Property & Homemover Report

Q2 2026

TwentyCi
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Contents

Preface

Welcome to the quarterly TwentyCi Property & Homemover Report, which provides an in-depth analysis of the UK's residential property market for Q2 2026 and the year to date. This report is compiled using the most robust and reliable property change data available.

Whether you are an industry professional, an investor, or simply interested in the health of the residential property market, we invite you to explore the key highlights and fluctuations of this period with us.

About the Report

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the trends and significant developments that have influenced the property market during this period. We offer a real-time assessment of the UK residential market, encompassing 99.6% of all sale and rental property transactions.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the state of the nation, along with unique insights that encompass:

- Factual data (not modelled or sentiment-based)
- Full market coverage
- Property sales data
- Property rental data
- Real-time data

Executive Summary

Supply of Properties:

New property listings increased by 2.7% in the year-to-date 2026 compared to year-to-date 2025.

Properties with a Sale Agreed:

Buyer demand has declined 5.0% year-to-date 2026 versus the same period in 2025.

Residential Transactions:

HMRC year-to-date transactions are 6.2% below 2025 levels, although last year's figures were boosted by stamp duty changes. Volumes remain well above 2023 (+15.7%) and 2024 (+12.8%).

Online and Hybrid Estate Agent Models:

Online agents' market share (excluding self-employed agents) has fallen year-on-year to 3.6%, while self-employed agents account for 2.5% of the market in year-to-date 2026.

Velocity

- Average Time to Achieve a Sale Agreed: The average time to sale agreed remained static year-to-date 2026 at 76 days, flat year-on-year versus 2025.
- Average Time to Achieve an Exchange: The average time to exchange in year-to-date 2026 was 130 days. This is a 5-day increase year-on-year.

Advertised Property Prices:

Advertised property prices fell 1.3% year on year (Jan-Jun) while transaction prices increased by 3.3% in the past year (Jan-Apr).

Rental Stock Availability:

Available rental stock in June 2026 has increased by 2.9% in the last year, following 5 years of decline. This rise has been observed in 10 out of 13 UK regions.

Rental Affordability:

Let agreed prices have remained flat over the past three years. Prices have only fallen by a modest 0.6%, meaning the affordability of lettings remains a challenge.

Executive Summary

“Buyer and seller confidence has been tested to its limits this year. As if the conflict in the Middle East and continued cost-of-living pressures weren’t enough, the Prime Minister stepping down added another layer of uncertainty. Though after six prime ministers in ten years, the UK may have become somewhat accustomed to this ‘changing of the guard’. Buyer demand softened, particularly in May and June, and this is likely to weigh on transaction volumes in the final quarter of the year.

Yet despite all this turmoil, many of the UK population still want to move. Supply of properties newly listed for sale has reached a decade high, while those further along the sales journey are experiencing fewer fall throughs. It’s undoubtedly a tough market, but one where committed buyers and sellers are continuing to press ahead with their plans.

The rental market also offers a glimmer of encouragement. After years of affordability pressures and a shortage of homes, June 2026 recorded the first year-on-year increase in available rental stock in five years! It’s far too early for fanfares, but it’s certainly a welcome green shoot.”

COLIN BRADSHAW
CEO,
TWENTYCI

The Owner-Occupied Residential Property Market

The Key Indicators

Year-to-date HMRC transaction volumes reveal a challenging picture, with activity falling 6.2% year-on-year. This comes with an important caveat: last year's Q1 stamp duty deadline created an artificial boost, with buyers rushing to complete before thresholds were reinstated.

A more positive picture emerges when you compare year-to-date transaction volumes with 2023 and 2024, as this year has surpassed both by significant margins (+15.7% and +12.8%, respectively).

Despite this, we can't ignore the very real headwinds that have also likely contributed to softened transactions this year:

- Mortgage pricing volatility, driven by rising swap rates.
- Fixed mortgage rates are returning to above 5% for many borrowers (though pricing has eased somewhat in recent weeks).
- Ongoing inflationary pressures are prompting the Bank of England to maintain the Bank Rate at 3.75% rather than resume rate cuts.
- New buyer enquiries fell sharply in March and remained subdued through April and May (although there are signs that demand may be stabilising at lower levels).
- Elevated energy prices and persistent cost-of-living pressures present a potential drag on household disposable income and buyer confidence.

"Mortgage rates rose during April and May due to uncertainty about events in the US-Iran war, and this is likely to have had a dampening effect on mortgage lending. Data for May shows the number of approvals for house purchase, a leading indicator of house sales, at their lowest for two years. House sales for May, which reflect lending a few months earlier, were still over 90,000; the equivalent of an annual total of c1.1m. While this is down compared with 2025, which saw house sales of 1.21m, it remains close to 2023/2024 levels and doesn't include 2025's artificial surge to avoid stamp duty. In addition, May approvals are likely a blip as buyers paused for thought. Now that rates are drifting down again, lenders are poised to increase lending and support the market."

ALEX BANNISTER
INDEPENDENT BOARD ADVISOR

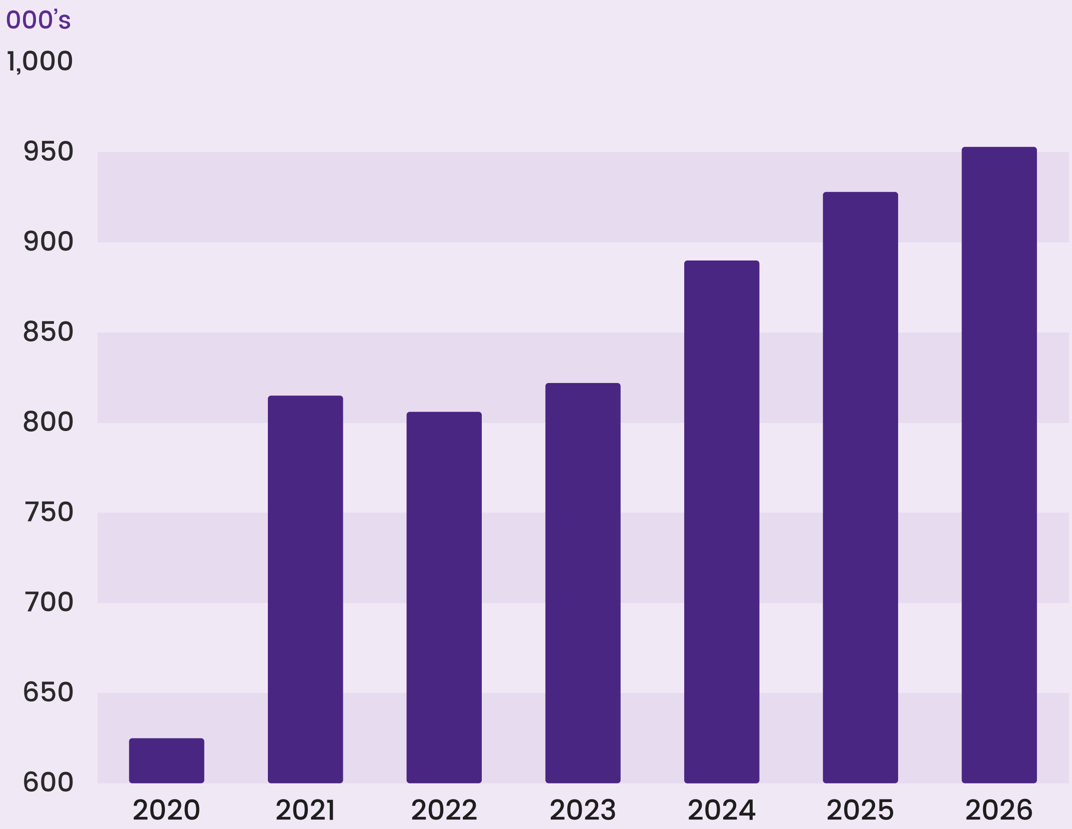
Former Director of Future Ventures,
Nationwide Building Society

Supply of Properties For Sale

Stock levels remain elevated. With the supply of newly listed properties 2.7% higher year to date in 2026 than in 2025, the trend of record supply levels over the past decade continues.

- All price bands have benefited from year-on-year supply growth.
- The £0 to £200k price band led growth, with volumes increasing by 4.1%.
- This is followed by 3.2% growth in £200k to £350k properties.

