



Guide to HIPs

1. What is a Home Information Pack?

A HIP is a pack of information about a house. It must include

- an index
- A Property Information Questionnaire
- an Energy Performance Certificate (a measure of energy efficiency)
- a sale statement (details of the seller and class of title)
- title details (land register entries or unregistered title)
- local search
- water/drainage search
- there are certain other optional documents which good quality packs will probably contain, eg Additional Property Information and Fittings and Contents Forms

2. When do we need one?

You must organise a HIP before you sell your house.

A HIP is not required for

- sales without vacant possession
- non residential properties
- seasonal or holiday accommodation
- sales of portfolios
- properties that are unsafe or due to be demolished

3. What do we do with it?

Estate agents are obliged to supply a copy of the HIP to potential buyers. A charge can only be made for doing so if it is supplied in hard copy. The agent does not need to supply a HIP to someone who

- is unlikely to have sufficient means to buy the property

- is not genuinely interested in buying a property of a general description which applies to the property
- is not a person to whom the buyer is likely to agree to sell the property (the criteria being agreed in advance with the seller)

4. How long does a pack last?

Under the regulations, the pack never goes out of date while the property is on the market. It may be updated, but does not have to be. In reality, the pack will be of limited use after three months have passed as, for solicitors, the local search will be too old. If a sale falls through, or a property is taken off the market, the same pack can be used if the property is marketed again by the same seller within one year.

5. Who is liable if the rules are breached?

The estate agent will be liable to be pursued by Trading Standards Officers.

A HIP IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT. THE BEST HIPS ARE PREPARED BY SOLICITORS. THEY ARE USUALLY BETTER AND CHEAPER THAN ESTATE AGENTS' HIPS. ESTATE AGENTS ARE OFTEN PAID COMMISSION TO SELL HIPS TO YOU. DON'T GET RIPPED OFF.

NOTE: this is a summary of the position as it is understood to be as at 24th April 2010. The proposals have changed often and without notice since originally envisaged in the Housing Act 2004. This information does not constitute legal advice and you should take advice on any issue of concern

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