

Looking for a property

Viewing a property that could potentially become your new home is no doubt exciting. But, for some, there's the worry they could make the wrong decision to buy, simply because they didn't find out as much about the property as possible when making their first visit.

So for a better chance of finding a house you can happily call your home, take a look at these top ten tips:

- 1. Research the area**, your estate agent should be able to provide some information but it's also worth checking out website such as www.checkmyarea.com, which provides details of the type of neighbourhood it is. Find out about the local travel services, doctors, entertainment venues to see if they are suitable for you and your family.
- 2. Visit the area at different times of the day**, to get a general feel for the town or street you are interested in. Keep in mind the traffic and noise volumes.
- 3. Check out the property externally first**, look out for loose roof tiles, cracks in exterior walls and poor quality window frames as these could indicate further work, and money.
- 4. Check for damp patches on walls or ceilings**, some may be hidden behind furniture or large pictures. Rusty radiators or pipes are also good indicators of damp properties.
- 5. Consider areas that would be most costly to repair**, once inside the property. If the property is old, ask if the electrics, damp proof course or heating systems have been replaced at any time and ask to see copies of guarantees and warranties. Also, don't forget to check the Energy Performance Certificate from the seller which will give you a good indication of what energy bills you may face.
- 6. Kitchens and bathrooms** are the most expensive rooms to refit so if you don't like the current fixtures and fittings, remember to budget for replacements.
- 7. Ignore basic décor**, everyone's tastes are different and basic decorations are not expensive to re-do.
- 8. What direction does the property face?** It may sound silly but if you like to sit in the sun in your garden, you'll have to consider this.
- 9. Is the driveway big enough?** Does it have a garage and does the street offer suitable and safe parking spaces for you and visitors?
- 10. Be prepared to be flexible**, remember there's no such thing as a perfect house.