YTD Supply of New Properties For Sale



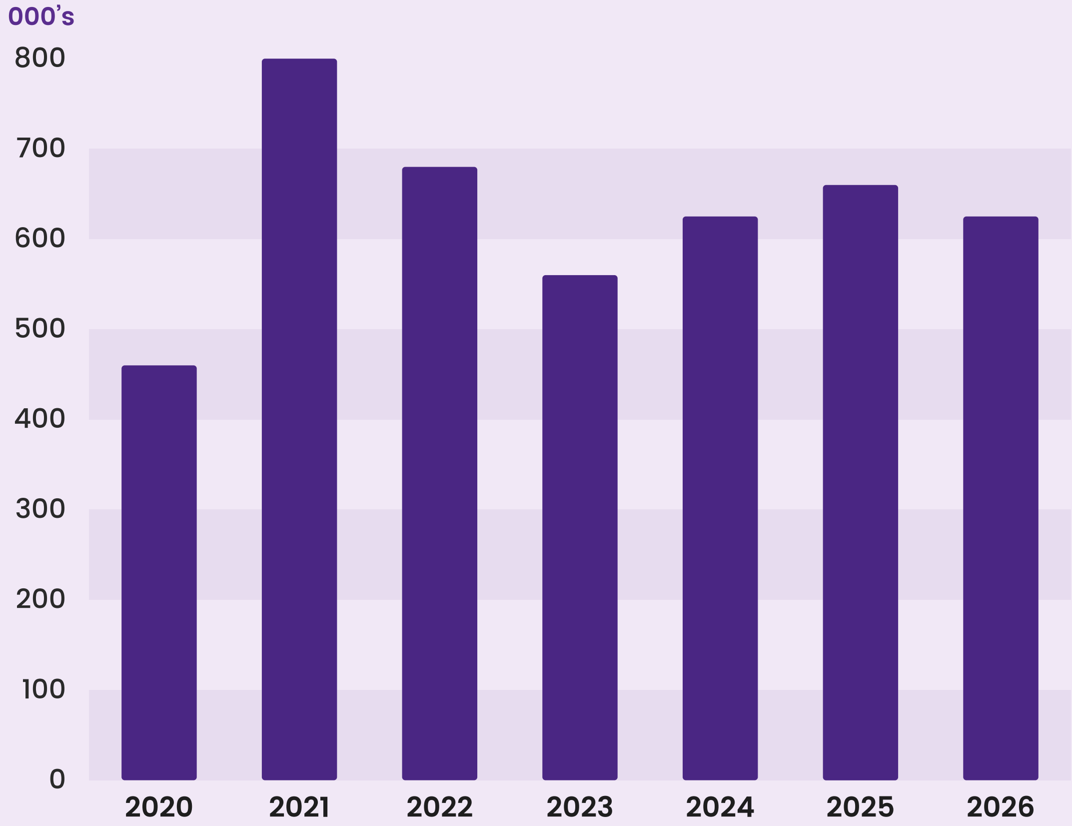
Sales Agreed

Demand, meanwhile, is showing signs of fatigue. Sales agreed volumes are 5% lower than in 2025, reflecting a combination of geopolitical uncertainty and the unwinding of last year's Stamp Duty threshold change, which pulled forward buyer demand.

- Demand has reduced in all UK regions year on year.
- Northern Ireland has seen the sharpest contraction in demand, down 20.8% year on year.
- This is followed by Inner London at 10.4%.
- Demand has fallen across all price bands, with the largest reduction in the £0 to £200k price band (-6.6%).
- While sales agreed volumes held up well across January to April 2026 compared with previous years, May and June 2026 saw notable demand declines of 8.1%. This is likely to feed through into weaker transaction levels in Q4 2026.

As a result of this final point, we are forecasting 1.15m transactions for 2026, down on 2025 (1.21m) but above 2024 (1.10m).

YTD Properties Moving to Sale Agreed Status



"Many commentators have revised their forecasts for UK house price growth in 2026, with the median down from 2.1% (in March) to 0.8% now, with some now predicting a decline (e.g. Savills expect prices to fall 2%). This seems unduly pessimistic given that London prices in Q2 2026 are the same average level as in 2022 Q2 at c£540,000, while average earnings are up by c20% over the same period, suggesting the downward adjustment may be over in the capital. As described before, there is less strain on affordability outside the South East, suggesting further price growth while the economy is steady. In addition, sellers tend to anchor their pricing to what they previously paid or what the going rate is nearby and so tend not to drop prices to secure a sale. The resulting inertia in pricing means sales tend to reduce when demand weakens."

ALEX BANNISTER
INDEPENDENT BOARD ADVISOR

Former Director of Future Ventures,
Nationwide Building Society

Price Reductions

Price reduction activity continues to be a consistent feature in the 2026 housing market, but volumes remained broadly stable. While the number of price reduction events increased marginally by 0.2% year-on-year, the proportion of concluded listings that experienced at least one price reduction was virtually unchanged at 38.4%, compared with 38.5% in 2025.

- Price reduction rates in year-to-date 2026 have increased in the lowest price band, while easing across higher price points.
- Properties priced between £0-£200k have seen price reduction rates rise by 0.7 percentage points.
- In contrast, £1m+ properties have seen price reduction rates decrease by 0.9 percentage points.
- At a regional level, price reduction trends are volatile. However, broadly speaking, price reductions are increasing in the South (with the exception of Inner London) and reducing in the North and Midlands.

Properties Newly For Sale Prices

Initial for sale prices have fallen in the year-to-date 2026 to £442,100.

- The average original instruction price in year-to-date 2026 has fallen by 1.3% or £5,700 over the past year.
- At a regional level, instruction prices are rising in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the West Midlands, with declines seen elsewhere.
- Northern Ireland recorded the largest year-on-year increase in instruction prices, up 5.0% or £11,900.
- The South West experienced the largest decline in listing prices, down 4.0% or £17,400.
- This was followed by Inner London, which saw a year-on-year change of -3.2% or -£33,000.

Average Property Transaction Price

According to the latest from UK HPI, prices in April 2026 increased by 0.7% on the prior month, but more importantly, they increased by 3.3% in the past year.

The average price paid for a property at full market value in April 2026 was £270k

"The Financial Policy Committee have just published their latest six-monthly stability report, and it makes for remarkably sanguine reading about the resilience of the household sector of the UK, saying: "Debt-servicing burdens are projected to rise moderately due to higher energy prices and borrowing costs, but it would take a severe shock to return aggregate debt servicing pressures to near previous peaks." They also suggest they are happy with their recent relaxation of high loan-to-income mortgage lending. Although unsaid in the report, it is likely that their comfort around household indebtedness is the absence of mortgage equity withdrawal since the financial crisis. In the boom years running up to 2008, households were extracting over £40bn per year for non-housing expenditure. Since the crash, mortgage equity withdrawal has been negative, meaning that housing wealth is not being realised to the same degree and is not boosting consumption nor the wider economy."

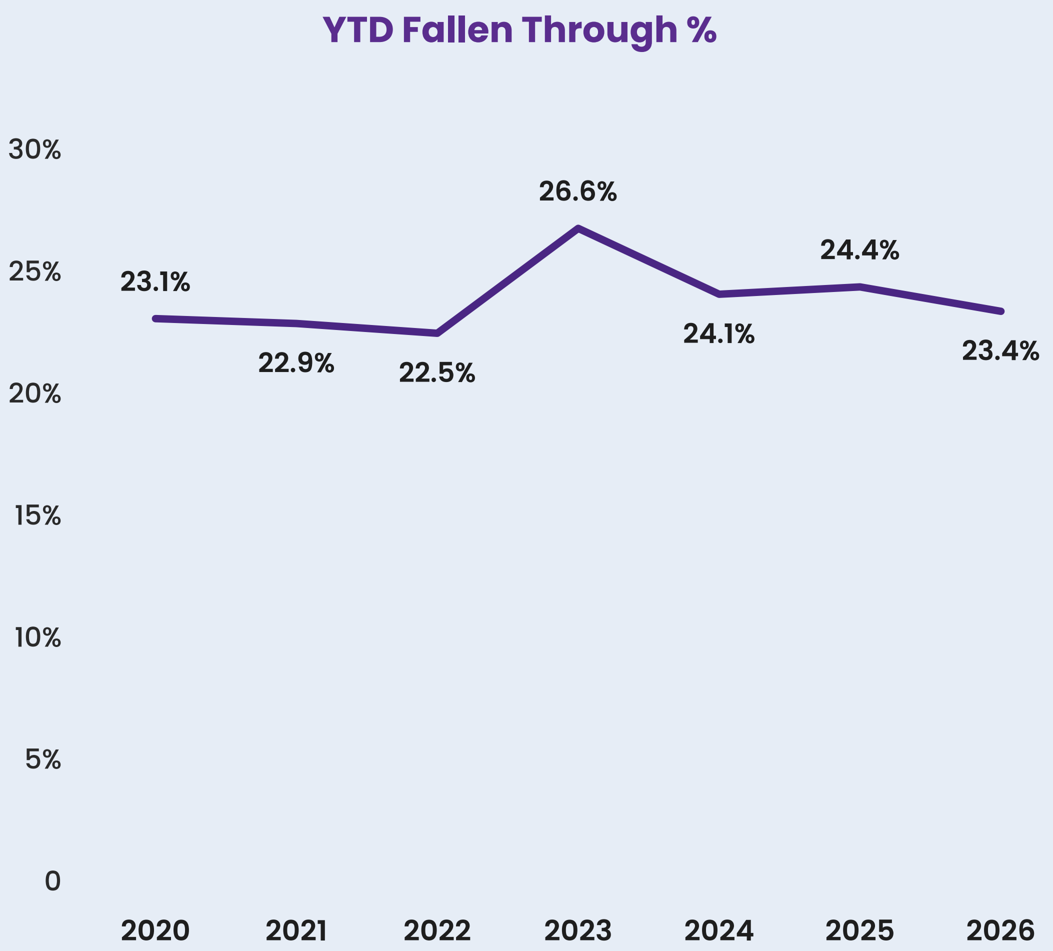
ALEX BANNISTER
INDEPENDENT BOARD ADVISOR

Former Director of Future Ventures, Nationwide Building Society

Fallen Throughs

We are seeing fewer transactions collapse. Fallen through volumes have decreased substantially year on year by 10.6%.

- The percentage of properties having at least one fall through has also reduced year on year by 1.0 percentage points.
- In 2026, 23.4% of concluded listings had at least one fall through.
- Fallen through rates have reduced since their peak in 2023.
- In year-to-date 2026, fallen through rates have reduced in all price bands compared with last year.
- Properties priced £0-£200k observed the largest decrease of 1.3 percentage points.
- Fallen through rates are reducing everywhere in the UK except for Inner London, which observed a marginal 0.2 percentage point increase.
- In general terms, fallen through rates are reducing faster in the North than in the Midlands and the South.



Time to Sell

Time to sell reflects the average number of days between listing and agreeing a sale and has remained stable at an average of 76 days in year-to-date 2026.

