



Buyers and sellers show resilience amid ongoing turbulence

Property Sentiment Index, Spring 2026



Property seekers are demonstrating consistent resilience in the face of enduring economic and political uncertainty. The latest edition of the OnTheMarket Property Sentiment Index (PSI) reveals that, rather than retreating from the macro-economic noise, buyers and sellers are adapting with increasing resilience.

Our Property Sentiment Index (PSI) draws on two surveys, one conducted via YouGov among the general public and another sent to OnTheMarket users who have registered for property alerts in the past six months.

Affordability confidence remains high for almost three quarters of active buyers (an average of 71% across our YouGov and OnTheMarket surveys), equal to that recorded in September 2025 (70% of OnTheMarket property seekers), despite the Autumn Budget, geopolitical conflict and potential interest rate and inflation rise. The confidence is in spite of an increased expectation of interest rate rises, of which 36% of the general public surveyed are forecasting; a higher proportion than property seekers from OnTheMarket of which 25% predict an increase.

How confident are you that you will be able to raise the necessary funds to purchase your next property?



Combined average percentages calculated using results from the OnTheMarket SurveyMonkey survey and YouGov survey.

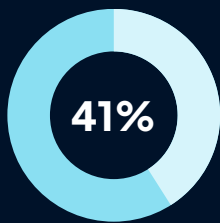
Together, this consistency of sentiment and enduring confidence suggests a market that is adapting to change, treating volatility as part of the landscape rather than a reason to delay decisions.

Sentiment towards the property market

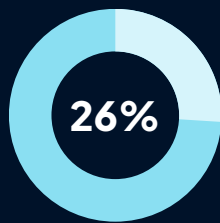
The market and economy

While expectations around house price growth have moderated, this appears to reflect a more pragmatic outlook rather than a loss of confidence. Responses from OnTheMarket property seekers shows that 41% still expect house prices to rise over the next year, with a 10% point drop compared to six months ago. A growing proportion now anticipate stability, with 26% expecting prices to remain broadly the same, up from 21%. Only 15% believe prices will fall, suggesting most buyers and sellers are adjusting expectations rather than stepping away from the market altogether.

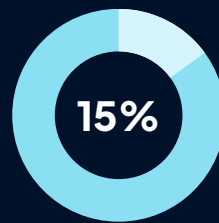
Looking to the next 12 months, do you think house prices will rise, fall or stay the same?



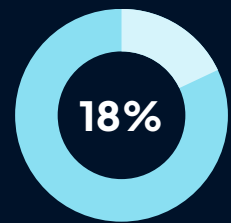
House prices will rise



House prices will stay the same



House prices will fall



Don't know

Data from OnTheMarket survey using SurveyMonkey.

Crucially, this is not translating into inactivity. Respondents from the OnTheMarket survey show that nearly three quarters (73%) of those with a property to sell still expect to do so within the next six months, down by just 5% since September 2025, with half of those anticipating a sale within three months. This continued momentum indicates that, even amid economic uncertainty and mixed signals on interest rates, sellers remain committed to progressing with their plans.

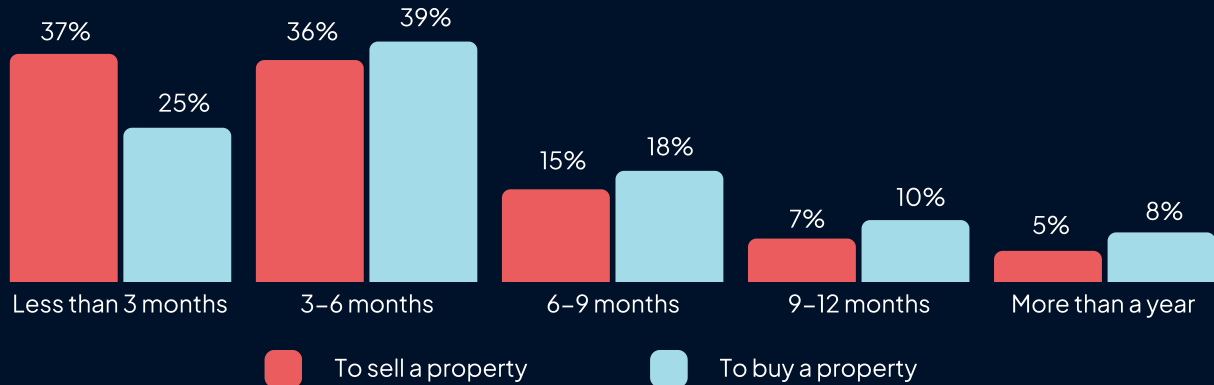
Buyers and sellers appear increasingly comfortable operating within a more fluid environment, one where price growth may be modest and conditions changeable, but where confidence in transacting remains intact.



Sales and rental market expectations

Timelines for buying, selling, and renting remain broadly consistent with last year. Amongst OnTheMarket property seekers that have a property to sell, 37% expect to accept an offer within three months, and a similar proportion (36%) expect a 3-6 month process. Buyers most commonly anticipate a 3-6 month search (39%), while renters remain the most optimistic: a third expect to secure a tenancy within three months.

