

Preparing your property for photography

A checklist for homes going on the market and for holiday lets. None of this is about turning a place into a show home. It is about clearing the small things that pull the eye away from the room itself.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE AN HOUR

- ☐ Clean the windows, inside and out
- ☐ Clear worktops and bathroom surfaces
- ☐ Make the beds with bedding that matches
- ☐ Check every bulb works
- ☐ Move the cars and the bins
- ☐ Open all the curtains and blinds fully

Kitchen

- ☐ Worktops cleared to one or two things
- ☐ Fridge door stripped completely
- ☐ Washing-up liquid and sponge out of sight
- ☐ Bin moved out of the room
- ☐ Tea towel off the oven handle
- ☐ Hob and splashback wiped
- ☐ Sink empty and dried

Living room

- ☐ Cables tucked out of sight
- ☐ Remotes, chargers, magazines and toys away
- ☐ Television off, not paused on a menu
- ☐ Cushions and throws straightened
- ☐ Coffee table down to one thing
- ☐ Drying rack out of the room and the hall

Bedrooms

- ☐ Beds made, bedding matching
- ☐ Bedside tables cleared
- ☐ Wardrobe doors and drawers shut fully
- ☐ Floor clear, and under the bed
- ☐ Washing off the back of the door

Bathrooms

- ☐ Toiletries and cleaning products away
- ☐ Toilet seats down, brush out of sight
- ☐ Towels matching and hung straight
- ☐ Bath mats straight or put away
- ☐ Mirror, taps and shower screen wiped

Hallway and stairs

- ☐ Shoes away rather than lined up
- ☐ Coats off the bannister
- ☐ Post and parcels out of sight
- ☐ Space inside the front door clear

Outside

- ☐ Cars off the drive and away from the front
- ☐ Bins round the back
- ☐ Hoses coiled, bikes and toys put away
- ☐ Lawn cut a couple of days before, not on the day
- ☐ Path swept and weeds pulled
- ☐ Front door cleaned, house number visible
- ☐ Garden furniture out, and cleaned first

If it is a holiday let

- ☐ Bedding a guest will actually get, not the good set
- ☐ Towels out, folded, matching
- ☐ Dining table laid lightly, plates and glasses
- ☐ Outdoor furniture out, even in October
- ☐ Welcome tray, log basket or travel cot set out
- ☐ Anything a guest will not get taken out of shot

If the coffee machine goes home with you between lets, it should not be in the photograph. Expectations need to match reality when the key comes out of the lockbox.

If it is going on the market

- ☐ Family photographs and artwork thinned out
- ☐ Anything that ties the property to you put away
- ☐ Toys reduced to a token amount
- ☐ Study or spare room cleared so its size reads
- ☐ Still looking lived in, not stripped bare

Depersonalised and sterile are not the same thing. A house with no sign of life in it photographs cold, and cold does not sell.

Two weeks before, if you can

- ☐ Window cleaner booked, especially for high outsides
- ☐ Any gardening done, lawn needs a few dry days
- ☐ Parts ordered for small repairs
- ☐ Carpets or upholstery cleaned, they need drying time
- ☐ Paintwork touched up, it wants a day to dry

On the day

- ☐ Property finished before I arrive, not tidied while I work
- ☐ Lamps on and main lights on
- ☐ Pets out of the way, bowls and litter trays moved
- ☐ Tell me any room that is not being photographed
- ☐ Tell me the good bits worth planning around

Worth doing

- ☐ Fresh silicone round the bath
- ☐ A deep clean of the grout
- ☐ A dripping tap or loose handle fixed
- ☐ Windows cleaned by someone with a ladder

Not worth doing

- x A new kitchen or a refitted bathroom
- x Repainting every room neutral
- x New carpets bought purely for the pictures
- x Artificial flowers or a bought-in vase of lilies

If a thing is clean, working and reasonably neutral, leave it be. Over-improving rarely returns its cost.

NOT SURE WHAT IS WORTH DOING?

Send me a few phone pictures and I will tell you honestly.

It normally saves more work than it creates. Property photography across Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex.