

THE REALLY USEFUL GUIDE TO **DOWNSIZING** **YOUR HOME**



THE EMPTY NESTER'S 15 MINUTE GUIDE

Lisney

"Downsizing should mean a better retirement and taking a step forward into your future."



It does not seem so long ago that you were making plans for your family and drawing up a shopping list of the things you wanted for your first home. A big garden for your kids; three bedrooms; a fireplace and lots of storage. Fast forward 30 years, and the kids have moved out and have families of their own.

Your family home is starting to feel creaky; you have got empty rooms you never use, and retirement is a reality. The idea of downsizing is starting to make sense. It is a choice for life, and doing it right should mean a better retirement and taking a step forward into your future.

Whether downsizing means moving from a house to an apartment or swapping to fewer bedrooms, it could be a smart move for you. You could free up equity, cut down the cost of your bills, and make your life simpler.

Of course, buying or selling a home is a big decision for anyone. There is a lot to consider, from solicitors to location to if it really is the right move for you and your family. We hope this ebook will help to guide you on your way.

Yours sincerely,

The Lisney team





Rule of thumb: set aside 1% of the value of your home for maintenance each year.

SHOULD YOU CONSIDER DOWNSIZING?

It is safe to say that most homeowners don't exactly daydream about swapping their family home for a smaller house or apartment, but downsizing has its benefits. It can be an exciting and enjoyable new chapter in your life. But how do you know if it is the right move for you?

Here are some signs that downsizing might be right for you:

- › Your family home feels too big. You may even have several rooms that have not been used in months.
- › Your home might not be ideally located anymore with family members moving away.
- › Your bills or the size of your home might be an unnecessary, costly burden – especially if your house was built in pre-BER days.

- › You might not have the time or energy to put into household chores or maintaining your garden or house.
- › Stairs or mobility issues might mean your living space is not as functional as it once was.
- › You may want to provide a financial supplement to your pension or retirement fund.
- › Your house is a financial strain you can no longer maintain.
- › You want to stay independent in your later life, which may mean a smaller house that is easier to get around or living closer to the nearest town/city centre.

Whatever your reasons, downsizing can make sense for your future and family. But how do you go about it?



LET'S GET STARTED!

STEP 1 MAKING THE CHOICE

Moving away from the family home you have cherished for a long time is a big deal, and it is not a move that should be taken lightly. Once you have decided to downsize, you'll need to start doing things like:

1. Breaking the news to your children. Even if they have moved out, the idea of selling the family home will be big for them too. Maybe have a family dinner and a chat with them to discuss your options. They may have moved recently or know someone who did.
2. Research areas you would potentially like to live in as well as potential estate agents and a solicitor.
3. Work out a budget – draw up a list of your income and outgoings, and research house prices. Visit propertypriceregister.ie for a database of properties that have recently sold to get an idea of the selling prices in your area.

4. You should draw up a wishlist for your new home, for example:

- a) Location – do you want to live near a village, in the country, or in town?
- b) Size – do you want an apartment, a bungalow, or a house with fewer bedrooms or no stairs?
- c) Key features – would you like a garden for your pets or grandchildren, a downstairs bedroom/bathroom, a conservatory or patio?
- d) Do you want to keep certain features? For example, if you're used to your morning tea on the back patio, consider looking for properties with something similar so it feels familiar.



A survey from GardeningExpress.co.uk found that people spend around €35,000 maintaining their garden in their lifetime.



