

## First-time buyer market rebounds as a fifth more stepped on the ladder last year

- Number of first-time buyers up +19% in 2024 vs 2023
- New buyers putting down a £61,090 deposit, on average
- Typical cost of first home now £311,034
- Average first-time buyer is 33 years old, two years older than a decade ago
- County Durham in the North East is the most affordable place to buy a first home in England
- **CASE STUDY: After years of renting, 40-year-old Jemma Sparrow's "dream came true" after saving enough to get on the housing ladder**

The number of first-time buyers stepping onto the property ladder rose to 341,068 last year, up 19% compared to 2023.

According to the latest analysis from Halifax, first-time buyers made up over half (54%) of all home purchases made with a mortgage last year, the biggest majority on record.

The average first-time buyer in 2024 was 33 years old, two years older than ten years ago (31 years old) and the oldest in two decades. They put down an average deposit of £61,090 and typically paid £311,034 for their first home.

Many buying their first home are doing so 'coupled up' – almost two thirds (62%<sup>1</sup>) of mortgage completions last year were in two or more names. However, 38% of buyers started on the property ladder on their own, a 1pp increase from 2023.

### **Amanda Bryden, Head of Mortgages, Halifax said:**

"Last year saw a big increase in the number of first-time buyers, up almost a fifth from 2023. This likely reflects an improvement in mortgage affordability, as interest rates eased and stabilised, providing more certainty for those stepping on to the ladder.

"Many are still teaming up to make the numbers work, with most buying homes jointly. This makes sense given the average deposit of £61,090 and an average starter home price of £311,034, which can be a stretch for those with a single income. It's not surprising the average first-time buyer is now 33 years old, the oldest in the last two decades.

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“Despite the challenges of saving for a deposit and rising house prices - up 8% in 2024 - it's encouraging that first-time buyers still account for more than half of all new mortgages, the biggest majority ever recorded.”

Table 1: Number of first-time buyers in the UK

Year	Number of first-time buyers	Annual % change	First-time buyers as % of all home purchase loans
2014	310,280	+20%	46%
2015	298,190	-4%	46%
2016	328,490	+10%	48%
2017	345,920	+5%	49%
2018	353,120	+2%	50%
2019	351,260	-1%	51%
2020	303,980	-13%	50%
2021	405,250	+33%	48%
2022	369,870	-9%	52%
2023	287,060	-22%	53%
2024*	341,068	+19%	54%

Source: UK Finance and Halifax estimates\* for 2024

## House prices and deposits

In 2024, the average cost of a first-time buyer home was £311,034 (up +8% vs 2023), with deposits averaging 20% of the purchase price. This means a typical new buyer is putting down a deposit of £61,090, around £7,500 (+14%) more than in 2023.

## All regions increased number of first-time buyers

Across the UK, all regions and nations saw growth in the number of buyers getting on the housing ladder. East Anglia and the South West experienced the largest increases, with +22% more first-time buyers than in 2023.

When looking over the last decade, almost all regions saw an increase in the number of first-time buyers, with Northern Ireland (+25%) and Wales (+20%) leading the way. London was the only exception, with 8% fewer first-time buyers than 10 years ago.

## First-time buyers getting older

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The average age of a first-time buyer has increased to 33 years old in 2024, (from 32 years old in 2023), the oldest in two decades. The average person buying a first home is now 31 years or older in all UK regions and nations.

At a local level, the Shetlands Islands in Scotland have the youngest average first-time buyer, at 27 years of age. At the other end of the scale, Slough in Berkshire and Sutton, South London have the oldest first-time buyers at 38 years old – five years older than the UK average.

## Affordability

Average property values for first-time buyers are now around 6.6 times the average UK salary (£46,970), so it's no surprise that most new buyers are purchasing in joint names rather than by themselves.

The most affordable place to buy a first home in the country is in the North of England, with County Durham topping the list. Using the comparison of the average earnings in County Durham in the North East (£39,245) to the average first-time buyer property price in the area (£142,248) those getting started on the property ladder need to borrow roughly 3.6 times the average salary.

The least affordable areas in the country are in London and the South East. First-time buyers in Hammersmith and Fulham face average house prices (£622,115) of more than 10 times the average salary (£64,646).

## Amanda Bryden, Head of Mortgages, Halifax said:

“Looking ahead we expect modest house price growth in 2025, but upcoming Stamp Duty threshold reductions won't make things any easier in the short term for first-time buyers. However as last year's figures show, there are ways to make your money go further, with affordable areas in the North of the country, such as County Durham or Burnley, offering more value.

“While the journey to homeownership can look daunting, there are lots of tools and schemes available to help, such as mortgage products tailored for those buying a first home, or Shared Ownership can also be a route to stepping on the property ladder at lower cost.

“The best first step is to speak to a mortgage adviser or broker. By understanding what you need to save and what's affordable, you can turn the dream of owning a home into reality.”

