

Join the queue for house viewings

Edinburgh estate agent says it is braced for over 1,000 viewings when market reopens

Lindsays are 'optimistic that housing demand will quickly return to healthy pre-lockdown state' when Scottish Government confirms it's safe to reopen

The firm with offices in Edinburgh and Dundee expect to organise in excess of 1,000 house viewings in the immediate aftermath of Scotland's housing market reopening, and already has more than 100 properties on the market. These will be ready for potential buyers to view in a safe way within social distancing guidelines after first viewing virtually.

With an average of nine viewings for each property brought to market, interest is expected to return on a high if, as expected, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirms the housing market can restart as she signals the start of the second phase of the nation's route map to recover from Covid-19 which is widely expected tomorrow 18 June 2020.

The most in-demand property so far – a one-bedroom waterfront apartment – already has 37 prospective viewers.

The house sales industry has been close to dormant – with no in-person viewings able to take place and very few new sales agreed – since the nation was ordered into lockdown in March.

And, while predictions about how the market will bounce back are difficult to make, experts at Lindsays believe the indications are for a positive return.

Maurice Allan, Residential Property Managing Director at Lindsays, said: "We know already that there's demand from buyers and sellers and we are preparing to meet that in the safest possible way.

"The volume of enquiries we have had during lockdown has been strong and we very much expect to jump back into the market we were in pre-lockdown, which was a busy one.

"People have been making plans which they are keen to progress. There are a significant number of sellers who are waiting for the end of restrictions to put their property on the market and are keen to move as soon as they are able to. The indications are that we should have a busy summer and autumn.

"If we look at what's happened in England, apart from in the south east, the market has returned to where it was before."

Lindsays staff conducting viewings will do so within government rules over social distancing and hygiene requirements. They will be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Guidance documents for viewers and sellers have been drawn up and video meetings will also be held with clients and remote valuations are possible.

Before an in-person viewing can take place, all prospective purchasers will first take part in a virtual viewing of a property, generally via a video tour. It is hoped this will reduce the number of speculative in-person viewings.

While the firm says it's too early to know what the impact of the coronavirus pandemic may be on property prices, the most recent relevant sales data available to valuers relates to the pre-lockdown market. They believe that this past sales data – in the absence of sales information relating to the lockdown period – will inevitably be a feature which for now continues to influence valuations.

Whatever the outlook for the nation's economy generally throughout the rest of 2020, Lindsays believe the mortgage market to finance home moves will also be different to any seen in downturns previously.

Maurice Allan said: "We haven't seen an increased reluctance on the part of lenders to provide mortgages to prospective purchasers, which is perhaps not surprising in light of the relatively healthy position of most lenders and the political encouragement they have received to ensure that the lending tap is not turned off."

