



Conveyancing Jargon Buster

A guide to the legal terminology used throughout a property purchase transaction

CLIENT CARE LETTER

This is our initial letter to you, which we will send out, along with our terms of business. We ask you to sign and return a copy by way of confirmation that you have both read and understood the details of this agreement.

COMPLETION

This is the finalising of the purchase when all monies are passed over and when you become the owner of the property. We will call you to let you know once this has taken place so that you can pick up the keys and move in.

CONTRACT

This is the agreement which specifies details of the property purchase.

DEPOSIT

This is the amount paid on exchange of contracts, which is usually 10% of the purchase price or 5% on new builds.

EXCHANGE OF CONTRACTS

This is the stage in the transaction when copies of signed contracts are exchanged between the buyer's and the seller's solicitors. If you pull out after this stage, you will lose the deposit and may face legal action from the seller. A date for completion is agreed at this point.

HM LAND REGISTRY

This is the government department responsible for the registration of land and property in England and Wales. They hold records of information about ownership of and interest affecting land and property.

MEMORANDUM OF SALE

This sets out the key details of the transaction and the contact details for the parties involved.

MONEY LAUNDERING CHECKS

We will ask for copies of your identification documents in order to comply with regulations.

MORTGAGE

This is a loan secured against your property. If you are obtaining a mortgage to help you to buy the property, we will also act on behalf of your mortgage company.

OFFICIAL COPIES

These are copies of deeds and documents held by the Land Registry, including title registers and title plans. They are guaranteed as being accurate at the time and date stated on them.

SDLT

This is a government tax payable by every home buyer when purchasing a property. The amount due will be a percentage of the purchase price.

SEARCHES

We will undertake a number of searches in relation to your property before we send our report to you. The most important search is the search of the Local Authority records, which will reveal things such as planning decisions, building regulations and listed buildings.

SURVEY

This is a report carried out by a surveyor on the physical state of the property you are buying. If you are buying a property you should be aware that the property is 'sold as seen'. It is for you, as the buyer, to discover any physical defects by means of inspections and surveys.

TRANSFER

This is the document that passes the ownership of the property from the seller to the buyer. It is dated with the completion date and will be sent to HM Land Registry after completion.