

Selling your Leasehold Home

You can sell your apartment at any time. Selling your Leasehold home is known as a resale. A new lease is not drawn up when you sell, instead you 'assign' (sell) the remaining term of lease, the rights that you have to occupy the apartment and the responsibilities of the lease to the buyer. In effect the new leaseholder 'steps into your shoes'.

We have produced this guidance to help you to understand the process that will need to be followed when you sell your home and how we will assist you in doing so.

Please note this guide applies to those people who have bought their leasehold apartment outright. There are different arrangements for those leaseholders who have purchased their apartment from us on an Older Shared Ownership basis. If you have purchased on an OPSO basis, please request our separate guide "Selling your OPSO (Older Persons Shared Ownership) Home".

As set out in the Lease you will require Rapport Housing and Care's (RHC) prior approval of any purchaser(s) to ensure they are eligible and suitable for the scheme. We will require all purchaser(s) to be aged 55 years and over and have a care and/or support need of 3.5 hours per week. Your solicitor will require written confirmation from our solicitors that RHC has approved any potential buyer before you can proceed.

When selling your home, you must advise us of your intention to sell by e-mail or in writing, to the following address.

Rapport Housing & Care
The Old Wharf
Station Road
Cuxton, Rochester
Kent
ME2 1AB

Kelly-anne.coster@rapporthc.co.uk

We will acknowledge your notice within 5 working days and provide a nominated contact who will be your main contact with RHC throughout this process.

Marketing Your Home

You will be able to market your home yourself usually by appointing an Estate Agent. Please note RHC does not offer a direct marketing service. Your estate agent will provide you with a valuation.

Please ensure that your estate agent is aware that your apartment is part of an Extra Care Housing Scheme and let them know what you originally paid for the apartment and when. Your estate agent will consider the valuations of other Extra Care Housing apartments in the local area when deciding upon a valuation. It is important that comparisons are only made with other Extra Care Housing Schemes and not with

sheltered housing or housing designated for older persons as ‘retirement housing’ where the services provided are different and less extensive than in Extra Care. Extra Care Housing is sometimes known as ‘assisted living’. Please ensure you explain the nature of Extra Care Housing, and the services that are provided to your agent. Please do not hesitate to contact Rapport if you would like further information in order to do so.

Whilst your apartment is on the market you must continue to pay all the outgoings associated with the property including the service charges as confirmed in the lease. This is the case even if the apartment is not occupied. Any service charge arrears that are due to RHC must be cleared before the completion of the sale.

What are the Costs Involved in Selling Your Home?

As with all property sales, you will have expenses to pay. Therefore, before deciding to sell your home it is worth investigating the full costs involved and considering carefully if and when to market your property. The estimated costs that you will have to pay are summarised in the table below and further information follows.

Description	Cost
Estate Agent Fees	Your Estate Agent may charge you a fixed fee or a percentage of the final sale price, You are likely to be pay less for a sole agency arrangement compared to using a number of agents.
Your Legal Fees	We suggest you obtain a number of estimates including one from the solicitor who acted for you originally
RHC’s Legal Fees	Estimated cost £450 - £550 plus VAT payable to RHC’s solicitor
Provision of a Management Pack	Payable to RHC’s solicitor £150 plus VAT
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	An EPC is required when a property is put up for sale or rent. It lasts 10 years. RHC will provide this free of charge whilst the current certificate for your home remains valid and it will be included within the Management Pack. Once this expires, however, you will need to provide your own from a qualified party. Estimated cost £150 plus VAT
Applicant Assessment Fee (Payable to RHC)	Reasonable costs for the assessment of applicants/potential purchasers referred to by your estate agent if you choose to appoint one. Total costs capped at a maximum of £400.

Legal Fees

Selling your home will involve changes to your existing lease which will require the professional services of a solicitor. The solicitor will incur professional and disbursement fees for acting for you. You are also required to pay RHC’s legal expenses.

Management Pack

In place of responding to solicitors enquires our solicitors will provide your solicitors with a Management Pack which includes:

- The last three years published service charge accounts
- Buildings insurance policy and schedule
- Service charge estimate for the current year and details of the anticipated payments on account for the property
- Copies of any notices served on the lessees under Section 20 in respect of any proposed works or any works which have not yet been paid for
- Documentation relating to any forfeiture proceedings applicable to the property
- Any additional regulations or rules affecting the property which are not contained in the lease
- General information in relation to serving notice, certificates of Compliance and deeds of covenant
- A copy of the original EPC Certificate as applicable (see above)

The information in the pack will be sufficient for the purchaser's needs and our solicitors will not need to respond to any additional enquiries as all the information that the buyer's solicitor will require will be in the pack.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Selling a home in England and Wales requires an Energy Performance Certificate – there are many companies providing this service now. An EPC will normally cost in the region of £50-£100 plus VAT and lasts 10 years, RHC will provide a certificate free of charge until the current certificates obtained when your home was first sold expires. The certificate will be included in the Management Pack as described below. A valid EPC certificate will be needed by the Estate Agent marketing your home

Applicant Assessment Fee

As set out in your Lease any potential purchaser will need to be assessed and approved by RHC, irrespective of who markets the property to ensure they are eligible and suitable for the scheme. We will require all purchaser(s) to be aged 55 years and over and have a care and/or support need of 3.5 hours per week. We will require you to cover our reasonable costs for the assessment of applicants/potential purchasers referred to by your estate agent if you choose to appoint one. These costs will be capped at a maximum of £400.

