

Consumer market study on the functioning of the real estate services for consumers in the European Union

Country fiche – UNITED KINGDOM (England and Wales)

General information

Country	ENGLAND AND WALES
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Researcher contact details (email)	P.Sparkes@soton.ac.uk
Main Sources Used	See list at point 1.2

1. Regulatory background

1.1 Level of regulation in the country

Table 1: Level of regulation			
	Level of regulation	Source of relevant legislation	Ongoing discussion on regulation/deregulation (if applicable): current state of affairs and main arguments in the debate
Real estate transactions¹	Formality and registration regulated, also identity checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law of Property Act 1925 • Land Registration Act 2002 • Money laundering Regulations 2007 	Extension of identity checks to beneficial owners of companies and beneficiaries under trusts.
Notary system (or lawyer/conveyancer system)²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitors/licensed conveyancers • Highly regulated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services Act 2007 c 29, ss 12, 13, sch 2 	Fees dropped as a result of increased competition introduced during the 80s of the last century; there is no active debate.
Profession of estate agents	Lightly regulated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate Agents Act 1979 • Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2007 • Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 	Ongoing concerns about professional standards

1.2 National legislation

Table 2: List of national legislation		
List of national legislation	Classification of national legislation	Content of the national legislation
Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, SI 2007/1277	Consumers	Copies out Unfair trading Regulation
Consumer Rights Act 2011, c 15	Consumers	Unfair terms regime e.g. real estate standard terms of letting agents
Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2007, c 17	Regulation of estate agents/consumers	Requires estates agents to belong to an approved redress scheme.

¹ E.g. limitations or prohibitions of certain transactions; specific formality requirements etc.

² Only in countries where notaries do not exist or do not have a monopoly on conveyancing.

Table 2: List of national legislation

Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 SI 2012/3118	Sales/lettings	Requires energy performance certificates
Estate Agents Act 1979, c 35	Regulation of estate agents	Reverse licensing scheme
EU (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regs 2015, SI 2015/2059	Regulation of professions	Implements EU Directives
Land Registration Act 2002, c 9	Transactions	Registration
Law of Property Act 1925, c 20	Transactions	Formality
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989, c 34	Transactions	Formality
Legal Services Act 2007 c 29, ss 12, 13, sch 2	Regulation of providers of legal services	Sets up regulation machinery for lawyers; restricts preparation of conveyancing documents to those licensed.
Money laundering Regulations 2007, SI 2007/2157 as amended on four occasions	Professional conduct	Copies out Third Directive
Mortgage Credit Directive Order 2015, SI 2015/916	Regulated lending industry/consumer information	Copies out MC Directive into existing regulatory regime
Timeshare, Holiday Products, Resale and Exchange Contracts Regulations 2010, SI 2010/2960	Timeshare transactions	Copies out recast Directive

1.3 Implementation of relevant EU legislation

Table 3: Implementation of relevant EU legislation					
EU legislation	Implementation achieved?	Implementation of EU legislation at the national level (e.g. the name of the law)	Source of the national implementation legislation	Content of the national legislation in keywords	Which parts of the EU legislation have been transposed?
Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices (UCPD)	Yes	Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008	SI 2007/1277	Same as Directive	Copy out
Directive 93/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts	Yes	Consumer Rights Act 2011	c 15	Part II integrates Directive and pre-existing domestic law	All
Directive 2008/122/EC on the protection of consumers, in respect of certain aspects of timeshare, long-term holiday product, resale and exchange contracts	Yes	Timeshare, Holiday Products, Resale and Exchange Contracts Regulations 2010	SI 2010/2960	Implements the Timeshare, Long-Term Holiday Product, Resale and Exchange Contracts Directive 2008/122 and replaces the previous UK regime split between the domestic Timeshare Act 1992 and the EU based Timeshare Regulations 1997.	Copy out
Directive 2010/31/EU of Energy Performance of Buildings Directive	Yes	Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012	SI 2012/3118	Consolidates 2007 Regs implementing 2002 Directive and subsequent amendments	Copy out

Table 3: Implementation of relevant EU legislation

Directive 2005/36/EC on Recognition of Professional Qualifications, as last amended by Directive 2013/55/EU	Yes	EU (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regs 2015	SI 2015/2059	Implements recast Directive (Separate regulations for health care professionals).	Copy out
Mortgage Credit Directive, 2014/17/EC	Yes	Mortgage Credit Directive Order 2015	SI 2015/916	Amends the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, c. 8 that covers the whole financial sector.	All

1.4 Communications and strategy papers

Table 4: Communications and strategy papers

Communication or strategy paper	Have the following communications and strategy papers been referred to in national documents?	Name of document	Source	Content	Differences with respect to communications and strategy papers listed in the first column
COM(2015) 550 final Communication of the Commission Upgrading the Single Market: more opportunities for people and business	Yes	Analysis of the long-term Economic Impact of EU Membership and the Alternatives	HM Treasury CM 9250 April 2016 (para 1.138, p 78, fn 187)	Favourable comment on services liberalisation	None
COM(2013)676 Communication from the Commission on evaluating national	Yes	Explanatory Memorandum on EU Document	Cabinet Office DB13 14688/13, 25 October 2013	Explanation of Communication	None

Table 4: Communications and strategy papers

regulations on access to professions					
COM(2016)820 Communication from the Commission on reform recommendations for regulation in professional services	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
European Consumer Agenda	Yes	Parliamentary European Scrutiny Committee	B3907 10420/12	Cleared from scrutiny	Some concerns expressed in ara 7.27.
Consumer Programme 2014-2020	Yes	Brexit: Impact Across Policy Areas	HC Briefing Paper 07213 26 August 2016	N/A	N/A

