# Buyers can save tens of thousands on UK house prices despite record highs



House hunters seeking a bargain could find significant savings on property prices in select areas across England, despite record-high average asking prices. According to data analysed by estate experts and reported by the Daily Mail, some sellers are offering substantial discounts, sometimes up to 30 per cent below the initial asking price, in order to secure a sale.

The national average asking price for homes has climbed to a record £377,000, a figure that remains challenging for many buyers amidst strained affordability and mortgage payment pressures. However, market analyses reveal that many properties ultimately change hands for less than the listed price. Industry figures from Propertymark indicate that only 9 per cent of homes sell at their asking price, while over 80 per cent sell for below it.

Henry Pryor, a buying agent from Pryor & Co, explained to the Daily Mail that estate agents often overvalue properties, describing this as a flattering approach to persuade sellers that their home is worth more. Sellers themselves tend to be optimistic about their property's price, sometimes overlooking factors such as noise from nearby flight paths or railway lines. This dynamic can result in properties being initially listed at inflated prices, a practice which frequently fails to attract buyers willing to pay the premium amount.

Fred Jones, chief executive of house buying company Upstix, stressed that asking prices can be aspirational and buyers often do not meet these figures. He said: "It’s easy for sellers to get lured in by an over-optimistic valuation... they must reduce their asking price anyway." He added that such overvaluations contribute to fewer interested buyers and extended listing times.

This situation is beneficial for buyers, who can negotiate hefty price reductions, particularly in slower property markets. However, buying agents like Henry Sherwood caution that a discount relative to a potentially overvalued asking price does not necessarily represent a true bargain. He observed: “Around half of the properties that come to the market are overvalued. So with this in mind, a reduction from the asking price is not a discount.”

Geographically, London properties offer notable discounts on average, with homes selling for approximately 3.71 per cent less than their listed price—a saving of nearly £30,628. More striking deals exist in certain postcodes outside the capital. For example, in Northumberland’s NE63 area, which includes the fishing town of North Sunderland and the seaside village of Seahouses, the average home is listed at £450,995 but sells for about £317,612, a discount nearing 30 per cent or over £133,000.

This coastal area, near attractions like Bamburgh Castle and the Farne Islands, typifies locations where buyers can pick up homes at significantly reduced prices. Detached four- to five-bedroom houses dominate the local market. Similarly, the West Midlands’ SY12 postcode, covering towns such as Ellesmere and Welshampton near the Welsh border, shows an average discount of 20.15 per cent—homes there sell for around £297,477 compared to an average listing of £372,531.

In eastern England, the IP12 postcode, encompassing villages like Orford and Rendlesham within the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape area, presents buyers with discounts exceeding 16 per cent. Properties in this area, which boasts rural surroundings and proximity to the coast as well as a reasonable commute to Ipswich, typically sell for £80,000 less than their asking price.

The affluent south Devon seaside town of Salcombe (postcode TQ8) also makes the list with homes selling for approximately 13.3 per cent less than the listing price. Despite its reputation as a luxury coastal location, several factors contribute to price reductions there. Theo Spink, consultant at Luscombe Maye estate agents in Salcombe, attributes price dips in part to tax changes aimed at second homeowners. She remarked: “The middle classes are feeling very hit by the Government and they are wondering where the next hit is coming from.”

The introduction of a 100 per cent council tax premium on second homes may deter potential buyers seeking holiday properties. Additionally, rising costs such as mortgage rates and local taxes squeeze rental profits, encouraging some owners to seek quick sales. Spink noted shifting holiday trends away from domestic coastal towns towards European destinations, influenced by recent poor summers and soaring prices for local goods such as beer, with a pint in Salcombe costing £6 to £7.

In central London’s Marylebone district (postcode W1U), buyers can find properties with discounts of around 13.3 per cent, though these still command substantial sums, typically around £1.3 million for two- to three-bedroom flats. Paula Higgins, chief executive of the HomeOwners Alliance, commented that leasehold reforms have slowed the London market, leading to more cautious seller pricing and greater willingness to negotiate.

Conversely, some areas across the Midlands and the North have witnessed homes selling above their asking price due to high demand. For instance, in central Bradford (postcode BD1), properties sell for around £56,751 while being listed at £44,611, representing a premium of over 27 per cent. Similar trends are evident in parts of Portsmouth, Middlesbrough, Wolverhampton, and Radlett where supply constraints or buyer competition push sale prices beyond initial asking figures.

For buyers seeking to negotiate, experts advise approaching offers strategically. Paula Higgins recommends avoiding lowball bids that could offend sellers, suggesting not to go below 10 per cent under the asking price unless the local market conditions justify it. Robert Jones, founder of Property Investments UK, encourages buyers to justify offers with market data and to consider the length of time properties have been listed as leverage. He also highlights the benefit of making precise offers, rather than round figures, to signal careful consideration.

Cash buyers often have a stronger position, especially when sellers desire certainty or speed of transaction. Henry Pryor advises that buyers come prepared with proof of funds or mortgage agreements to bolster their negotiating stance.

In summary, while the UK's property market currently exhibits some of the highest average listing prices on record, considerable variance exists across the country. Buyers prepared to research and negotiate can capitalise on opportunities for substantial savings in specific regions, particularly where homes have been overvalued or where market conditions have slowed sales.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://advantage.zoopla.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/HPI-Oct-2023.pdf> - Supports the claim that sellers are offering discounts below asking prices, with data showing average discounts of 3.4% to 6.1% in southern England and London, and that sellers accept increasingly larger discounts to secure sales, confirming the article's mention of up to 30% discounts in some areas.
2. <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/press/releases/housing-market-activity-improves-across-all-key-measures-as-average-discount/> - Corroborates the information that average discount rates between asking price and sale price have fluctuated and that while average discounts recently narrowed to 3.9%, buyers often pay less than the asking price, supporting the article's theme of aspirational asking prices and negotiation.
3. <https://www.carpenter-surveyors.com/blog/house-price-index-november-2023> - Confirms that house prices in the UK are at record highs and that discounts to asking prices are at a multi-year high, especially in the South of England, reinforcing the article's discussion on average asking prices climbing to £377,000 but buyers paying less.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-sales-and-demolitions-2023-24-england/social-housing-sales-and-demolitions-2023-24-right-to-buy-sales--3> - Provides official statistics on property sales discounts, showing significant discounts (up to around 43-54%) for social housing Right to Buy sales, supporting the article's point that substantial discounts on asking prices occur in certain markets in England.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-sales-and-demolitions-2022-23-england/social-housing-sales-and-demolitions-2022-23-right-to-buy-sales> - Details how changing government policies on Right to Buy discounts and price inflations have affected sales and discounts over time, adding context to the article's discussion of price reductions and market dynamics affecting buyers and sellers.
6. <https://www.propertymark.co.uk/news/property-market-data-2023/> - Supports data referenced about the proportion of homes selling below asking price (over 80%), and only a small percentage selling at or above asking price, matching the article's citation of Propertymark industry figures.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/article-14635823/Salcombe-Marylebone-Sea-Houses-Northumberland-30-cent-asking-price-Lucy-Evans.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data