



**The Clutter Clearing**  
CONSULTANCY

## Property Coach

Apparently we're supposed to be able to have our homes looking immaculate, clean and clear at all times. This is so that if a potential buyer wants to come round at a moments notice for a viewing they're going to be wowed by how much light, space and storage we have. They're going to be so impressed that they immediately fall in love with the home and put in an offer at the full asking price.

Great theory. Practice is a little more realistic. Let's face it, unless we moved the majority of our belongings out of the home and into storage for the duration of the time the home is on the market, there's going to be some chaos and clutter. Life goes on when you're trying to sell your home and the viewings have to fit in and around your daily tasks.

### Clutter and the Real World

The majority of us live in the real world where life is busy, time is short, it's hard to focus on just one thing at a time and clearing the clutter in a given room or space is a permanent item on the 'to-do list'. It never quite reaches the high priority status equal to that of going to work, food shopping, paying the bills, doing the washing, ironing and household chores, entertaining the kids or seeing friends and family.

And then we decide to sell our home and suddenly clearing that clutter seems to become a priority. Whether our estate agent has made polite hints that it might help if people could fully open the bedroom door when trying to view a home, or they've given us a leaflet about organisations who might be able to help us clear the clutter, we all know that controlling and minimising the clutter is a good idea when you're trying to sell.

Most people want to feel comfortable and be able to relax in their homes and of course if you can create this feeling to potential buyers, it's going to be much easier for them to be able to imagine living in your home. It's the concept that you're not selling your home, you're selling a lifestyle that can be bought for 'as little has' the asking price. The trick is to create a desirable lifestyle, and I have yet to meet anyone who wants to buy a lifestyle of clutter, chaos and no storage space.

However, anyone who has children, pets, hobbies, friends or jobs is going to have some clutter somewhere in their home. Clutter only becomes a problem when it gets out of control and hinders or prevents you from being able to get on with living and enjoying your life. In the case of selling your property, clutter can become either a huge hinderance for you, or a major bargaining tool for the buyer. And what we're all trying to do when we put our homes on the market is ensure that there is nothing that the potential buyer can negotiate us over.

I know what it's like. I'm trying to sell my home at this very moment. I've had the cracks in the garage wall fixed, I've replaced the garage door (well, if they'd wanted to get into the garage it'd have taken them about 10 minutes and I suspect they'd have noticed the 'wave' effect where the door has been kicked, pushed and rammed open). I've put a lick of paint over the whole home to 'neutralise' it – I even bought new sofa covers in a neutral 'beige' just in case someone didn't like my dark blue suite. I've since found that the cat hairs don't stand out as badly on a beige sofa which is a bonus.



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And it's working a treat. Within a week of going on the market I'd had two offers which I proudly turned down – well, £15,000 below the asking price was a little silly in my opinion. I know my home isn't cluttered. I know there's no area of 'bargaining', and certainly nothing that can justify £15,000 below the asking price. I don't fear a potential vendor opening cupboards and finding all the clutter stuffed inside or worse still, falling out as they open it. I don't have to ask the estate agent to make a similar announcement to an air stewardess who suggests that you take care opening the overhead lockers in case something has moved during the flight.

In a nutshell, clutter doesn't help sell homes. Clutter creates a bargaining tool for the buyer. And what people don't realise is that it only takes a short time to clear the clutter and keep it under control which will help you get as near to the asking price as possible. So the question becomes – is it worth spending a little time and money on clearing your clutter if it enables you to get a higher offer and quicker sale on your home?

### Top tips for clearing and controlling the clutter when your home is on the market.

1. Remember that you're trying to sell your home because you've decided to move. This means that the potential buyers opinion about the state of your home is the priority not yours. You may think that 101 coats and shoes cluttering the hallway is a 'natural part of a family home' – but what will your potential buyer think when they open the door and it's their first impression?
2. Did you know that people subconsciously judge the size of a room by how much floor and wall space they can see and how much light is in a room? Therefore, the more clutter in a room the less floor and wall space and light, and the smaller a person judges that room to be. People pay more for more space.
3. Have a sort out and de-clutter BEFORE you start having viewings. People rarely feed back to the estate agent honestly about clutter because it can be considered 'rude', so just because no one has said the clutter was an issue doesn't mean it's not. If you think your clutter MIGHT be an issue, then it IS an issue that you need to deal with.
4. Storage space is worth a lot to potential buyers especially with homes getting smaller and smaller. So show your potential buyer how to use the storage space you have by clearing and sorting the contents of your cupboards and rooms. For example, if you have a garage and it's full of clutter, people may have difficulty imagining their car being able to fit in the garage. Garages add value to a home but only when people believe they're getting a garage and not a store room (even though they'll probably use it as a store room themselves). Make sure your garage looks like a garage.
5. Clearly define the rooms and spaces in your home, and as you clear your clutter return items to wherever they belongs in your home. If you have a 'junk room', don't expect or assume that a potential buyer will be able to imagine it as another bedroom or study. If you have a family computer in the dining room, could it not live in the 'junk' room when it's cleared of clutter and turned into a clearly defined office?



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**The golden rule when clearing your clutter is to remember that:**

**Space + light + storage = a sale near or at your asking price**

**Clutter + darkness + no spare storage = lots of viewings + no offers**

The Clutter Clearing Consultancy run one day workshops specifically on how to clear and control your clutter to get ready for a home sale. It's for people who are considering putting their home on the market and wonder whether clearing and reducing the amount of clutter might help, but they don't know where to start. We'll help them get started, and see the value of clearing the clutter for that all important sale. For more information on these visit [www.clutterclearing.net/oneday](http://www.clutterclearing.net/oneday) .

We also have our workbooks that people can use to help them get started and motivated [www.clutterclearing.net/products](http://www.clutterclearing.net/products).

For those who would like to act as a clutter consultant, either Estate Agents themselves or working with Estate Agents who want to offer their clients relevant help to clear their clutter, we offer clutter consultant training for people who want to specialise as property clutter consultants. [www.clutterclearing.net/training](http://www.clutterclearing.net/training)

Clare Draper  
Specialist Clutter Clearing Consultant

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For more information contact:  
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