

## Paying someone to do the hard work

When looking for a property to rent or buy it can pay to hire a professional to search for you.

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The housing and rental markets have been toughening up over the last ten years with buyers becoming more streetwise, and needing to rely less on the skills of estate agents. Programmes such as 'Property Ladder' and 'Location, Location, Location' have given people an insight and understanding into a market previously left to the professionals. This, coupled with websites such as Rightmove and Primelocation, means that control of the market has shifted. Does this signal the death of the property professional? Surprisingly, no. However, those working in the property market need to offer a far superior service.



Property search consultants, home finders and property search agents are able to offer a service that bridges the gap between estate agent and client and is

money well spent in the current market, where demand outstrips supply and every penny counts. Once viewed as a luxury service afforded by the very rich, people are finding that investment in such a service will often save them money as well as time and peace of mind.

People are working longer hours and are finding it harder to strike a work-life balance. Finding time to contact estate agents, narrow down a list of options and view and deal with properties that, on occasions, meet none of the buyer's criteria can take up valuable free time. A property search specialist can do this work for you, be it either buying or renting.

Most companies will offer an initial consultation with you to discuss your requirements in terms of budget, location, style of property and any other must-haves. If instructed, they will charge an upfront fee which is then refundable against the overall success fee – normally a percentage of the purchase price. They will then contact, not just estate agents and developers, but people you may not have access to, such as decorators and maintenance workers, who are often hired to do a pre-sale tidy-up and may know of places about to come on the market, and even solicitors who cover probate cases. Having sourced the properties, they will then view them on your behalf to ensure

that they meet your criteria and contact you with a short list of properties they think you will like. Their knowledge of the market and negotiating skills mean that they can often secure the property you want for the best price, usually covering the cost of their service and saving you time.

It is not just time and money that can be saved using a property search consultant. More and more, people are finding they have to relocate to areas they are unfamiliar with and a lot of people are

coming to the UK from abroad to work. Starting a new job is stressful enough without having to worry about finding a property to rent or buy in a market and area you are unfamiliar with. Home finding companies can offer orientation tours of the area you are moving to, highlighting the best schools, areas to avoid, transport links, types of property in the area and what you can expect to pay. This service can offer great peace of mind when faced with so many other unsettling things going on around you.

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Lawrence Edwards is a property search consultancy covering central and south London further information can be found at [www.lawrence-edwards.com](http://www.lawrence-edwards.com)

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