

Press Release

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Armagh is the UK's best performing city over the past five years

With city living a popular lifestyle choice and intense competition amongst towns to be awarded city status, new research by Halifax Estate Agents has investigated the movement of house prices in the 66 official cities in the UK.

Armagh has recorded the biggest increase in house prices of any UK city over the past five years with a rise of 188%. All four cities with the highest house price growth in the last five years are in Northern Ireland, reflecting the phenomenal rise in prices across Northern Ireland in the past few years.

Bradford experienced the highest price increase on the British mainland with a 131% rise over the past five years. Two Scottish cities – Dundee and Aberdeen – and two Welsh cities – Swansea and St David's – also feature amongst the ten top performing cities over the period.

Smaller cities have generally performed better than larger cities. Nine out of the top ten performing cities over the past five years have populations of less than 300,000.

House prices in the UK's cities exceed those in their region by an average £11,000. Thirteen cities have an average house price that is at least £50,000 above their region's average. Thirty-one cities have an average house price above the average in their region.

Westminster is the UK's most expensive city with an average property price of £601,821. Winchester (£379,643) is the most expensive city outside Greater London.

Hull (£128,863) and Stoke-on-Trent (£134,978) are the two least expensive cities in the UK.

Places that have been conferred city status since 2000 have generally recorded higher house price rises since becoming cities.

Table 1: Ten best performing cities over the past five years

City	Region	Average Price Sept 2002* £	Average Price Sept 2007* £	5 year % change
Armagh	Northern Ireland	69,379	199,974	188%
Newry	Northern Ireland	90,566	233,075	157%
Lisburn	Northern Ireland	96,507	242,873	152%
Londonderry	Northern Ireland	79,459	184,129	132%
Bradford	Yorks & Humber	59,276	136,755	131%
Dundee	Scotland	66,094	152,050	130%
Aberdeen	Scotland	89,229	200,721	125%
Swansea	Wales	72,786	163,545	125%
St David's	Wales	115,500	258,272	124%
Carlisle	North	67,342	150,339	123%

*12 months to September.

Source: Halifax

Martin Ellis, chief economist at Halifax Estate Agents, commented:

"House prices in cities tend to be higher than the average price in their region. The attraction of shopping and leisure facilities, as well as a short commute for workers means that there will always be demand to live in cities. Many cities have also benefited from urban regeneration programmes that have seen the wide scale re-development of old industrial areas and canal side warehouses into residential properties.

The strong performance of smaller cities, in particular, highlights that homebuyers are looking for attractive places to live in which also offer good transport links, easy commuting and convenient shopping."

KEY FINDINGS

House Price Growth – Last Five Years

- **Armagh has seen the largest increase in house prices of any UK city over the past five years with a 188% rise to £199,974.** The next best performing cities are Newry (157%), Lisburn (152%) and Londonderry (132%). Bradford - the best performing British city - experienced a 131% increase to £136,755.
- **House prices have more than doubled over the past five years in 18 cities.** More than one in four cities has recorded an increase in house prices of at least 100%.
- **Cardiff has recorded the smallest increase in house prices in the past five years with a rise of 41%.**
- **House prices in UK cities have risen by an average 78% in the past five years.** This compares with a 76% rise in house prices across the UK as a whole. Thirty of the 66 cities have recorded a rise in house prices above the UK average.

Most Expensive / Least Expensive Cities

- **Seven cities have an average house price above £300,000.** City of Westminster is the most expensive city in the UK with an average house price of £601,821. Winchester is the most expensive city outside Greater London with an average house price of £379,643. A further 24 cities have an average house price above £200,000, dispersed fairly evenly across the regions.
- **Only two cities in the UK have an average house price below £135,000.** These are Hull (£128,863) and Stoke-on-Trent (£134,978). In 2002, there were 31 UK cities with average house prices below £100,000.

Recent Cities

- **Inverness has been the best performing "millennium" city - those towns granted city status in 2000.** House prices in Inverness have increased by 192% to £172,691 in the seven years since September 2000. The UK average house price has increased by 140% over the period.
- **All three millennium cities – Inverness, Brighton & Hove and Wolverhampton – have recorded house price growth above their region's average since being granted city status.** In the five years prior to becoming cities, only Brighton & Hove (96%) outpaced its region's average price rise (81%).
- **Newry has been the best performing "Jubilee" city - those granted city status to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee in 2002.** House prices in Newry have increased by 157% in the past five years to £233,075. The UK average house price has increased by 76% over the same period.
- **All five Jubilee cities have seen an increase in average house growth since being granted city status compared to the previous five years with the exception of Newport.** In Lisburn, house prices have risen by 152% in the past five years compared with an increase of 56% in the preceding five years.