Are there any Restrictions on Selling?

There are a number of restrictions associated with selling your home, with these being set out in your lease.

The main restrictions are:-

- All leaseholders assigned to the lease must sign and agree to sell the property.
- The leaseholder is required to meet the estate agents and legal costs and any other costs incurred in connection with selling the home.
- The leaseholder is responsible for providing an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), (this is a Government requirement for all properties marketed in England and Wales and must be available before marketing can commence). As referred to previously RHC will provide a certificate free of charge until the current certificates obtained when your home was first sold expires.
- The potential purchaser of your property must meet the requirements of the lease and the selection criteria of RHC this includes the requirement that any new buyer and any member of their household must be at least 55 years old and one household member must have a minimum 3.5 hours domiciliary care and/or domestic support need per week.
- Any arrears on service charges (remember that service charges are payable up until the sale is completed) and any additional costs incurred must be cleared before the sale can complete.

The Sales Process

Confirming your Intention to Sell

When you have decided that you wish to sell please confirm your decision to us in writing, or by e-mail at the following address.

Rapport Housing & Care
The Old Wharf
Station Road
Cuxton
Rochester
Kent
ME1 2XJ

Kelly-Anne.Coster@rapporthc.co.uk

We will acknowledge your decision within 5 working days and send you a copy of this guide. We will also provide you with details of a nominated contact who will be your main contact with RHC throughout this process.

Appointing a Solicitor

Before instructing an Estate Agent to market our home, it is best to select your solicitor, so that you're ready to act promptly. You require a solicitor to deal with the legal work associated with the sale of your home. We recommend using the solicitor who originally dealt with your purchase as they are most likely to have a lot of your details available regarding your property.

We always suggest:

- You select a solicitor who offers a fixed fee for their services
- You obtain a quotation before instructing your solicitor
- You choose a solicitor with knowledge and experience of leases

Provide an Energy Performance Certificate

An EPC will normally cost in the region of £50-£100 plus VAT and lasts 10 years. RHC will provide An EPC for your property free of charge until the current certificate obtained when your home was first sold expires. If this is the case the certificate will be included in the Management pack to be provided by RHC's solicitor (see above). If not, then you will need to obtain an EPC yourself.

Marketing your Home

You need to decide if you are happy to show potential buyers around your home alternately you may wish a friend or relative to be in attendance. You can also ask your estate agent to be present, these are called accompanied viewings. To get the best results from the viewings, you need to follow a few simple but effective tips which you will find later in this guidance.

Eligibility to Purchase

There is no point in a potential buyer viewing your home if they will not be eligible to purchase it. Make sure therefore that your estate agent knows that any buyers, including any members of their household must be 55 years or over to qualify. In addition one member of the household must have a minimum 3.5 hour a week care or support need. Care or support may be provided by a partner, friend or relative as well as a care professional. We suggest that only when a prospective purchaser is in a position to make an offer for your home and are able to proceed with purchase, that you ask RHC to meet them to formally check their eligibility. Remember too that you will need to meet RHC's costs associated with assessing any prospective purchaser capped at £400.

When RHC assesses a buyers eligibility we will also want to ensure not only are they suitable for the scheme but also that they understand the services they will receive from RHC and the associated costs.

RHC will also need to confirm eligibility to your solicitors assuming the sale proceeds.

Selling Process when you have a Buyer

Once you have a buyer and solicitors have been instructed what are the next steps?

Please read the information below on what you should be doing each week.

Please note that the following information and timescales are given as guidance only to help you in the sales process and is not a definitive guide for the resale legal process. Other matters could occur that are outside of RHC's or solicitors' control and result in the sale being delayed. We hope that you will find it a useful guide however.

Week 1

You should immediately contact your solicitor to provide your formal instructions. They will usually ask you to complete a Property Information Form, Leasehold Information Form and Fixture and Fittings Form. Try to complete as much of the forms as you can. If you are unable to complete some sections your solicitor will try and obtain the information from us or other organisations.

You should also send any money for fees to your solicitor straight away. The fees will include the work your solicitor will be doing on your behalf, our solicitor's fee and the fee for our solicitor to provide the Management Pack for your property. If this isn't done straight away, it can result in the sale being delayed.

If you are purchasing another property, please ensure you are progressing this sale as quickly as possible.

Week 2

Once your solicitor has received all relevant information and monies from you, they will commence drawing up the legal paperwork for the sale.

They will obtain the lease and title for your property and send these along with an 'undertaking' to our solicitor.

The undertaking is a legal letter which confirms that our solicitor's legal fee will be paid by you. In order for your solicitor to send the undertaking, they would need the fee from you in Week 1. Without the fee and undertaking from your solicitor the sale will be delayed as our solicitor will not be able to complete their legal paperwork.

