

RICS Home Surveys Information Sheet

Helping you choose the right survey

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Why do you need an RICS Home Survey? Because forewarned is forearmed. Choosing the right survey will help highlight any serious problems and advise you of the specific risks before you commit to the process of buying or selling a property.

RICS has three different types of survey (outlined overleaf). These can only be conducted by qualified surveyors. Reliable and cost effective, these reports carry the full weight of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – the industry's most respected authority on surveying.

Buying a home

It's important to remember that your mortgage lender's valuation report is not a survey. It merely tells your lender whether or not the property is reasonable security for your

loan. An RICS survey will tell you the actual condition of the property. That's vital information that can be invaluable during price negotiations, and will also help you avoid expensive surprises after you've moved in.

Selling a home

An RICS home survey can help you prepare for selling your property. It will show you any problems that may delay your sale or cause price reductions later in the process.

Staying at home

A survey of the current condition of your home will warn you of defects and help you avoid escalating repair and maintenance costs in the future. It will also be extremely useful if you're thinking of remortgaging.

The image shows a collage of RICS Home Survey report pages. The pages are overlapping and show various sections of a survey report. The visible sections include:

- Overall opinion and summary of the condition ratings:** This section provides an overall opinion of the property and summarises the condition ratings of the different elements of the property. It includes a table with columns for 'Section of the report', 'Element number', and 'Element name'. The table lists elements like 'Rainwater pipes and gutters', 'Roof structure', 'Electricity', 'Garage advice', 'Windows', 'Floors', 'Glass', 'Heating wall', 'Outside doors (including patio doors)', 'Floors', 'Water', and 'High hedge'. Each element is assigned a condition rating (1, 2, 3, or NI) and a color-coded icon.
- Outside the property:** This section describes the condition of the property's exterior, including the roof, rainwater pipes, and ground. It includes a table with columns for 'Section of the report', 'Element number', and 'Element name'. The table lists elements like 'Rainwater pipes and gutters', 'Roof structure', 'Electricity', 'Garage advice', 'Windows', 'Floors', 'Glass', 'Heating wall', 'Outside doors (including patio doors)', 'Floors', 'Water', and 'High hedge'. Each element is assigned a condition rating (1, 2, 3, or NI) and a color-coded icon.
- Valuation:** This section provides a professional valuation of the property. It includes a table with columns for 'Market Value on', 'Area of property (sq m)', 'Current reinstatement cost of the property', and 'Current reinstatement cost of the property (see note below)'. The table lists the market value as £251,000 and the current reinstatement cost as £124,000.
- What to do now:** This section provides advice on how to deal with the defects identified in the survey. It includes a table with columns for 'Defect', 'Action', and 'Priority'. The table lists defects like 'Waterproofing between the chimney stack and the roof covering', 'No rainwater pipe to the utility room is causing dampness to the ceiling below', 'Outside walls have a barrier against dampness rising from the ground', 'Windows are replacement double glazing in PVC frames', 'The door is unlikely to be safety glass and will be a safety risk for anyone who falls against it', 'There is an open porch to the front entrance', 'Spalling concrete around the main roof and rear flat roof are partly rotten, deteriorations to most surfaces are beginning to flake off', and 'Not applicable'. Each defect is assigned an action and a priority rating (1, 2, 3, or NI).

Buying or selling? Survey your options

The RICS Condition Report

Choose this report if you're buying or selling a conventional house, flat or bungalow built from common building materials and in reasonable condition. It focuses purely on the condition of the property by setting out the following:

- clear 'traffic light' ratings of the condition of different parts of the building, services, garage and outbuildings, showing problems that require varying degrees of attention;
- a summary of the risks to the condition of the building; and
- other matters including guarantees, planning and building control issues for your legal advisers.

An RICS Condition Report does not include a valuation, but your surveyor may be able to provide this as a separate extra service.

Ask your surveyor for a detailed 'Description of the RICS Condition Report Service' leaflet.

The RICS HomeBuyer Report

Choose this report if you would like more extensive information whilst buying or selling a conventional house, flat or bungalow, built from common building materials and in reasonable condition. It costs more than the Condition Report but includes:

- all of the features in the Condition Report plus a more extensive inspection;
- the surveyor's professional opinion on the 'Market Value' of the property;
- an insurance reinstatement figure for the property;
- a list of problems that the surveyor considers may affect the value of the property;
- advice on repairs and ongoing maintenance;

- issues that need to be investigated to prevent serious damage or dangerous conditions;
- legal issues that need to be addressed before completing your conveyancing; and
- information on location, local environment and the recorded energy efficiency (where available).

Ask your surveyor for a detailed 'Description of the RICS Homebuyer Service' leaflet.

The building survey

Formerly called a structural survey, you could choose the building survey if you're dealing with a large, older or run-down property, a building that is unusual or altered, or if you're planning major works. It costs more than the other RICS reports because it gives detailed information about the structure and fabric of the property. It includes:

- a thorough inspection and detailed report on a wider range of issues;
- a description of visible defects and potential problems caused by hidden flaws;
- an outline of repair options and the likely consequences of inactivity; and
- advice for your legal advisers and details of serious risks and dangerous conditions.

A building survey does not include a valuation, but your surveyor may be able to provide this as a separate extra service.



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At-a-glance survey comparisons

This table will help you choose the most appropriate survey, but if you have any particular requirements, remember to discuss them with your surveyor before the inspection of the property. The surveyor may be able to provide you with extra services, under separate contracts.

Service features	RICS Condition Report Service	RICS HomeBuyer Service	Building survey
Describes the construction and condition of the property on the date of the inspection.	✓	✓	✓
Aims to identify any problems that need urgent attention or are serious.	✓	✓	✓
Aims to identify things that need to be investigated further to prevent serious damage.	✓	✓	✓
Aims to tell you about problems that may be hazardous.	✓	✓	✓
Aims to show up potential issues and defects, before any transaction takes place.	✓	✓	✓
Includes the standard visual inspection during which secured panels, electrical fittings, inspection chamber covers and other similar features are not removed.	✓	✓	✓
Aims to help you decide whether you need extra advice before committing to purchase.		✓	✓
Aims to help you prepare a budget for any repairs or restoration.		✓	✓
Aims to advise you on the amount of ongoing maintenance required in the future.		✓	✓
An enhanced service that includes all the features of the standard inspection plus a more extensive roof space and underground drainage inspection.		✓	✓
Provides a reinstatement cost to help you avoid under- or over-insurance.		✓	
Provides market valuation.		✓	
Aims to establish how the property is built, what materials are used and how these will perform in the future.			✓
Aims to describe visible defects, plus exposing potential problems posed by hidden defects.			✓
Aims to outline the repair options and give you a repair timeline, whilst explaining the consequences of not acting.			✓
A longer and more detailed visual inspection of a wider range of issues including a more thorough consideration of the roof space, grounds floors and services.			✓

For more information, visit www.rics.org/homesurveys.



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