2. General market information

2.1 Key market data

Table 5: Key market data	
<p>General market situation (e.g. trends in the market, recent developments in the market, price fluctuations, etc.)</p>	<p>House prices have in general risen sharply over the period since the Second World War, though there has been a tendency for periodic cycles of boom and bust. There is enormous regional variation in prices, with London by far the most expensive. Prices have become unaffordable for many would be owners.</p> <p>During the 80s of the last century, almost all security and rent control from the private rental market, which encouraged strong growth in the sector, spurred on by the wide availability of buy to let mortgages. The percentage of owners has fallen back from a peak in 2001 (69%). There is a very substantial shortage of private sector homes, especially at affordable prices, and also social sector rentals and private rental properties, though this effect is regional.</p>
<p>Total value of residential transactions for buying and renting for the year 2015 (2014 or 2013 depending on the latest available data) expressed in EUR</p>	<p>Buying: LR Figures for England and Wales in 2015 [Figures are available up to April 2017] Average price £272,025; Total sales £915,696; Total market activity £249,092,204,400 = £249 billion = €291 billion</p> <p>Renting: Statistics do not appear to be collected for the number of leases entered into (England and Wales both have very limited security of tenure and so there is a large degree of churn of tenants.) The figures are therefore based on the average rents and the number of tenanted properties. Figures are given for 2015-16 though more recent figures are available, England ONS Table FA3211. Average rents were £716 monthly (a median of £650 monthly throughout England but the median was £1452 in London). There were 4.08 million tenants in the sector. This suggests a rental yield slightly above £35 billion annually (= €41 billion). In the public and social sectors the average was £400 monthly paid by 3.90 Million tenants, yielding £18.7 billion (= €22 billion). Wales (Statistics for Wales) Average private sector rents were £500 monthly (£400 for one bed, £500 for two beds, £550 for three beds and £800 for four beds; most were in the middle two categories; tenants in receipt of housing benefit were excluded). There were an estimated 207,615 private sector tenants in 2015, yielding approximately £1.25 billion (= €1.5 billion). (Some projections are lower.) In the public/social sector the stock is 232,588 (2015) and average weekly rents were £83.06, which implies a rental yield of slightly above £1 billion (= €1.2 billion). Total rental yield for England and Wales is therefore, very roughly, £56 billion (= €66 billion).</p>
<p>Ratio house owners – tenants (i.e. the percentage of households that are owners resp. tenants of dwelling units)</p>	<p>England, 2015 (English Housing Survey Headline Report 2015-16 (ONS)): Owners 63%; Tenants 37% (20% of the total were in the private rental sector) Wales (2015) Wales Statistics: ownership is a few percentage points higher (house prices are much lower); owner occupation 69.8%; renting 21.2% (of these, 6.2% of total were renting from local authorities, 9.7% from registered social landlords and 14.3% in the private sector).</p>

Table 5: Key market data

<p>Usage of land (Quotas for built land, agricultural land, “wild land” (forests, lakes etc.)</p>	<p>According to DEFRA/ONS figures, use of land in 2010 was</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="521 252 1413 523"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>thousand hectares</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agricultural land</td> <td>15,333</td> <td>65.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forestry</td> <td>3,059</td> <td>13.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Urban/developed land</td> <td>2,748</td> <td>11.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coastal and inland water</td> <td>631</td> <td>2.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>1,658</td> <td>7.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>23,429</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>See J Khan, T Powell, A Harwood, Land Use in the UK (DEFRA, ONS, 2015)</p>			thousand hectares	%	Agricultural land	15,333	65.4	Forestry	3,059	13.1	Urban/developed land	2,748	11.7	Coastal and inland water	631	2.7	Other	1,658	7.1	Total	23,429																
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<p>Average prices of residential property</p>	<p><i>According to the type of property</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average flat of ca. 70 sqm • Terrace house of ca. 100 sqm • Detached (one family house) of ca. 150 sqm 	<p>LR Statistics (2015) are collected by property type irrespective of floor area [Figures are available with a delay of three months]:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="763 655 1391 823"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>£</th> <th>€</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Flat</td> <td>£274,721</td> <td>321,808</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Terrace</td> <td>£225,979</td> <td>264,711</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Semi</td> <td>£231,036</td> <td>270,636</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detached</td> <td>£367,038</td> <td>429,948</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Contains Land Registry data © Crown copyright and database right [2015]</p>		£	€	Flat	£274,721	321,808	Terrace	£225,979	264,711	Semi	£231,036	270,636	Detached	£367,038	429,948																					
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Table 5: Key market data

Price development of residential property

Nationally

Data is available from the House Price Index UK (month and year) www.ons.gov.uk. The index was based at 100 in June 2015. In March 2017 it stands at 113.21, representing an average of £215,847. Prices rose 4.1 annually between March 2016 and March 2017, though they had fallen month on month by 0.6%. The reports give figures by country and historical data back to 2002. Contains Land Registry data and National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017].

According to the type of property

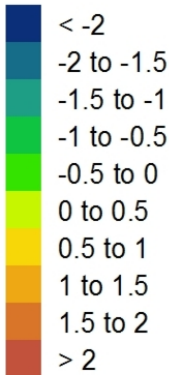

- Average flat of ca. 70 sqm
- Terrace house of ca. 100 sqm
- Detached (one family house) of ca. 150 sqm

Average monthly price by property type

Property type	March 2017	March 2016	Difference
Detached	£324,927	£313,564	3.6%
Semi-detached	£203,177	£192,884	5.3%
Terraced	£174,036	£167,656	3.8%
Flat or maisonette	£195,830	£189,180	3.5%
All	£215,847	£207,333	4.1%

UK House Price Index summary: March 2017, www.gov.uk/, Open Government licence
Contains Land Registry data and National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017].

Table 5: Key market data

	<p><i>According to the type of location</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Capital city</i> • <i>Urban areas</i> • <i>Rural areas</i> 	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Monthly Price Changes</p> <p>Growth (%)</p>  <p>< -2</p> <p>-2 to -1.5</p> <p>-1.5 to -1</p> <p>-1 to -0.5</p> <p>-0.5 to 0</p> <p>0 to 0.5</p> <p>0.5 to 1</p> <p>1 to 1.5</p> <p>1.5 to 2</p> <p>> 2</p> </div> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">UK House Price Index summary: March 2017, www.gov.uk/, Open Government licence Contains Land Registry data/National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2017]</p>
<p>Development of price index</p>	<p>UK House Price Index from Land Registry data on https://www.gov.uk/</p>	

2.2 Service providers

Table 6: Service providers						
	Total number of firms	Total number of professionals	Total number of employees	Branch offices per firm	Market concentration in % of turnover	Average turnover per firm (expressed in EUR)
Estate agents	16,500 (UK)	50,000	158,000	1.15	Very small	€650,000
Solicitors	10,325	138,280	N/A	1.3	Very small	N/A
Notaries	n.e.	810	(also practising as solicitors)			
Licensed conveyancers	237	687	50,000	Not published	Very small	€880,000
Architects	N/A	90,000	Very small % of their work is in residential sales market.			
Surveyors	N/A	75,000	Extent to which their work is in residential conveyancing will vary.			
Engineers	-	-	Very few would work mainly in existing residential property.			