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**CASE STUDY:** Jemma Sparrow, 40, from Chipping Sodbury, South Gloucestershire made it on to the property ladder for the first time last year.

*“After renting for years, it was always our dream to own a home to call our own. However, it’s been challenging, especially with my husband being self-employed. Balancing rent, raising our children and being able to put enough money aside towards a deposit was tough.*

*“We didn’t want to miss out on making memories, like much-needed holidays with our sons, as they grow up so fast. But we were always looking at ways to save extra money. Finally, last November, just before I turned 40, we were able to buy our forever home.*



*“I still cannot believe it’s actually ours and so much bigger than the previous houses we rented. My favourite part is being able to decorate it and change things to exactly how we want.*

*“We love entertaining our family and friends and filling our home with happy memories. It took a while, but we kept going and our hard work has paid off now we have a place to call our own.”*

Photo shows Jemma with her husband Tom and their children Leo and Lucas.

**Further tables**

Table 2: First-time buyers: average price and deposit by nations and regions, 1 year change

Region	Average house price 2023 (£s)	Average house price 2024 (£s)	Average deposit 2023 (£s)	Average deposit 2024 (£s)	Deposit as % of purchase price 2024	1 year % change in deposit	1 year % change in average price
East Midlands	240,456	249,130	36,836	40,402	+16%	+10%	+4%
East of England	332,468	346,523	54,015	56,526	+16%	+5%	+4%
London	492,687	511,514	109,278	124,688	+24%	+14%	+4%
North East	179,415	180,834	30,567	30,678	+17%	0%	+1%
Northern Ireland	175,382	194,323	32,197	37,898	+20%	+18%	+11%
North West	219,786	230,161	36,594	39,574	+17%	+8%	+5%
Scotland	192,176	200,356	40,439	43,537	+22%	+8%	+4%
South East	359,041	367,974	60,624	61,744	+17%	+2%	+2%
South West	277,978	291,362	49,730	55,083	+19%	+11%	+5%
Wales	203,927	211,339	37,709	39,877	+19%	+6%	+4%
West Midlands	241,034	255,373	38,708	42,898	+17%	+11%	+6%
Yorkshire and The Humber	208,319	210,578	34,165	36,731	+17%	+8%	+1%
<b>UK<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>288,136</b>	<b>311,034</b>	<b>53,414</b>	<b>61,090</b>	<b>+20%</b>	<b>+14%</b>	<b>+8%</b>

Source: Halifax rolling 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, 2024

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**Table 3: Number of first-time buyers by nations and regions**

Region	2014	2019	2023	2024*	1-year change	10-year change
North	13,140	16,010	13,180	15,375	17%	17%
Yorkshire and the Humber	24,440	29,950	23,420	27,298	17%	12%
East Midlands	22,140	27,210	22,010	25,692	17%	16%
East Anglia	11,300	12,420	10,400	12,693	22%	12%
Greater London	48,200	40,720	37,250	44,521	20%	-8%
South East	63,510	68,070	56,120	67,200	20%	6%
South West	24,990	28,210	22,590	27,583	22%	10%
West Midlands	25,070	31,460	24,200	28,569	18%	14%
North West	29,960	37,900	30,130	35,486	18%	18%
Wales	12,270	15,890	12,530	14,772	18%	20%
Scotland	27,550	32,630	27,020	32,620	21%	18%
N. Ireland	7,430	10,790	8,210	9,259	13%	25%
<b>UK<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>310,280</b>	<b>351,260</b>	<b>287,060</b>	<b>341,068</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Sources: UK Finance and Halifax estimate\* for 2024. Nation and regions total does not equal UK total due to rounding.

**Table 4: Average age of first-time buyers by nations and regions 2014 vs 2024**

Region	Average age 2014	Average age 2024
East Midlands	30	32
East of England	31	33
London	33	34
North East	29	31
Northern Ireland	30	32
North West	30	32
Scotland	30	32
South East	31	34
South West	30	32
Wales	30	31
West Midlands	30	33
Yorkshire and The Humber	29	31
<b>UK</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>33</b>

Source: Halifax, 12 months to December

**Table 5: England and Wales 10 Most affordable Local Authority Districts for first-time buyers, 2024**

Local Authority District	Region	House price to average earnings ratio
County Durham	North East	3.6
Burnley	North West	3.8
Isle of Anglesey	Wales	3.8
Pendle	North West	3.9
Cumberland	North West	4.0
Hyndburn	North West	4.0

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Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland	4.1
Blackpool	North West	4.1
Merthyr Tydfil	Wales	4.1
North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	4.1