Expected timelines for buying and selling a property

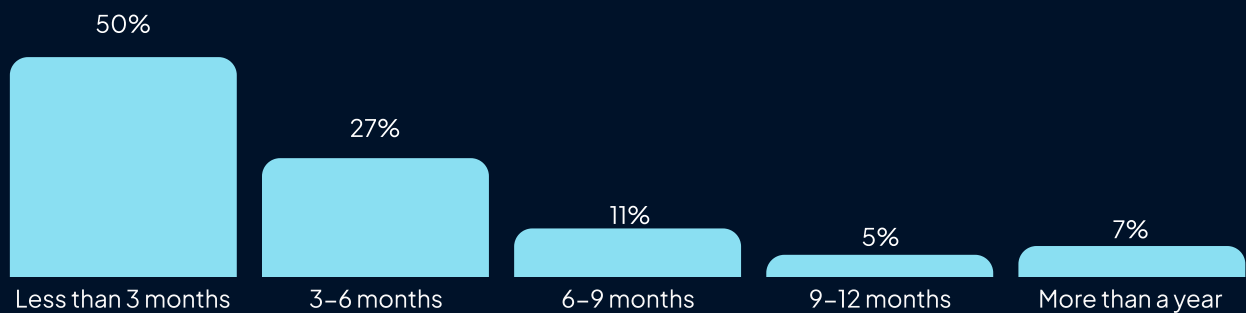


Data from OnTheMarket property seeker survey using SurveyMonkey.

These expectations may soon be tested by the rollout of the Renters' Rights Act, which begins implementation on 1 May 2026. The first phase will abolish assured shorthold tenancies and Section 21 'no-fault' evictions, replacing them with assured monthly periodic tenancies. The government has committed to a phased approach to help landlords, tenants and local authorities prepare for the transition.

While the reforms aim to improve security for renters, the adjustment period may temporarily lengthen search times as landlords adapt to new compliance requirements.

Expected timelines for renting a property



Data from OnTheMarket property seeker survey using SurveyMonkey.



How buyers are funding their next move

Mortgages remain the most common source of funds for a new property, followed closely by personal savings and earnings with both the general public and OnTheMarket property seekers. Many buyers will also rely on proceeds from a recent sale, while smaller proportions expect to use inheritance or financial support from relatives.

The Spring Statement did not introduce new buyer focused schemes, despite industry calls for renewed first time buyer support such as a reimagined Help to Buy. Analysts warn that without measures to stimulate demand for new homes, housebuilders may slow delivery, further challenging the government's already stretched target of 1.5 million new homes this Parliament.

Why people are looking to move

The most common reason for moving remains a desire for a new location. Upsizing is more common among the general public (28%) than downsizing (16%), while OnTheMarket respondents show the opposite pattern and are mostly looking to move to a new location (24%). Other motivations include moving closer to family, bereavement, relationship changes and health-related needs.

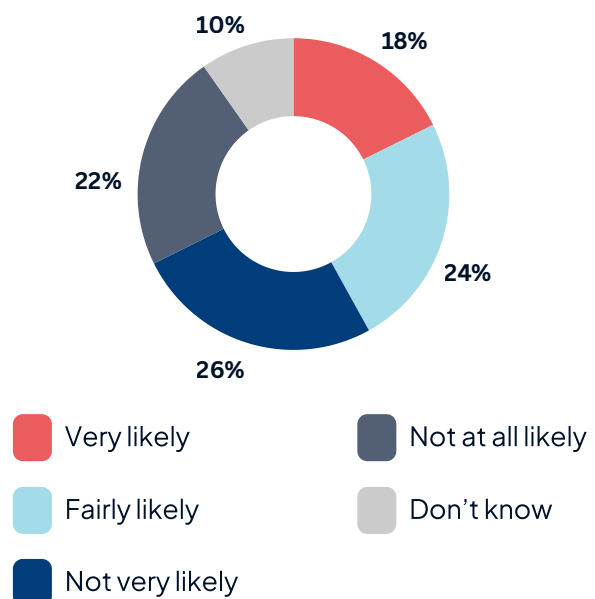
New Homes

Interest in new builds remains divided. Just under half (42%) of OnTheMarket property seekers say they would consider a new home, compared with only 27% of YouGov respondents. Energy efficiency and lower running costs are the strongest motivators, alongside modern design, financial incentives, and the appeal of a chain free purchase.

However, the Spring Statement confirmed that housing supply is expected to fall, with net additions projected to drop to around 220,000 in 2026–27, well below the government's ambitions.

This tightening supply may increase competition for new builds, particularly if developers reintroduce incentives or if further government support emerges later in the year.

How likely are you to consider a new build?



When considering a new home, what factor(s) are most likely to persuade you to buy one?