- Property accounts for 14% of turnover of solicitors' firms; around 54% of business is reserved business (including conveyancing, matters for which there is a monopoly for registered legal services providers).
- Registered European, foreign and exempt European lawyer's number 649, 2308 and 2918 respectively.
- Of solicitors' firms, 25% are sole practitioners, 18% partnerships, 42% incorporated companies and 15% limited liability partnerships.
- Of licensed conveyancers' firms, typically 85% of income is derived from residential conveyancing.
- Office of Fair Trading in Home Buying and Selling (OFT1186, 2007) reported an estate agency market worth £4.2 billion shared among 14,500 firms, giving a turnover of slightly less than £300,000 per firm. Obviously, the market has changed since then.

3. Roles of professionals and services in the real estate market

Table 7: Role of professionals in the real estate market							
	Estate agent	Property valuator³	Solicitor	Notary	Bank	Licensed conveyancer	Technical expert
Main function: does the professional typically work independently or as part of a firm or another organisation?	Usually in a firm; usually also in collaboration with an online agency	Firm	Firm	Usually also a solicitor (see solicitor for further questions)	N/A	Firm or employed by firm of solicitors (alternative to solicitor)	Firm
Sale	As above	As above	As above	-	N/A	As above	Occasional
Purchase	As above	As above	As above	-	Providing mortgage	As above	Occasional
Letting	As above	N/A	As above	-	N/A	As above	N/A
Renting	As above	-	No	-	-	No	-
Extent of engagement (at which point(s) does each professional intervene in the process?)	First point of contact	Time of survey, just before contract	When instructions received from agent	N/A	N/A	As alternative to solicitor – when instructions received from agent	N/A
Sale	As above	-	As above	N/A	N/A	As above	N/A

³ In some EU countries, the real estate property valuers are regulated as a profession that is separate from estate agents (e.g. Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia); their services might be obligatory, especially when taking mortgage loans.

Table 7: Role of professionals in the real estate market							
Purchase	As above	N/A	As above	N/A	Mortgage application – may be introduced by agent, solicitor or mortgage broker	As above	In event of structural problems/ development proposals
Letting	As above	N/A	As above	N/A	N/A	As above	N/A
Renting	As above	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
Mandatory involvement	No	Yes (Mortgage Credit Directive)	Yes (or licensed conveyancer)	No	N/A	Yes (as alternative to solicitor)	No
How are their fees/charges structured	% value but fixed fee often quoted to client	Scale - % value	Based on value, but often fixed fee quoted to client	N/A	Fixed fees cited on bank websites	As for solicitor, possibly slightly cheaper on average	Usually by time

Some 25% of solicitors practice as sole practitioners, but many of these are being squeezed out of conveyancing since they are not included in lenders' approved panels.

4. Land registration

Table 8: Land registration	
Responsible authority(ies) dealing with land registration	HM Land Registry
Actors involved in the registration procedure and their main functions	Purchasers' solicitor usually act for purchaser and bank in preparing transfer, mortgage and land registry application. Vendor's solicitor or bank produces discharge of existing loan.
Intermediate steps of the registration procedure, if applicable	A search preserves priority for the registration of the transfer/mortgage provided the transfer is lodged within the priority period.

5. The process of buying or selling a property

5.1 Main steps in the transaction process to buy or sell a property

Table 9: Main steps of the process to buy or sell a property			
Main steps	Main function	Applicable	National specificities/additional functions/main actors
Estate agent services	Matching the parties	Yes	Most vendors use high street estate agents (i.e. an agent with a physical office in a town near to the property); most purchasers usually rely on online agencies for searching for property; individual properties are generally marketed online but by high street agencies.
Alternative matching devices	Matching the parties	Unusual	Newspaper advertisement; personal contact
Preliminary contract	Securing the transaction before the final contract is concluded	Unusual	-
Preliminary checks	Ensuring that the buyer knows all legal obligations and relevant features related to the property	Yes	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer
Drafting the sales contract and/or deed of conveyance	Summarising the agreement of the parties	Yes	Yes, this work is restricted to people regulated (indirectly) by the Legal Services Board – solicitors and licensed conveyancers.
Legal advice or counselling	Ensuring that the transaction is valid and that the parties know about their rights and duties.	Yes	This is part of the standard instructions of a conveyancer.
Certification of signatures	Ensuring the validity of the agreement.	Yes	Deeds required to be witnessed, not necessarily by practitioners, but the conveyancer must carry out Know Your Client checks before accepting instructions.
Contract execution (transfer of payment)	Executing the contract (and securing that both parties perform their obligations).	Yes	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer
Contract execution (transfer of property)	Executing the contract (and securing that both parties perform their obligations).	Yes	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer; this process is known as completion and the document as the (land registry) transfer.
Registration	Making the transaction visible to third parties and the public.	Yes	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer – usually the purchaser's conveyancer also acts for the bank.
Taxation	Creating revenue for the state.	Yes	Stamp duty land tax must be paid before registration.

Table 9: Main steps of the process to buy or sell a property

Post-transaction controls	Securing that the contract is duly executed.	Yes	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer carries out any post-completion steps; these may be required particularly with leasehold land.
Other steps	Money laundering checks	Yes	Money laundering checks at the outset.

