



# Property Search Guidance for Home Buyers



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## What are property searches?

You will find lots of answers to this question on the internet, but to break it down, If you are in the process of buying a house, you will need searches, also known as property searches.

There are three main types of search;

- Local authority searches, which we, the local authority, provide. These highlight issues such as planning permission, enforcement case, outstanding financial charges, highway information. More comprehensive information can be found below.
- Environmental searches highlight flooding issues, subsidence and contaminated land issues. these can be obtained from an Environmental Agency (not to be confused with the Environment Agency), and;
- Water and drainage searches cover sewer and drainage issues. These will need to be obtained directly from the company ie Thames Water.

Your solicitor may apply for further searches such as coal or chancel depending on the area.

The local authority, in this case Hertsmere, are only responsible for providing the local authority search. If you have any questions about environmental or water and drainage searches, please speak with your solicitor.

## What is a local authority search?

Local authority searches are a key part of the house purchasing process, they provide you (the buyer) with crucial information about the property.

Let's take the loft conversion at a potential house for example; it will give the family the space you need to grow, but did the current

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A member of our friendly team will more than happy to help :)

owner obtain the relevant planning consent and building control regulations before they converted it? If they didn't, it could cost you time and money to get the issues rectified.

And what about the garden, it is large and south facing but the big oak tree at the bottom blocks out a lot of the sun and you would want to take it down - easy, right? Not if it has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) attached to it. It is a criminal offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree protected by a TPO, or to cause or permit such actions, without the authority's permission.

This is the type of information revealed as part of a local authority search. You can find more comprehensive information below along with answers to some other frequently asked questions.

**What do local authority searches include?**



**Where does the information in the local authority search come from?**



**Who provides local authority searches?**



**Official search v personal search**



**How long do searches take?**



**Can you speed up local authority searches?**



**What if my search results are wrong?**



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