- Time to sale agreed has only increased in price bands above £350k.
- The £1m+ segment stands out, with time to sell rising 4.2% (5 days) year on year.
- On average, it now takes 114 days to sell a property in the £1m+ bracket.
- Time to sale agreed has risen most in the South, with Inner London recording the largest increase at 5.5 days.
- Time to sell has declined in the North, showing improvement in transaction speed.

Time to Exchange

The average time to exchange in the UK year-to-date 2026 is 130 days (or 4.3 months), up 4.4% (5 days) on 2025.

Outer London and the East have the longest time to exchange at 4.8 months. In contrast, Scotland completes transactions more quickly, averaging only 3.1 months. It's supported by its separate legal system, where key elements such as property information and buyer commitment are established earlier in the process.

The government has signalled a clear intention to reform the home buying and selling process, through a series of consultations, policy statements and, most recently, the publication of its Home Buying and Selling Reform Roadmap in June 2026.

The main areas of reform are:

- Upfront property information (sales packs)
- Digitisation of the transaction process
- Binding agreements earlier in the transaction
- Professionalisation of estate agency

The overall aim is to streamline the home buying and selling journey, reducing unnecessary delays, shortening transaction times, and ultimately lowering fall-through rates.

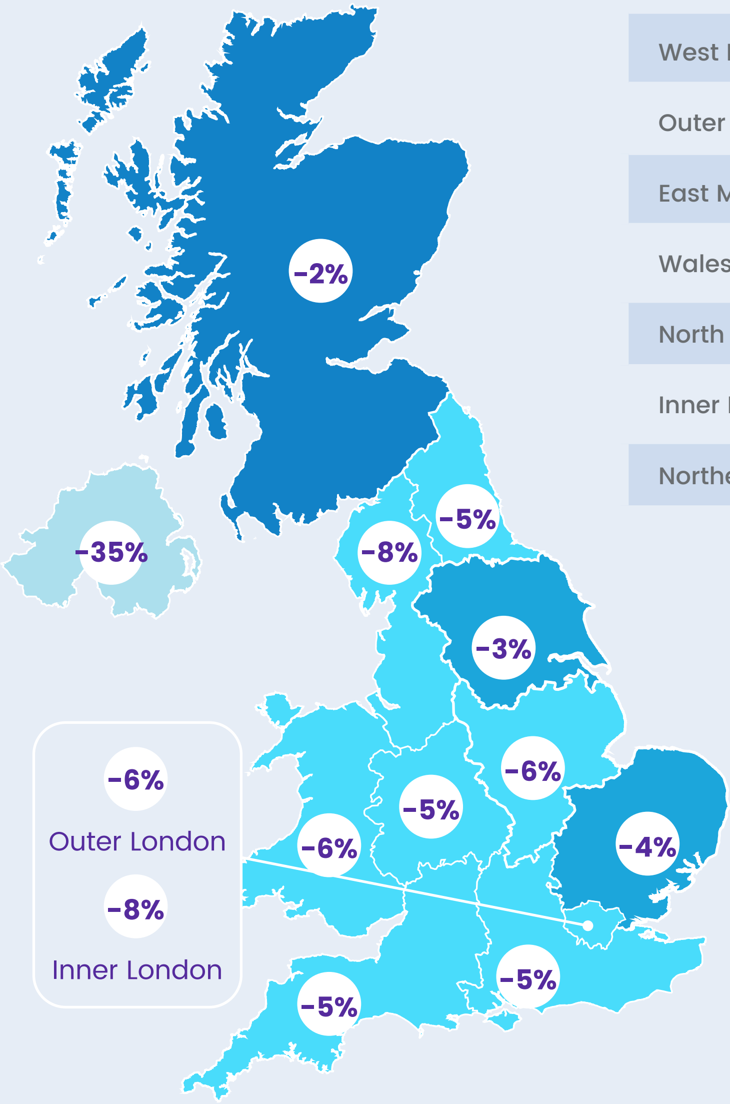
Q2 2026 Sales – Key Metrics

	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	Change
New Instruction	485,129	487,470	↑ 0.5%
Sale Agreed	342,074	322,290	↓ -5.8%
Exchanged	213,726	219,728	↑ 2.8%
Fallen Through	78,835	71,959	-8.7%
Price Changed	321,051	324,605	1.1%
Withdrawn	190,523	196,927	3.4%

Let's look at the second quarter in isolation. Q2 2026 performance compared with the same period in 2025 was mixed. New instructions edged up by 0.5%, while exchanges increased by 2.8% year-on-year. Fall-throughs also decreased by 8.7%, suggesting buyers are more committed to getting their sales over the line. However, sales agreed volumes were down 5.8%, pointing to a softening in the housing market.

Sales by Region & Major Cities – Q2 2026

Sales agreed across regions present a clear picture of weakening market conditions. The negative figures show that no region has been immune to the slowdown. Northern Ireland has been the most significantly impacted, recording a substantial 35.4% fall in sales agreed volumes compared to Q2 2025. All other regions are in negative territory, although declines remain contained at below 10% across the board. Inner London has also experienced notable pressure, with an 8.2% decline, while Outer London has proved comparatively more resilient, recording a smaller yet still significant fall of 5.8%.



Sales Agreed by Region – Q2 2026 Compared to Q2 2025

UK REGION	CHANGE
Scotland	-2%
Yorkshire and The Humber	-3%
East of England	-4%
North East	-5%
South East	-5%
South West	-5%
West Midlands	-5%
Outer London	-6%
East Midlands	-6%
Wales	-6%
North West	-8%
Inner London	-8%
Northern Ireland	-35%

Sales Agreed by Major Cities – Q2 2026 Compared to Q2 2025

MAJOR CITIES	CHANGE
Edinburgh	7%
Norwich	3%
Sheffield	-3%
Newcastle upon Tyne	-4%
Leeds	-4%
Glasgow	-5%
Peterborough	-5%
Plymouth	-6%
Cardiff	-6%
Birmingham	-8%
Southampton	-8%
Nottingham	-8%
Inner London	-8%
Bristol	-9%
Manchester	-15%

Sales performance across cities is more mixed, with the negative figures less widespread. Edinburgh proved resilient with a 7.1% increase in sales agreed year on year, while Norwich also recorded positive growth of 3.4%. Despite strong employment growth and its regeneration programme, Manchester has observed a 15% year on year decline compared to Q2 2025. Bristol follows, recording a considerable 9.4% decline.

The Lettings Residential Property Market

Supply of New Properties To Let

In year-to-date 2026, supply of properties to let in the UK has risen by 108,300 in the last year.

- Supply is 17.4% higher than in 2025 and is at its highest point in the last seven years.
- Supply has increased across all price brackets, with double-digit percentage growth in every price bracket without exception.
- The strongest growth in supply has been observed in the £0-£800pcm and £800-£1,500pcm price bands (18.4% and 19.6% respectively).
- Rental supply is also rising in every region of the UK with the exception of Northern Ireland.
- Wales observed the largest increases in supply year-on-year at 33.0%.
- Every other region in Great Britain observed more than 10% growth.

Properties with a New Let Agreed

In year-to-date 2026, UK demand (lets agreed) volumes are 4.1% higher than 2025 and at its highest level in 10 years.

- While demand is naturally linked to supply, growth is evident across three out of four price points.
- Demand growth is strongest in the £0-£800pcm range, up 6.6% year on year, closely followed by £800-£1,500pcm (+6.1%).
- Demand is increasing in 11 out of 13 regions.
- Growth in demand is most pronounced in Wales, where 2026 volumes are 13.8% higher than in 2025.
- Inner London (down 1.2%) and Northern Ireland (down 3.6%) are the only regions recording a decline in demand.

Lettings Available

A clear bright spot in the lettings market is that available rental stock in June 2026 has increased by 2.9% over the past year, following five years of decline.

- Available stock for renters has increased in properties priced less than £1,500pcm.
- The £800pcm to £1,500pcm price band experienced the largest growth at 8.5% year on year.
- There are still minor stock reductions in price brackets above £1,500 of -0.7% (£1,500-£3,000pcm) and -1.7% (£3,000pcm+) year on year.
- Available stock is increasing in ten out of thirteen regions, with Wales recording the highest increase at 20.4% year on year.
- Northern Ireland has the largest reduction of 54.1%, with Yorkshire and Inner London both reducing by 4-5%.

With supply growth significantly outpacing demand growth in recent months, availability across the private rental sector has improved. However, the increase remains relatively modest and overall stock levels are still lower than in prior years. At the same time, purpose-built stock for renters (BTR) is increasing disproportionately.

Average Price of Lettings – National

Let agreed prices have marginally reduced in the year-to-date 2026.

- The average let agreed price in YTD 2026 at £1,450pcm has reduced by 0.6% in the last year (-£9pcm).
- In general, prices have risen in the Midlands and the North but reduced in London and the South.
- Northern Ireland has the largest year-on-year price inflation at 8.4%, whilst Inner London and the East have the highest price reductions at -1.1% year on year.
- Prices have remained relatively static over the last three years, and as such, the affordability of rental stock remains an issue.