5.2 Sale contract and transfer of ownership

Table 10: Contract of sale and transfer of ownership

Main steps	Actors involved per intermediate step	Payment details ⁴		Typical risks associated to these steps
		Payments expressed : • In EUR as % of total purchase price <u>and</u> • As a fixed amount if available (add if VAT applies)	When is the payment made	
Estate agent services or alternative matching devices	Agency usual; payment is by vendor	1.5-3% + VAT Average bill £5,247	Out of completion monies	Gazumping ⁵
Preliminary contract (usual)	Unusual	N/A	N/A	Both sides are left without binding commitment
Preliminary checks (land register, administrative permits) Drafting the sales contract and/or deed of conveyance Legal advice or counselling	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer	Legal fees typically £850-1500 including VAT	Completion statement includes all charges, disbursements, and tax.	Lack of binding commitment; need to harmonise chains of sales and purchases

⁴ Payment shall be considered as the 'discharge of an obligation by its settlement equal to the monetary value of the debtor's obligation' while fees can be defined as 'a charge for services rendered' (Retrieved from: <http://www.investorwords.com/3634/payment.html>, <http://www.investorwords.com/1922/fee.html>). Payment, therefore, includes both the cost of the service and the fees for the service in question.

⁵ **Gazumping** occurs when a seller (especially of property) accepts a verbal offer (a promise to purchase) on the property from one potential buyer, but then accepts a higher offer from someone else.

Table 10: Contract of sale and transfer of ownership

Certification of signatures				Mainly practical administrative issues
Contract execution (transfer of payment and registration; transfer of property)				
Registration in land register or similar device		See below		Land registration works well
Taxation (esp. transfer tax)		See below		
Other steps	Electronic bank transfer	£40-45		

▲ Information on the legal position of a tenant occupying the dwelling to be sold. In particular: Does the rule *emptio non tollit locatum* apply? Property is usually sold with vacant possession, unless it is investment property. The vendor therefore serves notice to quit on any tenant and the tenant vacates before the land is sold. If the property is sold subject to a lease, the lease binds because it is a legal estate in the land and short leases override the register. However, private sector tenants have little security and if necessary, an assured shorthold can be terminated by two months' notice.

Fees: Legal fees for residential conveyancing are charged in 90% of cases on a fixed fee basis.

Stamp duty			Land register fees	
Price	% (of band)	+ (second home)	Value (£)	Fee £
0-125K	0	+3% (over £40K)	100K-200K	95
125K-250K	2	+3%	200K-500K	135
250K-925K	5	+3%	500K-1M	270
950K-1.5M	10	+3%	1M+	455
1.5M +	12	+3%		

5.3 Professional services performed in the real estate market related to buying and selling a property

Table 11: Professional services performed in the real estate market related to buying and selling a property					
Services in the real estate market	Minimum standards for information provided by law, if applicable	Service providers involved	Quality of involvement	Fees expressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In EUR as % of total purchase price <u>and</u> • As a fixed amount (if available) 	
Estate agent services or alternative matching devices	N/A	Estate agents/online agents	Optional but usual	1.5-3% + VAT Average £5247	
Provision of mandatory information before the start of the transaction, if applicable	N/A	N/A	N/A	Legal fees typically £850-1500 including VAT Average not available.	
Preliminary contract (usual)	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Preliminary checks (land register, administrative permits)	N/A	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer	It is theoretically possible to employ a solicitor or licensed conveyancer to draft documents and not to provide advice, but this would be extremely unusual.		
Drafting the sales contract and/or deed of conveyance	N/A	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer			
Legal advice or counselling	N/A	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer			
Certification of signatures	N/A	N/A			
Contract execution (transfer of payment; transfer of property)	N/A	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer			
Registration in land register or similar device	N/A	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer			See notes to 5.2
Taxation (esp. transfer tax)	N/A	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer			Ditto

5.4 Creating a Mortgage

Table 12: Mortgage requirements

Main steps to create a mortgage	Actors/institutions involved	Minimum standards for information	Additional requirements for consumer mortgages	Fees expressed: • In EUR as % of total purchase price and • As a fixed amount (if available)	Typical risks associated to these steps
Conclusion of credit and mortgage agreement with lender (bank)	Reference is usually made by agent/ solicitor/ mortgage broker. Bank must provide information in ESIS. Purchaser's solicitor/licensed conveyancer usually acts for bank in creation of security (a legal charge).	Under Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 as amended to comply with MCD Ditto; also under Mortgage Conduct of Business Rules.	Lenders have detailed lending handbooks Regulatory bodies also have detailed conduct rules.	Booking fee £100-250 Arrangement fee £2000 Mortgage valuation fee £150 Legal fee included in purchase	Mortgage fraud
Insertion of mortgage in the land register, usually at first rank	Solicitor/licensed conveyancer	N/A	N/A	No separate fee if lodged with transfer	N/A
Credit sum paid to mortgagor (buyer) or seller	Vendor's solicitor/licensed conveyancer	Completion statement	N/A	Including in conveyancing	N/A

6. The process to rent or let a property

6.1 Main steps in the transaction process to rent and let a property

Table 13: Main steps of the process to rent and let a property	
Main steps	Process involved
Finding and matching landlords and tenants	Many possibilities – newspaper advertisement, internet advertisement etc., but in most cases now via letting agents.
Information search by landlords or tenants (e.g. about salary, outstanding debts)	Letting agents undertakes search.
Inspection of the property by tenants (in some cases with the help of professionals)	Yes; usually letting agent is present and possibly the landlord.
Delivery of mandatory information to tenants prior to the conclusion of the contract	Letting agent takes care of delivering information to tenants.
Delivery of energy performance certificate to tenant	Also obligation of the letting agent.
Provision of additional guarantees to landlord	This is often required, e.g. from the parents of students.
Conclusion of the contract in the usual form (e.g. oral, written, preformulated)	Almost always written (not strictly required) and invariably on the standard form provided by the letting agent; there is usually no scope for negotiation.
Rent payment and deposit (e.g. bank account)	Direct debit usually required. Deposit of month's rent plus month as security. Deposits must be deposited with a deposit scheme. ⁶ On tenancy deposit schemes see www.gov.uk/tenancy-deposit-protection .
Registration of the contract in the land register	Short leases override the register; there is no registration scheme in England.
Other steps	In Wales, landlords are required to register with Rent Smart Wales; in April 75,000 landlords had registered 159,000 properties; estimates of total stock vary between 180-210,000.

