trowers & hamlins

Ages and stages

Connecting homes and growth

How demand patterns, demographic trends and economic engines shape the future of our homes.

An initiative from **Trowers & Hamlins**

To meet the ambitious goal of delivering 1.5 million homes by the end of the current Parliament, the UK must not only drive economic growth but also address specific housing needs in response to changing demographics across the UK. The most important determinant of demand is the age profile of the UK population, the country is ageing, and our milestones are shifting later.

There are two critical areas of housing delivery that will be influenced by these factors, Build to Rent (BTR) sector, predominantly serving those between the ages of 25-34, and the provision of senior living housing, which doesn't currently provide enough options for a stage of life that could be up to 50 years long.

The BTR sector has shown remarkable growth, with the completion of over 22,300 new BTR homes in 2024 alone, marking a record year for the sector.

The operational BTR stock, which includes co-living, multifamily, and single-family housing, now exceeds 126,000 homes, with substantial growth projected in the coming years.

Simultaneously, the UK's ageing population presents an urgent need for senior living housing. With people aged 65 and over constituting around 18% of the population and the number of those aged 80 and over set to more than double, there is a clear demand for more housing solutions that cater to older adults. Modern senior living schemes must evolve to accommodate the active lifestyles of the over-55s, ensuring that housing options are both diverse and flexible.

This report, the latest in the Ages and Stages initiative, examines demographic trends, regional variations, and economic factors, exploring how these sectors can address the evolving needs of the UK population and support the broader goal of economic and social well-being.

Understanding how economic drivers interact with home supply

In the past 25 years, a third of the UK's highest productivity industries were responsible for generating nearly two-thirds of the economy's entire productivity growth.

In its new 10-year industrial strategy, Invest 2035, the UK Government has identified a mix of eight 'old and new' business sectors which it believes offer the highest growth opportunity for the economy:

- **Advanced manufacturing**
- **Clean energy industries**
- **Creative industries**
- **Defence**
- **Digital and technologies**
- **Financial services**
- **Life sciences**
- **Professional and business services**

We will continue to explore these growth sectors to understand how they are driving prosperity and needs for homes across the UK.

8.5m

The number of people in the UK with an unsatisfied housing need

70%

of people choose to remain in family home after children have moved out

£234,000

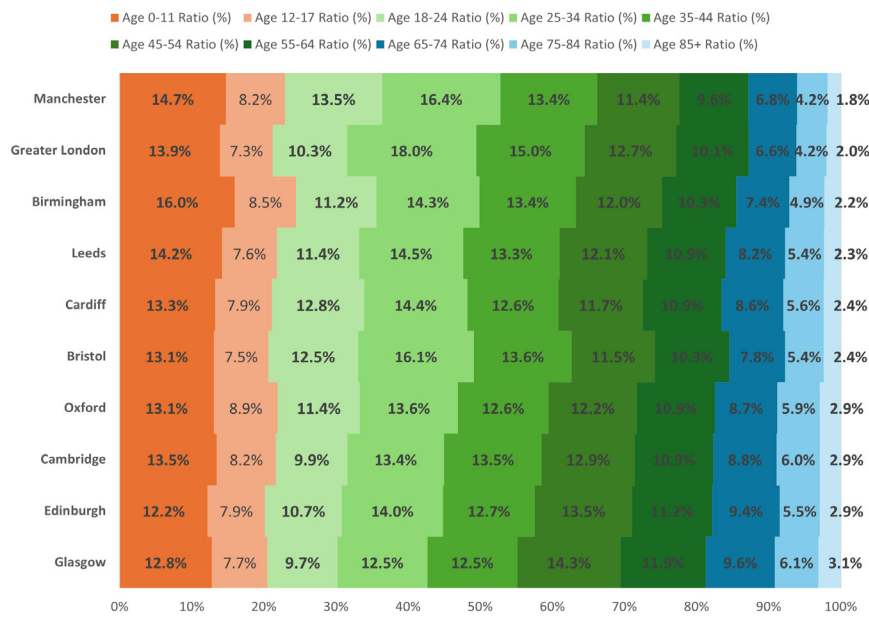Average mortgage amount for UK first-time buyers

£60,000

Average annual cost of residential care for the elderly

The UK home landscape

Different occupier groups have varying priorities which influence home demand across the UK. We are a growing but also an ageing population and this will be expressed over time in different strands of demand for homes.

