New York. The story explores their intricate relationship, tracing their rise to power, the rivalry that developed between them, and the betrayal that ultimately reshaped the Mafia. *The Alto Knights* is set to be released on March 21st 2025, offering a compelling look into the world of organised crime.

### *Three fun facts about The Alto Knights:*

**De Niro's Dual Role:** Robert De Niro takes on both leading roles, demonstrating his remarkable versatility and depth as an actor.

**Written by Nicholas Pileggi:** The screenplay is written by Nicholas Pileggi, famous for his work on *Goodfellas*, ensuring a gripping and true-to-life story.

**Strong Supporting Cast:** The film boasts a strong supporting cast, including Debra Messing, Cosmo Jarvis, and Kathrine Narducci, enriching the narrative.

## DAREDEVIL: BORN AGAIN (TV)

*Daredevil: Born Again* is a forthcoming Marvel Studios series that picks up the story of Matt Murdock (Charlie Cox), a blind lawyer with extraordinary senses who seeks justice through his busy law practice. His rival, Wilson Fisk (Vincent D'Onofrio), is advancing his own political ambitions in New York. As the two men's pasts resurface, they are set on a collision course. *Daredevil: Born Again* will premiere on Disney+ on 4th March 2025, with the first two episodes available at launch and the remaining seven following on a weekly basis.

### *Three fun facts about Daredevil: Born Again:*

**Dual Performances:** Charlie Cox returns as Matt Murdock/Daredevil, and Vincent D'Onofrio reprises his role as Wilson Fisk/Kingpin, building on their established chemistry from the original Netflix series.

**Returning Cast:** The series brings back familiar faces, including Deborah Ann Woll as Karen Page and Elden Henson as Foggy Nelson, enriching the storyline with their continued involvement.

**New Antagonist:** Jon Bernthal joins the cast as Frank Castle/The Punisher, adding a fresh and exciting element to the series.







# THE BEST SEASONAL DISHES FOR MARCH

## INGREDIENTS

4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into batons  
3 medium parsnips, peeled and cut into batons  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 tsp ground cumin  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
75g mixed salad leaves (such as rocket, spinach, and watercress)  
50g toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped  
50g feta cheese, crumbled  
For the dressing:  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 tbsp red wine vinegar  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
1 tbsp honey  
Salt and pepper, to taste

## ROAST CARROT AND PARSNIP SALAD WITH HAZELNUT DRESSING

### INSTRUCTIONS

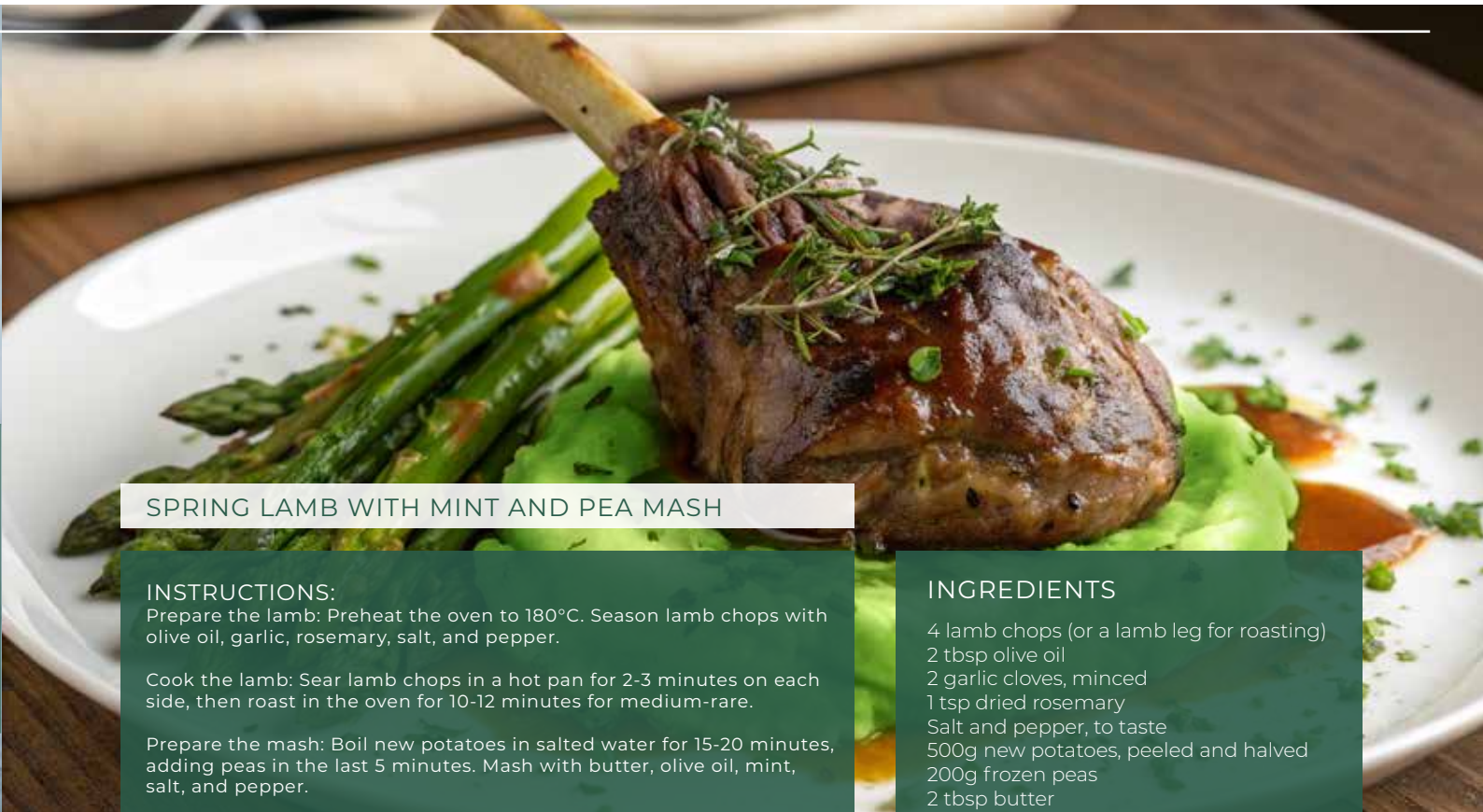
Roast the vegetables: Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan). Toss carrot and parsnip batons with olive oil, cumin, salt, and pepper. Roast for 25-30 minutes until tender and browned.

