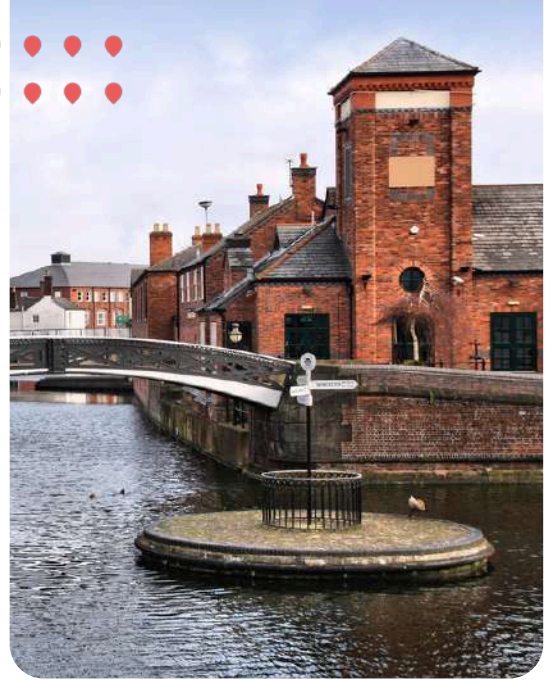




# Northern towns and cities including Bradford and Wigan race ahead as southern markets slow

Hotspots Index, February 2026



The latest OnTheMarket Hotspots report shows the gap between North and South is widening and its the northern sales market setting the pace.

By tracking instructions, buyer leads and property searches, the Hotspots Index reveals where homes are generating the most activity. And once again, it's towns and cities in the North that are drawing the strongest demand in today's most competitive sales markets.


## Bradford holds firm but Wigan and Rochdale surge

Between November and January, Bradford has kept its crown as England's busiest sales market since December 2024. But the real story this period are some of the changes in rankings behind Bradford.


### Top 10 hotspots




**1. Bradford**  
→ Previous ranking #1




**2. Wigan**  
↑ Previous ranking #9




**3. Rochdale**  
↑ Previous ranking #12




**4. Stoke-on-Trent**  
↑ Previous ranking #6




**5. Coventry**  
↑ Previous ranking #7




**6. Newcastle upon Tyne**  
↑ Previous ranking #8




**7. Sunderland**  
↓ Previous ranking #4



**8. Liverpool**  
↓ Previous ranking #3



**9. Middlesbrough**  
↑ Previous ranking #13



**10. Burnley**  
↓ Previous ranking #2

Check out the full list at [OnTheMarket](#)

Wigan leapt seven places, rising from ninth to second, while Rochdale climbed nine spots to reach third. Meanwhile, Stoke-on-Trent, Coventry and Newcastle upon Tyne each moved up two places. Affordable homes, high buyer interest and strong instructions continue to prove a hard-to-beat formula.

Meanwhile, some former high performers slipped down the rankings. Sunderland dropped three places, while Liverpool fell by five. Burnley experienced the sharpest decline, tumbling from second to tenth.

## Southern coastal towns stuck at the bottom

At the other end of the table, the same names reappear and for the same reason. Higher house prices continue to weigh on activity in many southern coastal locations. Brighton remains anchored to the bottom spot, while Southend-on-Sea and Worthing complete the bottom three. Portsmouth dropped five places, falling into the bottom ten and Exeter dropped three spots.

There were, however, small signs of recovery. Chatham climbed five places and Bristol rose three, narrowly avoiding the bottom ten. But the pattern is clear: when affordability tightens, activity slows.

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## London market hotspots

### London's hotspots sit on the edges but there's one surprise at the centre

In London, momentum continues to sit on the outer boroughs, echoing [January's Under Offer Index](#).

The surprise? The City of London takes the top spot, likely amplified by the small number of instructions in the Square Mile. Joining London in the top five are Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge and Bexley - all among the capital's fastest-moving markets right now.

Barnet was among the highest climbers in the latest rankings, jumping nine places, as well as Islington also made notable progress, rising four places.

### Central London boroughs lose ground

In central London, however, the story is very different, with several boroughs sliding down the rankings. Lambeth sits at the bottom, followed by Haringey and Hackney, while Wandsworth and Tower Hamlets each dropped a place.


Although Southwark climbed three positions, it still remains in the bottom ten, alongside Hammersmith & Fulham, Greenwich, Ealing and Merton.




## Top 10 London borough hotspots




**1. City of London**  
 ↑ Previous ranking #2



**2. Barking and Dagenham**  
 ↓ Previous ranking #1



**3. Havering**  
 ↑ Previous ranking #4




**4. Redbridge**  
 ↓ Previous ranking #3




**5. Bexley**  
 → Previous ranking #5




**6. Enfield**  
 ↑ Previous ranking #9




**7. Newham**  
 ↓ Previous ranking #6



**8. Sutton**  
 ↓ Previous ranking #7



**9. Barnet**  
 ↑ Previous ranking #18



**10. Islington**  
 ↑ Previous ranking #14

Check out the full list  
 at [OnTheMarket](#)



**Jason Tebb**  
 President, OnTheMarket

“These latest Hotspots results underline a trend we’ve been seeing for some time now, affordability is a key driver of market momentum. Northern towns and cities, where buyers can get more for their money, are seeing consistently higher levels of activity, while more expensive southern and central locations are finding conditions more challenging.

What’s particularly interesting is how this pattern is echoed in London, with outer boroughs outperforming more central areas. Buyers remain motivated, but they are increasingly focused on value, and that’s clearly reflected in where we’re seeing the strongest instructions, searches and enquiries.”

## What this tells us about today’s market

The Hotspots data points to one unmistakable trend: buyers are chasing value, and that value is increasingly being found in the North and on the outskirts of London. Where homes are more affordable, activity is stronger; where prices are higher, momentum is harder to sustain. For agents, sellers and buyers alike, the direction of travel is clear: the market’s energy is shifting northward and outward.



## Methodology

The OnTheMarket Hotspots ranking data is calculated by looking at the number of available sales properties within a certain area in England, and comparing that against the volume of onsite activity over the same period to create a score that is representative of the intensity of interest in that market.

Areas are ranked by this score and this score is compared across different time periods to show how the 'heat' of the market is changing over time.

The data in this report is for November 2025 to January 2026.

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