

# A nation of frustrated home-movers

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The downturn in the housing market in the last three years has left the UK a nation of frustrated, unfulfilled house-movers, according to the latest data from Understanding Society, a study of 40,000 UK households funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

It found that between 2009 and 2010 only 10 to 14 per cent of people who wished to move actually achieved their desire and overall only 6.4 per cent of people moved home during that period. The study also found that living in an urban setting or in a less deprived areas increased the [likelihood](#) of fulfilling your moving desires, while living in rural or more deprived areas reduced the likelihood.

The findings are based on a sample of 16,000 individuals who were asked about their desire to move home, and their expectations of moving in the next year and why they wished to move. They show that 39 per cent of individuals living in [urban areas](#) wish to move, compared to only 28 per cent in rural areas. In the most affluent areas 29 per cent of people expressed a desire to move, which contrasts with nearly half (45 per cent) of those living in the most deprived areas who want to move.

The main reason given for moving home by those that managed to do so was either needing bigger, smaller or better accommodation. Family related reasons such as divorce or moving in together also ranked highly and were mentioned by 25 per cent of [respondents](#). Area related [motives](#), such as wanting to move to a better [neighbourhood](#), came further down the list with mentions from 12 per cent of movers.

Underlying these responses are a number of changes in the lives of those moving. Twenty-seven per cent of previously single people moved in with their partners and nine per cent of movers separated from a partner. Seventeen per cent of movers who were previously renting bought a house, 33 percent of social renters moved into other tenure types such as private renting, and 10 per cent of individuals moved into social renting. Finally, 31 per cent of movers from [rural areas](#) moved into urban areas, whereas only 11 per cent of movers from urban areas moved to rural ones.

Dr Birgitta Rabe, at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex, who analysed the data comments: "These results indicate that the UK is a nation of frustrated home movers. In recent years there has been a stark contrast between individuals wanting and expecting to move and their actual moving behaviour. This has wider economic implications for people's flexibility in a challenging job market, because it is homeowners, either with a mortgage or those that own their home outright, who find it most difficult to achieve their moving desires."

Provided by Economic & Social Research Council

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