

Scotland offers UK’s most affordable places to buy a first home

- Number of first-time buyers up +21% last year, compared to 2023
- First-time buyers make up over half (51%) of all home loans
- UK’s five most affordable areas for buying a first home are in Scotland
- First-time buyers on the Shetland Islands are the youngest in the UK, at 27 years old, on average
- New buyers putting down an average £43,537 deposit and typically paying £200,356 for their home

The number of first-time buyers in Scotland rose to 32,620 last year, up +21% compared to 2023. Those starting out on the property market made up the majority (51%) of all home purchases (with a mortgage) last year.

According to the latest analysis from Bank of Scotland, those buying a first home put down an average deposit of £43,537 last year, up +8% from 2023 (+66% more than a decade ago). First-time buyers typically paid £200,356 for their first home, up 4% on the year before and £72,000 more expensive than ten years ago (+57%).

The average Scottish first-time buyer is 32 years old, a year younger than the UK average (33 years old). In fact, new buyers in Scotland’s Shetland Islands are the youngest across the UK, at 27 years old.

Table 1: Number of first-time buyers in Scotland

Year	Number of first-time buyers	Annual % change	First-time buyers as % of all home purchase loans
2014	27,550	20%	47%
2015	28,430	3%	46%
2016	30,660	8%	50%
2017	33,560	9%	50%
2018	32,480	-3%	50%
2019	32,630	0%	49%
2020	28,740	-12%	51%
2021	35,000	22%	50%
2022	30,500	-13%	49%
2023	27,020	-11%	50%
2024*	32,620	21%	51%

Source: UK Finance and Bank of Scotland estimates* for 2024

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Isla Benzie, Head of Bank of Scotland Mortgages said:

“Scotland continues to offer great appeal for those buying their first home, with some of the most affordable places in the UK, evidenced by last year’s increase in the number of people stepping onto the property ladder in the country.

“The challenges of saving for a big enough deposit and rising house prices remain, but it’s reassuring over half of all home loans were for first-time buyers.

“While the journey to homeownership can look daunting, there are lots of tools and schemes available to help.

“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 your own place into a reality.”

Affordability for first-time buyers

Compared to the rest of the UK, Scotland has some of the most affordable places for those buying a first home. Inverclyde in West-Central Scotland is the most affordable, as properties here are around 3.2 times the average salary (£41,300).

In contrast, Edinburgh - which also has one of the highest average house prices (£276,717) - is the least affordable in Scotland, with average property prices around 5.6 times the average salary (49,077).

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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
Scotland	192,176	200,356	40,439	43,537	+22%	+8%	+4%
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%
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%
UK**	288,136	311,034	53,414	61,090	+20%	+14%	+8%

Source: Bank of Scotland rolling 12 months to 31st December 2023, 2024

Table 3: 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
Scotland	127,980	200,356	26,220	43,537	66%	57%
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%
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%
UK**	167,235	311,034	33,935	61,090	80%	86%

Source: Bank of Scotland rolling 12 months to 31st December 2014, 2024

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

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

Source: Bank of Scotland, 12 months to December

Table 5: Scotland 10 Most affordable Local Authority District's for first-time buyers, 2024

Local Authority District	House Price to Average Earnings ratio
Inverclyde	3.2
East Ayrshire	3.3
West Dunbartonshire	3.4
Na h-Eileanan Siar	3.5
Clackmannanshire	3.5
Argyll and Bute	3.8
Fife	3.8
Scottish Borders	3.9
North Ayrshire	3.9
Shetland Islands	3.9

Source: See Notes to Eds

Table 6: Scotland 10 Least affordable Local Authority District's for first-time buyers, 2024

Local Authority District	House Price to Average Earnings ratio
City of Edinburgh	5.6
East Renfrewshire	5.4
Midlothian	5.3
East Lothian	5.1
East Dunbartonshire	4.9
West Lothian	4.9
Glasgow City	4.8
Moray	4.5
Orkney Islands	4.4
Falkirk	4.4

Source: See Notes to Eds

Notes to editors

**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 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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