⁶ A security deposit is usually charged as security against damage to the property or getting into rent arrears. It should be returned to the tenant at the end of the tenancy if he has not breached the tenancy agreement. An agent who charges a security deposit for an assured shorthold tenancy on or after 6 April 2007 must protect it in one of the three government-approved schemes and provide the tenant with details of the scheme (see Housing Act 2004 ss 213 - 215, sch. 10, as amended by Localism Act 2011 s. 184. Schemes in operation are the Deposit Protection Service, the Tenancy Deposit Scheme and 'mydeposits').

6.2 Rent contract

Table 14: Rent contract				
Main steps	Actors involved per intermediate step	Payment details ⁷		Typical risks associated to these steps
		Payments expressed : • In EUR as % of total purchase price <u>and</u> • As a fixed amount if available (add if VAT applies)	When is the payment made	
Finding and matching the parties	Usually letting agents	See notes	On conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsuitable tenant • Poor quality accommodation
Information search by landlord on tenant (e.g. about salary, outstanding debts)	Usually letting agent	Ditto	Before property is reserved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government has announced its intention to ban fees for tenants, but this has not been implemented at the time of the election (June 2017).
Inspection of the property by tenant (in some cases with the help of professionals)	Always accompanied	Ditto	In L invoice (above) Fees vary widely, but for a letting only service are typically one month's rent In London £1500; elsewhere £750 All plus VAT. Landlords should beware extras e.g. for inventories Rent collection is usually 5% of rent, full management 10-15% of rent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need careful inventory
Delivery of mandatory information to tenant prior to the conclusion of the contract	Letting agent	Ditto		
Delivery of energy performance certificate to tenant	Letting agent	Ditto		

⁷ Payment shall be considered as the 'discharge of an obligation by its settlement equal to the monetary value of the debtor's obligation' while fees can be defined as 'a charge for services rendered' (Retrieved from: <http://www.investorwords.com/3634/payment.html>, <http://www.investorwords.com/1922/fee.html>). Payment, therefore, includes both the cost of the service and the fees for the service in question.

Table 14: Rent contract

Conclusion of the contract in the usual form (e.g. oral, written; if written, preformulated)	Letting agent – always in writing and in standard form	Ditto		
Rent payment and deposit (e.g. bank account)	Direct debit invariably required	Ditto		
Registration of the contract in the land register or other device	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not necessary in England & Wales – tenancy overrides the land register In Wales must register with Rent Smart Wales 	Ditto		

Fees are indicated in 6.3 below

6.3 Professional services performed in the real estate market related to renting and letting a property

Table 15: Professional services performed in the real estate market related to renting and letting a property

Services in the real estate market	Minimum standards for information provided by law, if applicable	Service providers involved	Quality of involvement (e.g. mandatory; exclusive rights)	Fees expressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In EUR as % of total purchase price <u>and</u> As a fixed amount (if available)
Finding and matching landlords and tenants	-	Rental agency	Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees vary widely, but for a letting only service are typically one-month's rent. In London £1500; elsewhere £750 All plus VAT. Landlords should beware extras e.g. for inventories.
Information search by landlords or tenants (e.g. about salary, outstanding debts)	Data protection rules ⁸	Rental agency	Agreement	

⁸ Details relevant in the landlord tenant relationship are given e.g. by http://www.anthonycollins.com/media/2323/dataprotection_report_v7.pdf

Table 15: Professional services performed in the real estate market related to renting and letting a property

Inspection of the property by tenants (in some cases with the help of professionals)	Defects should be disclosed, but failure merely leads to rescission.	Rental agency	Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent collection is usually 5% of rent, full management 10-15% of rent.
Delivery of mandatory information to tenants prior to the conclusion of the contract	Deposit protection scheme	Rental agency	Agreement	
Conclusion of the contract in the usual form (e.g. oral, written, preformulated)	Invariably in writing and on standard terms of rental agency	Rental agency	Agreement	
Rent payment and deposit (e.g. bank account)	Data protection rules	Rental agency	Agreement	Rent collection is usually 5% of rent, full management 10-15% of rent
Registration of the contract in the land register (e.g. excluded, optional or mandatory)	Not necessary in England & Wales – tenancy overrides the land register. In Wales must register with Rent Smart Wales, a kind of tenant register ⁹ .	-	-	£33.50

⁹ See <https://www.rentsmart.gov.wales/en/>

7. Professional services regulation: notaries

7.1 Market entry and structure regulation

Table 16: Market entry and structure regulation

	Regulation	
Subjective requirements	<i>Qualifications (diplomas, exams, concours) required to become a notary in your country:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification as a notary is regulated by the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury under the direction of the Master of the Faculties. Details of the Faculty Office and all the Rules governing the qualification and admission of notaries can be found at their website www.facultyoffice.org.uk. The main regulations are contained in the Notaries (Qualification) Rules 2013. • Most notaries are solicitors.
Objective requirements	<i>Do numerus clauses and other objective requirements exist?</i>	No
Citizenship requirements	<i>Are foreign candidates admitted de iure and also de facto under the same conditions as nationals?</i>	Yes; there is also (at least until Brexit) a special category of EEA notaries.
Inter-professional cooperation	<i>Are forms of collaboration between notaries and other professionals allowed and usual?</i>	Almost all are solicitors
Business structure	<i>Are notary associations/corporations allowed?</i>	Most work in solicitor's practices; their main function is to witness signatures in apostilles.
Geographical limitations	<i>Are there limitations with respect to the area in which the notary can exercise his/her activities (e.g. at the regional or municipal level)?</i>	No
	<i>Are these limitation restricted to specific tasks?</i>	No

For an explanation of the role of notaries (which is very limited in England and Wales) see: <https://www.thenotariessociety.org.uk/pages/what-a-notary-does>

