# Home sellers in the UK increasingly taking fixtures with them, causing buyer frustration



A recent survey highlights a growing trend among home movers in the UK, revealing that a surprising number of sellers are taking cherished items with them when leaving a property. The findings from estate agent Purplebricks show that light bulbs were the most commonly reported item removed, with 20% of buyers noting their absence upon moving in. Additionally, 9% found that toilet seats had been taken, while door handles and doorbells were also among the missing fixtures, noted by 4% and 11% of respondents, respectively.

This phenomenon is not new; a similar survey from HouseWeb.com two decades ago found that a staggering 40% of home buyers encountered missing light bulbs, alongside other fixtures that had been stripped from properties, such as door knobs and even mature garden plants. Mark Desvaux of HouseWeb.com commented on the situation, criticising sellers for their penny-pinching tactics and asserting the need for improved communication throughout the selling process.

In today's market, the removal of minor fixtures can lead to more than just inconveniences for buyers; it often underscores a breakdown in the communication between parties involved in property transactions. Speaking to industry representatives, Toby Leek, president of the National Association of Estate Agents Propertymark, emphasised that moving house can be an intensely stressful experience. He stated, “Strong communication between buyers, sellers, surveyors, estate agents and conveyancers is essential... to ensure that the moving process is as smooth as possible for all parties involved.”

Interestingly, the survey conducted by Purplebricks also indicated that more than one in six people (15%) would consider taking fitted fixtures that they particularly liked when moving. This behaviour highlights the personal connection people have with their home environments, or perhaps a growing awareness of personal property rights that extend beyond the sale.

Discussions on platforms like MoneySavingExpert reveal that sellers often wrestle with the implications of taking fixtures, especially in the case of issues disclosed during surveys. For example, one thread highlighted a seller's frustration when a buyer requested repairs for minor defects in a house built over a century ago, leading to a consensus among forum members that age and condition should be taken into account during discussions about property sales.

Moreover, the notion that some sellers might leave unintentional surprises for their successors can add another layer of complication. While some buyers have reported finding unwelcome items like bags of rubbish and spoiled food left behind, there are also heartwarming stories of welcome notes and gifts from previous owners. This duality reflects the spectrum of experiences associated with moving house.

The removal of fixtures may seem trivial to some, but it can significantly impact buyers' initial impressions and comfort in their new homes. As the market evolves, so too does the need for clearly defined communication about what is included in a sale. Failure to address these issues can lead to disputes and dissatisfaction, ultimately making what is already a stressful process even more complicated.

As the housing market continues to shift, ensuring that both buyers and sellers are on the same page regarding fixtures could serve as a simple yet effective means to alleviate inevitable tensions during such life-changing events. Clear documentation and proactive communication practices are not just beneficial—they are essential for a smooth transaction in today’s competitive landscape.

### Reference Map

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/money/inconvenience-home-movers-taking-toilet-seats-and-light-bulbs-to-new-property-b2749242.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/jul/06/11> - A 2000 survey by HouseWeb.com found that 40% of home buyers discovered that previous owners had removed light bulbs, and 23% found that light fittings and fixtures were also taken, potentially exposing them to electric shocks. The survey also highlighted instances where sellers took door knobs and even dug up mature gardens, leaving buyers with barren plots. To address these issues, HouseWeb.com introduced the House Spec, a checklist for buyers and vendors to agree upon before legal negotiations. Mark Desvaux of HouseWeb.com criticized the penny-pinching tactics of some sellers, emphasizing the need for better communication in the moving process.
3. <https://forums.moneysavingexpert.com/discussion/6530252/selling-house-repairs-survey> - A discussion on the MoneySavingExpert Forum in May 2024 addressed concerns from a seller about repairs and disclosures during the selling process. The seller was worried about issues like a non-functioning bathroom light, a cracked toilet cistern, and other maintenance problems that might be uncovered during a buyer's survey. Forum members advised that if the house is priced to reflect its current condition, there's no need to invest in repairs. They suggested that buyers should be aware of the property's state and that the seller is not obligated to fix minor issues, especially if they were disclosed upfront.
4. <https://forums.moneysavingexpert.com/discussion/6523397/buyer-asking-for-us-to-fix-things-following-survey> - In April 2024, a MoneySavingExpert Forum thread discussed a buyer requesting repairs after a survey revealed issues in a 100-year-old property. The seller expressed frustration over the buyer's expectations, noting that the house met building regulations at the time of construction. Forum participants emphasized that the property's age and condition should be considered, and that the seller is not responsible for modernizing aspects that were compliant when built. They suggested offering a discount instead of making repairs and highlighted the importance of setting clear expectations during the sale process.
5. <https://www.gransnet.com/forums/ask_a_gran/1260220-Advice-needed-please> - A Gransnet forum thread from April 2019 featured a discussion about the inclusion of fixtures and fittings in a property sale. A user recounted moving into a house to find that previous owners had removed light bulbs, a fitted bathroom heater, and a toilet roll holder. This anecdote highlights the importance of clearly specifying which items are included in a property sale to avoid misunderstandings and ensure a smooth transition for the new owners.
6. <https://www.insightdiy.co.uk/news/survey-reveals-nearly-a-quarter-of-us-redecorate-for-the-festive-season/6759.htm> - A 2018 survey by home improvement retailer Wickes revealed that nearly a quarter (23%) of UK residents redecorate their homes in anticipation of Christmas guests. The study found that 60% focus on redecorating the living area, 30% the dining area, and 13% the downstairs toilet. Common quick fixes during this period include repairing toilet seats (46%), toilet flush handles (37%), locks on doors (30%), and light bulbs (29%). Despite these efforts, guests' top irritations during Christmas visits include toilets not flushing (41%) and broken toilet seats (28%).
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/money/inconvenience-home-movers-taking-toilet-seats-and-light-bulbs-to-new-property-b2749242.html> - A survey by estate agent Purplebricks found that 20% of home movers discovered that previous owners had removed light bulbs, 9% found toilet seats taken, and 4% encountered missing door handles. Additionally, 11% reported that doorbells were removed. Other items commonly taken by sellers included kitchen appliances, curtains, blinds, and carpets. The survey also highlighted instances where sellers left behind unwanted items like bags of rubbish and rotten food, as well as pleasant surprises such as welcome notes and gifts. The findings underscore the importance of clear communication between buyers and sellers to ensure a smooth moving process.