Thirty-Point Viewing Checklist

A free printable companion to *Step Forward: A Smarter Way onto the Property Ladder, Solo or Supported*. Use a fresh copy for each viewing and record observations before you leave.

Property: _____ Viewing date: _____

1/6 · Before You Step Inside

No.	Question / observation	Why it matters	Your notes
1	What is the general condition of the exterior?	Peeling paintwork, cracked render, missing roof tiles, and broken guttering indicate deferred maintenance or deeper structural issues. Look up as well as straight ahead.	
2	What is the state of the roof from street level?	Missing or displaced tiles and visible sagging are warning signs. Flat-roofed sections require particular scrutiny — they have a finite lifespan and can be costly to replace.	
3	Are there visible cracks in the external walls?	Hairline cracks are often superficial. Large, stepped, or diagonal cracks running through brickwork can indicate subsidence and warrant professional investigation.	
4	What is the street and neighbourhood like?	Visit at different times of day. A quiet street on Tuesday morning may feel very different on Friday evening. Note parking, noise sources, and the condition of neighbouring properties.	
5	Is the property on a flood plain?	Check the Environment Agency flood map (or SEPA in Scotland). This affects insurance, mortgage availability, and future saleability.	

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2/6 · First Impressions Inside

No.	Question / observation	Why it matters	Your notes
6	Does the property smell of damp or mould?	A musty or earthy smell is one of the most reliable early indicators of damp. Fresh paint or air fresheners in isolated areas can be a sign that a smell is being masked.	
7	Are there visible signs of damp on ceilings or walls?	Look for tide marks, discolouration, bubbling plaster, or dark patches. Pay attention to ground-floor rooms, corners, and areas beneath windows.	
8	How is the natural light?	Which direction does the property face? A north-facing living room may be perpetually gloomy. Check whether light enters the rooms you will use most often.	
9	What is the ceiling height and overall sense of space?	Wide-angle photographs make rooms appear larger. Bring a tape measure if dimensions matter to you.	
10	Is there adequate storage throughout?	Built-in storage is a significant practical asset that photographs often fail to convey. Consider where coats, cleaning equipment, and everyday items will be kept.	

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3/6 · Structural and Technical

No.	Question / observation	Why it matters	Your notes
11	What type of heating is installed, and how old is it?	Ask for the boiler's age and whether it has been serviced annually. A boiler over fifteen years old may be approaching the end of its economic life.	
12	When was the electrical system last inspected?	Ask whether there is an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). Old-fashioned fuse boards indicate ageing wiring that may need upgrading.	
13	Is there any evidence of subsidence?	Look for doors and windows that stick, sloping floors, or cracks running diagonally from the corners of door and window frames.	
14	What is the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating?	Legally required on sale. A low rating means higher energy bills. Understand what improvements would be required and factor the cost into your offer.	
15	Are there signs of woodworm, rot, or pest infestation?	Look for small holes in timber, fine dust beneath floorboards, and any signs of rodent activity. In older properties, check roof timbers if possible.	

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4/6 · Practical and Legal

No.	Question / observation	Why it matters	Your notes
16	What is included in the sale?	Fixtures and fittings can be a source of dispute. Ask specifically about white goods, light fittings, curtains and blinds, and any fitted furniture.	
17	Why is the vendor selling?	You may not receive a candid answer, but it is worth asking. Understanding the motivation helps with negotiation and gives you a sense of urgency on both sides.	
18	How long has the property been on the market?	A property listed for several months without selling warrants investigation. Has the price been reduced? Are there known issues that have deterred previous buyers?	
19	Is there a chain, and how long is it?	A long chain increases the risk of the sale falling through. Ask whether the vendor has found a property to purchase and whether that purchase is itself dependent on another sale.	
20	Is the property freehold or leasehold?	If leasehold, ask for the years remaining on the lease, the annual ground rent, and the service charge. Be cautious of leases below eighty years.	

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5/6 · Room by Room

No.	Question / observation	Why it matters	Your notes
21	Do all windows open and close properly?	Stiff or painted-shut windows indicate damp swelling or long-term neglect. Double glazing should show no condensation or misting between the panes, which indicates failed seals.	
22	Is the water pressure adequate?	Run taps in the kitchen and bathroom. Poor water pressure can indicate plumbing issues and is an everyday inconvenience that is easy to overlook during a viewing.	
23	What is the condition of the bathroom and kitchen?	These are the most expensive rooms to refurbish. If either requires significant work, factor the cost explicitly into your calculations.	
24	Is there a loft, and is it accessible and insulated?	A boarded, insulated loft adds useful storage and improves EPC rating. Ask about conversion potential — subject to planning permission — as this can add significant value.	
25	What is the mobile signal and broadband speed like?	In an era of remote working, reliable connectivity is not a luxury. Check coverage maps for mobile networks and ask the agent for confirmed broadband speeds.	

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6/6 · Outdoor Space, Boundaries, and Neighbours

No.	Question / observation	Why it matters	Your notes
26	What are the boundaries of the garden, and are they clearly defined?	Boundary disputes are among the most common neighbourly conflicts. Understand who owns which fence or wall — this should be clarified in the title deeds.	
27	Which direction does the garden face?	South- or west-facing gardens receive the most afternoon and evening sun. This matters for quality of life and for resale value.	
28	Are there obvious signs of difficult neighbours?	Unkempt properties next door, evidence of anti-social behaviour, or an unusual number of vehicles parked on the street are worth noting.	
29	Are there any planning applications or developments nearby?	Check the local authority's planning portal. A neighbouring development can significantly affect your outlook, privacy, and potentially your property's value.	
30	Does the overall picture match the asking price?	Step back and consider the property in its totality. Are the positives sufficient to offset the issues identified? What would you need to spend in the first year?	

After the viewing: Main strengths: _____ Main concerns: _____

Follow-up questions / checks: _____

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