7.2 Market conduct regulation

Table 17: Market conduct regulation

	Regulation	
Exclusive rights	<i>Specify for which transactions or parts of them only notaries may act against payment.</i>	There are only 650 notaries in England and Wales, almost all of them solicitors.
Duty to provide services	<i>Are notaries allowed to refuse a request to act?</i>	
Professional standards	<i>How are professional standards regulated? What are the tasks of the professional representation (e.g. Chamber of Notaries) in this context?</i>	
Mandatory intervention	<i>Is the intervention of a notary is required for the registration procedure</i>	
Compulsory indemnity insurance	<i>Is indemnity insurance compulsory? If yes, what is the indicative amount of the insurance?</i>	
Continuing education	<i>Do forms of continuing education exist? If yes, is continuing education mandatory?</i>	
Advertising restrictions	<i>Are there limitations on advertising?</i>	
Fee regulation	<i>Notarial fees system</i>	

8. Professional services regulation: solicitors/licensed conveyancers (legally admitted to perform real estate transactions and/or to assist the conclusion of tenancy agreements)

8.1 Market entry and structure regulation

Table 18: Market entry and structure regulation		
	Regulation	
Subjective requirements	<i>Conditions (diplomas, exams, concours) required to become a lawyer in your country.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitors generally require a degree, completion of the legal practice course and of a training contract. SRA Admissions Regulations 2011; www.sra.org.uk/students/ Licensed conveyancers have more diverse qualification routes based in general on more practical experience www.conveyancer.org.uk/trainee-lawyer.
Objective requirements	<i>Do numerus clauses and other objective requirements exist?</i>	No
Citizenship requirements	<i>Are foreign candidates admitted de iure and also de facto under the same conditions as nationals?</i>	Yes ¹⁰
Inter-professional cooperation	<i>Are forms of collaboration between lawyers and other professionals allowed and usual?</i>	Yes. The Law Society issued a Practice Note on Alternative Business Structures in July 2013. This makes clear that cross-discipline practice is now permitted subject to any conflicts of professional obligations e.g. in relation to disclosure.
Business structure	<i>Are lawyer associations/corporations allowed?</i>	Yes
Geographical limitations	<i>Are there limitations with respect to the area in which the lawyer can exercise his/her activities (e.g. at the regional or municipal level)?</i>	There are single professions covering England and Wales. Reciprocal arrangements exist in relation to other parts of the United kingdom.
	<i>Are these limitation restricted to specific tasks?</i>	N/A

¹⁰ Details of practice by non-British solicitors can be found at <http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/registered-european-foreign-lawyers.page>

The Solicitors Regulation Authority gives these figures for the composition of firms:

Date(s)	Sole Practitioner	Partnership	Incorporated Company	Limited Liability Partnership	Other	Total
April 2017	2,558 (25%)	1,898 (18%)	4,366 (42%)	1,562 (15%)	41 (0%)	10425

Sole practitioners are not included in lender’s panels; they face rising insurance premiums.

8.2 Market conduct regulation

Table 19: Market conduct regulation

	Regulation	
Exclusive rights	<i>For which transactions or parts of them only lawyers may act against payment</i>	Section 12 of the Legal Services Act 2007 (and sch 2) reserves “reserved instrument activities” to solicitors/licensed conveyancers/notaries etc. (See below).
Neutrality	<i>Is the lawyer allowed to act on behalf of both parties involved in the transaction? In this case, what type of fees apply and which party has to bear them?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitors' Code of Conduct 2007 rule 3 prohibits a solicitor from acting for both sides in a conveyancing transaction. (Licensed conveyancers are allowed to act on both sides if there is no conflict of interest, and commonly do; however, chains of transactions are usual in England and Wales meaning that the conveyancer acts for one party in a related sale and purchase). The same solicitor/conveyancer can act for both members of a couple (e.g. two purchasers). The same solicitor/conveyancer generally acts for a client and the bank.
Duty to provide services	<i>Are lawyers allowed to refuse a request to act?</i>	Yes (a situation unlikely to arise unless there is a conflict of interest)
Professional standards	<i>How are professional standards regulated? What are the tasks of the professional representation (e.g. Chamber of Lawyers/Advocates) in this context?</i>	Discipline is enforced by the Solicitors Regulation Authority of the Council of Licensed Conveyancers. Each profession has similar conduct rules.
Compulsory indemnity insurance	<i>Is indemnity insurance compulsory? If yes, what is the indicative amount of the insurance?</i>	Yes. Either £3 million or £2 million depending upon business structure.

Table 19: Market conduct regulation

Continuing education	<i>Do forms of continuing education exist? If yes, is continuing education mandatory?</i>	Yes (mandatory from 2016 through an annual self-test) ¹¹
Advertising restrictions	<i>Are there limitations on advertising?</i>	Conveyancers are generally free to advertise subject e.g. to ensuring adverts are not misleading; see Solicitors Conduct Rules rule 7. Licensed conveyancers have corresponding rules.
Fee regulation	<i>Lawyer fee system</i>	Fees are agreed between the parties but are liable to taxation i.e. assessment for fairness.

Reserved legal activities

Section 12 of the Legal Services Act 2007 (and sch 2) sets out six “reserved legal activities” that can only be carried on by those authorised by approved regulators such as the Solicitors Regulation Authority:

- The exercise of a right of audience;
- The conduct of litigation;
- Reserved instrument activities;
- Probate activities;
- Notarial activities; and
- The administration of oaths.

Most relevant is reserved instrument activities: Preparing any instrument of transfer or charge for the purposes of the Land Registration Act 2002, making an application or lodging a document for registration under that Act; and preparing any other instrument relating to real or personal estate for the purposes of the law of England and Wales or instrument relating to court proceedings in England and Wales. “Instrument” is further defined.