As the table below shows, there is a developing variance in the age profiles of locations across the UK and this will become increasingly pronounced as the population grows but has a bigger segment which is moving into upper age bands.

Chart 1   Life Stages by Major UK City: Demographics March 2025

■ Age 0-11 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 12-17 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 18-24 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 25-34 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 35-44 Ratio (%)
■ Age 45-54 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 55-64 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 65-74 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 75-84 Ratio (%)   ■ Age 85+ Ratio (%)

City	0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Manchester	14.7%	8.2%	13.5%	16.4%	13.4%	11.4%	9.6%	6.8%	4.2%	1.8%
Greater London	13.9%	7.3%	10.3%	18.0%	15.0%	12.7%	10.1%	6.6%	4.2%	2.0%
Birmingham	16.0%	8.5%	11.2%	14.3%	13.4%	12.0%	10.3%	7.4%	4.9%	2.2%
Leeds	14.2%	7.6%	11.4%	14.5%	13.3%	12.1%	10.9%	8.2%	5.4%	2.3%
Cardiff	13.3%	7.9%	12.8%	14.4%	12.6%	11.7%	10.9%	8.6%	5.6%	2.4%
Bristol	13.1%	7.5%	12.5%	16.1%	13.6%	11.5%	10.3%	7.8%	5.4%	2.4%
Oxford	13.1%	8.9%	11.4%	13.6%	12.6%	12.2%	10.9%	8.7%	5.9%	2.9%
Cambridge	13.5%	8.2%	9.9%	13.4%	13.5%	12.9%	10.9%	8.8%	6.0%	2.9%
Edinburgh	12.2%	7.9%	10.7%	14.0%	12.7%	13.5%	11.2%	9.4%	5.5%	2.9%
Glasgow	12.8%	7.7%	9.7%	12.5%	12.5%	14.3%	11.9%	9.6%	6.1%	3.1%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

17
Average age of
entering the workforce

25-26
Average age people become
economically independent

31
Average age for
having a first child

33.8
Average age people buy
their first home

Ages and places

The distribution of different age groups across the UK is a crucial metric for the Government, local authorities, and developers working towards meeting the UK homes target. The heatmaps provided illustrate the proportion of local populations within key age groups that influence housing demand.

Current renters, primarily pre-homeownership young professionals, and those still living in family homes after their children have moved out, are key demographics to consider. This highlights the need for thoughtful planning around senior living options and the potential to free up family homes.

The BTR sector in the UK has traditionally focused on city centres, catering primarily to the 25-34 age group. However, there is a growing demand for single-family housing among the 35-45 age group, which tends to be located outside urban centres. This demographic shift presents a significant market opportunity for expanding BTR developments to suburban areas, addressing the needs of single families seeking rental options.
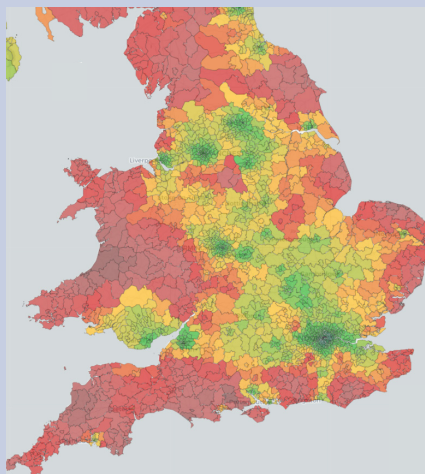
Map 1
Age 25-34 Ratio