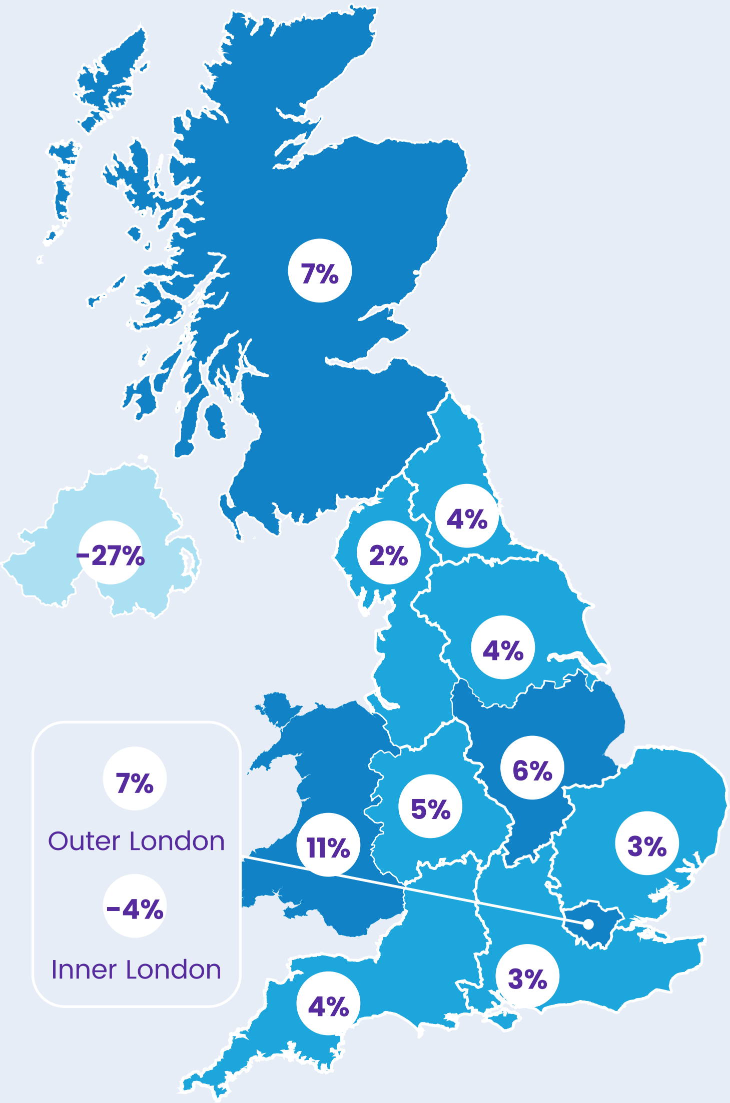
Q2 2026 Lettings Performance Overview

Examining Q2 2026 independently from the wider year-to-date picture, the lettings market is in a healthier position than it was a year ago. Compared with Q2 2025, new instructions rose by a significant 16.7%, providing tenants with greater choice. Market activity also strengthened, with lets agreed up 2.6% and completed lets increasing by 0.9%.

	CHANGE
New Instruction	↑ 17%
Let Agreed	↑ 3%
Let	↑ 1%

Rental Lets Agreed by Regions – Q2 2026 Compared to Q2 2025

Mirroring the sales market, Northern Ireland was the weakest-performing region, recording the sharpest decline in lets agreed, down 26.5%. This suggests housing demand in Northern Ireland has cooled more markedly than the rest of the UK, with more residents staying put. The only other region to record a fall was Inner London at 3.5%. Elsewhere, lettings agreed rose across all regions compared to Q2 2025, led by Wales at 10.9% and followed by Scotland at 6.9%.



MAJOR REGIONS	CHANGE
Wales	11%
Scotland	7%
Outer London	7%
East Midlands	6%
West Midlands	5%
South West	4%
North East	4%
Yorkshire and The Humber	4%
South East	3%
East of England	3%
North West	2%
Inner London	-4%
Northern Ireland	-27%

Rental Lets Agreed by Major Cities – Q2 2026 Compared to Q2 2025

City-level lettings activity is broadly positive, with only three locations recording declines in lets agreed compared to Q2 2025: Plymouth (-6.1%), Inner London (-3.5%) and Southampton (-1.6%). All other regions saw growth in lets agreed volumes. Performance once again mirrors the sales market, with Edinburgh leading growth in lets agreed, up 11.7% versus the same period in 2025. This displays a strong underlying performance across both the sales and lettings markets in the city. The only other city to record growth above 10% was Peterborough at 10.3%.

MAJOR CITIES	CHANGE
Edinburgh	12%
Peterborough	10%
Bristol	8%
Sheffield	6%
Norwich	6%
Cardiff	6%
Newcastle upon Tyne	5%
Leeds	4%
Nottingham	3%
Birmingham	3%
Manchester	2%
Glasgow	2%
Southampton	-2%
Inner London	-4%
Plymouth	-6%

Online/Hybrid Agents

Owner-Occupied Market Share – Exchanges

The market share of online agents (excluding agencies without a substantial self-employed business model) has declined in the year-to-date 2026, falling to 3.6%, a reduction of 7% year-on-year.

In contrast, self-employed agents continue to gain momentum:

- Market share has increased to 2.5% in year-to-date 2026, representing a 18.7% rise compared with 2025.
- Growth has been recorded across all price bands, with double-digit increases observed among properties priced above £200k.
- The strongest growth has come from the £350k to £1m price band, which increased 22.1% year-on-year.
- Self-employed agents have expanded their presence across all regions, except for Scotland, where market share declined by 0.5 percentage points.
- The West Midlands and Wales observed the largest growth at 0.9 percentage points.
- Self-employed agents have the strongest presence in Wales, where, in year-to-date 2026, they represent 3.5% of market share.

Please note that self-employed agents are not currently a feature of the market in Northern Ireland.

Older, Wealthier Homemovers Drive Q2 Property Exchange Growth

The housing market has seen overall like-for-like exchange growth of 15.7%, indicating positive momentum. We examined the underlying age distribution to identify which age groups are driving this growth.

In Q2 2026, the age profile of homemovers shifted towards older age groups compared with the same period in 2025. The largest year-on-year rise came from those aged 66 and over (in or nearing retirement), which rose by 40.6%. Owners aged 46-65 followed, with 14.6% year-on-year growth. This age bracket continues to hold the lion's share of overall exchanges, accounting for 40.3% of total activity.

The scale of growth in the oldest age bracket is particularly interesting. Older age groups are less constrained financially and more likely to be established homeowners with built-up equity, giving them greater capacity to move regardless of broader economic conditions. Many are also at a life stage where empty-nesting or retirement drives them to downsize into smaller, more suitable properties.

In stark contrast, the youngest population group (18-25) fared the worst, with a year-on-year fall in exchanges of 58.4%. Total share of exchanges for Gen Z fell from 3.1% in Q2 2025 to just 1.3% in Q2 2026. This may reflect rising numbers of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). Office for National Statistics estimates show that just over 1 million young people aged 16 to 24 in the UK were NEET in early 2026. Many are struggling to find work in the current sluggish economy, with Gen Z fast becoming the stay-at-home generation. According to the Resolution Foundation, 63% of those in their early twenties are living in the family home.

The (26-35) age bracket also saw a significant year-on-year fall in exchanges, of 32.2%. Even the middle age bracket of 36-45, where we should see healthy levels of exchanges, as this cohort represents second- and even third-steppers, saw year-on-year exchanges fall by 7.4%. Higher mortgage rates and the cost of living continue to make moving or entering the housing market challenging for many.

Lifestage	% of Owner Occupied Homemovers in Q2 2025	% of Owner Occupied Homemovers in Q2 2026	YoY Change
66+	17.3%	24.4%	**40.6%**
46-65	35.1%	40.3%	**14.6%**
36-45	23.2%	19.7%	**-15.3%**
26-35	21.2%	14.4%	**-32.2%**
18-25	3.1%	1.3%	**-58.4%**

Property Exchanges by Household Income

How is exchange growth being driven across different household income groups? It's a similar story to the age bracket analysis, where exchanges are coming from those who have the financial freedom to move home. The most notable finding is that the volume of property exchanges, year on year, declined across all household income brackets below £70,000. This reflects just how heavily economic conditions are weighing on the housing market and consumer confidence. Exchanges fell 2.6% year-on-year for households with incomes between £60k-£70k. As income bands reduce, exchange volumes fall in a consistent downward pattern, with the steepest declines seen at the lowest income levels. Household income levels of £20k-£30k recorded the highest decline of 9.5% exchanges year-on-year.

Homemovers in Q2 2026 are more likely to come from the higher income brackets, particularly those earning 100k and above, than they were in Q2 2025. We are seeing the strongest year-on-year exchange growth of 31.3% among those earning above £150k. This may reflect a range of factors, including the potential impact of the proposed High Value Council Tax Surcharge (HVCTS) set to take effect in April 2028, which could be encouraging more affluent homeowners to sell. A further explanation is that this income group is less affected by cost-of-living pressures and therefore more financially flexible when it comes to relocating. Those earning £70k-£100k continue to retain the highest levels of total exchanges in both Q2 2025 and Q2 2026.

There is some hope on the horizon for middle- to lower-income buyers, as lenders such as Nationwide, Barclays, Accord and TSB have already begun cutting mortgage rates in response to Middle East peace talks. This should help encourage those fence-sitters or hesitant sellers to finally commit to a relocation.

Household Income pa	% of Owner Occupied Homemovers in Q2 2025	% of Owner Occupied Homemovers in Q2 2026	YoY Change
£20,000 - £29,999	12.0%	10.9%	**-9.5%**
£30,000 - £39,999	14.0%	12.8%	**-8.9%**
£40,000 - £49,999	14.2%	13.2%	**-6.8%**
£50,000 - £59,999	11.5%	11.2%	**-2.9%**
£60,000 - £69,999	9.9%	9.7%	**-2.6%**
£70,000 - £99,999	20.3%	20.5%	**1.0%**
£100,000 - £149,999	9.7%	10.9%	**12.5%**
£150,000 +	2.9%	3.8%	**31.3%**

How Long Does It Really Take to Sell a Property in the UK

Most homebuyers would be surprised to learn that completing a property purchase takes a staggering seven months on average. It may sound like hyperbole, but that is the harsh reality facing homemovers in the UK. In pre-pandemic 2019, this figure stood at 5.5 months. The process has slowed to a crawl.

