



“Business as Usual”? SureMove Think Not!

Is it really business as usual? I keep hearing this, but I don't believe it! I think transferring an office of twenty-two people to their individual homes for six weeks is far from “business as usual”.

As a firm, we have always been able to work at home; we use case management in the cloud, and electronic files, so we were already 95% there, but working at home for a day here and there really isn't the same as having no physical contact with the office for six weeks. I miss the multi-scanner/copier! Oh, and actual real people too!

Plus, we are relying on ‘third-

parties’. Two weeks ago, a member of our staff was on hold to Barclays for almost seven hours, trying to get the release of mortgage funds for a client who was packed up and ready to move that day. Our perseverance paid off though, and the client got their keys at 4.30pm! Barclays had closed their Indian call centres that day, which had left only a handful of staff in the U.K.

We also rely on other ‘third-parties’, such as the Land Registry and Local Authorities for searches; some are open, some are closed, some are ‘working from home’. We usually have our assistants

sitting next to us, but they are now miles away. We use electronic files, but still have a paper file with deeds and documents. On March 20th, we closed the office, loaded several hundred files into our cars and off we went, taking over kitchen tables, dressing tables and even bringing garden furniture inside. The office looks like it's been burgled and the stationery cupboard emptier than Tesco's loo roll shelf!

But it's not all doom and gloom! After settling in, we are into a rhythm and are fully operational, working from home. We are all working extremely hard to get those people moved, that can, and others to the point of exchange, ready for when the lockdown restrictions are lifted. We can only complete on unoccupied properties during lockdown, but can progress occupied properties to the point of exchange of contracts.

In fact, we completed thirty-five transactions during the first week of lockdown, thirty in week two, and are still taking on new business. We are doing Zoom meetings with clients; holding our usual staff team meeting



on a Wednesday morning; using an app. downloaded to clients' smartphones to verify their ID; using an e-mail link for clients to pay for searches; using 'MyLegalSpace' for clients to communicate securely and track their milestones; and we are now using 'AdobeSign' for clients to sign contracts electronically. Our phone system works on the cloud, so it is easy to access from pcs at home and we now all have wireless headphones, just like in the office.

I am so proud of SureMove and that we are doing the best job possible for our clients, but "business as usual"? ... I don't think so!

Good news !!!

Suremove Property Logbook

I have seen a lot of advice lately from estate agents to prospective vendors, who are desperate, but unable, to market their property due to Covid-19 restrictions; suggestions to decorate and de-clutter their homes etc. But what about getting paperwork in order and getting legally "sale-ready"?

We have been looking to develop this over the last few months, but with the current conditions, we are now rolling it out quicker than anticipated. When the current restrictions are lifted and consumers begin marketing their properties for sale, everyone's priority will be to achieve exchange and completion as quickly as possible; consumers will be fed-up with waiting to move and will expect, and demand, speed and efficiency.

The government have been looking at this for some time and are developing the BASPI (Buyer and Seller Property Information). In fact, there was a good article from Property Wire recently: <https://www.propertywire.com/>



[blog/home-sellers-can-still-make-progress-under-lockdown/
https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/
latest-news/single-source-of-property-truth-to-be-piloted-within-weeks.](https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/single-source-of-property-truth-to-be-piloted-within-weeks)

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So, it's not our idea; the government have already done the research, but it could be years before it's launched. However, we are jumping in and offering it now.

What happens?

- Clients will upload all their documents to the Property Logbook (guarantees, planning permissions, building regulations, gas, electrical certificates, etc, etc).
- SureMove will then upload registers of title, plan, Land Registry documents (i.e. a copy of "the deeds") which we will obtain from the Land Registry. This is the good bit ... we will then "check and validate" the documents and highlight anything that is

missing or needs actioning.

- The agent and prospective buyers can then view the documents.
- We will also deal with ID requirements at this stage and get clients to complete the property information and, basically, get them "legally sale-ready". The government's research indicates that this could shave three to four weeks off the conveyancing process.

What are the benefits?

- It puts the seller in the best possible position to sell their property.
- It uses the time to get everything (legally) in place whilst the property is on the market, rather than when you find a buyer.
- It gets you "sale-ready" quicker and there is less likelihood of the sale dropping through.
- It is more likely to save you money.
- Think of it like selling a car – the vehicle that has a full service history and AA check will be more attractive than a car without.