Editors' Notes:

1. There are no set criteria under which the Crown confers city status. Traditionally, city status was given to towns which had cathedrals. However, large urban populations without cathedrals were also conferred city status. Additionally there are a number of cathedral towns. There are 66 cities in the United Kingdom.
2. More recently city status has been awarded to mark key events like the turn of the millennium (Brighton & Hove, Inverness and Wolverhampton) and the Queen's Jubilee (Lisburn, Newry, Newport, Preston and Stirling).
3. House prices shown in the tables are arithmetic annual average prices of houses – otherwise known as crude averages - on which an offer of mortgages has been granted. These prices are not standardised and therefore can be affected by changes in the sample from quarter to quarter.

Table 2: Most Expensive Cities in the UK as at Sept 2007

City	Region	Average Price Sept 2007* £	Premium to Region's Average House price £
Westminster**	Greater London	601,821	232,538
City of London**	Greater London	446,329	77,047
Winchester	South East	379,643	97,208
Oxford	South East	345,936	63,501
St. Albans	South East	345,022	62,587
Truro	South West	322,834	95,847
Chichester	South East	316,891	34,456
Bath	South West	298,905	71,918
Cambridge	East Anglia	295,339	88,258
Brighton and Hove	South East	266,457	- 15,979

*12 months to September.

**House Price Data as at July 2007 based on Local authority boundaries

Source: Halifax

Table 3- Performance of House Prices in Millennium Cities since granted city status in 2000.

City	Region	Average Price Sept 2000* £	Average Price Sept 2007* £	% Change since Sept 2000	Out performance Vs. region since 2000
Inverness	Scotland	59,126	172,691	192%	43%
Brighton and Hove	South East	114,783	266,457	132%	24%
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	71,124	162,474	128%	1%

*12 months to September.

Source: Halifax

Table 4- Performance of House Prices in Jubilee Cities since granted city status in 2002.

City	Region	Average Price Sept 2002* £	Average Price Sept 2007* £	% Change since Sept 2002	Out performance Vs. region since 2002
Newry	Northern Ireland	90,566	233,075	157%	21%
Lisburn	Northern Ireland	96,507	242,873	152%	15%
Preston	North West	92,449	173,946	88%	-3%
Stirling	Scotland	97,978	171,072	75%	-35%
Newport	Wales	143,333	215,000	50%	-44%

*12 months to September.

Source: Halifax

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Table 5- Performance of All UK Cities

City	Region	Average Price Sept 2002* £	Average Price Sept 2007* £	Premium to Region's Average House price £	5 year % change	Population (2001)
Aberdeen	Scotland	89,229	200,721	29,443	125%	179,518
Armagh	Northern Ireland	69,379	199,974	-19,377	188%	55,702
Bangor-Gwynedd	Wales	77,559	149,650	-15,388	93%	15,521
Bath	South West	191,342	298,905	71,918	56%	92,212
Belfast	Northern Ireland	99,108	220,783	1,432	123%	284,745
Birmingham	West Midlands	94,343	161,004	-22,868	71%	992,609
Bradford	Yorks & Humber	59,276	136,755	-28,099	131%	300,287
Brighton and Hove	South East	178,709	266,457	-15,979	49%	211,250
Bristol	South West	148,080	224,644	-2,343	52%	429,963
Carlisle	North	67,342	150,339	-6,250	123%	73,378
Cambridge	East Anglia	195,601	295,339	88,258	51%	134,406
Canterbury	South East	161,113	249,983	-32,452	55%	44,526
Cardiff	Wales	123,933	174,499	9,461	41%	296,765
Chester	North West	123,053	207,267	32,921	68%	81,913
Chichester	South East	194,966	316,891	34,456	63%	28,092
City of London**	Greater London	297,586	446,329	77,047	50%	7,346
Coventry	West Midlands	99,378	166,716	-17,157	68%	310,263
Derby	East Midlands	100,610	170,233	-4,092	69%	234,539
Dundee	Scotland	66,094	152,050	-19,228	130%	121,338
Durham	North	76,839	136,902	-19,687	78%	43,899
Edinburgh	Scotland	126,000	228,212	56,934	81%	379,908
Ely	East Anglia	147,641	212,665	5,585	44%	14,266
Exeter	South West	144,453	218,569	-8,417	51%	109,160
Glasgow	Scotland	83,750	169,474	-1,804	102%	477,162
Gloucester	South West	123,561	186,278	-40,708	51%	125,961
Hereford	West Midlands	120,031	206,461	22,589	72%	57,634
Hull	Yorks & Humber	58,400	128,863	-35,991	121%	308,158
Inverness	Scotland	83,788	172,691	1,413	106%	33,718
Lancaster & Morecambe	North West	86,983	162,189	-12,157	87%	97,658
Leeds	Yorks & Humber	96,118	171,935	7,081	79%	453,162
Leicester	East Midlands	106,057	175,429	1,104	65%	337,968
Lichfield	West Midlands	143,244	243,847	59,974	70%	29,071
Lincoln	East Midlands	95,990	158,678	-15,646	65%	87,886
Lisburn	Northern Ireland	96,507	242,873	23,523	152%	111,575
Liverpool	North West	77,708	155,598	-18,748	100%	479,508