TIP

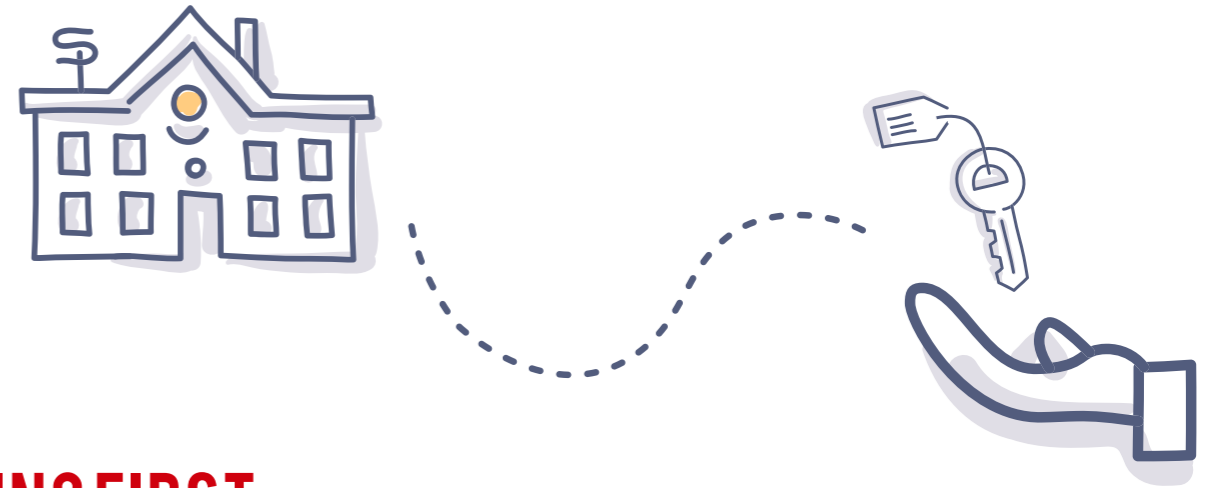
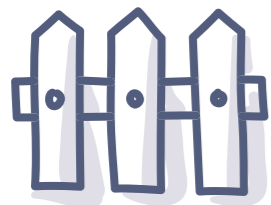
Visit propertypriceregister.ie for a database of properties that have recently sold and their sale prices.

STEP 2 BUYING FIRST OR SELLING FIRST



Once you have decided what you want and have a rough idea of your budget, you will need to decide if you want to buy first and then sell, or sell first and then buy. If you are approaching retirement age, you may have paid off your mortgage so buying first is the logical option.

However, there are benefits to selling first too!



BUYING FIRST

PROS

- ✓ A more enjoyable experience without the worry of a looming closing date.
- ✓ Less stress if an offer is rejected, as you can keep looking.
- ✓ The possibility of making an offer on a new home conditional on the sale of your current home.
- ✓ The potential to find the house of your dreams as you'll have more time to look.
- ✓ While you wait for your home to sell, you can rent it out and move into your new house in the meantime.

CONS

- ✗ You may end up paying for the maintenance/upkeep of two properties.
- ✗ Difficulty in securing a second mortgage for the new home.
- ✗ Sellers may be turned off by any selling conditions.

SELLING FIRST

PROS

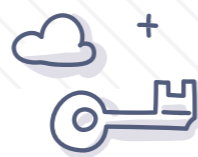
- ✓ You will be in a stronger position when buying as you will be able to offer cash in the bank and/or a pre-approved mortgage.
- ✓ You are completely in control of the sale of your house as you won't need to make a quick sale.
- ✓ You may get a better price if you find a seller who wants to move quickly.
- ✓ There is no risk of owning two homes at once or having to finance and maintain two homes.
- ✓ Getting a new mortgage may be easier once you have cleared the one on your original property.

CONS

- ✗ You will be in a race against the clock to buy.
- ✗ You may end up rushing the process and choosing a house that is not exactly as you had hoped.
- ✗ You may need to make a higher offer than anticipated, to speed up closing the sale.
- ✗ If you do not buy a new house in time, you may have to rent somewhere else while you wait.
- ✗ You may have to pay the additional cost of storage for items/furniture.



STEP 3 SELECTING AN ESTATE AGENT



Choosing an excellent estate agent will make the buying and selling process easier as they will come with a wealth of local knowledge and selling savvy. But with so many estate agents to choose from, how do you know who to go with?

Here are some considerations:

- Choose an estate agent with local knowledge. You'll want to hire someone with great knowledge of the local area and market. Not only will a good estate agent help you sell your home, they will be able to help you find a replacement that will match your needs.
- Once you have done your research and drawn up a shortlist, invite three auctioneers or estate agents to pitch for your business. In most cases, they will discuss selling strategies, their rates, and your end goal. They may also undertake a valuation of your property.

- Ask to meet the agent who will be overseeing the sale. You will want someone who is experienced in your area and the market in general.
- Ask them about their marketing efforts too: how will they market your property when it comes time to sell?
- Estate agents rates can range between 1.5% and 2% of the selling price, and you will also have to pay VAT of 23% on the fees or commission. There may also be additional charges for marketing material.
- It is good to have an estate agent with a list of under bidders from similar properties.

Generally, market activity peaks in Ireland in March/June and September/October, so if you are looking to sell/buy, these months are the ideal times. Start getting your house in order in January to hit the first peak or June to hit the second.



If you are moving to an apartment, remember to factor in annual management fees. Prices could vary anywhere from €750 per year to upwards of €3,000 per annum.