Scale   **18%+   14%   12%   11%   <10%**
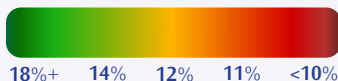
The UK's ageing population is becoming increasingly concentrated in urban centres. With almost one in five people aged 65 and over, and nearly two in five aged 50 and over, the need for senior living housing options is becoming more urgent. As our population continues to age, it is crucial to provide diverse and flexible housing solutions that allow older individuals to choose how they want to live.
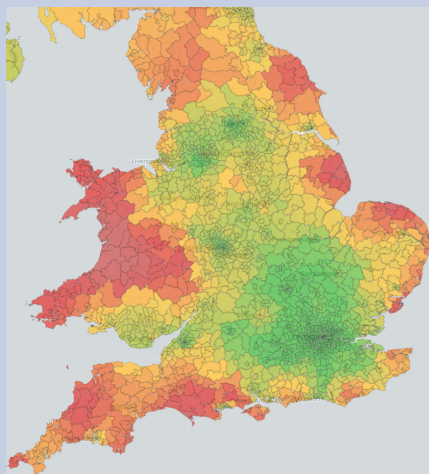
38.5

Average age
of marriage

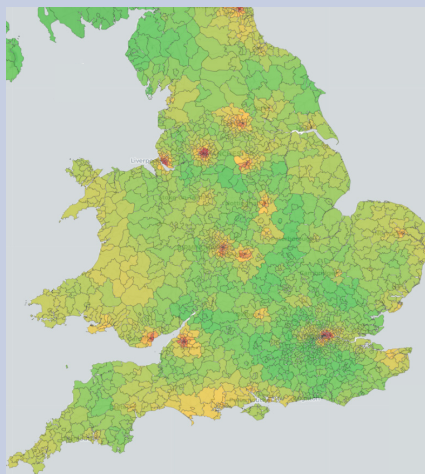# 41

Average age for
having a last child
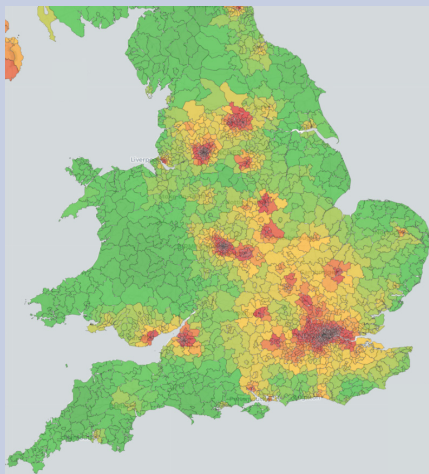
46.5