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Table 5- Performance of All UK Cities (cont.)

City	Region	Average Price Sept 2002* £	Average Price Sept 2007* £	Premium to Region's Average House price £	5 year % change	Population (2001)
Londonderry	Northern Ireland	79,459	184,129	-35,222	132%	107,851
Manchester	North West	80,546	160,724	-13,622	100%	403,088
Newcastle upon Tyne	North	96,796	185,093	28,505	91%	194,110
Newport	Wales	143,333	215,000	49,962	50%	117,978
Newry	Northern Ireland	90,566	233,075	13,724	157%	89,366
Norwich	East Anglia	131,884	203,010	-4,071	54%	177,940
Nottingham	East Midlands	95,956	159,207	-15,117	66%	255,167
Oxford	South East	229,010	345,936	63,501	51%	146,215
Peterborough	East Anglia	109,858	183,189	-23,892	67%	139,341
Plymouth	South West	102,314	175,456	-51,530	72%	249,248
Portsmouth	South East	118,725	171,643	-110,793	45%	191,240
Preston	North West	92,449	173,946	-400	88%	131,300
Ripon	Yorks & Humber	128,791	244,485	79,631	90%	16,836
Salford	North West	72,324	157,373	-16,974	118%	74,377
Salisbury	South West	182,077	257,140	30,154	41%	44,325
Sheffield	Yorks & Humberside	86,192	162,817	-2,037	89%	449,705
Southampton	South East	152,735	221,740	-60,695	45%	239,463
St David's	Wales	115,500	258,272	93,234	124%	1,825
St. Albans	South East	243,375	345,022	62,587	42%	84,273
Stirling	Scotland	97,978	171,072	-206	75%	75,678
Stoke on Trent	West Midlands	70,763	134,978	-48,894	91%	265,051
Sunderland	North	69,907	143,348	-13,241	105%	181,715
Swansea	Wales	72,786	163,545	-1,493	125%	172,564
Truro	South West	149,850	322,834	95,847	115%	21,388
Wakefield	Yorks & Humber	87,070	172,793	7,939	99%	78,606
Wells	South West	153,450	246,581	19,594	61%	10,639
Westminster**	Greater London	376,347	601,821	232,538	60%	185,832
Winchester	South East	240,978	379,643	97,208	58%	42,347
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	102,442	162,474	-21,399	59%	257,087
Worcester	West Midlands	149,127	214,304	30,431	44%	96,132
York	Yorks & Humber	135,925	220,533	55,680	62%	140,581

*12 months to September.

*House Price Data as at July 2007 based on Local Authority Boundaries

Population data based on 2001 figures re-estimated using ONS 2006 growth projections

Source: Halifax and ONS (population)

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For further information please contact

Helpline No: 08456 6045404

Email: Groupeconomics@hbosplc.com

ISDN facilities are available for broadcast media interviews

Halifax Estate Agents is part of the HBOS group

Tel: 01422 333829 Fax: 01422 333007

Website: <http://www.hbosplc.com/media>