

## Interpreting a Building Survey

Only 20% of people in England and Wales commission a survey of their intended house purchase (Source: RICS).

Is this because they do not trust the delivery or content or consider that the content is not definite enough.

The following are some of the items you may find and the questions you could ask of the surveyor:

1. "Damp found – Get a contractor who is a member of the Property Care Association to advise further."

Not very helpful as may be relatively helpful or easily resolved. Ask your surveyor "Where?; How extensive?; What else may be affected if not remedied?; Is it something that will affect occupation?"

2. "Woodworm present – Arrange for a member of the Property Care Association to advise further."

A further example of poor advice. Again ask your surveyor "What type of infestation is it?; Where is it?; How extensive?; Is it affecting structure?; Can I get it repaired/ treated easily?; Do I need to replace any timbers?"

3. "Cracking – Get a structural engineer's report."

This should only be considered in the most extreme of circumstances as a "Building Surveyor" will have the technical knowledge to determine the type, extent and severity of any visible cracking. Ask him to advise on whether recent and ongoing or historic; whether it is stepped or vertical; likely reason for cracking and whether it is a deal breaker or something to be just monitored and repaired.

4. "No access below floors – Cannot comment."

Whilst there may not be any access the surveyor should still be able to comment on any obvious defects and the risk of possible defect due to the existing construction or whether further inspection is necessary.

5. "Only a head and shoulder inspection from loft hatch possible."

This is sometimes all that is possible but further advice should be provided in relation to risk based on what can be seen.

These are just some of the issues presented within surveyors reports that need further interpretation.

Should you need to discuss the content of a report either by us or others please do not hesitate to call.