¹¹ For solicitors see <https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/cpd-accreditation.page>; for licensed conveyancers see <http://www.conveyancer.org.uk/CLC-Lawyer/CPD-Practice-Note.aspx>

9. Professional services regulation: estate agents

9.1 Market entry and structure regulation

Table 20: Market entry and structure regulation

	Regulation	
Subjective requirements	<i>Qualifications (level and duration of education and training, diplomas, exams, traineeships or professional experience requirements, concours) required to become an estate agent in your country.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (many agents are members of the RICS or NAEA). • There are some prohibitions e.g. on undischarged bankrupts and after convictions for offences of dishonesty: Estate Agents Act 1979 s 3.
Objective requirements	<i>Do numerous clauses and other objective requirements exist?</i>	N/A
Licence requirements	<i>Are estate agents licenced or do they work as employees?</i>	The Estate Agents Act 1979 imposes a 'negative licensing regime' in which an estate agent found to be in breach of duties or convicted of offences of dishonesty may be banned from estate agency work.
Citizenship requirements	<i>Is unlimited access to the profession granted to foreign professionals de iure and de facto?</i>	Yes, there are no qualifications and hence no nationality requirement, provided the person has the right to reside in the UK.
Inter-professional cooperation	<i>Are estate agents allowed to exercise another profession or business activity? Is inter-professional cooperation regulated?</i>	Yes, there are no restrictions on estate agents.
Business structure	<i>The share of estate agent acts acting as sole practitioners and as companies (if data are available)? Can the agent be employed by another agent or establish a partnership with other agents? Are there any restrictions on the corporate structure of a real estate enterprise (such as voting rights reserved to qualified members of a profession, shareholding requirements etc.)?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not known • Yes • No
Geographical limitations	<i>Are there limitations with respect to the area in which the estate agent can exercise his/her activities (e.g. at the regional or municipal level)?</i>	No
	<i>Are these limitation restricted to specific tasks?</i>	See 9.2 below

9.2 Market conduct regulation

Table 21: Market conduct regulation		
	Regulation	
Neutrality	<i>Is neutrality regulated? Is the agent allowed to act on behalf of both parties involved in the transaction? In this case, what type of fees applies and which party bears these?</i>	The agent is generally employed by the vendor. Therefore, as a rule, no neutrality clause exists, and the agent will not normally act on behalf of both parties.
Professional standards	<i>How are professional standards regulated? Are entities or associations ensuring the professional representation and respect of rules of good practice (e.g. association of real estate professionals)?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agents are subject to the Estate Agents Act 1979, which is enforced by Powys County Council throughout the country. They are required to be members of approved dispute resolution schemes by the Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2007.
Compulsory indemnity insurance	<i>Is indemnity insurance compulsory for estate agents? If yes, what is the indicative amount of the insurance?</i>	Yes, indirectly, the real estate agent will be required to join redress schemes. For example, the Property Ombudsman requires cover of £100,000 with an excess of no more than £1000 ¹²
Continuing education	<i>Do forms of continuing education exist? If yes, is continuing education mandatory? What are the requirements related to the content and duration of continuing education? What are the consequences of non-compliance?</i>	No
Advertising restrictions	<i>Are there limitations on advertising?</i>	Yes – unfair trading rules (2005 Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices, see above).
Fee regulation	<i>Real estate agent fee system</i>	Fees are paid by the vendor; the percentage varies according to whether an agency is exclusive or shared with others. Probably 1.5% is typical for a sole agency.
Compulsory membership in professional bodies/compulsory registration	<i>Is membership in professional bodies compulsory? If so, what are the membership conditions and the membership fees? Does the professional body have a supervisory or another important regulatory role?</i>	No, although membership of a redress scheme is required by Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Act 2007, c 17 See http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/licensing-trading-standards/national-trading-standards-estate-agency-team/ombudsman-redress-schemes/ .

¹² See e.g. <https://www.tpos.co.uk/members/membership-information#q1>

A person is an estate agent if s/he:

- Deals with people who want to buy or sell freehold or leasehold property, throughout the UK (this excludes letting agents and internet agencies as such).
- Does this as part of a business; and
- Acts on instructions from a client.

Estate agents must work in the best interests of their clients, and treat both parties “honestly, fairly and promptly”, re:

- Duties to clients (passing on offers, handling money);
- Information to clients (details of charges and terms of business);
- Declaring a personal interest in a transaction;
- Handling negotiations (including keeping records of offers received);
- Handling clients’ money;
- Insurance.

Enforcement is contracted to a County Council in Wales; full details are available on their website: <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/licensing-trading-standards/national-trading-standards-estate-agency-team/advice-for-estate-agents/>

10. The real estate market

10.1 Transaction costs for sample transactions

Table 22: Transaction costs VAT excluded						
	Estate agent¹³	Technical services (if usual)	Legal services	Land register fee	Transfer tax/stamp duty	Total usual transfer costs
€100,000 sales price (no mortgage)	£1755	£150	£390+410	£95	£0	£3,341/€3,900
€100,000 sales price + 100.000€ mortgage	£1755	£150	£410+410	£95	£0	£3,365/€3,930
€250,000 sales price (no mortgage)	£4370	£150	£485+ 500	£135	£4,568	£11,309/€13,200
€250,000 sales price + 250,000€ mortgage	£4370	£150	£-500+ 585	£135	£4,568	£11,429/€13,340
€500,000 sales price (no mortgage)	£5827	£150	£650+660	£270	£19,137	£28,151/€32,850
€500,000 sales price + €500,000 mortgage	£5827	£150	£660+660	£270	£19,137	£28,163/€32,870
%VAT applicable	20%	20%	20%	-	-	-

The buyer will pay a survey fee see 10.2 below.

For legal services, the first figure is for the seller and the second for the buyer.

¹³ An agent usually receives a percentage of the transaction value.

10.2 Transaction features

Table 23: Transaction features			
Transaction / service	Party bearing the costs of intermediation service (buyers or sellers, landlords or tenants)	Fees expressed in the contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In EUR as % of total purchase price <u>and</u> • As a fixed amount (if available) 	Possible hidden costs faced by buyers or tenant
Estate agents	Seller	For sole agency typically 1.5% of selling price	VAT
Letting agent	Landlord	Typically one month's rent	Tenant often charged administration fee – this is to be abolished
Technical services	Buyer	Scale (see below) typically £440 for a typical house	Beneficial to have full survey
Legal services	Each party	Almost all conveyancers quote a fixed price. See 5.2 and 10.1 above.	VAT, disbursements, stamp duty, registration fees.
Land register fees	Buyer	Scale, see 5.2	More if leasehold, transaction with part
Taxes on conveyancing	All fees	VAT on fees	N/A
Transfer taxes	Buyer	Fixed scale in bands, see 10.3	Extra 3% if buyer already owns property

Fees can only be quoted as a percentage of the price due to the fact that house prices vary so much; the overall cost of purchase in particular is very sharply progressive because of the rates of stamp duty on the more expensive houses in central London.

