
Your Essential Checklist: 16 Key Questions to Ask Every Surveyor

Introduction

Choosing the right surveyor is just as important as choosing the right house. An insightful, thorough survey can save you thousands of pounds and give you true peace of mind, while a rushed or inexperienced one can leave you with costly surprises.

To help you make an informed decision, we've compiled this list of essential questions to ask any surveyor you are considering. We believe in transparency and are confident in our own answers to every question on this list.

Part 1:

The Surveyor's Credentials & Experience

These questions help you verify that the surveyor is qualified and has the right experience for the specific property you are buying.

1. What are your qualifications?

Why ask this? You are looking for a surveyor who is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), indicated by letters like AssocRICS, MRICS, or FRICS. This ensures they are regulated, insured, and adhere to strict industry standards.

Lupa Surveying – I am a fully qualified Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS) and am also registered with the Residential Property Surveyors Association (RPSA). This ensures my work meets the highest industry standards for quality, ethics, and insurance.

2. Who will actually be carrying out the survey?

Why ask this? Some larger firms may use a different surveyor than the one you speak with initially. You want to know the qualifications and experience of the specific individual who will be inspecting the property.

Lupa Surveying – As the founder and principal surveyor of Lupa, I personally conduct every survey. This guarantees you receive the full benefit of my experience and that the person you speak to is the person inspecting your future home.

3. What is your experience with properties of this age and type?

Why ask this? A 1990s semi-detached house requires a different expertise than a 17th-century timber-framed cottage. An experienced surveyor will understand the specific defects and characteristics common to the property's construction style and era.

Lupa Surveying – I have over a decade of residential surveying experience. My career began in a corporate firm, mastering mortgage valuations and Level 2 surveys. I then progressed to a specialist role at an SME practice, where I focused on complex Level 3 surveys, particularly for period and Listed properties.

4. (If applicable) What is your experience with Listed Buildings?

Why ask this? Surveying a Listed Building requires specialist knowledge of historic building materials, conservation principles, and the legal obligations of owning a listed property. This is a critical question if the property is Grade I, II*, or II listed.

Lupa Surveying – I have completed specialist training for surveying Listed Buildings and have inspected numerous listed properties. This experience ensures a deep understanding of historic building materials, conservation requirements, and the unique challenges they present.

Part 2:

The Service & The Report

These questions clarify what you will receive and what the process looks like.

5. What level of survey do you offer? (e.g., RICS Home Survey Level 2 or Level 3)

Why ask this? The RICS framework has different levels. A Level 2 survey is typically for conventional homes in good condition, while a Level 3 survey is a more in-depth inspection for older, complex, or dilapidated properties. Understanding a firm's approach helps you gauge if you're getting the right level of detail for your needs, or if you're being pushed towards a confusing or inappropriate product.

Lupa Surveying – To eliminate confusion, I offer one single, comprehensive survey. It provides the high level of detail you would expect from a RICS Level 3 inspection, ensuring you have all the critical information you need. The pricing is then simply tailored to the property's size and age, not a confusing 'Level'.

6. How long do you typically spend inspecting a property like this one?

Why ask this? While there's no fixed time, a surveyor who dedicates a significant part of their day (e.g., 3-5 hours for a standard house) is likely to be more thorough than one who rushes through multiple jobs in a day.

Lupa Surveying – We operate a strict 'one survey a day' policy. This guarantees your property receives my undivided attention for as long as is needed on the day, without the pressure of rushing to another appointment. Thoroughness is our priority.

7. What is your typical turnaround time from inspection to receiving the report?

Why ask this? This helps you manage your timeline. Most surveyors deliver the report within 3-7 working days, but it's crucial to confirm this so you can plan accordingly with your solicitor.

Lupa Surveying – You will receive your detailed, bespoke report within 5 working days of the inspection.

8. Can I see an example or sample report?

Why ask this? This is the best way to judge the quality and clarity of their work. Is the report easy to understand? Does it include photographs? Is it a generic template or a detailed, bespoke document?