"The market peaks in March/June and September/October"





REMEMBER

If you've carried out building work on your property e.g. an extension or conversion, you will need to root out related files like a copy of the architect's plans or relevant planning permission.



STEP 4 CHOOSING A SOLICITOR

If you don't already have a solicitor, you will need to hire one to deal with the legal considerations of downsizing. You will want someone who has dealt with property before, who can advise you on your legal documents, title deeds, and the nitty gritty of drawing up contracts and closing the sale.

Some tips:

- › Ask friends/family for recommendations or look online.
- › Compile legal documents related to the property.
- › Read and re-read your contract before you sign it.
- › Outline your moving deadlines and strategies.
- › Ask your solicitor to request your title deeds from the bank or from safe keeping. This avoids any delay in preparing contracts.

The solicitor will require a fee for handling the sale – the cost will vary depending on the nature of the sale, so be sure to discuss the selling strategy and all pricing before you instruct a solicitor. The fee will be subject to VAT and may include a professional fee, registration fees, search fees, law clerk fees, bank EFT fees, copy folio and file plan fees, stamp duty, printing and postage and more, so make sure to read your contract to find out what you'll be paying for.



STEP 5 FINDING YOUR NEXT HOME



At this stage, you will know what you want. You will have chosen the area, settled on a budget, and narrowed down the list of properties you have your eye on. You have got a pretty good idea as to what you want, but there are certain tips that will make the house hunt easier:

1. Check out the aspect of the property. If your family home had a southerly aspect, try and source a property with something similar to carry over your routine.
2. Scope out prospective properties with enough space for your favourite furniture or items. Bring measurements with you, if possible.
3. Downsizing to a more secure property can also give you greater peace of mind, especially if you are retired or plan on spending more time abroad.
4. Ask around in the neighbourhood to find out what the area is really like.
5. Map out your journey to hobbies/work and try out the commute at least once in rush hour before buying.
6. Look into the BER rating of the house. A higher BER rating will mean lower fuel costs – so it is worth the effort!
7. If you are planning to buy a fixer-upper, make sure you can get planning permission for the changes. You will also need to account for the cost of architects or contractors depending on what is required.
8. Have a good look around the house – get a surveyor to ensure there are no hidden problems.
9. In the case of any additional work, seek out multiple quotes – but make sure to do your sums to allow for a contingency of at least 10% of your overall spend.
10. Earn some extra income by selling the furniture/items you won't need any more.

HOW TO DISPOSE OF OLD ITEMS

- Throw a garage sale.
- Charities/charity shops
- Sell your furniture/items online on sites like Adverts.ie and DoneDeal.ie.
- Free disposal websites such as www.furniture recyclingdublin.com



"Not only can Lisney help sell your home in an efficient manner, they can also help you to find the replacement house of your dreams. We are delighted with our house and are looking forward to spending the rest of our lives there. The whole process could not have gone any better!"

Lilian & Jim Coffey, who recently downsized from Killiney to Dalkey with the help of Lisney.



WHY CHOOSE LISNEY?

For over 80 years, Lisney has enjoyed a reputation for providing the best service in Irish property. That is because we have always remained true to our basic values of integrity, objectivity and knowledge. Yes, even in this rapidly changing world of ours. Every member of our team has been handpicked because they show not just talent, but creative thinking too. That is how we add value and deliver results.

You will also quickly notice a rich depth of local and national property expertise and expert judgement which all adds up to a higher level of service than you will find anywhere else.

What is our mission? To provide our clients with the best advice and service and to not just meet their expectations but to surpass them. Every time.