Scale of charges for Halifax surveys (extract)

Purchase price no more than	Valuation only	Survey and valuation
£150,000	£315	£495
£200,000	£355	£545
£300,000	£430	£665
£500,000	£565	£940
£600,000	£620	£1,080
£800,000	£735	£1,365
£1,000,000	£845	£1,650

The fee includes VAT (if applicable) and a £100 administration charge.

10.3 Taxes during the process of buying and selling a property

Table 24: Taxes related to buying and selling a property

	Relevance of the tax	When to pay the tax as part of the process of buying or selling	Tax amount
Registration tax	No	-	-
Mortgage tax	No	-	-
Cadastral tax	No	-	-
Stamp tax	Yes	The Stamp tax is called Stamp Duty Land Tax. The technical deadline is 30 days after the effective transaction, but in practice, the tax is paid almost immediately after completion because it is necessary to stamp documents before registering them and registration needs to occur promptly to preserve the priority of the search. The purchaser is liable but in practice, the return is filed by the conveyancer and the tax paid out of the monies obtained by the conveyancer in the completion statement.	See below
Transfer tax (tax on the acquisition of property)	No	-	-
Archives tax	No	-	-
Other taxes	Capital gains tax	Seller may be liable but not on principal residence	-

Stamp duty:

Purchase price of property	Rate of Stamp Duty	Buy to Let/ Additional Home Rate*
£0 - £125,000	0%	3%
£125,001 - £250,000	2%	5%
£250,001 - £925,000	5%	8%
£925,001 - £1.5 million	10%	13%
Above that	12%	16%

Tax is charged at the rate shown on the band of price shown, thus a house costing £500,000 will be charged at 0% on the first £125,000, 2% on the next slice of £125,000 and 5% on the balance. A person who already owns a property pays an extra 3% (excluding the first £40,000).

10.4 Taxes during the process of renting and letting a property

Table 25: Taxes related to renting or letting a property			
	Relevance of the tax	When to pay the tax in the process of renting or letting	Tax amount (expressed in EUR as % of total purchase price <u>and</u> as a fixed amount if available)
Registration tax	No	-	-
Stamp tax	No	-	-
Other taxes concerning the use of the property, if applicable	No	-	-

11. Consumer situation in the market

11.1 Consumer rights

Table 26: Consumer rights		
Are there specific consumer rights in the context of real estate transactions and residential tenancies in your country? In particular: are residential tenants treated as consumers?	<i>With respect to buyers of new houses</i>	Developers provide a 10 year warranty; information on market leaders is at: http://www.nhbc.co.uk/Warrantiesandcover/Homeowners/WhatdoesBuildmarkcover/ https://www.build-zone.com/new-home-warranty .
	<i>With respect to sellers vs agents</i>	Real Estate agents must be members of redress schemes; see 9.2.
	<i>With respect to clients vs conveyancers</i>	Solicitors firms must have internal redress schemes, after which the client can appeal to the Legal Ombudsman. The Council for Licensed Conveyancers hears complaints against Licensed Conveyancers.
	<i>By buyers against sellers</i>	Unless the seller is a developer, a sale of house will not fit the T2C pattern of EU consumer law.
	<i>With respect to tenants</i>	Deposit protection scheme see 6.1 Other complaints against letting agents: lettings agents must be members of a lettings agency redress scheme (the same as for estate agents)
	<i>With respect to tenants against landlords</i>	Most landlords have only a few properties and are probably not, therefore, traders under the T2C pattern of EU consumer law.
	<i>With respect to landlords</i>	Landlord can use consumer rights against letting agents (e.g. if they have unfair terms in their standard terms of doing business).
If relevant, which existing marketing practices are non-compliant with national consumer legislation?	None	
If relevant, which existing marketing practices are non-compliant with EU consumer legislation?	None	
Are there existing marketing practices detrimental to consumers, even if not necessarily illegal, in both domestic and cross-border transactions?	Problems arise from the strong demand for properties, both to buy and to rent, the main issue being lack of affordability.	

11.2 Consumer complaints

Table 27: Consumer complaints	
How often do <u>buyers and sellers</u> complain due to arising legal issues (e.g. invalid contract, missing information, hidden defects, missing building permit, delay in payment)?	Conveyancing: Losing the plot: Residential conveyancing complaints and their causes (Housing Ombudsmen) reported over 1300 complaints in 2011-12; 46% were resolved informally. Firms would generally have internal dispute mechanisms to reduce outside complaints.
How often do <u>tenants and landlords</u> complain due to arising legal issues (e.g. invalid contract, missing information, increase of rent, termination of the contract without proper notice)?	Most disputes probably relate to deposits. Before the compulsory protection scheme, roughly half of tenants thought there had been unfair withholding or deductions. The Tenancy Deposit Scheme was introduced in 2007 since when 172K disputes have been resolved; in the year to March 2016 there were 28,100 disputes, that is 0.82% of deposits: Tenancy Deposit Disputes in England and Wales (September 2016). Many disputes about other issues go to the Housing Ombudsmen.
Are consumer complaints against a professional service provider frequent, in particular as regards the fees and quality or service?	Conveyancing: 1300 complaints to the Housing Ombudsmen out of 890,000 completions in 2011-12.
To whom can consumers complain (e.g. local or national administration, consumer protection agencies)? And through which means (e.g. formal letter, online form)? Is the procedure effective (in particular: average time needed for reply, solutions available for redress)?	Solicitors Regulation Authority; Council of Licensed Conveyancers; Housing Ombudsmen; Tenancy Deposit Organisation; three approved redress schemes for estate agents; enforcement scheme in relation to estate agents; local trading standards officers enforcing consumer laws.