We use trigger signals to monitor two major phases of the UK home-selling process:

1. The first measures the time taken to secure a buyer and reach a sale agreed (which we refer to as 'time to sell')
2. The second measures the time taken to progress this agreed sale to exchange of contracts (which we refer to as 'time to exchange')

Together, these metrics indicate the total time taken to move home.

Despite the increasing time required to complete a move, the time to sell has remained relatively consistent. It currently takes around 2.5 months for a property to progress from being listed to Sold Subject to Contract, the same timescale today as it was in 2019.

The time taken to exchange contracts following a sale being agreed, however, has lengthened considerably, increasing from around three months in 2019 to nearly four and a half months in 2026.

Rather than dwelling on the causes of longer transaction times (which have been well documented), we will focus on the effects these delays are having on the UK housing market.

There are two major issues that stand out:

1. Higher fall through rates

Longer sales times are contributing to more transactions collapsing. This is reflected in our data: in 2019, fall through rates were below 21%, and they are now touching 24%. They have even been as high as 27% in 2023.

2. Fewer transactions

Slower sales are increasing issues within chains, resulting in fewer overall transactions that would otherwise have completed.

Both factors increase costs for consumers and, given the high levels of retail spend typically associated with homemovers, longer transaction times not only impact businesses dependent on housing activity but also weaken the significant "multiplier effect" of property transactions.

A key objective of the government's property reform is the reduction of transaction times. We await the introduction and outcome of these as eagerly as the property industry as a whole.

Time to Exchange Distribution

Let's better understand the distribution of our time to exchange metric.

Distributions of time to exchange	Q2 2026		Q2 2025		Q2 2024	
	Absolute	Cumulative	Absolute	Cumulative	Absolute	Cumulative
1 month	10.0%	10.0%	10.5%	10.5%	11.3%	11.3%
2 months	19.0%	29.0%	20.3%	30.8%	21.5%	32.8%
3 months	17.9%	46.8%	19.3%	50.1%	20.5%	53.3%
4 months	11.8%	58.6%	13.9%	63.9%	13.6%	66.9%
5 months	11.2%	69.8%	9.7%	73.6%	8.9%	75.8%
6 months	25.8%	95.6%	23.0%	96.6%	21.8%	97.6%
>=7 months	4.4%	100.0%	3.4%	100.0%	2.4%	100.0%

The Q2 2026 data shows that while the average time to exchange stood at 4.5 months, 30% of properties took 5 months or more to reach exchange. The most common time to reach exchange was a full six months from the sale agreed date.

Even over the past two years, we have seen the time to exchange continue to rise. In Q2 2024, 25% of properties took 5 months or more to exchange, and in Q2 2025, this was 24%. It is now standing at 30%, suggesting that the situation is worsening and homemovers are left facing a frustrating wait before they can receive the keys to their new property.

Legal Tenure Distribution

Focusing on Q2 2026, let's look at whether any notable concentrations or patterns suggest certain areas or property characteristics are performing better or worse than others.

The first area we examined is legal tenure, as shown in the table below:

Current distribution of time to exchange (Q2 2026)	Freehold		Leasehold	
	Absolute	Cumulative	Absolute	Cumulative
1 month	7.6%	7.6%	6.1%	6.1%
2 months	19.2%	26.8%	13.0%	19.0%
3 months	19.6%	46.4%	15.8%	34.9%
4 months	12.7%	59.0%	12.4%	47.3%
5 months	11.3%	70.4%	13.1%	60.4%
6 months	25.6%	96.0%	33.9%	94.3%
>=7 months	4.0%	100.0%	5.7%	100.0%

Unsurprisingly, leasehold properties take longer to exchange when looking at the distribution, due to the additional legal complexity involved in such transactions. Nearly 27% of all freehold properties exchange within 2 months, compared to only 19% of leasehold properties. Furthermore, almost 60% of all freehold properties exchange within 4 months, whilst for leasehold properties, this stands at just 47%.

Price Band Distribution

The next table shows how the time to exchange varies across different price bands:

Current distribution of time to exchange (Q2 2026)	£0-£200k		£200k-£350k		£350k-£1m		£1m+	
	Absolute	Cumulative	Absolute	Cumulative	Absolute	Cumulative	Absolute	Cumulative
1 month	14.6%	14.6%	8.8%	8.8%	7.1%	7.1%	9.6%	9.6%
2 months	22.1%	36.6%	20.0%	28.8%	15.6%	22.7%	15.3%	24.8%
3 months	17.6%	54.2%	19.6%	48.4%	17.1%	39.8%	13.3%	38.2%
4 months	11.3%	65.6%	12.6%	61.0%	12.1%	51.8%	9.6%	47.8%
5 months	10.0%	75.6%	11.2%	72.2%	11.7%	63.5%	10.5%	58.3%
6 months	21.1%	96.7%	24.0%	96.2%	30.9%	94.5%	33.7%	91.9%
>=7 months	3.3%	100.0%	3.8%	100.0%	5.5%	100.0%	8.1%	100.0%

There is a clear relationship between the price band and the time to exchange. For properties at the lower end (£0-£200k), over half (54%) of all properties exchange within 3 months, but this figure falls as the price rises. For properties priced over £1 million, only 38% of all properties exchange within 3 months. The general trend here is that lower-priced properties tend to exchange more quickly. This may be due to more complex mortgage applications, detailed surveys, or the greater legal intricacies of higher-value properties.

Regional Distribution

Finally, we examined UK regions. Given the large number of regions, we focus on the cumulative figures and reverse the axis for clearer interpretation.

Current distribution of time to exchange (Q2 2026)	1 month	2 months	3 months	4 months	5 months	6 months	>=7 months
Scotland	31.1%	60.4%	71.8%	77.5%	84.6%	96.8%	100.0%
North East	10.7%	36.1%	58.4%	72.2%	81.7%	97.6%	100.0%
North West	7.6%	26.8%	47.6%	61.6%	74.0%	95.7%	100.0%
Yorkshire and The Humber	9.3%	32.9%	55.6%	69.1%	79.8%	97.5%	100.0%
East Midlands	8.2%	29.1%	50.4%	64.0%	74.6%	97.0%	100.0%
West Midlands	8.1%	28.8%	49.9%	62.9%	75.2%	96.8%	100.0%
Wales	9.2%	30.7%	53.2%	66.1%	78.7%	97.5%	100.0%
East of England	6.0%	20.1%	35.8%	46.8%	58.4%	95.0%	100.0%
Outer London	6.3%	18.0%	31.1%	41.1%	53.3%	92.8%	100.0%
Inner London	8.4%	21.3%	35.4%	45.7%	58.1%	91.7%	100.0%
South East	6.1%	20.3%	36.3%	48.3%	60.6%	94.6%	100.0%
South West	6.6%	22.2%	39.6%	52.4%	64.1%	94.8%	100.0%

Scotland is the clear outlier. Thanks to its separate legal system, 72% of all sales agreed exchange within 3 months. In contrast, Outer London saw just 31% of all sales agreed properties exchange within 3 months. In summary, properties in the Midlands and the North exchange faster than those in London and the South.

Upfront (and Out of Date) Information?

Buying and selling property in the UK is notoriously slow. Plagued by broken chains, missed deadlines and exhausting admin, buyers and sellers are frequently left vowing that they will never endure moving home again.

Long transaction times affect more than homemovers; they are a major concern for the government. They create an inefficient, uncertain and more costly housing market. This in turn:

- Increases fall throughs
- Reduces mobility
- Suppresses economic activity
- Leads to poor consumer outcomes

Improving the time to sell, and more crucially, the time to complete a property is central to the government's home buying and selling reform, economic productivity and consumer protection.

As part of the reform, the government proposes to initiate the preparation of upfront information, which will include property searches and, eventually, a property condition report. These sales packs will need to be provided by sellers and estate agents at the point of listing rather than later in the process when the buyer instructs a conveyancer. These property details, provided to buyers and their advisers upfront, should enable faster, more informed decisions and reduce delays, fall throughs and any late surprises. What's interesting is that these proposals will shift housing transactions from a buyer-led model to a front-loaded seller-led one.

Our analysis of transaction timescales highlights a significant roadblock: **property searches expire after six months, and the average transaction timescale is seven months**. This means a significant proportion of searches will expire before completion, and lenders will not release funds to complete past the six-month deadline unless the search data is refreshed or insured.

The validity of the property data over time was one of the concerns raised by those surveyed in the Home Buying and Selling Reform Roadmap, alongside higher costs for sellers, challenges around buyers' trust in the information provided and lenders' willingness to accept the data.

We have explored the data in depth to ascertain how many purchase cases will need to repeat or refresh legal searches based on the current six-month validity.

The following table looks at the percentage of exchanges in a given year which take longer than six months between instructing an estate agent to sell a property and the exchange:

Year of Exchanged	% of Exchanges more than six months between Instruction and Exchanged
2019	36.1%
2020	39.1%
2021	40.2%
2022	47.9%
2023	50.5%
2024	53.4%
2025	54.4%
2026	60.8%

This figure was 36% in 2019 and has risen to 60.8% so far this year. This means that of the properties that reach exchange, in these cases, the legal searches would have had to be repeated or refreshed.

> **According to Beth Rudolf (from the Home Buying and Selling Group);**
>
> ***"This is not necessarily a cost issue, because lots of the regulated search companies will refresh the searches for free and of course Local Land Charges (for the 157 Local Authorities currently submitting to the HM Land Registry Local Land Charges Register) are available in real time from HM Land Registry; it does however, represent something that needs to be legislated for in some way, perhaps by enabling search data held in the Digital Property Logbook to be used at listing with a requirement to order a refresh and update the listing when received. The seller, of course, will already be aware of any changes triggered by their activities at the property or any notices received and can update this in the property information held in the logbook.***
>
> ***The Home Buying and Selling Reform roadmap will still improve the time to certainty and reduce fall throughs for lots of people. And some law firms may use indemnity insurance wrap-arounds to cover any out-of-date search data or unknowable issues, e.g. breach of restrictive covenants prior to the seller's ownership, etc."***

With the current six-month validity requirement for lenders, would searches still be re-run for free at such high-volume rates of 60.8%, or would this become impractical?