**Source:** See notes to editors

**Table 6: UK 10 Most affordable Local Authority Districts for first-time buyers, 2024**

Local Authority District	Region	House Price to average earnings ratio
Inverclyde	Scotland	3.2
East Ayrshire	Scotland	3.3
West Dunbartonshire	Scotland	3.4
Na h-Eileanan Siar	Scotland	3.5
Clackmannanshire	Scotland	3.5
County Durham	North East	3.6
Argyll and Bute	Scotland	3.8
Fife	Scotland	3.8
Burnley	North West	3.8
Isle of Anglesey	Wales	3.8

**Source:** See notes to editors

**Table 7: UK 10 Least affordable Local Authority Districts for first-time buyers, 2024**

Local Authority District	Region	House Price to average earnings ratio
Hammersmith and Fulham	London	10.2
Hillingdon	London	9.9
Haringey	London	9.6
Hounslow	London	9.6
Harrow	London	9.5
Waltham Forest	London	9.4
Camden	London	9.3
Oxford	South East	9.3
Hackney	London	9.2
Tandridge	South East	9.2

**Source:** See notes to editors

**Table 8: First-time buyers: average price and deposit by nations and regions, 5 year change**

Region	Average house price 2019 (£s)	Average house price 2024 (£s)	Average deposit 2019 (£s)	Average deposit 2024 (£s)	5 year % change in deposit	5 year % change in average price
East Midlands	184,282	249,130	34,503	40,402	17%	35%
East of England	276,158	346,523	51,586	56,526	10%	25%
London	452,862	511,514	113,895	124,688	9%	13%

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North East	141,778	180,834	26,269	30,678	17%	28%
Northern Ireland	134,395	194,323	23,185	37,898	63%	45%
North West	168,278	230,161	32,029	39,574	24%	37%
Scotland	160,387	200,356	31,517	43,537	38%	25%
South East	303,120	367,974	59,088	61,744	4%	21%
South West	225,743	291,362	44,572	55,083	24%	29%
Wales	162,125	211,339	31,177	39,877	28%	30%
West Midlands	184,324	255,373	33,760	42,898	27%	39%
Yorkshire and The Humber	159,262	210,578	29,545	36,731	24%	32%
<b>UK<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>233,876</b>	<b>311,034</b>	<b>48,044</b>	<b>61,090</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>33%</b>

Source: Halifax rolling 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, 2024

**Table 9: First-time buyers: average price and deposit by nations and regions, 10 year change**

Region	Average house price 2019 (£s)	Average house price 2024 (£s)	Average deposit 2019 (£s)	Average deposit 2024 (£s)	5 year % change in deposit	5 year % change in average price
East Midlands	130,328	249,130	24,192	40,402	67%	91%
East of England	192,099	346,523	37,261	56,526	52%	80%
London	306,415	511,514	70,522	124,688	77%	67%
North East	116,156	180,834	22,315	30,678	37%	56%
Northern Ireland	98,555	194,323	16,991	37,898	123%	97%
North West	123,379	230,161	22,210	39,574	78%	87%
Scotland	127,980	200,356	26,220	43,537	66%	57%
South East	218,395	367,974	43,798	61,744	41%	68%
South West	169,496	291,362	35,583	55,083	55%	72%
Wales	122,470	211,339	22,747	39,877	75%	73%
West Midlands	135,547	255,373	26,658	42,898	61%	88%
Yorkshire and The Humber	120,351	210,578	22,101	36,731	66%	75%
<b>UK<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>167,235</b>	<b>311,034</b>	<b>33,935</b>	<b>61,090</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>86%</b>

Source: Halifax rolling 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014, 2024

## Notes to editor:

### Photo of Jemma Sparrow and family available on request.

<sup>i</sup> Based on combined Halifax, Lloyds and Bank of Scotland mortgage completion data between January and December 2024, 62% were joint (2 parties or more) and 38% were sole applicants

<sup>2</sup> Nations and regions are based on Government Office Regions, with the exception of the numbers of first-time buyers, as UK Finance use Economics Planning Regions.

This research is based on data from the Halifax's own extensive housing statistics database, UK Finance statistics (including Halifax estimates based on the expected levels of market completions given the prevailing economic environment and lead indicator of market applications), and ONS ASHE data on average earnings.

### House Prices

The prices used in this research are simple arithmetic ('crude') averages for 12 months to December each year. These prices are not standardised and

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therefore can be affected by changes in the sample from period to period.

### **Average Earnings**

Average earnings figures are from the ONS's "Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings" (ASHE) at Q4 2024 uplifted to October 2024 using ONS EARN weekly earnings data and refer to the means for full-time employees.

This report is prepared from information that we believe is collated with care; however, it is only intended to highlight issues and it is not intended to be comprehensive. We reserve the right to vary our methodology and to edit or discontinue/withdraw this, or any other report. Any use of this report for an individual's own or third-party commercial purposes is done entirely at the risk of the person making such use and solely the responsibility of the person or persons making such reliance." © Bank of Scotland plc all rights reserved 2025.

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