1. Energy efficiency/
lower running costs



5. Modern design/appliances



2. Ability to make it your own



6. Being brand new/ the
convenience of being
move-in ready



3. Ease of purchase, e.g.
no onward chain



7. The warranty



4. Financial incentives/
help to buy schemes



8. Availability of new build
homes



Data from OnTheMarket survey using SurveyMonkey.

Insights from the OnTheMarket website

Keywords

To get the most accurate results, people can use the keyword function to home in on the specific features they're looking for in their new home. Among buyers gardens, garages and parking remain the most common search terms, with rural properties, freehold properties and land also remaining popular. We have seen an increase in the number of people looking for character properties and those with land.

Top must-haves for buyers



4. Rural

5. Freehold

6. Character

7. With land

8. Annexe

9. Outbuildings

10. Sea views



Similarly to buyers, renters are also looking for homes with a garden or outside space, a garage or parking. However, we see more renter-specific keywords filling out the top 10 with bills included, pets considered and furnished all proving popular search terms.

Top must-haves for renters




4. Bills included 

5. Pet-friendly 

6. Balcony 

7. Two bathrooms 

8. Furnished 

9. Rural 

10. Ensuite 

Property types

Many of our property seekers filter their search results using our 'property type' filter. The most commonly searched for house is detached, while we also see high numbers of people looking for bungalows, houses and semi-detached homes. Others in the top ten include flats/apartments, terraced homes, farms, land and cottages.

Among renters, flats/apartments are the most popular option, followed by detached and semi-detached homes. Bungalows took fourth place, while terraced homes, studio flats and flat shares still appearing in the top ten but nearer the bottom of the rankings.

Most searched property types by buyers

1. Detached house 
2. Bungalow 
3. Semi-detached house 
4. Flats/apartments 
5. Terraced 
6. Farms/land 
7. Cottages 

Most searched property types by renters

1. Flats/apartments 
2. Detached house 
3. Semi-detached house 
4. Bungalow 
5. Terraced 
6. Studio 
7. House flat share 

Price reductions

While the number of properties on site seeing reductions in their prices remained steady throughout January and February, the first week of March has seen a noticeable increase, from 0.55% of the available properties to 0.6%.



Jason Tebb

President, OnTheMarket

“Contrary to the headlines, this response points to an impressive level of resilience and optimism among UK buyers and sellers. Even against a backdrop of ongoing political and economic turbulence, attitudes towards affordability, property values and moving home remain remarkably buoyant.

What we’re seeing is a growing acceptance that uncertainty is no longer the exception but the norm. The UK housing market is fundamentally needs-driven, and life events will always prompt people to move, whether that’s upsizing, downsizing or relocating. Those actively engaged in the market are taking a pragmatic, long-term view and finding ways to make moves happen. In many cases, the reality on the ground is far more positive than it appears from the sidelines.”

Insights from OnTheMarket agents



Marc von Grundherr

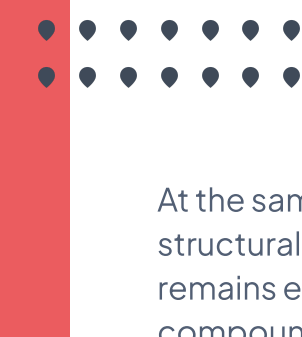
Director, Benham and Reeves

 Benham
& Reeves

“While sentiment around the wider economy remains cautious, the findings highlight that those actively engaged in the property market tend to view the outlook with a greater degree of balance than the general public.

For buyers and sellers, the property market is often driven by life events rather than short-term economic noise, and this helps to explain why many remain confident about their ability to move despite ongoing uncertainty around interest rates and the broader economic backdrop.





At the same time, the expectation that rental prices will continue to rise reflects the structural pressures still present within the lettings sector. Demand for rental homes remains extremely strong while supply remains constrained, and this is being compounded by continued uncertainty surrounding the Renters' Rights Act as more key changes continue to come into effect from April. Until this policy landscape becomes clearer and supply improves, it's likely that rental values will remain under upward pressure.

What the research ultimately shows is a market that is cautious, but far from stagnant. Buyers, sellers and renters are still active and engaged, and this underlying level of demand continues to provide an important foundation for the property market moving forward.”

Methodology

Between 27 February and 9 March 2026, over 2,000 active property seekers who have recently signed up for property alerts or sent a property enquiry within the last six months at OnTheMarket participated in our surveys.

Data in this article was collected via two surveys:

- YouGov omnibus survey with a sample size of 4,546 adults in the UK, conducted between 5-9 March 2026.
 - Those actively looking to buy or rent a property = 301
 - Those who currently own a home = 129
 - Those actively looking to purchase a property = 231
- OnTheMarket survey using SurveyMonkey, with 2,061 respondents in total.

Where totals do not add up to 100%, this is due to rounding.

Data on keywords, property types, new instructions and reduced properties is for 1 January to 12 March 2026 and is drawn from OnTheMarket's data compiled from thousands of estate agent branches and housebuilders who list their properties with OnTheMarket every month.

The data for keywords and property types is related to all searches that have used those filters and does not include information relating to searches without them.

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