Beyond this, the length of time required to redo these searches poses a further stumbling block. Though currently redone searches are often expedited, this could be unfeasible when dealing with such great numbers. Ironically, reordering expired searches introduces the very transactional delays that the government's reforms aim to eliminate.

To make upfront information viable, the government would need to work with lenders to extend the validity period of these searches. As Beth Rudolf notes, this is another area that will need legislation or clear definition. Who is responsible for obtaining refreshed searches, and who checks these? Who pays for this? Will buyers, lenders and conveyancers rely on searches commissioned months earlier by the seller? All of the answers to these questions remain to be seen.

834,800 Landlords Gone, So Why is Rental Supply Rising?

The property press has run the same story for years. Landlords are selling up and leaving the private rental sector.

With one of the most complete market views in the sector, we wanted to put a number on it. So, we narrowed the question from "Are landlords leaving?" to "How many private rented homes have actually left the sector?"

The answer is quite sobering.

So far, 834,800* properties have left the PRS this decade.
That is **18.6%** of all private rental stock.

Put another way, close to one in five rented homes that were active in the last decade have since been sold and have not come back to the rental market.

The timing is hard to overlook. The Renters' Rights Act 2025 became law last year, with its main measures due to take effect from 1 May 2026. No surprise then that the highest volume of former rental properties was sold in 2025. We cannot say the Act is the only cause, and it applies to England, while this figure covers the whole of the UK, but the recent rise in exits sits close to that change. And 2026 represents an increase over 2025. Faced with new rules, a meaningful number of landlords appear to have chosen to sell rather than adapt.

What Does it Mean for the Sector?

For property businesses, this is the same shift viewed from different parts of the market. When a rented home is sold and does not return to the rental sector, it leaves one pipeline and enters another. Lenders see buy-to-let lending reduce as those homes move into owner-occupation. Estate agents gain sales instructions as landlords choose to exit. Conveyancers and removal firms pick up the work created by each sale and move. The homes have not disappeared; they have changed hands. Knowing where this is happening, and how quickly, helps businesses plan rather than react too late.

So Why is Rental Supply Still Rising?

Private rental supply in the UK has risen by more than 17% so far in 2026 versus the prior year and is now at its highest level for seven years. Given the number of landlords who have exited the market in recent years, that may seem contradictory.

Several factors are likely driving the increase in supply, with purpose-built rental homes appearing to be one of the main contributors.

These are predominantly owned by an institution, for example, a pension fund, investor or large landlord, rather than by individual buy-to-let landlords, and they come with many features for tenants, such as gyms, co-working spaces, communal lounges and concierge services. They are usually slightly more expensive, though, and not always suitable for family living.

We track advertising for purpose-built rental homes and have observed that these owners often advertise directly, rather than using traditional letting agents.

In Q2 2026, advertising for these properties was 22% higher than in Q2 2025. This helps explain how rental supply can rise while more traditional landlords leave the market.

**This analysis covers every UK property listed to rent since 1 January 2016, around 4.5 million homes. We then identified which of those homes were later sold and did not return to the rental market.*

To see where exits are concentrated in your markets, contact us.

The Impact of the Renters' Rights Act Two Months On

Many landlords made a hasty retreat when the Renters' Rights Act 2025 was announced. Hailed as the great exodus, we saw droves of dejected landlords vote with their feet and leave the sector. Most were concerned about the abolishment of Section 21 'no fault' evictions and the increased compliance burden. The Act marks the most significant reform in England's private rental market in decades.

The first phase of the Renters' Rights Act came into force on 1 May 2026. Just two months on, we wanted to see what impact the Act has had thus far. To understand the effect, we analysed data from May and June 2026 against the same months in the previous year.

Instruction Price Inflation

First and foremost, the key question is: what impact has the Act had on prices?

To answer this, we need to look at instruction prices, which provide the most current view of the market and are quick to reflect changing conditions.

There were expectations that the introduction of the legislation could lead to lower rental prices. With rent increases now more tightly controlled, rental bidding prohibited, and tenants given greater ability to challenge increases through the tribunal process, the thinking was that landlords would be less inclined to push rents higher.

However, it was also reasonable to consider the opposite effect, with the legislation potentially putting upward pressure on rents. Smaller landlords may have felt overwhelmed by the increased regulatory complexity and sought professional support, the costs of which could then have been passed on to tenants through higher rents. There was also the possibility that some landlords would set higher initial rents ahead of the rules becoming fully embedded, anticipating that future increases would be more restricted. With large upfront payments banned and rent increases limited to once per year, landlords may have sought to maximise the starting rent.

The fact that there are arguments supporting both upward and downward pressure on rents may help explain why the impact has differed so considerably across regions.

The following table displays the instruction price inflation since the Renters' Rights Act in 2026 versus the same period in 2025.

UK Region	Instruction Price Inflation (May-Jun 26 v prior year)
Scotland	1.9%
North East	-1.6%
North West	-2.4%
Yorkshire and The Humber	-4.0%
East Midlands	4.3%
West Midlands	6.8%
Wales	13.9%
East of England	-7.7%
Outer London	-2.3%
Inner London	0.4%
South East	1.0%
South West	-0.4%

Wales and the Midlands have experienced the highest price inflation, with Scotland, Inner London and the South East observing more modest rises.

The East of England saw the largest price deflation, at 7.7% year-on-year, followed by Yorkshire and the Humber at 4.0%.

Build-to-Rent Premiums

While analysing the impact of the Renters' Rights Act, it is also important to consider whether different types of landlords have been affected equally. Build-to-rent operators, with their larger portfolios and longer investment horizons, are better positioned to absorb additional regulatory requirements than smaller or accidental landlords.

Build-to-rent properties historically command a rental premium as they are often newer stock and offer better amenities and professional management. Our analysis shows that the average price premium has remained largely intact across all regions, although the extent of the premium varies. The North West was the exception, with build-to-rent properties recording a discount rather than a premium, compared with the wider rental market. The highest premiums are found in Wales, Outer London and Yorkshire.

UK Region	BTR Premium (BTR v all stock)
Scotland	14.2%
North East	20.7%
North West	-5.2%
Yorkshire and The Humber	31.9%
East Midlands	17.0%
West Midlands	12.5%
Wales	47.6%
East of England	16.7%
Outer London	38.3%
Inner London	8.6%
South East	8.5%
South West	20.3%

Supply, Demand and Available Stock Levels

The next area of analysis focuses on rental market dynamics. We examined the supply through the volume of rental instructions, demand through the number of lets agreed and the level of available 'to let' stock currently on offer for tenants to choose from.

UK Region	Supply Growth (May-Jun 26 v prior year)	Demand Growth (May-Jun 26 v prior year)	Available Stock to Let Growth (May-Jun 26 v prior year)
Scotland	15.6%	6.5%	0.9%
North East	20.4%	4.3%	6.3%
North West	19.1%	1.1%	9.1%
Yorkshire and The Humber	13.5%	2.8%	-5.6%
East Midlands	27.2%	5.8%	10.6%
West Midlands	19.4%	4.9%	8.4%
Wales	26.8%	8.7%	20.4%
East of England	20.0%	2.7%	7.1%
Outer London	17.6%	4.3%	9.7%
Inner London	13.0%	-4.2%	-4.4%
South East	21.4%	2.9%	6.5%
South West	19.1%	3.9%	6.6%

The supply of newly listed rental properties has risen across the whole of the UK, with the strongest growth in the East Midlands and Wales. The most significant driver is likely the continued growth in direct-to-consumer advertising by build-to-rent operators (which we mentioned in the previous article), bringing more rental stock to market through public listings. There are, however, several other possible explanations for supply growth that could be a result of the Renters' Rights Act. Some landlords may have delayed decisions until the legislation came into effect before reassessing their position, while those remaining in the market may be bringing additional stock forward. The increase may also reflect normal seasonal rental patterns, as households look to move before the new school year. In some regions, rising rents and stronger returns may also be encouraging more landlords back into the market.

Demand for rental properties has also increased in every region, with the exception of Inner London. While this cannot be attributed solely to the legislation, greater tenant security and ongoing affordability challenges in the sales market may be contributing factors. Another possible factor is the movement of tenants displaced by landlords exiting the sector ahead of the legislation, with those households re-entering the rental market and contributing to increased demand.

What is important to note is that supply growth outstrips demand growth, which has resulted in available stock to let rising in ten out of 12 regions, with just Yorkshire and Inner London bucking this trend.

Has the Landlord Profile Changed?

The final area we examined was whether the profile of landlords operating in the market has adjusted. Given the staggering volume of landlord exits in the years leading up to the Renters' Rights Act, we wanted to understand whether those leaving the sector had altered the overall makeup of the landlord base.

To explore this, we analysed the proportion of rental stock owned by incorporated landlords (those operating through a company structure) and how this has changed over time. The outcome is that this has remained largely unchanged since the Renters' Rights Act versus the prior year, with around a quarter of tenanted stock belonging to incorporated landlords.

The legislation is still very much in its embryonic stage, meaning its full impact on the rental market is still emerging. We will continue to review developments over the coming months as the changes become embedded and further elements of the legislation come into force.

Is Consolidation in the Lettings Market Really Happening?

