

# New HOME, new START

Victoria Staff on the benefits of decluttering before selling your home



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can now be organised. It will also help you make a decision on what furniture and storage you need for your new home, giving you time to pre order any items you'll be purchasing (bearing in mind most furniture companies have a lead time). John Lewis in Cheltenham has a fantastic range of storage for all areas of the home, just pop to the experience desk and they will be happy to help. Consider whether you are downsizing or moving to a larger property as this will impact your choice in furniture. If you are downsizing, then furniture and storage solutions are key as the smaller the home the more functional each item needs to be, as opposed to larger properties where you can have more decorative pieces.

Stage your home ready for marketing photographs and viewings, making it stand out as an environment that potential buyers could see themselves living in - selling them a lifestyle as well as a home.

Some suggestions for viewings are that, if the weather is cold,

put the heating on a timer for when you know viewings are going to be each day, creating a warm and welcoming environment. Use room diffusers to create a nice-smelling home, and if you want to go all out, get a fire going (obviously only if you are going to be in), fresh coffee brewing in a pot, and something cooking in the oven (just not a

**'The last resort is to throw anything in the bin, remember - reduce, reuse, recycle'**

smoked fish pie!). Remember that materials in the home absorb dirt and smells so it might be worth hiring a carpet cleaner or a company to do this, dry clean curtains, and carry out any minor repairs prior to any viewings.

This may all seem a bit excessive but, in my experience, it works (and also if you are taking rugs and curtains with you then it means you are moving with clean items, ready for your new home).

Planning ahead saves you money, alleviates stress, and

means you can start life in your new home with a more organised and decluttered environment. Clutter is anything that is not genuinely useful or loved, so you don't need to live a minimalist life, you can be a maximalist or somewhere in between - but you can still live in an organised environment which is guaranteed to leave you feeling liberated.

It doesn't matter whether you are buying or renting and what size home you are moving into, just remember it's your home, your space, and your place of sanctuary. The whole process of decluttering will make you more conscious of items you are bringing into your environment and their purpose. I'm not suggesting for one minute to stop buying, but to be more aware of the items you are purchasing, the potential environmental impact that they may have, and if it is something that will last. ♦

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Deciding to sell your home is not usually an overnight decision; it's probably something that you've discussed, or thought about, at length. So, why not make the process easier by planning ahead and, more importantly, using this time to declutter.

Some questions to consider are; how will your home look to potential buyers? And, how do you feel when you walk into your home? If entering your house causes you to feel stressed and overwhelmed then the chances are that so will any visitors. Whilst buyers aren't there to critique your choice of interiors, the pile of paperwork on the dining room table, or the clothes bulging out of your closet, it will affect the way your home looks

and feels and can have an impact on a buyer's decision.

Decluttering your home is probably the last thing on your mind when you are contemplating putting it on the market, but detoxing your home before you move is a positive thing to do. Instead of dreading the move, see it as an opportunity to organise your home and life, clearing out the things that you no longer need and leaving you with the things that you love - allowing for a clutter-free, fresh start on moving to your new home.

Save money on extra removals (or potential storage) by letting go of boxes full of items that would probably end up getting moved from one attic to another, never to be opened again - that way you are moving with less baggage and are left only with

what you love and use. Sell objects that you no longer need using online market places, and for more valuable items speak to your local auctioneers. Get your children involved by sorting through their toys and donate anything to charity or sell it online.

Always bear in mind when decluttering that the last resort is to throw anything in the bin, remember - reduce, reuse, recycle. The decluttering process could take some time, so whether you feel you need to hire a professional organiser to tackle the job or take on the challenge yourself, make sure you allow enough time to declutter properly.

Once you have decluttered you are left only with the possessions you love or deem as useful, which



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