



Who should I get to undertake a house survey?

There are many people who offer to undertake house surveys, Chartered Surveyors, Architects, Engineers and other professionals to anyone who thinks they understand buildings. The quality of the individual can vary and no one profession is necessarily better than the others, but as the name suggests 'surveyors' are generally the best qualified to carry out a building 'survey'.

But which type of surveyor should I use? They're all the same aren't they? – Well no. There are in fact a number of different disciplines within the surveying profession, ranging from building surveyors to quantity surveyors and general practice surveyors or valuers. Many areas of their respective expertise overlap, but equally some disciplines are better than others at certain things. You should also note that anyone can call themselves a surveyor but only professionals who have undertaken a Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) assessment of professional competence and hold appropriate insurance as deemed necessary by the RICS rules of conduct, can call themselves a chartered surveyor. These surveyors will generally show the denomination FRICS or MRICS after their name to indicate their qualifications.

When looking for a surveyor the first thing you should be thinking is; are they chartered? If they're not I wouldn't use them, unless you can be sure of their competence through recommendation. Secondly, what sort of surveyor should I use? They all seem to offer surveys but which sort is the best for me?

If you want a home buyer report a chartered building surveyor or general practice surveyor / valuer will offer the best solution. Although as the names suggest, the valuer may have a basic understanding of defects through experience, but predominantly they value buildings rather than undertake construction where experience of defects is gained. On the other hand, the building surveyor will have a technical background in building and building related defects and is likely to have a greater understanding of construction. It is this type of surveyor that I would choose to carry out my survey. When it comes to a full building survey, it is even more important that the surveyor has a detailed grasp of construction and no-one other than a Chartered Building Surveyor will do for me.