The UK lettings agent sector remains highly fragmented. In Q2 2026, there were 5,696 active lettings brands operating across the UK, down from 5,758 a year earlier, a net fall of just 62. Hundreds of small agencies hold strong local portfolios, many of their owners are approaching retirement, and lettings income is typically recurring and predictable, unlike residential sales commission, which rises and falls with transaction volumes. On paper, that is the classic "roll-up" opportunity: acquire smaller businesses and integrate them into a larger platform, gaining scale without having to build market share organically.

Several forces add to the appeal. Increasing regulation, such as the Renters' Rights Act 2025, promotes scale, because smaller agents and landlords will struggle to keep up without evolving their expertise. The Act received Royal Assent in October 2025, and its new tenancy regime came into force on 1 May 2026. Technology creates economies of scale, and we are aware of a few technology-led players acquiring lettings assets. Perhaps the largest draw is that the sector appears attractive to private equity houses.

The reality, though, is more measured. The volume of brands acquired remains relatively small. Across the UK, acquisitions rose from 88 brands to 92 over the year, an increase of four, lifting the acquired share from 1.5% to 1.6% of all brands. Real movement, but marginal.

UK			
	Active Lettings Brands	**Acquired Brands**	**% Acquired Brands**
Quarter 2 2025	5,758	88	1.5%
Quarter 2 2026	5,696	92	1.6%
Variance	-1.1%	+4.5%	

London runs the other way. Active lettings brands in the capital rose 2.0%, from 1,958 to 1,997, while acquisitions fell from 44 to 32, down 27.3%. As a share of the market, acquired London brands dropped from 2.2% to 1.6%. Both the volume and the percentage of acquired brands have fallen over the year.

London			
	Active Lettings Brands	**Acquired Brands**	**% Acquired Brands**
Quarter 2 2025	1,958	44	2.2%
Quarter 2 2026	1,997	32	1.6%
Variance	+2.0%	-27.3%	

One point to keep in mind when reading these figures: there are two kinds of acquisition, and only one shows up as a falling brand count. When a buyer absorbs an agency and folds it into an existing brand, that brand drops out of the total. When a buyer keeps the agency trading under its own name, the brand stays live even though ownership has changed. The active-brand count captures the first and misses the second, so it understates how much ownership has actually moved.

So, the conditions for consolidation are in place, but the activity has not yet caught up. 1.6% of UK lettings brands are acquired by a group, and in London, that percentage is falling. That gap between a strong case and slow movement is the part worth watching. For any agent with a lettings arm, it is also a useful part. A recurring-income lettings book is exactly what a consolidator wants, whether you are weighing a sale or considering acquiring local competitors yourself. The owners who understand what their book is worth and how a buyer treats a retained brand versus a merged one will be better placed to set the terms.

We will keep tracking the numbers. The next few quarters will show whether Q2 2026 was an early, quiet signal or proof that this market is harder to roll up than the theory suggests.

Are Houses For Sale Being Overvalued?

What the gap between asking prices and true market value says about the UK market, and what a widening gap means for the value of lending security.

The National Picture

Every home listed for sale has an asking price, agreed upon by the seller and their agent. What it rarely shows is how closely that price reflects what the property is likely to sell for. We compared the instruction price of every property newly listed for sale against its automated valuation model (AVM), an independent estimate of market value, for Q2 2026 and the same quarter a year earlier. The gap between the two shows how far stock is being priced above or below what it is likely to be worth.

In Q2 2025, the average newly listed property in the UK was priced 5.7% above its AVM value. In Q2 2026, that gap widened to 11.6%. More stock is coming to market above independent value than a year ago.

Averages are pulled around by outliers, so the distribution matters more than the headline. The table below shows the share of newly listed stock in each valuation band. A negative figure means the asking price sits below the AVM (underpriced); a positive figure means it sits above (overpriced).

Asking price vs AVM	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	YoY change
≤ -10% (priced below AVM)	29.1%	27.5%	-5.5%
-10% to -5%	12.9%	12.5%	-3.0%
-5% to 0%	20.9%	21.2%	+1.7%
0% to 5% (priced above AVM)	14.2%	14.0%	-1.4%
5% to 10%	7.2%	7.5%	+4.2%
10%+	15.8%	17.3%	+9.7%

The change column shows the year-on-year movement in each band's share of listed stock, as a relative percentage. Bands may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

As a rule of thumb, a property listed 2% to 3% above market value tends to attract buyers while still selling in a reasonable timeframe. Against that benchmark, the recent trend is towards heavier overpricing. The share of stock priced 5% to 10% above the AVM has risen by over 4% year on year, and the share priced more than 10% above has risen by nearly 10%.

Where asking prices run well ahead of independent value, those properties tend to sit on the market longer and are less likely to sell. Which raises the obvious question: where is this concentrated?

Where the Overpricing is Concentrated

The table below shows the year-on-year change in each valuation band by UK region. Positive figures in the higher bands mean a region has moved towards overpricing.

Region	≤-10%	-10 to -5%	-5 to 0%	0 to 5%	5 to 10%	10%+
Scotland	-4.0%	-3.1%	-1.3%	-7.8%	+10.6%	+4.0%
North East	+0.2%	+11.7%	-0.3%	-0.5%	-11.5%	-0.5%
North West	-5.2%	-8.7%	+4.2%	+2.7%	+10.3%	+4.9%
Yorkshire and The Humber	-7.2%	-7.2%	+1.2%	+2.1%	+10.7%	+10.5%
East Midlands	-3.6%	-2.2%	+1.1%	-4.8%	+2.1%	+10.8%
West Midlands	-2.7%	-2.2%	+2.2%	-4.4%	-1.5%	+9.4%
Wales	-11.5%	-7.6%	+10.8%	+6.8%	+6.6%	+14.9%
East of England	-13.1%	-10.6%	+5.4%	+5.5%	+9.8%	+19.3%
Outer London	-6.9%	-5.0%	+0.3%	+0.9%	-1.7%	+17.8%
Inner London	+3.1%	-2.0%	-2.2%	-3.8%	+7.7%	-1.5%
South East	-5.2%	-0.1%	-1.3%	-4.5%	+0.1%	+16.7%
South West	-6.8%	+4.0%	+1.3%	-4.0%	+3.6%	+12.0%

Nearly every region has moved towards overpricing, with two exceptions. The North East has gone the other way, with more stock priced below the AVM than a year ago. And in Inner London, there is now less stock priced 10% or more above the AVM than there was last year. The sharpest move towards overpricing is in the East of England, where the share of stock priced 5% to 10% above value has risen by around 10% year on year, and the share priced more than 10% above has risen by 19%.

A Closer Look at the Cotswolds

The Times recently ran a piece on the Cotswolds, reporting a “perfect storm” hitting country house prices as taxes and running costs mount for owners of expensive rural homes. We drilled into the same set of postcodes to see what the pricing data shows.

Asking price vs AVM	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	YoY change
≤ -10% (priced below AVM)	40.3%	36.5%	-9.5%
-10% to -5%	11.9%	13.4%	+12.7%
-5% to 0%	17.2%	19.8%	+15.6%
0% to 5% (priced above AVM)	11.6%	10.2%	-12.4%
5% to 10%	6.3%	6.1%	-4.5%
10%+	12.7%	14.0%	+10.8%

The Cotswolds is defined here as postcode districts GL7, GL8, GL54, GL55, GL56, OX7, WR12, CV36, SN6, SN7, BA1, BA11 and BA15.

The picture here is mixed. The share of stock priced more than 10% above the AVM has risen by nearly 11% year on year. At the same time, more stock is coming to market below independent value: the share priced 5% to 10% below rose by 12.7%, and the share priced within 5% below rose by 15.6%. Both ends of the range are growing, which points to a market where sellers and agents are pricing less consistently than they were a year ago.

What This Means for Lenders

A widening gap between asking prices and independent value has practical consequences for anyone lending against residential property. Indicators anchored to listing prices read high when sellers price above value, which flatters headline market data. Time to transact tends to lengthen where stock is overpriced, which affects assumptions about how quickly security could be realised. And the further asking prices drift above true value, the easier it is to overstate the realisable value of a property at the point of a lending decision. An independent valuation that holds steady while seller expectations climb is the check on all three.

Recession-Proofing Homeware Retail: Why Homemovers Keep Margins High

In September 2022, we published advice for retailers marketing through the cost-of-living crisis, with inflation on its way to a peak of 11.1%. Four years on, inflation stands at 2.8%,[1] and whether 2026 counts as a downturn depends on which dataset you read. GfK's Consumer Confidence Barometer, which has tracked the UK consumer mood since 1974, reads -23 for June, and no demographic group currently records a positive score, including households earning £50,000 or more.[2] The Major Purchase Index, which asks whether now is the right time to buy furniture or electrical goods, sits at -20, four points lower than in 2025. By mood, this is a downturn.

The spending data is less dramatic. Retail volumes rose 3.2% in the year to May 2026 but were still 0.4% below February 2020 levels.[3] Six years on, the quantity of goods sold has not grown. May's 1.2% monthly rise tells a sharper story: the ONS says retailers attributed the uplift to promotions and the joint-third warmest May on record. Volumes held up, but margins took the hit.

That gap between the mood and the money is where homeware margins are leaking in 2026. Demand exists, but the default way to reach a nervous shopper is a discount, and a discount offered to everyone gives away margin to the many to win the few. Recession-proofing a homeware business, whatever the label on the economy, starts with finding the customers who buy without one.

