# Most high earners in Britain do not consider themselves wealthy



Research by HSBC Premier has uncovered that a significant majority of high earners in Britain do not consider themselves wealthy, despite earning above £100,000 annually before deductions, which places them in the top 4 per cent of earners in the country. According to the findings from HSBC Premier’s report titled "Your Money's Worth: Defining Wealth in 2025," most Britons believe that an individual must earn at least £213,000 a year to truly be classified as wealthy, which is substantially higher than the national average annual salary.

HSBC Premier’s analysis indicates that only 1 per cent of the UK population identifies as wealthy, revealing a substantial discrepancy between perceived and actual financial status. The report highlights that individuals earning £100,000 or more often see themselves as only slightly above average, estimating their financial standing to be in the top 52 per cent of earners.

Vicky Reynal, a financial psychotherapist, spoke to the Daily Mail about the paradox illuminated by the findings. She stated, "Despite having high earnings and ambitious financial goals, many mass affluent individuals still don't feel wealthy." She elaborated on this disconnect, attributing it to anxieties over rising living costs, insufficient savings, and social comparison that creates a sense of scarcity even among those who have considerable assets.

The report features insights from over 2,000 respondents, including HSBC Premier customers, and reveals that high earners often set their threshold for wealth even higher. While the general population sees £213,000 as the wealth threshold, those with high incomes believe one must earn around £724,000 annually to be considered wealthy.

The study also illustrates geographic differences in perceptions of wealth within the UK. Residents of the North East consider £80,000 as the threshold, while in Northern Ireland it is £93,000, and in the West Midlands, the figure rises to £106,000. The thresholds are substantially higher in other regions, with the South East identifying £367,000 as the wealth line, followed closely by the South West at £363,000.

For high-income earners, financial aspirations differ; about half aim for a comfortable retirement, while 30 per cent focus on home ownership. Despite the high-income bracket, challenges such as immediate costs, insufficient savings, and unpredictable income are prevalent, affecting their financial outlook.

Interestingly, while many in the general population equate wealth with material possessions like private jets and yachts, higher earners are increasingly valuing non-material indicators of wealth. Nearly half of individuals earning over £100,000 see investment holdings as a key sign of wealth, with 55 per cent of this demographic having investments compared to just 18 per cent across the broader population.

The survey also highlighted generational differences in perceptions of wealth, noting that nearly half of Gen Z (ages 18-24) consider non-material aspects, such as work-life balance, as central to wealth, unlike older age groups.

Xian Chan, head of Premier Wealth at HSBC UK, discussed the personal nature of wealth, emphasising that individuals assess wealth not just based on their financial status but also on their feelings towards money and their ability to achieve financial goals. He advised that early preparation and consistent investment habits are crucial for building long-term wealth.

The insights from HSBC Premier’s report underscore a complex relationship between income perception and actual wealth, revealing how societal comparisons and personal aspirations influence individual assessments of financial status across the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.expat.hsbc.com/wealth/insights/market-outlook/special-coverage/bank-of-england-faces-one-more-bump-in-the-road-before-accelerating-rate-cuts/> - This article provides insights into economic conditions in the UK, which can influence perceptions of wealth and financial stability. It discusses inflation and interest rates, which are relevant to the financial outlook of high earners.
* <https://www.privatebanking.hsbc.com/wih/> - Although restricted, this link suggests that HSBC provides wealth insights and investment views, which align with the themes of wealth perception and financial goals discussed in the article.
* <https://www.expat.hsbc.com/wealth/insights/market-outlook/investment-outlook/2024-11/> - This article discusses global investment trends and the importance of innovation and rate cuts, which can impact how wealth is perceived and managed by high-income earners.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source is mentioned as the origin of the article, providing context on the perceptions of wealth among high earners in the UK.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk> - The Daily Mail is mentioned as a platform where financial psychotherapist Vicky Reynal discussed the paradox of high earners not feeling wealthy, highlighting societal pressures and financial anxieties.