

## Home improvement figures decrease for a second year

Home improvement figures across Great Britain decreased throughout 2018 with the number of planning applications dropping by 2.8% compared with 2017.

The 'Home Improvers of Great Britain 2019' report, compiled by construction industry analysts [Barbour ABI](#), shows that across Great Britain there were 2.8% fewer applications for home improvement in 2018 than in 2017. Despite a fall in applications, London held onto the top spot, even though it saw a reduction in the number of planning applications in 29 of its 32 boroughs, whilst the biggest growth in applications came from North West England, with an increase of 5.0% (see figure 1.1).

## Home improvement across Britain's regions and countries

Number of home improvement applications for every 100 private homes.

Rank	Region/Country	2016	2017	2018	Growth (%)*
★	London	3.8	3.7	3.4	-10.5
2	South East	2.8	2.9	2.7	-4.1
3	East of England	2.7	2.7	2.6	-2.5
4	South West	2.1	2.1	2.1	-2.1
5	East Midlands	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5
6	Yorkshire & Humber	1.5	1.6	1.5	0.1
7	West Midlands	1.4	1.5	1.5	2.8
8	North West	1.3	1.4	1.4	5.0
9	Wales	1.3	1.3	1.4	3.1
10	North East	1.1	1.2	1.2	-1.1
11	Scotland	1.1	1.1	1.1	-2.2
	England	2.2	2.2	2.1	-3.2
	Great Britain	2.1	2.1	2.0	-2.9

\*2018 compared with average of 2016 and 2017

Source: Barbour ABI, MHCLG, StatsWales, Scottish Government

(Figure 1.1)

Home Improvement applications in the capital hit a peak in 2015 and 2016, with one application for home improvement made in each year for every 26 private homes. However, over the past two years London has seen the number of applications drop by almost 10%. The decline in home improvement in the capital was first evident with a fall in the super-affluent boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster in 2015. But the pace of decline has accelerated, and the effect has widened to most boroughs.

Looking across the rest of Great Britain, the North West was highlighted last year as an area of growth and has been the stand out region over the past three years. The local authority of Manchester, for example, has seen a near doubling of applications being submitted over the past three years, albeit from a low base. The rise in home-improvement applications in the North West fits with the vibrancy of the housing market and prices.

While the North West appears to have been the most buoyant, London, the East of England and the South East still account for 52% of all home improvement applications, slightly down from 54% in 2015 and 2016. The general picture we see in the changing regional pattern of home improvement planning applications is a continuation of the wave of house price rises that has crept out of London and the South East in recent years.

With a strong proven correlation between the economy and home improvement, the Home Improvers of Great Britain 2019 report surmises that the impact of Brexit and any shift in GDP is likely to reduce activity further. The uncertainty it has caused and will continue to cause, as the effects of any settlement begin to emerge, will likely inhibit households' confidence.

Download the full report here: <https://ubm.io/2GhJ9nq>

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**About Barbour ABI:**

Barbour ABI is a leading provider of construction intelligence services. With a team of in-house research specialists and a dedicated economics team, it provides commercially relevant insight and unique analysis of trends and developments within the building and construction industry.

Barbour ABI is the chosen provider of Construction New Orders estimates data to the Office for National Statistics and partner of the Government's Infrastructure and Projects Authority in providing the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline. Barbour ABI also provides data for independent organisations, such as the Construction Products Association.

Barbour ABI is headquartered in Cheshire Oaks, Cheshire.

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