

Press Release



**BANK OF
SCOTLAND**

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HAMELDAEME: BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN SCOTLAND REVEALED

- **Orkney retains top spot while Shetland Isles make way for a new Glaswegian runner up**
- **Orkney, East Renfrewshire, Shetland Islands, East Dunbartonshire and Edinburgh all make the UK top 100**
- **Affordability, safety and access to green space most important factors when choosing a place to live**

The historic islands of Orkney have been crowned Scotland's best place to live for the eighth year in a row, according to the Bank of Scotland Quality of Life survey 2020.

Best known for their beautiful coastline and spectacular landscapes about 20 miles north of the mainland, Orkney maintained position for the eighth consecutive year thanks to high employment levels, low crime rate, strong exam results, smaller primary class sizes and good health and happiness scores.

As a result of an updated survey methodology including a number of new metrics, Glasgow's East Renfrewshire has moved into the prestigious second place (up from 13th), with Shetland down one place to third and East Dunbartonshire fourth (up six places), and the City of Edinburgh fifth (up 15 places). The top five Scottish locations also appear in the UK top 100.

The annual research takes into consideration 26 different factors (table 3) that homebuyers consider when choosing a place to live. For the first time this year, the research also takes into account how important these factors are to people looking to find the perfect property, with affordability, safety and access to parks and green spaces all proving most essential according to UK adults.

Tara Foley, Managing Director, Bank of Scotland, said: "Oradians have long celebrated the Islands' status as one of the most desirable places to live in Scotland as well as the UK – with high employment, low crime rates, smaller class sizes and more affordable housing.

"The Scottish locations that make it into the UK's top 100 showcase the diversity of Scotland from the dramatic beauty of its remote islands to the impressive architecture of its historical cities and easy access to green vast space and rich country parks from the surrounding suburbs."

At a UK level, East Hertfordshire in the East of England took the top spot overall this year, followed by Fareham and Hart, both in South East.

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What makes Orkney such a good place to live?

- The latest ONS figures indicate adults living in Orkney are amongst the most happy, satisfied and content in the UK, with low anxiety rates
- Orkney is one of the most affordable places to live for first time buyers with an average house price of £131,913, standing at 3.8 times the average annual pre-tax local income, compared to the national average of 4.3.
- Orkney has the highest employment rate with nearly nine in ten (88%) 16-64 year-olds in work and weekly average earnings of £665
- Residents enjoy one of the lowest crime rates in the country, with 6.9 crimes per 10,000 population, compared to a national average of 52.6
- Residents feel fit and well with more than nine in 10 (97%) reporting good or fairly good health

Notes for editors:

Table 1: 2020 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Rankings – Scottish Local Authority Districts

Local Authority	2020 Rankings Scotland	2019 Rankings Scotland
Orkney Islands	1	1
East Renfrewshire	2	13
Shetland Islands	3	2
East Dunbartonshire	4	10
Edinburgh, City of	5	20
Aberdeenshire	6	6
Western Isles	7	3
Aberdeen City	8	16
Perth & Kinross	9	8
East Lothian	10	14
Scottish Borders	11	9
Moray	12	15
Midlothian	13	18
Renfrewshire	14	29
Highland	15	12
Fife	16	19
West Lothian	17	21
Angus	18	7
South Ayrshire	19	11
South Lanarkshire	20	26

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Dumfries & Galloway	21	5
Clackmannanshire	22	23
Stirling	23	17
Falkirk	24	22
Argyll & Bute	25	4
East Ayrshire	26	24
West Dunbartonshire	27	28
North Lanarkshire	28	30
Dundee City	29	27
North Ayrshire	30	25
Inverclyde	31	31
Glasgow City	32	32

Source: Bank of Scotland January 2020

Table 2: 2020 Bank of Scotland Quality of Life Rankings – UK's top 10 Local Authority Districts

Local Authority	Region	2019 Rankings	2020 Rankings
East Hertfordshire	East of England	14	1
Fareham	South East	44	2
Hart	South East	13	3
Horsham	South East	106	4
Maldon	East of England	103	5
Selby	Yorkshire and The Humber	50	6
Hambleton	Yorkshire and The Humber	4	7
Babergh	East of England	27	8
St Edmundsbury	East of England	45	9
Wokingham	South East	25	10

