



# An agent's guide to video viewings



Expert advice for making the most of an online property tour

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# Video viewings explained

More and more property seekers are now using video viewings as a preview to help them short-list the properties they want to go and see.

Similarly, video viewings are helping agents to limit the number of physical visits they need to arrange.

The video content can either be uploaded at OnTheMarket for convenience or they can be sent “on application” to property seekers who show interest in the property details page.

If you can't get a potential buyer or tenant through the door of a property in person, there is plenty of technology to help.

Property seekers are increasingly able to make virtual viewings – in other words, remotely – from their laptop, phone or tablet. That could be through the magic of 3D, or a pre-recorded video walk-through of a home. But whatever the medium, it can be a great way to help market a property and show what's on offer.



In this guide, we'll be sharing the different ways you can set up a video viewing. Firstly, don't be put off by the jargon: there are plenty of terms being used at the moment – virtual viewings, 360 virtual tours, video tours, video walk-throughs, online viewings – but they all amount to the same thing: they allow property seekers to see inside a property online.

This can either be pre-recorded by the current occupier or an estate agent, or it could be a 'livestream' video viewing. That means the buyer or tenant can see the property in real time via technology such as WhatsApp, FaceTime or other video conferencing apps such as Zoom.



# Virtual viewings at OnTheMarket

If a would-be renter or buyer is keen on the property after watching a video viewing, agents can follow up with a livestream viewing for a guided tour. Below, you'll find information on both, along with some top tips to make video viewings as smooth and effective as possible.

## Pre-recorded video viewings

Professionally produced video tours clearly have their marketing merit but an agent, vendor, landlord or even existing tenant can also give house-hunters a visual taste of what's on offer simply by filming a tour of the property on their phone. You could even add some commentary – but bear in mind some people watch videos with the sound turned off, so don't rely on it being heard.

We've put together some expert tips for creating an engaging video later in this guide that can be used by estate or letting agents, or passed on to a landlord or vendor. If it's them creating the video, there are a number of ways they can send the video file, whether that's via WhatsApp or a file transfer service. There are plenty of resources on the internet to advise on what might work best.

## Live-streamed video viewings

If a property seeker can't get there in person, the viewing experience can be created as a group video chat, between agent, home-seller or landlord and potential buyer or tenant. This gives the interested party the opportunity to 'walk' around the property to ask questions. Similarly, as the instructed agent, you can be on hand to support your client and provide that relevant extra detail they would normally give on a property tour in person. It also gives you the chance to get on-the-spot feedback from the interested party.



# Which app to use?

Video calling is obviously not a new phenomenon and many agents already have the relevant apps, but there are a lot of options when it comes to finding the right technology for you. It is, of course, your choice which apps you use. The options we've shared here offer a selection and there are obviously more tools available.

And just to add – this information doesn't cover everything you need to know, and you'll find lots of guides on the internet for setting up these apps. It's a good idea to do as much research as you can so that you're well informed (for example, around privacy and security, which has been an issue) before organising anything with a customer.



## WhatsApp

Group video calling on WhatsApp is straightforward and free, with the capacity for up to eight people to be on a call at once. You'll need to download the app if you haven't already, and those you want to call will need the app too. It's available for Android and iPhone, and you'll need a strong internet connection. [Find out more](#)



## Zoom

Zoom lets you host virtual meetings from the website, desktop app or mobile app. You can sign up for a free account, although it's worth noting that there is a limit on group calls to a maximum of 40 minutes unless the host pays a fee. While the host needs an account, the other participants you invite to your call don't necessarily need to have signed up. [Find out more](#)



## Microsoft Teams

One of the many facets of Microsoft Teams is its video calling function, which you can access on desktop and mobile. If you have a Microsoft Teams account (which you can sign up to for free), you can invite those who don't to join an online video meeting. [Find out more](#)

# Which app to use?



## Skype

A long-time fixture on the communications scene, Skype will be familiar to many. A free app that has a video chat function, you can operate it from your desktop, mobile or tablet. There are two options Skype and Skype for Business. Skype caters for personal use and 'very small organisations', recommended for up to 20 people on a video call. Meanwhile, Skype for Business is billed as more suitable for larger groups of people, but will eventually be replaced with Microsoft Teams. [Find out more](#)



Google Duo



Google Hangouts



Google Meet



FaceTime

## Google Duo

Duo is very simple to set up and works on iPhone and Android, desktops and tablets. You can create a group video call but the other call participants will need to have Duo, too. It's free and easy to invite them from the app. Up to 12 people can be on one call at the same time.

## Google Hangouts and Google Meet

Google Hangouts and Google Meet are both video meeting tools you can use if you have a Google account. They can be accessed directly from your computer, or you can download the mobile apps. Google Hangouts appears more geared to personal use while Google Meet is the newest kid on the block, with a slick business edge. [Find out more](#)

## FaceTime

If you've got an iPhone or iPad, FaceTime will allow you to group video call contacts. But obviously that depends on the people you're calling also having FaceTime, which is restricted to Apple. [Find out more](#)

## 3D Tours

You could create your own 3D tour using technology such as that supplied by industry-leader Matterport. The company has released an app for iPhone and iPad that lets you produce your own immersive 3D digital replica of a property. The property seeker can then 'walk through' online, allowing them to see the space in detail at their own pace.

# Top tips for video viewings

Here are some bright ideas to help make sure a virtual viewing shows off a property at its best. Use these tips yourselves, or share them with a vendor or tenant.

- 1 Slowly pan around each room to let viewers take everything in – whizzing round will make them feel dizzy.
- 2 Shooting in daylight will create a more natural, brighter light. Low-key lighting is nice for a viewing in person but doesn't work as well on video.
- 3 While a lived-in look can make a video seem authentic and a little less like a sales-pitch, there are things you can do, as if it were an in-person viewing. For example, declutter the rooms because too many belongings can make a property appear smaller than it is.
- 4 If there are any interesting features, you might want to show them off. Move closer into things that are particularly nice and hold the shot for a few seconds. But think twice about opening every cupboard to show what's inside.
- 5 If there's a nice view, don't shut it out with blinds or curtains.
- 6 If you're using a phone, you could hold it sideways so that you get a landscape view. After all, we experience the world in widescreen.
- 7 Avoid jerky movements. Try to keep your phone steady and smooth by holding it with both hands.
- 8 A bit of commentary might be useful to sell certain highlights. But keep in mind that a lot of people might not have the sound up. If you're recording audio, limit background noise as it will be distracting. And don't forget to decide who's doing the talking if you're on a group video call!
- 9 If you haven't used any of the above technology before, it's worth giving it all a test run before organising a virtual viewing with a customer. And do set things up in advance of your appointment just in case there are any glitches. For example, will there be a strong enough internet connection?
- 10 For pre-recorded videos, while prospective buyers will probably stick with a video of a few minutes or more, 15 minutes might be a bit long!