



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

OFFICIAL

# Home buying and selling reform

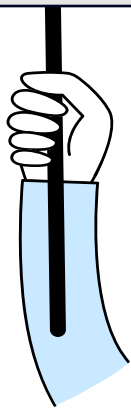
Geoplace – May 2024

SENSITIVITY MARKING



# The current home buying and selling system

Transactions take  
**21 weeks on  
average**



\*Estimated at 540,000  
transactions per year<sup>1</sup>

Buying a house  
is the seventh  
**most stressful  
life event**  
in the UK



The current process I'd  
give a 2 out of 10.

I think it's appalling – we  
last moved 27 years ago  
and it's not moved on one  
bit.”<sup>3</sup>

Buying and selling  
concurrently  
61, West Midlands



# The current home buying and selling system

**4m**

Wasted working  
days each year<sup>1</sup>

For conveyancers and  
estate agents on failed  
transactions.

**~£1b**

Wasted in direct  
costs to estate  
agents and  
conveyancers<sup>1</sup>

Lenders, surveyors, and data  
owners are also experiencing  
negative outcomes from the  
current system.



I think the impact for  
the consumer is  
horrendous – and it's  
bad for business  
because it's all so  
complex."<sup>2</sup>

Estate agent



Conveyancing isn't causing  
problems...the issues  
already exist.

Conveyancers have to  
accept a [average] fall  
through rate of 20% which  
we don't get paid for and  
which hurts profitability."<sup>2</sup>

Conveyancer

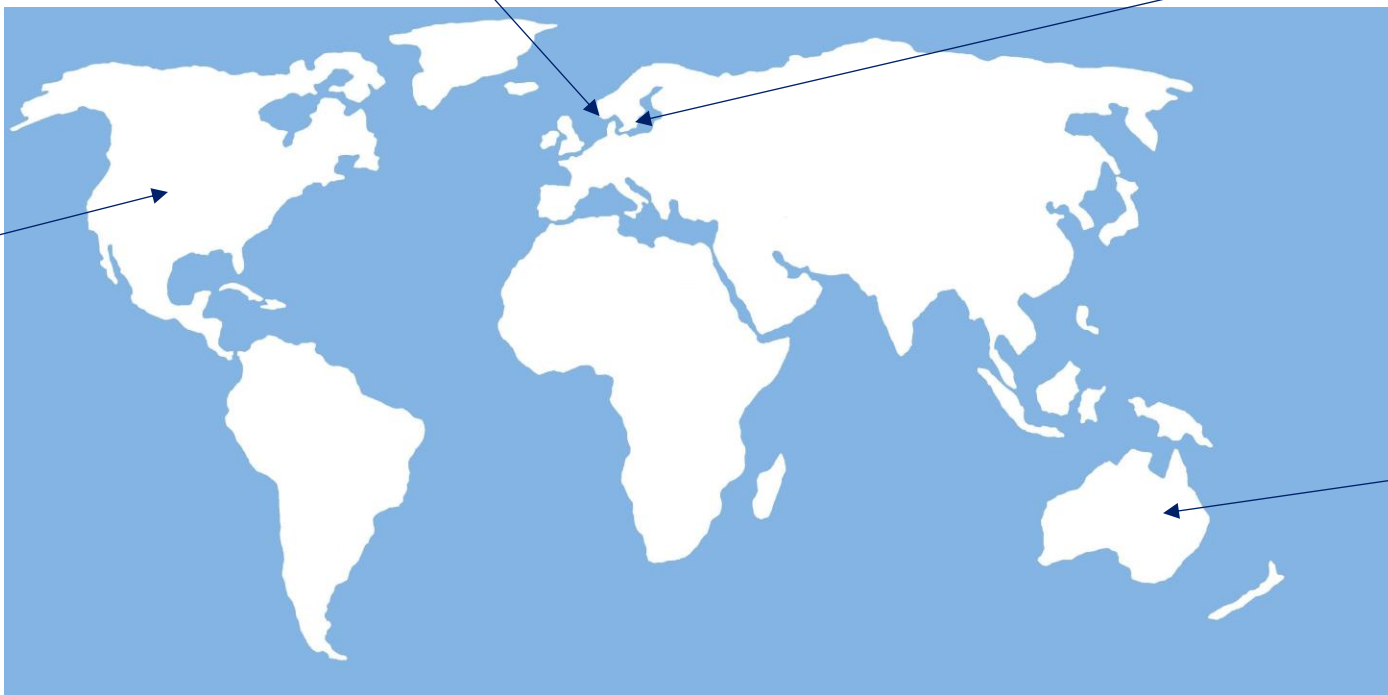


## International evidence for change

**Norway** – project to streamline home buying and selling system will save c. £1.4bn over 10 years.

**Finland** – property can be purchased in as little as 2 weeks but usually around 6 weeks; due to binding offers and ongoing seller responsibility for defects in the property (up to 5 years)

**USA** – early deposit (1-2% of asking price) so buyers can demonstrate good faith/commitment to transaction



**Australia** – end-to-end conveyancing system available online for 90% of transactions



# Steps towards reform


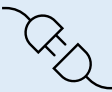

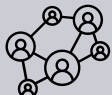




## Levelling Up White Paper Commitment:

*The UK Government and the industry will work together to ensure the critical material information buyers need to know – like tenure type, lease length and any service charges – are available digitally wherever possible from trusted and authenticated sources, and provided only once. If necessary, the UK Government will legislate*

Empowering consumers

Opening-up data

Delivering a digital service

	Opening data through Local Land Charges programme and upcoming pilots		Research on data and interoperability standards
	How to buy and sell guides to improve consumer education		Cross industry collaboration via HBSG and DPMSG
	Prop tech pilots to support innovation		Endorsing UPRNs as an open data standard
	Developing referral fee guidance on transparency		Legislation to create a fairer system for leaseholders



## Select Committee inquiry

The Levelling Up Select Committee is holding an inquiry on “Improving the home buying and selling process”

Key dates:

- Written evidence submitted by 18 April
- Stakeholder hearings on 13 May
- Ministerial hearing expected soon

“We aren’t going to solve this without the regulation of agents

Strong support for better upfront information

Should we have a review of referral fees?

Data needs to be digital at source as a precursor to digitalisation

There is no financial penalty for consumers changing their mind

The task of conveyancing has expanded massively since 90s