The Customers Who Buy Without a Discount

In 2022, we argued that homemovers were the audience most likely to hold up through the squeeze, and the data since has supported that. Residential transactions in 2026 so far are 6.2% lower than the same period last year, a comparison distorted by last year's rush to beat the stamp duty deadline. Against the same period of 2023, they were up 15.7%, and against 2024, up 12.8%. Supply is growing too, with new listings up 2.7% year-on-year, the highest in a decade.[4]

Homemovers spend, on average, three times more on retail goods than households staying put, contributing £21.4 billion a year to the UK economy.[4] When the general public says now is the wrong time to buy furniture, the exception is the household that has just exchanged contracts on a house with no curtains and the wrong sofa. A move converts discretionary purchases into scheduled ones. No confidence index deters a purchase that a move has made necessary, and no discount is needed to trigger a purchase that is already scheduled. That is what keeps margins high: the mover buys because the move requires it, not because the price finally dropped.

The Mover Has Changed

The audience holding up is also changing shape. In 2016, the most common age band for owner-occupied movers was 30 to 39. Today, it is 50 to 59, and single-owner-occupied movers have grown 15.6% over the last ten years, while married movers have fallen 22.6%.[4] This buyer is typically equity-rich, selecting for quality and design, and spending more per room on fewer rooms. Price promotions built for a stretched young family are the wrong tool for a buyer who was never waiting for the price to drop. We covered this segment in detail in our Q1 2026 report.

Three Disciplines That Protect the Margin

The 2022 advice drew on Harvard Business Review's downturn research, which found that companies taking a "scalpel" rather than a "cleaver" to marketing budgets performed better through and after a recession.[5] That still holds, and this year's data sharpens it into three disciplines.

First, keep the budget working and change who it reaches. Wasted reach is margin spent on attention from people with no reason to buy, and in a market where volumes have been flat for six years, cutting reach altogether mostly saves your competitors the trouble of outbidding you.

Second, use timing where you would have used a discount. Spending around a move follows a sequence, from DIY and flooring before the sale to furniture, electricals and garden goods after completion, and the window for each category is measured in weeks. A promotion offered to the whole market pays for conversions that needed no persuading. A message timed to the move wins the same sale at full price.

Third, measure the increment. The figure that justifies acquisition spend is the number of customers a campaign won that you would not have won anyway, which a matched holdout can establish, and a last-click report cannot. Every sale a campaign takes credit for but did not cause is a margin misspent, and repeated next quarter.

> ***"The owner-occupied market has stayed remarkably detached from the wider consumer mood, just as it did through 2022. Households move spend because the move requires it. For retailers, the discipline is knowing who those households are and when to reach them."***
>
> ***– Colin Bradshaw, TwentyCi***

Before You Buy the Data

Everything above depends on the quality of the homemover data behind it, because a mistimed message carries the same cost as a blanket discount: spend that changes nothing. Several firms now market life-event or homemover data in the UK, and their claims are hard to tell apart at the brochure level. The tests are the ones we have always suggested: how much of the market the source covers, how often it refreshes, whether the events are observed or modelled, and whether the provider will show you where its data comes from. This report is compiled from 99.6% of UK sale and rental property transactions, factual rather than modelled, and we publish the method behind it every quarter. A provider that cannot show its data sources is practically selling a brochure.

Sources

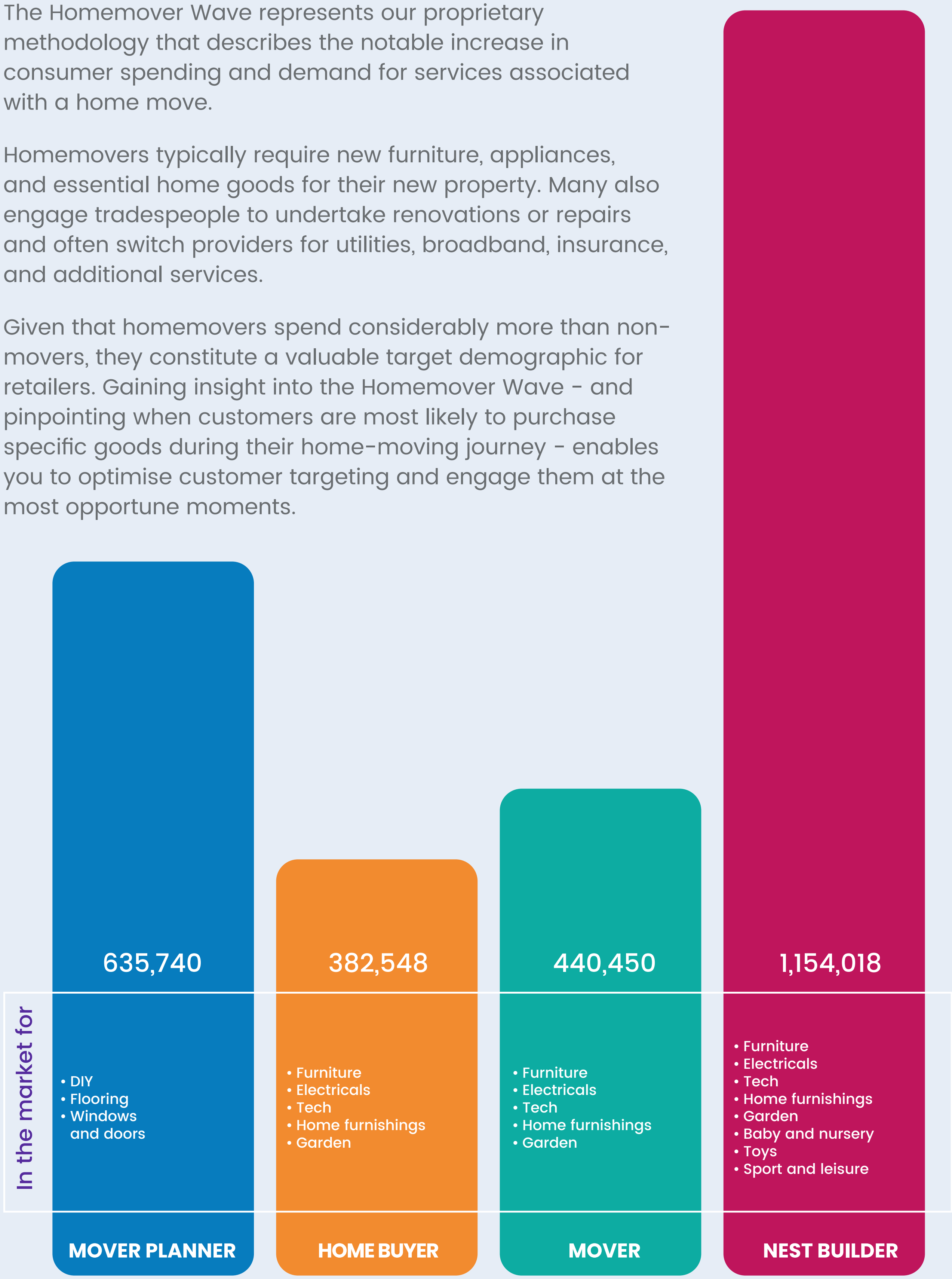
1. *ONS, Consumer price inflation, UK: May 2026. https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/may2026*
2. *GfK Consumer Confidence Barometer powered by NIM, June 2026 (published 19 June 2026). https://nielseniq.com/global/en/news-center/2026/consumer-confidence-stay-at-23-in-june/*
3. *ONS, Retail sales, Great Britain: May 2026 (published 19 June 2026). https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/bulletins/retailsales/may2026*
4. *TwentyCi & TwentyEA, Property & Homemover Report, Q1 2026.*
5. *Quelch & Jocz, "How to Market in a Downturn", Harvard Business Review, April 2009. https://hbr.org/2009/04/how-to-market-in-a-downturn-2*

The Homemover Wave

The Homemover Wave represents our proprietary methodology that describes the notable increase in consumer spending and demand for services associated with a home move.

Homemovers typically require new furniture, appliances, and essential home goods for their new property. Many also engage tradespeople to undertake renovations or repairs and often switch providers for utilities, broadband, insurance, and additional services.

Given that homemovers spend considerably more than non-movers, they constitute a valuable target demographic for retailers. Gaining insight into the Homemover Wave - and pinpointing when customers are most likely to purchase specific goods during their home-moving journey - enables you to optimise customer targeting and engage them at the most opportune moments.



Homemover Data Across Marketing Channels

Movers buy in a predictable pattern. The same audience, reached across every channel.

£29bn
incremental revenue a year

1m+
households move each year

20–40%
higher average order value

How the channels fit

One mover audience, activated across the journey.

DIRECT MAIL

Dated and precise, posted while the buying happens

EMAIL MARKETING

Trigger off the move, fully trackable by cohort

MOBILE ADVERTISING

In-market reach on mobile display

SOCIAL MEDIA

Real dated moves matched in, not lookalikes

PROGRAMMATIC

Broad in-market reach across the open web

TV DIGITAL ADS

Sky AdSmart, to mover households only

Catch Up on Our Latest Homemover and Property Insights

In addition to our Property and Homemover Report publication, we are regularly featured in leading publications including The Times, The Sunday Times and the Financial Times, as an authority on the UK residential property market. Furthermore, we post a regular range of articles and special features to our blog, which can be found **here**

TwentyCi is an information and marketing services company that provides UK residential property data, analytics and insight for marketing and other key strategic purposes. Our experience and client portfolio encompass multiple sectors and categories, including property and estate agency groups, retailers, financial services, automotive and utilities.

Holding the UK's largest and richest resource of factual homemover data, compiled from more than 29 billion qualified data points, TwentyCi works with advertisers and their agencies to create contextually targeted marketing programmes that cut through by reaching consumers at the exact moment that they need a company's product or service, through the best media channel for that individual.

twentyci.co.uk

TwentyEA was formed in 2016 as a part of the TwentyCi Group to provide database solutions to UK estate agents and other residential property market professionals.

With our real-time tracking of over 99% of residential property listings, we help estate agents increase their market share by providing expert data-based insights and cutting-edge marketing.

twentyea.co.uk

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