



DENTAL & MEDICAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

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Creating kerb appeal

First impressions count when selling your home

If you're planning to sell your home this spring or summer, there are a number of improvements you should consider before putting it on the market, as even small changes can make a surprising difference to a successful and quick sale.

Preparing your home for viewers, or 'staging' as it's called, can add thousands of pounds to its value

Your property will almost certainly be more attractive to buyers with some general sprucing up and cleaning, which can give your home a new lease of life and potentially increase its value without blowing a big hole in your budget.

Remember that most buyers start looking for properties online, and they will expect to see around twenty to thirty photos, so your property has to look its best from the outset. Untidy properties and those that look like they have limited space aren't likely to be first in the queue for a viewing.

Redecorating

Decorating is perhaps the most obvious way to add value to your home. Whilst small, superficial defects won't directly affect a property's value, they could put off potential buyers and therefore prevent it from selling at the optimum price.

It's best to fix all superficial defects. While unlikely to be the clinching factor in a house sale, small problems and defects can create an impression that the house is run down or not well cared for.

Redecorating checklist:

- Peeling paint
- Dirty walls, especially near door frames and around switches
- Dripping taps
- Squeaky floors, doors or stairs
- Mouldy sealant in kitchens or bathrooms
- Limescale built up on kitchen and bathroom fittings
- Badly fitted laminate flooring
- Broken lightbulbs

Bigger issues, such as damp, should not be covered up. They will show up in a survey and are likely to come back to haunt you later on.

First impressions count

Prospective buyers are likely to make a drive-by visit to your property before deciding whether to arrange a viewing. Your goal is to make them want to come in.

It's important to ensure your property has instant kerb appeal. Tidy the exterior of your home, regularly cut the lawn, trim hedges and remove any weeds from your beds or pathways.

If required, consider painting the front door and window frames. Even a new doorknob, house number or name sign can help. If it's the right season, put some pots or baskets outside your property.

Kitchen makeover

An attractive, clean and sociable kitchen is essential for most buyers. Kitchens may be the first thing they look to replace if they can't





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imagine living in yours. You may not be able to afford a whole new kitchen, but there are many smaller ways to improve what you already have.

For a relatively small budget, painting units or replacing cupboard handles or doors is a cheaper way to refresh kitchens. Good lighting and clean, clutter-free surfaces will make a big difference to the feel of the house.

Alternatively, if there is money in the budget, kitchen renovations can be carried out for a modest investment. Prospective buyers may be willing to pay more to avoid the hassle of buying a new kitchen.

Kitchen checklist:

- Clean and polish all surfaces, fittings, handles, cupboard fronts and appliances
- Clean inside the oven and any integrated appliances that are included in the sale
- Clear any clutter from surfaces and make sure the sink and draining area are completely clear
- Pet bowls should be cleared away, and always let in a blast of fresh air to clear any stale cooking smells

Bathroom

Bathrooms need to be fresh and hygienic-looking. Where appropriate, re-grout tiling, remove all limescale, and replace taps. Paint the walls a neutral shade, and ideally replace a shower curtain with a new one or a simple glass screen.

Bathroom checklist:

- Replace existing bathroom fixtures if they are chipped, badly stained or an unfashionable colour such as pink, avocado, peach or chocolate brown
- Flooring should be clean and hygienic
- Consider painting unfashionable tiles with white tile paint. If you need to replace tiles, you could tile over the old ones as removing tiles can be a difficult and very time-consuming job
- Make sure the bathroom has an extractor fan for ventilation
- Add a mirror or two to make the space seem larger and brighter
- Make sure that at least one bathroom has a shower
- Consider replacing bath and shower sealants if mould has accumulated
- Clear away the mountain of toiletries, sponges, medication and make-up that seems to accumulate in the bathroom
- Clear away children's bath toys and put out clean, dry, folded towels
- Open windows to clear away any excess moisture

Garden appeal

For many people, the garden is one of the biggest selling points. An attractive, tidy, well-designed garden can add considerable value to a property.

The garden should feel like an extra space for entertaining or relaxing, rather than an expanse

of grass. A decking area gives buyers a sense of having a larger usable living space.

Garden checklist:

- Tidy away any rubbish, weed and cut the grass
- Trim borders and clear pathways
- Put out some potted plants to soften patios and yards
- A seasonal fertiliser will add colour to a tired lawn
- Be sure to cut back any boisterous bushes, particularly in smaller gardens

Smart technology

Smart home technologies are increasingly important to buyers; simply advertising the presence of fibre-optic cables in your area could be enough to encourage buyers. Statement systems, such as multi-room music platforms, can also make a difference.

Smart technology such as Hive, which provides mobile control of heating systems, is a feature worth considering. If it moves your EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) up a band, it could add thousands to the sale price. ■

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