

She is a member of the Home Staging Association (HSA) and Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers (APDO). In the latest HSA report, 100 per cent of estate agents surveyed said home staging made it easier for buyers to visualise a property as their future home. With the rise in popularity of series like *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*, it's clear we have an appetite for decluttering.

"I recommend that personal items, like family photos and trophies, should be packed away," says Jane. "They are distracting and make it difficult for buyers to imagine themselves moving in."

"One couple I worked with had a wardrobe with shoes piled on top. A potential buyer would think 'there's no storage in this house'. They gave a load to charity and the rest fitted into a cupboard on the landing."

Eliminating items that are no longer needed can create one of the biggest transformations, according to Jane. "People put off having a big clear-out but once you get into it, and start reclaiming space, it can be a huge relief. Clutter can actually stop people from moving altogether, especially if one person has more than the other; the stress of decluttering is too much. Many couples disagree on how much work needs doing. I can help them through the process."



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Jane is also good at finding usable spaces where there doesn't appear to be any.

"I worked with a seller who had a wide hallway between her kitchen and living room. There was nowhere to sit and eat so I moved a table she was using as a desk into the hallway, creating a dining area in the dead space. After staging and decluttering the flat sold for £10,000 more than she had expected."

But what if no properties seem to be selling, should people bide their time and not try to sell?

"People might be disheartened if the market is not moving but with home staging they can take control and give it a shot," says Jane. "Well-presented homes create a buzz when they hit the market."

The positive impact of a successful house sale can have a big impact on Jane's clients.

"I worked with a widow who was trying to downsize from her big family home to a flat. She was daunted by the prospect, it was very emotional for her. As she lived in another county I studied the agent's photos on Rightmove before giving advice.

"When it sold she told me how cathartic the process was and that she was looking forward to the move instead of dreading it. The experience meant she was emotionally prepared and it was lovely to be a part of that."

Jane believes we could all take note when it comes to facing the challenge of editing down our belongings.

"I see clutter-clearing as a lifelong process. Moving house is a great opportunity to sort through everything and get ready for the next stage in your life, it's very therapeutic."



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