Prepare the dressing: Whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, Dijon mustard, honey, salt, and pepper.

Assemble the salad: Cool the roasted vegetables slightly, then toss with mixed salad leaves.

Finish the salad: Drizzle dressing over the salad, toss to coat, and top with toasted hazelnuts and crumbled feta.





## SPRING LAMB WITH MINT AND PEA MASH

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Prepare the lamb: Preheat the oven to 180°C. Season lamb chops with olive oil, garlic, rosemary, salt, and pepper.

Cook the lamb: Sear lamb chops in a hot pan for 2-3 minutes on each side, then roast in the oven for 10-12 minutes for medium-rare.

Prepare the mash: Boil new potatoes in salted water for 15-20 minutes, adding peas in the last 5 minutes. Mash with butter, olive oil, mint, salt, and pepper.

Serve: Let the lamb rest before serving with the minted pea mash, garnished with extra mint.

### INGREDIENTS

4 lamb chops (or a lamb leg for roasting)  
2 tbsp olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 tsp dried rosemary  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
500g new potatoes, peeled and halved  
200g frozen peas  
2 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped  
1 tbsp olive oil (for the peas)



## RHUBARB CRUMBLE

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan).

Coat rhubarb with caster sugar, cornflour, and vanilla, then transfer to an ovenproof dish.