Please ensure the fees are sent to your solicitor ASAP. Your solicitor will also request the Management Pack from our solicitors and send them the fee for this service. Details of what is included in this Management Pack are included earlier on in this guidance. This information will be sent on to the buyer's solicitor at a later stage.

Week 3

Keep in touch with your solicitor for updates. You may need to provide additional documents at this stage. If the buyer is purchasing your home with a mortgage, the buyer's lender will be instructing a valuation for your property. If this is the case, we will give your details to the surveying company so that the surveyor can contact you for access to your property.

Week 4

Once your solicitor has collated all information about your property which includes the forms you completed and the Management Pack from us, they will send these papers with the draft contract to the buyer's solicitor.

The buyer's solicitor will review the papers and raise any enquiries to your solicitor. In the meantime, the buyer's mortgage offer (if applicable) will be issued and will need to be approved by our solicitors.

Week 5

Your solicitor will be liaising with the buyer's solicitor to resolve any outstanding legal matters.

Week 6

Once all legal matters are resolved, your solicitor will send you the contract, which sets out the terms of the sale.

Week 7

Having reviewed the contract, you should sign and return the contract to your solicitor. You should also discuss a proposed completion date with your solicitor. Your solicitor will be liaising with the buyer's solicitor to confirm completion dates.

If you are purchasing another property, please ensure all matters have been resolved so that you can exchange contracts.

Week 8

Contracts will be exchanged ('Agreement to Lease') – this means that you will have entered into a legal agreement with the buyer. You will not be able to withdraw from the sale at this stage without incurring significant financial penalties.

You will receive a completion statement from your solicitor which details the monies due from the buyer as well as any outstanding fees that are payable by you. If there are any arrears on your RHC account, the monies for these will be taken from your completion funds. Your solicitor will deal with any outstanding legal paperwork. They will arrange for any money payable to us by you (including the settlement of any service charge arrears) to be sent to us on the day of completion.

Finally – Completion Day has arrived!

Congratulations – You have now sold your property!

Please remember that you are selling direct to your buyer. It is therefore extremely important that you pass on all keys and fobs. If you still hold any guides about your property, please leave these for the buyer. Please ensure you take meter readings on the day, so you can inform the utility companies you have left the property and they can close their accounts with you.

Once monies have been received by your solicitor, you will meet the buyer at your property to handover any keys. This will be arranged between yourself and the buyer.

We will be notified about completion by our solicitor and we will update our systems with the new leaseholder's details.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I ensure that the sale progresses as quickly as possible?

It is important to liaise with your solicitors on a regular basis so that they can progress the sale with your buyer's solicitors. If you are buying another home, you should try and ensure this sale progresses as quickly as possible.

When should I look for another home?

You should begin to look for another home as soon as you decide to sell. However, to avoid putting yourself under any pressure, you should not make an offer on another home to buy or rent until a buyer has agreed to buy your home. Remember that you and your buyer could decide not to proceed at any time up to exchange of contracts.

Top Tips for Selling Your Home

1. First & Foremost

When showing people around your home be yourself, friendly and warm, to create a welcoming atmosphere. Before the viewing think about the best way to present your home, maybe practice on a friend how you would show a potential buyer round your home. Always greet your prospective buyer with a smile and invite them into your home. Calmly guide those viewing round your home, allowing the prospective buyer to enter the room first so they see the full size of the rooms and point out a few key points about your home that impressed you when you bought it. Always end the viewing with the most impressive room, normally the main reception room as this creates a lasting impression.

2. Inform & Persuade

If you are carrying out your own viewings, nobody likes being sold to, so when discussing your home be informative about the positive aspects of the property, etc.

but never oversell and never inform buyers of items which are incorrect as this may result in the sale falling through later.

3. Spick & Span

First impressions count with the majority of buying decisions made within the first 10 seconds of entering a property. Always make sure that the property is kept tidy and is well-cleaned. Store away personal possessions to create a more spacious environment. De-personalise your living space in order to allow your prospective buyers a chance to view the property in a less personal light. Carry out any repairs that you have been putting off and ensure that the house is spotless. Failure to address smaller items may lead your buyer to think that the property has been neglected and they may leave uninterested.

4. Bright & Breezy

A new lick of paint or new carpet if needed will help to smarten up the property. If you have them ensure that any cut flowers within the home are fresh, and that there are no unpleasant or strong smells – if so, buy some air fresheners.

5. Personal Safety

We all think of our home as a safe place and it usually is, however when selling your home, you are inviting strangers into your home. You personally don't know who is coming through your door so always try to have someone with you when arranging viewings. If it isn't possible to have someone with you, try and ensure people know when you have a viewing, always let your housing officer know and only arrange viewings in daylight.

Never let people into your home without a prior appointment.

6. Outside Space

Gardens and balconies can be a real selling feature. Always ensure that your garden or balcony is kept neat, maintained and clear of debris. If you have plant pots, make sure they are filled with live plants, preferably in flower.