

The Rising Cost of Returning to Your Childhood Home

June 27, 2025

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For many Britons, the idea of moving back to their childhood hometown evokes a strong sense of nostalgia. Whether it's revisiting familiar streets, reconnecting with community, or raising a family where they grew up, 52% of UK adults say they would consider a return to their roots. However, new research reveals that for many, this heartfelt aspiration is becoming increasingly difficult to realize.

Over the past two decades, average UK house prices have surged by 74%, rising from £113,900 in 2005 to £268,200 in 2025. This significant increase has placed many

childhood homes firmly out of financial reach, especially in southern regions.

The South East and East of England have experienced some of the steepest rises. In Elmbridge, Surrey, average house prices have more than doubled from £338,800 to £712,700, marking a 110% increase. Similarly, St Albans has seen prices jump from £289,600 to £622,100. London itself has not been spared, with average prices up 119% to £534,400.

By contrast, affordability has improved or remained more stable in northern regions. The North East has recorded the smallest growth in house prices, at 39%. For instance, homes in Sunderland have increased from £101,600 to £124,000, a relatively modest rise of £22,400 over 20 years. Blackpool similarly offers affordable options, with prices climbing just 26% to £124,300.

Moreover, house price-to-earnings ratios have improved in the North West and Yorkshire, falling from 6 to 5.1 and 5.7 to 5 respectively, indicating enhanced affordability in these areas.

Daniel Copley, consumer expert at Zoopla, summarises the findings: “While house price growth has made returning to many childhood towns financially unattainable particularly in the South East and East of England the situation is far more positive in the North. This creates a stark regional divide in the accessibility of the ‘return home’ dream.”

As UK housing markets continue to evolve, those considering a move back to their hometowns should carefully assess local affordability, as the financial reality often differs dramatically from the warmth of nostalgia.