

# GOUGHS

## SOLICITORS



***In this month's "Ask Goughs" column we answer a question which will definitely be on your mind if you are thinking of selling your home in the near future...***

***Q: I'm thinking of putting my house on the market. Is it true that I don't need a "Home Information Pack" – and what difference will this make?***

A: Home Information Packs (HIPs) were compulsory until recently, and one of the first things the new Government did was to suspend them (on the 20th May this year) with a view to abolishing them.

HIPs were introduced in order to require the Seller to assemble information about the property to be sold, which the Buyer would find useful and which would also help to speed up the process. The pack included an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), replies to a standard questionnaire, copies of the property's title, and local and water "searches".

In practice few Buyers even asked for the pack and even when they did they were of little practical use.

The local search was often of limited use to the Buyer's solicitors, as naturally the Seller would want to supply a basic, inexpensive local search. On the other hand the Buyer generally wanted an official search, direct from the Local Authority. Furthermore, after three months the original searches were out of date and often had to be repeated.

In most cases the Energy Performance Certificate, which assesses the energy efficiency rating of the property, was rarely at the top of a Buyers list of

essential criteria. Most Buyers choose a house on the basis of location and style. Although of environmental importance, the energy efficiency of the house is not of primary concern.

Although few will shed a tear for the demise of HIPs, it's worth noting that EPCs remain compulsory, so you will still have to have one. However, they are relatively inexpensive and shouldn't take long to carry out.

What should you do now that HIPs have been suspended? Firstly, you should instruct a solicitor on the sale of the house as soon as you think about putting it on the market. If you contact your local office of Goughs when you consider selling, we will send you a detailed introductory letter and our Home Movers Guide, an estimate of all the costs and expenses involved, and all the relevant forms. Once we are instructed we can sort out the EPC for you and if required obtain the title and draw up the sale contract.

This way as soon as a Buyer is found the contract papers can be sent to the Buyers' lawyer. This can save you a week or even two at the start of your sale transaction and get it off to a flying start!

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This article does not constitute legal advice and no action can be taken as a result of reading it. A qualified lawyer should always be consulted before taking any legal action.

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