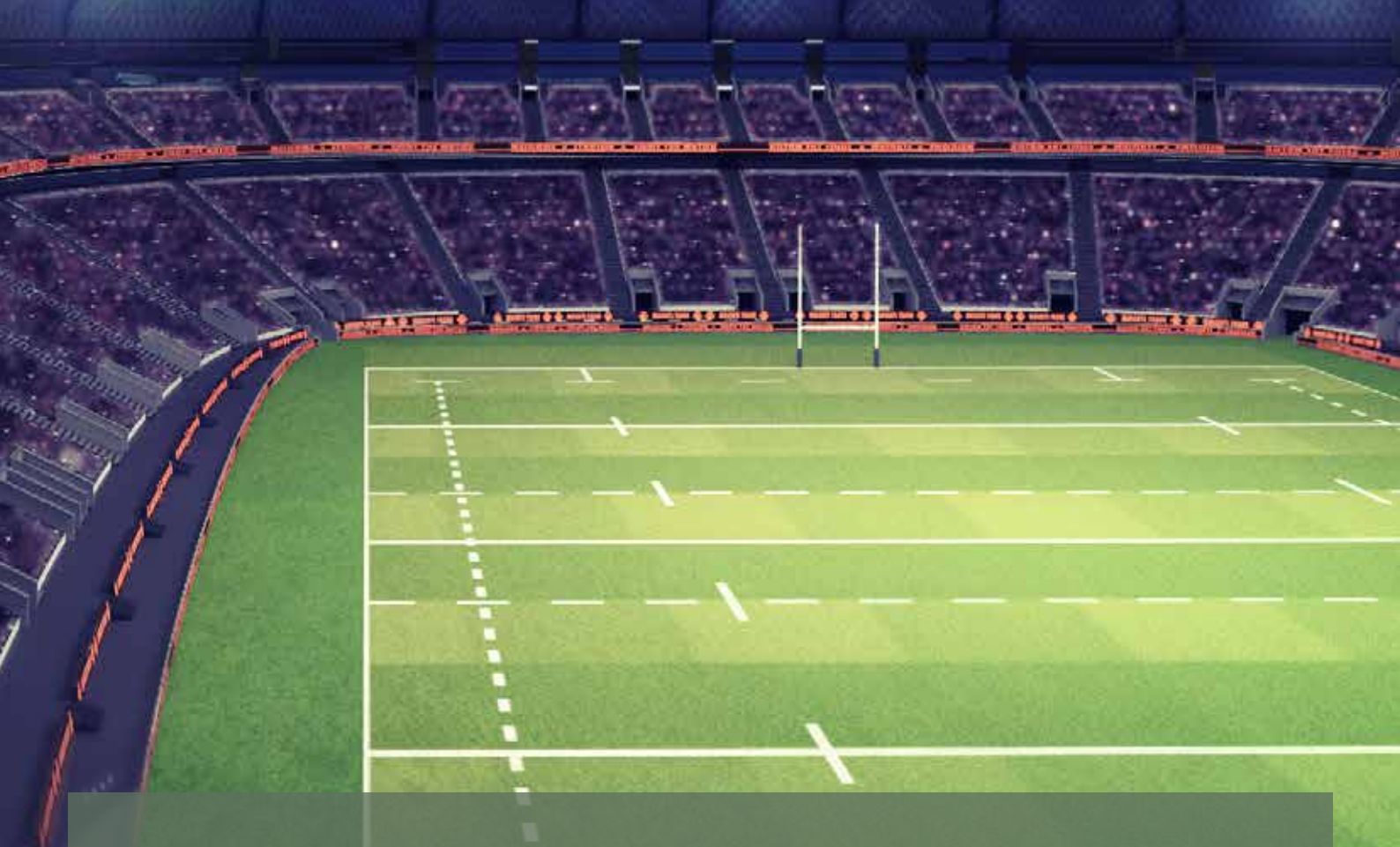
Rub butter into flour to form breadcrumbs, then stir in demerara sugar and oats.

Scatter the crumble topping over the rhubarb. Bake for 30-35 minutes until golden and bubbling. Serve warm with custard, cream, or ice cream.

### INGREDIENTS

500g rhubarb, chopped into 2cm pieces  
100g caster sugar  
1 tbsp cornflour  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
For the crumble topping:  
100g plain flour  
50g butter, cubed  
50g demerara sugar  
50g oats (optional for added texture)





# HOW ARE ENGLAND LOOKING FOR THEIR FINAL TWO SIX NATIONS GAMES?

England's Six Nations campaign so far has been marked by notable performances and challenges

**T**he squad's fitness and form have been pivotal in their journey, with the final two matches against Italy and Wales offering opportunities to enhance their standing. While England has faced challenges in the Six Nations, the upcoming matches against Italy and Wales offer opportunities to enhance their campaign. With strategic adjustments and optimal performance, England can aim to conclude the tournament on a positive note.

## SQUAD FITNESS AND FORM

England's squad has experienced a mix of injuries and recoveries. Notably, fly-half Fin Smith, No. 8 Tom Willis, and wing Ollie Sleightholme have been integrated into the starting lineup, reflecting strategic adjustments to bolster the team's performance. However, the team has faced setbacks, including a 27-22 loss to Ireland in Dublin, highlighting areas for improvement.

## UPCOMING MATCHES

Looking ahead, England's final two Six Nations fixtures are against Italy and Wales.

**England vs. Italy:** Scheduled for March 9, 2025, at Twickenham, this match presents a favourable opportunity for England. Italy has shown resilience but remains a team England can challenge effectively. A strong performance here is crucial for England to maintain momentum and secure a positive result.

**Wales vs. England:** Set for March 15, 2025, at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff, this encounter is anticipated to be more competitive. Wales has demonstrated formidable form, making this match a significant test for England. A strategic approach and peak performance will be essential for England to achieve a favourable outcome.





# CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL 2025 PREVIEW

The Cheltenham Festival 2025 is set to capture the imagination of racing enthusiasts from Tuesday 11th March until Friday 14th March at Cheltenham

**T**his prestigious four-day event features 28 top-tier races, including the renowned Gold Cup, Champion Hurdle, and Queen Mother Champion Chase.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

**Champion Day (11 March):** The festival begins with the Champion Hurdle, where Constitution Hill is the big favourite, aiming to defend his title.

**Style Wednesday (12 March):** A day blending high fashion with elite racing, including the Queen Mother Champion Steeple Chase, offering spectators a chance to showcase their style alongside breathtaking races.

**St Patrick's Thursday (13 March):** Celebrating Irish heritage, this day merges festive spirit with competitive racing, honouring the contributions of Irish trainers and jockeys.

**Gold Cup Day (14 March):** The festival ends with the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Reigning champion Galopin Des Champs is hoping for a historic third consecutive win.

#### NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS:

Trainer Nicky Henderson faces a critical decision regarding his four-year-old star, Lulamba. Initially the 6-4 favourite for the Triumph Hurdle, Lulamba has also been entered into the Supreme Novices' Hurdle, prompting strategic planning.

In a notable move, top owner Olly Harris has sold three horses trained by Henderson, including the prominent Cheltenham contender Peaky Boy, for a six-figure fee. Despite these transactions, however, Henderson's stable remains formidable with contenders like Constitution Hill and Sir Gino.

#### BETTING INSIGHTS:

Bet365 has introduced a Non-Runner No Bet (NRNB) offer for the festival's five major races: Champion Hurdle, Champion Chase, Stayers' Hurdle, Ryanair Chase, and the Gold Cup. This initiative provides bettors with a safety cocoon, ensuring they get refunded if their selected horse does not end up participating, which is especially beneficial given the unpredictable nature of high profile racing events such as these.

#### ENHANCEMENTS FOR 2025:

The Jockey Club has implemented several enhancements to elevate the festival experience: **Customer Experience:** Investments have been made to improve facilities and services, ensuring attendees have a memorable visit.

**Multi-Day Tickets:** Attendees purchasing tickets for multiple days can enjoy added benefits, encouraging a more immersive festival experience.



Necton Road, Little Dunham, Kings Lynn

OIEO £450,000



Full of charm! Fantastic, extremely well presented, spacious detached, three double bedroom house situated in the popular rural village of Little Dunham. This superb property boasts converted garage offering garden studio usage, large carport, two reception rooms, open fireplace and much more...

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### Millfield, Sporle, Kings Lynn

**£525,000 - £550,000**



Guide Price: £525,000-£550,000 Fantastic, detached four bedroom executive style property, situated on a small development just on the outskirts of Sporle. This superb property has much to offer and includes double garage, en-suite shower room, four reception rooms, parking, gardens and more...

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### Ceres Drive, Swaffham

**£325,000**



Three bedroom detached house situated in the market town of Swaffham. The property offers open plan kitchen/dining room, utility room, sitting room, en-suite and separate bathroom, garage, off-road parking for two vehicles, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

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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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## Park Road, Dereham

**Guide Price £300,000 - £325,000**



Very well presented, updated three bedroom house conveniently situated within easy reach of Dereham town centre. This fantastic property offers two reception rooms, utility room, luxury bathroom, garden with studio/office, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating.

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Swaffham - 01760 721389  
Watton - 01953 883474

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### Charles Avenue, Watton

**OIRO £425,000**



Fantastic, extremely well presented, impressive detached four bedroom house, conveniently situated within easy reach of Watton town centre. This superb property has plenty to offer including double garage, two reception rooms, en-suite shower room and delightful gardens. Viewing Highly Recommended!

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### Priory Road, Watton, Thetford

**£300,000**



Well presented, spacious detached chalet style three bedroom house conveniently situated within easy reach of Watton town centre. The property includes a recently fitted kitchen and bathroom, garage, conservatory, parking for several vehicles, gardens, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

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## Merton Road, Watton

**Guide Price £550,000 - £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.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - [info@longsons.co.uk](mailto:info@longsons.co.uk)

## West Croft Watton Road, Ashill

**£425,000 - £450,000**



Five bedroom detached house, located within the popular village of Ashill. Situated in a non-estate position, this property offers five double bedrooms, living room, cloakroom to ground floor, kitchen, utility room, en-suite facilities, family bathroom, outside spaces, garage and more!

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The Poplars, Ploughboy Lane, Saham Toney

£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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Swaffham | Watton

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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!

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

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

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.



# 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





“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!



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](http://comparemymove.com) and [reallymoving.com](http://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!



# SPRING INTO NEW BEGINNINGS

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