Average age
of divorce

60

Average age for
paying off mortgage
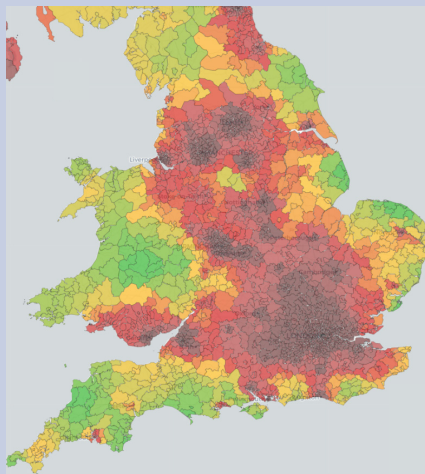

Map 2
Age 35-44 Ratio

Map 3
Age 45-54 Ratio

Map 4
Age 55-64 Ratio

Map 5
Age 65-74 Ratio

65

Average age
of retirement

79

Average age of entry
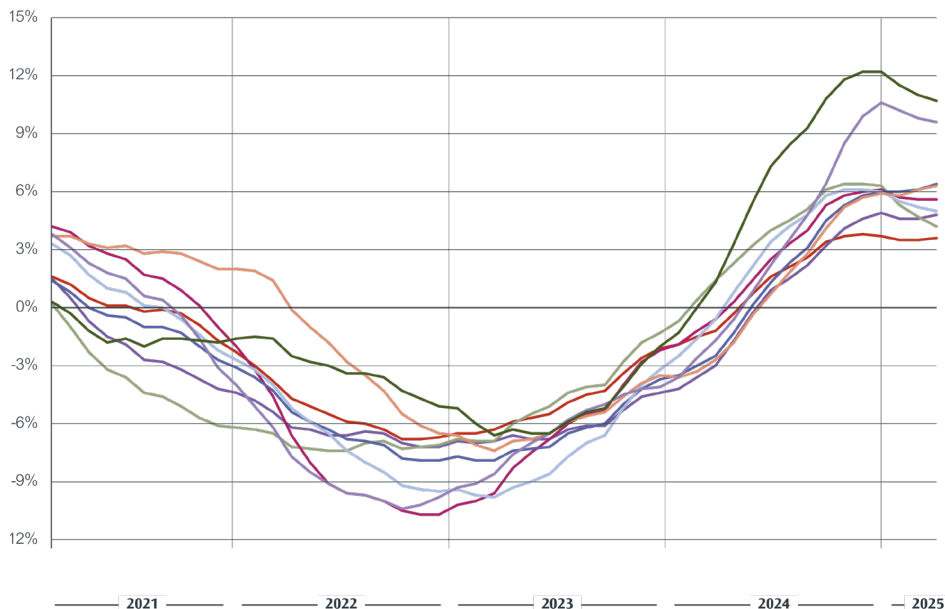into retirement living

86.6

Average age of the
population in care homes

The UK in recovery

If the providers of homes are targeting
occupiers or owners from particular
localised business sectors, it is powerful
to track the trajectory of those sectors and
also the prevailing economic temperature of
their location.

Key

— Belfast
— Manchester
— United Kingdom
— Glasgow
— Birmingham
— Bristol
— Leeds
— Cardiff
— Greater London

Chart 2 **12-month % change in EvaluateLocate
Economic Vitality Index**

Driving impactful conversation

Exploring the following demographic trends and assessing the issues relating to housing delivery is our starting point for this initiative.

Economic independence and affordability

People start working at 17 and become economically independent in their mid-twenties, but it takes another decade to afford buying a home. Affordability to both buy or rent, in proximity to employment, is an increasing issue for this age group.

Family dynamics

Trends in marriage, co-habitation, divorce, and single-parent households are important drivers for changes in needs.

Under-occupation

70% of people stay in their family home after children move out, leading to under-occupation and cost of living challenges.

Existing buildings

With 80% of 2050's buildings already built, new homes must support economic and social wellbeing while achieving Net Zero goals.

Profile of first-time buyers

The average age of first-time buyers is now 33.8 years. Many will be parents with growing families and not necessarily the young individual or couple we might think of.

Multigenerational homes

Increasingly, children live longer at home or parents join younger generations, forming multigenerational homes.

Ageing population

In some cities, 30% of the population is 55 and over. The developing variance in the age profile in UK cities has the potential to drive demand, both now and in the next 30 years.

Necessary infrastructure

Homes do not exist in isolation; sustainable communities are built upon infrastructure including transport, energy, schools, hospitals, retail, leisure and of course employment opportunities their inhabitants need.

th trowers & hamlins

This initiative is intended to drive conversation, if you'd like to get involved, please get in touch with
Suzanne Benson or **Amy Goodall**
on the email addresses below

Suzanne Benson
Partner
Head of Real Estate

sbenson@trowers.com

Amy Goodall
Business Development
Manager

agoodall@trowers.com

www.trowers.com   in Trowers & Hamlins   @trowers_law

EVALUATE LOCATE   ing.