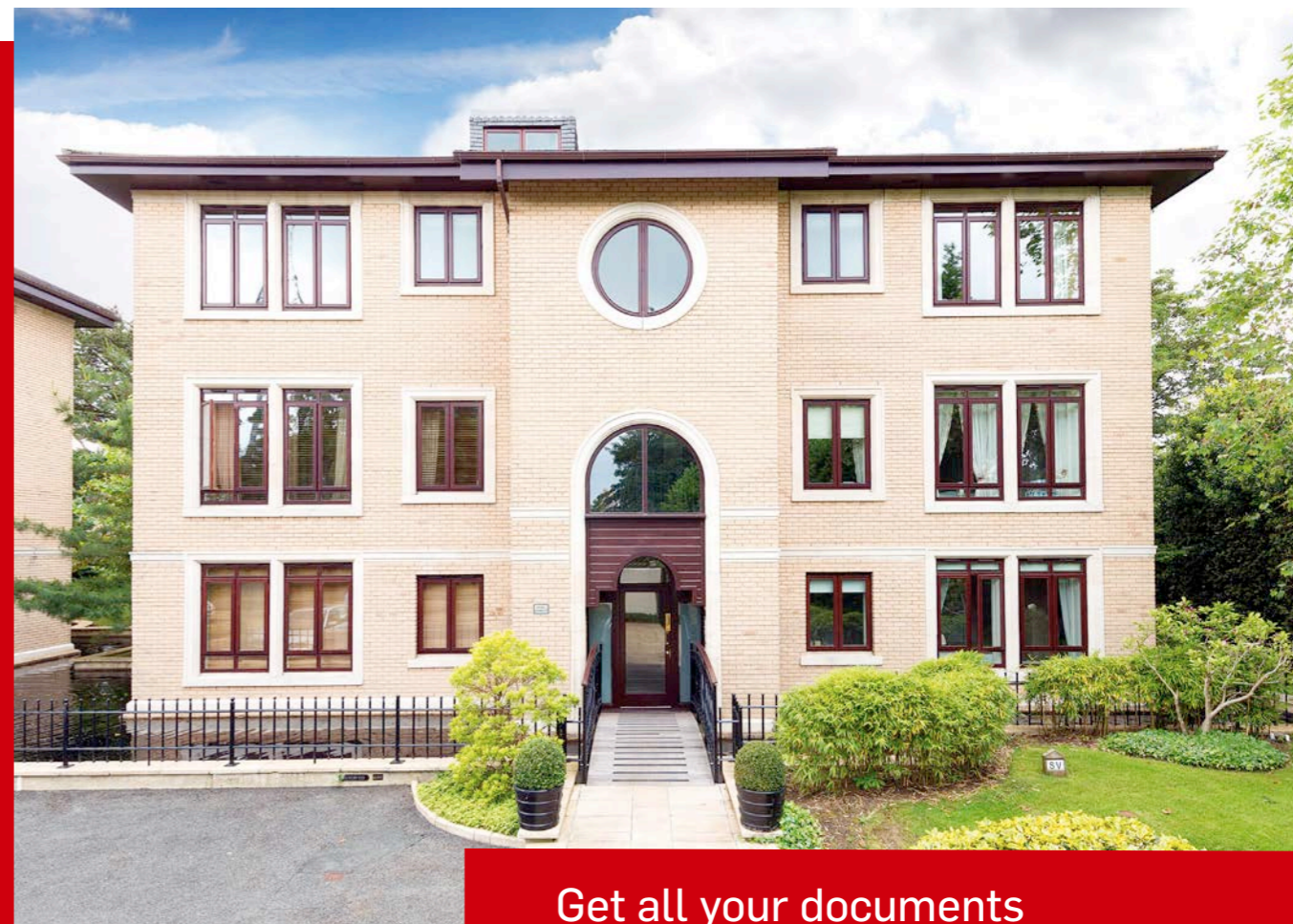
CHECKLIST SELLING YOUR HOUSE DOCUMENT

- ❑ Contract for sale – ready to go if an acceptable offer is received.
- ❑ Certificate of compliance – if work has been carried out on the house since it was built, this shows the build was compliant with planning permission and/or building regulations.
- ❑ A BER certificate – this is legally required unless the property is uninhabitable/a protected structure.
- ❑ Land registry compliance map – all property sales must be registered with the Property Registration Authority and this needs a 'land registry compliant' map based on official maps from Ordnance Survey Ireland. Visit www.prai.ie for more info.
- ❑ Title deeds – if you have a mortgage, you will need to get the title deeds from your bank so they can be transferred to the new owner.
- ❑ If you are selling the family home and you are married, both spouses need to give permission to sell so you may need to sign a Family Home Protection Act Declaration.



CLICK BELOW TO READ MORE:

What an estate agent looks for when valuing your home



Get all your documents together in a folder before you start the selling process.



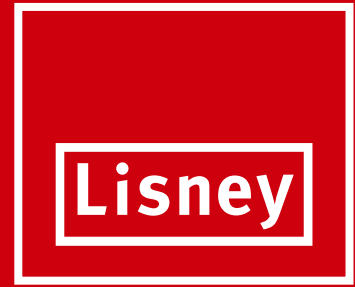
READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

Click here to

GET IN TOUCH

with your local Lisney office





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