Source: Bank of Scotland January 2020

Table 3: Local Authority District with the best quality of life in each category in 2019

Group	Variable	Local Authority District
Labour		
Scotland average: 74.2% (UK: 74.9%)	Highest employment rate: 88.2%	Orkney
Scotland average: £685 per week (UK: £712 per week)	Highest gross weekly Earnings: £972	East Renfrewshire
Scotland average: 29.6% (UK: 31.4%)	% of adults (16+) with highest qualification gained: 50.7%. This includes graduate and post postgraduate degrees, NVQ level 4 and above, and professional qualifications.	City of Edinburgh

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Housing		
Scotland: 5.2 (UK: 7.4)	House prices to earnings ratio (All Buyers) lowest: 4.0	East Ayrshire
Scotland: 4.25 (UK: 6.2)	House prices to earnings ratio (First Time Buyers) lowest: 3.0	East Ayrshire
Scotland: 116M² (UK: 113M ²)	Highest average size of house (M²): 139	Orkney Aberdeenshire
Scotland: £1,833/M² (UK: £2,488/M ²)	Lowest average price of house per M²: £1,054	Western Isles
Urban Environment		
Scotland: 70 per sq/km (UK: 274 per sq/km)	Lowest Population density per sq km: 9	Western Isles
Scotland: 612 cars/km (UK: 2,299 cars/km)	Lowest traffic flows per square km: 75 cars /km	Western Isles
Scotland: 25 per 10,000 people (UK: 41 per 10,000 people)	Lowest burglary rate per 10,000 population: 3.2 per 10,000 people	Orkney
Scotland: 1.6 tonnes CO₂ emissions per capita (UK: 1.5 tonnes)	Lowest Total Consumer CO₂ Emissions: 1.3 tonnes per capita	Glasgow City
Physical Environment		
Scotland: 1,693mm year (UK: 869.9mm per year)	Lowest average annual rainfall: 804mm	Dundee City
Scotland: 25.8 hours per week (UK: 29.7 hours per week)	Highest average weekly sunshine hours: 27.9 hours	Aberdeen City
Health		
Scotland: 94.7% (UK: 94.6%)	Highest % of residents in good health: 96.8%	Aberdeenshire
Male life expectancy Scotland: 78.4 years (UK: 79.5 years)	Longest Male life expectancy at birth for males: 80.5 years	East Renfrewshire
Female life expectancy Scotland: 82.3 years (UK: 83.1 years)	Longest Female life expectancy at birth for males: 83.7 years	East Renfrewshire
Education		
Class size Scotland: 22.9 pupils per class (UK: 27.2 pupils per class)	Lowest average number of pupils in primary school class: 16.6	Western Isles
Secondary Education Exams	% achieving 1+ SCQFs level 6 or above: 83.7%	East Renfrewshire

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Scotland: 64.9%		
Per pupil spending (primary & secondary)	Scotland per pupil spend: £4,974	Not available at local authority level
Personal Well Being		
Scotland & UK: 7.8 from 10	Highest Life Satisfaction rating out of 10: 8.4	Orkney
Scotland & UK: 7.9 from 10	Highest Worthwhile rating out of 10: 8.3	Orkney
Scotland & UK: 7.6 from 10	Highest Happiness rating out of 10: 8.3	Orkney
Scotland & UK: 2.8 from 10	Lowest levels of Anxiety rating out of 10: 2.1	Orkney
Lifestyle		
Scotland: 6.6 per 10,000 people (UK: 7.8 per 10,000 people)	Number of pubs per 10,000 population: 10 per 10,000 people	Argyll & Bute
Scotland: 1.5 per 10,000 people (UK: 1.5 per 10,000 people)	Number of commercial & public health and fitness centres per 10,000 population: 3.3 per 10,000 people	Perth & Kinross
Scotland: 46.9% of premises (UK: 47.5%)	% of premises with Ultra-Fast Broadband available: 92%	West Dunbartonshire

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