Lupa Surveying – Absolutely. Our reports use a bespoke template designed for maximum clarity. We embed high-resolution photos directly alongside the relevant text to clearly illustrate any issues we find. Please ask and I'll be happy to send you a sample.

9. Will I be able to speak with you directly to discuss the report's findings?

Why ask this? A good survey report can sometimes raise more questions. The ability to have a follow-up call with the surveyor who inspected the property is invaluable for clarifying issues and understanding the next steps.

Lupa Surveying – Communication is key. Before the survey, we'll discuss any specific concerns you have. After you receive the report, I will invite you to a follow-up call or video chat to answer any further questions. You will always communicate directly with me, and I'm available via phone, email, or SMS for your convenience.

10. What are the main limitations of the survey?

Why ask this? This is a question of transparency and managing expectations. No survey is X-ray vision. An honest surveyor will be upfront about what they can't see, such as areas concealed by furniture, fitted carpets, or dense foliage. Understanding these limitations helps a buyer appreciate what is and isn't covered and shows the surveyor is trustworthy.

Lupa Surveying – A survey is a non-intrusive visual inspection, so I can only report on what is visible and accessible on the day. I cannot see through walls or lift fitted carpets and floorboards. However, my 'one survey a day' policy allows me the time to move furniture where practical and to look for subtle signs that might suggest a hidden issue. I will always clearly state in the report if a significant area could not be inspected and recommend any further steps.

11. What happens if the report recommends further specialist investigations?

Why ask this? A survey will often recommend seeking advice from a specialist, such as a structural engineer or a damp contractor. A good surveyor won't just leave you to find someone on your own. Asking this question reveals how much support you can expect after the initial report is delivered.

Lupa Surveying – My role is to give you clear, actionable advice and not to default to 'further investigation' where possible. If specialist reports are needed, I will explain exactly why and what type of professional to engage. As part of my service, I provide a directory of trusted, independent local contractors and specialists to help you get reliable quotes, and I am happy to discuss their findings with you afterwards.

Part 3:

Practicalities & Costs

These questions cover the final details of the service.

12. Do you use any specialist equipment, like a drone or thermal imaging camera?

Why ask this? Drones can be essential for safely inspecting high or inaccessible roofs, and thermal imaging can help identify issues with heat loss or damp that aren't visible to the naked eye. It shows a commitment to modern, thorough methods.

Lupa Surveying – Yes. Where necessary and safe to operate, a drone inspection of the roof is included as standard. I am fully licensed and insured for commercial drone operation.

13. What is your level of Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance cover?

Why ask this? All RICS surveyors must have PI insurance. It protects you in the unlikely event that the surveyor is negligent and misses a significant defect that costs you money later.

Lupa Surveying – For your peace of mind, we hold Professional Indemnity insurance cover of £1,000,000.

14. Are there any extra charges, or does the quote include everything?

Why ask this? You want to ensure the final price is transparent. Confirm that the quote includes the inspection, the report, the follow-up call, and any VAT.

Lupa Surveying – The price you are quoted is the price you pay. Our quote is fully inclusive of the comprehensive survey, drone use, and follow-up call. The only optional extra is a formal valuation, which is clearly stated upfront. This transparent approach is central to our mantra: 'Residential Surveys Made Simple'.

15. What happens if the sale falls through after I've paid for the survey?

Why ask this? While you can't get a refund for work done, some surveyors may offer a discount on a future survey for a different property as a gesture of goodwill. It's worth asking if they have such a policy.

Lupa Surveying – We understand how frustrating it is when a sale falls through. As a gesture of goodwill for returning clients, we offer a 10% discount on your next property survey with us.

16. Do I need to arrange access with the estate agent and seller, or do you handle that?

Why ask this? This is a simple but important practical question that clarifies the process. A surveyor who handles all the logistics of scheduling provides a more streamlined, hassle-free service for the client.

Lupa Surveying – You don't need to worry about a thing. Once you instruct us, we handle all the logistics directly. I will contact the estate agent to arrange access with the vendor at a suitable time and will keep you informed every step of the way.

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