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Property Health Check – the seller’s secret weapon

A South West property expert has launched a nationwide new service to help home owners get the best price for their property.

Property Health Check is the brainchild of Falmouth-based Chartered Surveyor Richard Hocking and gives vendors the inside track on what surveyors look for when surveying properties for buyers or valuing for mortgage lenders.

With the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Council of Mortgage Lenders saying house prices are starting to wobble and lending is still tight, sellers are coming under increasing pressure to accept lower offers in a buyer’s market.

Richard has used his experience surveying more than 17,000 homes in a career spanning over 25 years to put together a step-by-step guide in the form of a 40-minute online video that home owners can log into on the Property Health Check website.

Richard said: “Almost half of all property sales that fall through are due to adverse survey and valuation, and agents say one of the biggest reasons for buyers to pull out at the moment is a down-valuation by a mortgage lender.

“It’s all very well making your home look beautiful to potential buyers, but it’s the surveyor who reports back on its condition to buyers and lenders. The video on the Property Health Check website could potentially save vendors thousands of pounds for a very modest outlay.

“On many occasions I have had no alternative but to reduce my valuation significantly on homes I’ve inspected for want of some fairly basic maintenance and remedial work that many owners can undertake themselves at modest cost. Equally, I am aware that adverse comments in a more detailed survey can lead to the need for significant renegotiation or, at worst, a purchaser withdrawing from the transaction.

“That’s why I came up with Property Health Check. It gives sellers the inside track on what surveyors look for. In any market, but particularly in the present climate where prices have been falling and lending getting tighter, sellers need all the help they can get.”

Richard said typical problems include penetrating damp caused by blocked gutters or downpipes, damage caused by vegetation, and rotten windows or doors due to poor maintenance, all of which, although individually minor, can add up to a significant reduction in value.

Property Health Check has already been well received by estate agents and surveyors, with 27 estate agency offices already planning up to recommend the service to their clients. Agents believe it will smooth the buying and selling process and reduce the need for renegotiation as well as save many property sales.

Jeremy Miller, director of Miller & Son, which has offices across Devon and Cornwall, said: “We believe that the Property Health Check will greatly assist our clients in the sale of their properties. All of our 13 offices will be recommending our clients to view the website in order to help their sales through the survey and valuation process, greatly reducing the stress associated with this pivotal point in the transaction.”

The Property Health Check video features Richard and broadcaster Jemma Woodman, a former ITV Westcountry presenter. It takes sellers through the various common defects that surveyors look out for, including exterior and interior problems, outbuildings, retaining walls and services like electricity and drainage. Each section of the video has a checklist for home owners to follow.

Richard said: “We believe Property Health Check can benefit the whole property market and provide a very useful aide to sellers to help them achieve the best possible price for their property.

“Sellers will know what they need to do to increase the chances of a successful sale; buyers will acquire a property in better condition where value is maintained for mortgage valuation purposes, while agents will hopefully have less risk of chains collapsing and achieve better prices.”

Richard is establishing a network of qualified surveyors covering the whole country who can also undertake individual Property Health Check reports for those vendors that may be concerned about what they need to do in order to achieve a sale.

The Property Health Check online video costs £36 and is available only from www.propertyhealthcheck.co.uk. Vendors are also able to enter their postcodes so that they can be put in contact with a qualified surveyor in their area who can assist with a personalised Property Health Check.

What people are saying about Property Health Check

“We believe that the Property Health Check will greatly assist our clients in the sale of their properties. All of our 13 offices throughout Devon and Cornwall will be recommending our clients to view the website in order to help their sales through the survey and valuation process, greatly reducing the stress associated with this pivotal point in the transaction.”

*Jeremy Miller, Director, **Miller & Son**, Penzance, St Ives, Hayle, Helston, Camborne, Redruth, Falmouth, Liskeard, Launceston, Tavistock, Okehampton, Crediton.*

“The Property Health Check scheme is a fantastic opportunity for our clients to prepare their house for the survey and valuation process. We can see that this will not only greatly help their sale progress, but will also reduce the need for significant renegotiation later in their sales transaction and expedite exchange of contracts.”

*Ludo Laskowski, Director, **Laskowski & Company**, Falmouth*

“We can see that as the loan to value ratios have become much tighter for mortgage lenders, the Property Health Check video will greatly assist all three of our offices in achieving satisfactory sales for our clients by avoiding unnecessary down-valuations or adverse survey comments. We will be highly recommending all our clients to take on board the potential benefits of PHC at the outset of their marketing programme.”

*Andy Goundry, Director, **Goundry Pearce**, Truro, St Agnes, Camborne*

About Richard Hocking

Property Health Check was developed by Richard Hocking of [Hocking Associates](#), a Chartered Surveyor based in Falmouth, Cornwall with over 25 years' experience.

Richard is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Fellow of the Land Institute.

Having inspected over 17,000 properties during his career, Richard has identified many defects which surveyors will be looking for when undertaking either a private survey or valuation for mortgage loan purposes.

On many occasions, these defects taken individually can be regarded as relatively minor and perhaps not of concern, however when several defects are found together this may result in the need for significant expenditure.

This can often result in a down-valuation of the property or, alternatively, a purchaser being put off to the extent that they will wish to significantly renegotiate the purchase price or, at worst, withdraw completely.

As a Chartered Surveyor Richard has highlighted the need for house sellers to be more aware of defects which are likely to be identified in a survey or valuation, and the Property Health Check online video provides a valuable insight into the problems which may arise and can therefore be remedied prior to sale.

Personalised Property Health Check & Defects Reports can also be provided on individual properties, and this service is offered by Property Health Check's network of Chartered Surveyors located throughout the UK.

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