

reallymoving House Price Forecast

December 2020: House prices on downward path in first quarter

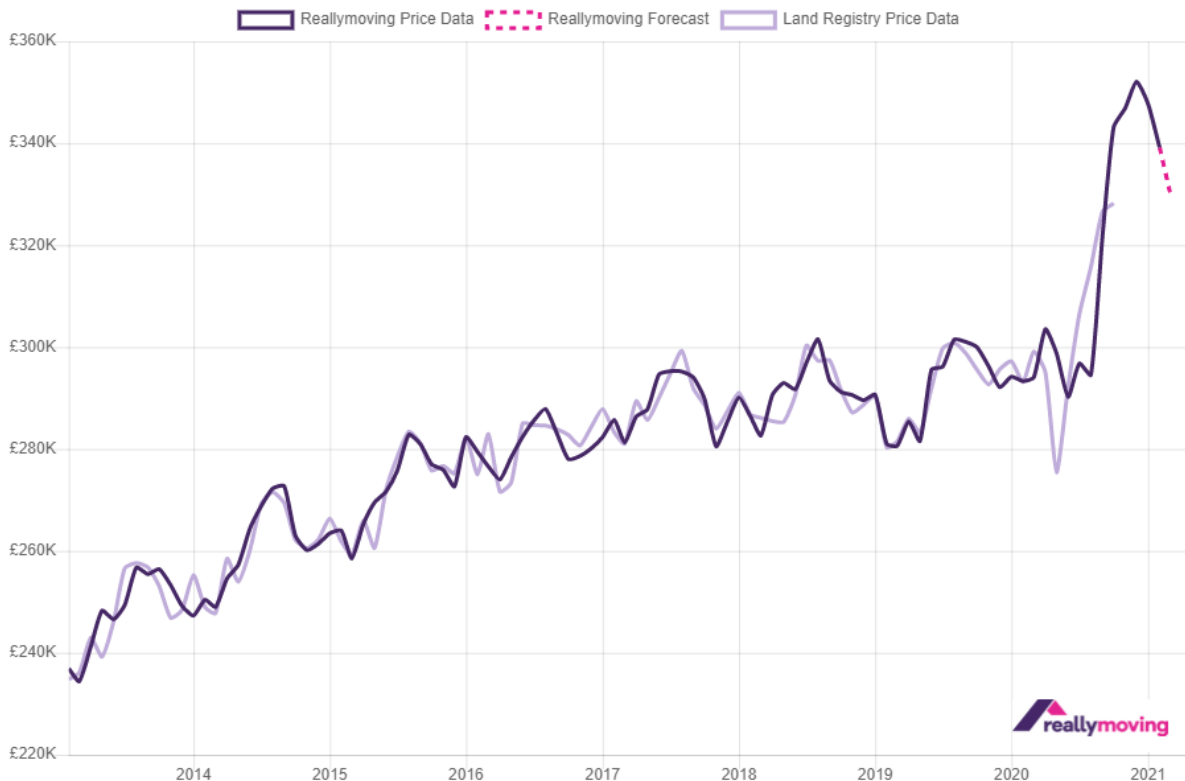
- House prices will fall by 6.2% in the first quarter of 2021, following December price peak
- Decline will accelerate month on month (-1.2% in January, -2.5% in February, -2.6% in March)
- Average house price to fall from £352,106 in December 2020 to £330,295 in March 2021

Month	Average price agreed	Monthly change %
November 2020 (actual)	£346,903	1.1%
December 2020 (actual)	£352,106	1.5%
January 2021 (forecast)	£347,749	-1.2%
February 2021 (forecast)	£339,177	-2.5%
March 2021 (forecast)	£330,295	-2.6%

The housing market in England and Wales is on a downward trajectory in the first quarter of 2021 with price falls accelerating month on month, according to the Reallymoving House Price Forecast December 2020, released today. Exceptional levels of buyer activity through the summer and early autumn created a boom which saw the housing market diverge from wider economic trends, but this was unsustainable and it is now entering a period of readjustment.

Reallymoving captures the purchase price buyers have agreed to pay when they search for conveyancing quotes through the comparison site, typically 12 weeks before they complete. This enables reallymoving to provide an accurate three-month house price forecast that historically has closely tracked the Land Registry's Price Paid data, published retrospectively (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: reallymoving House Price Index (England and Wales) including 3-month price forecast



Monthly price changes

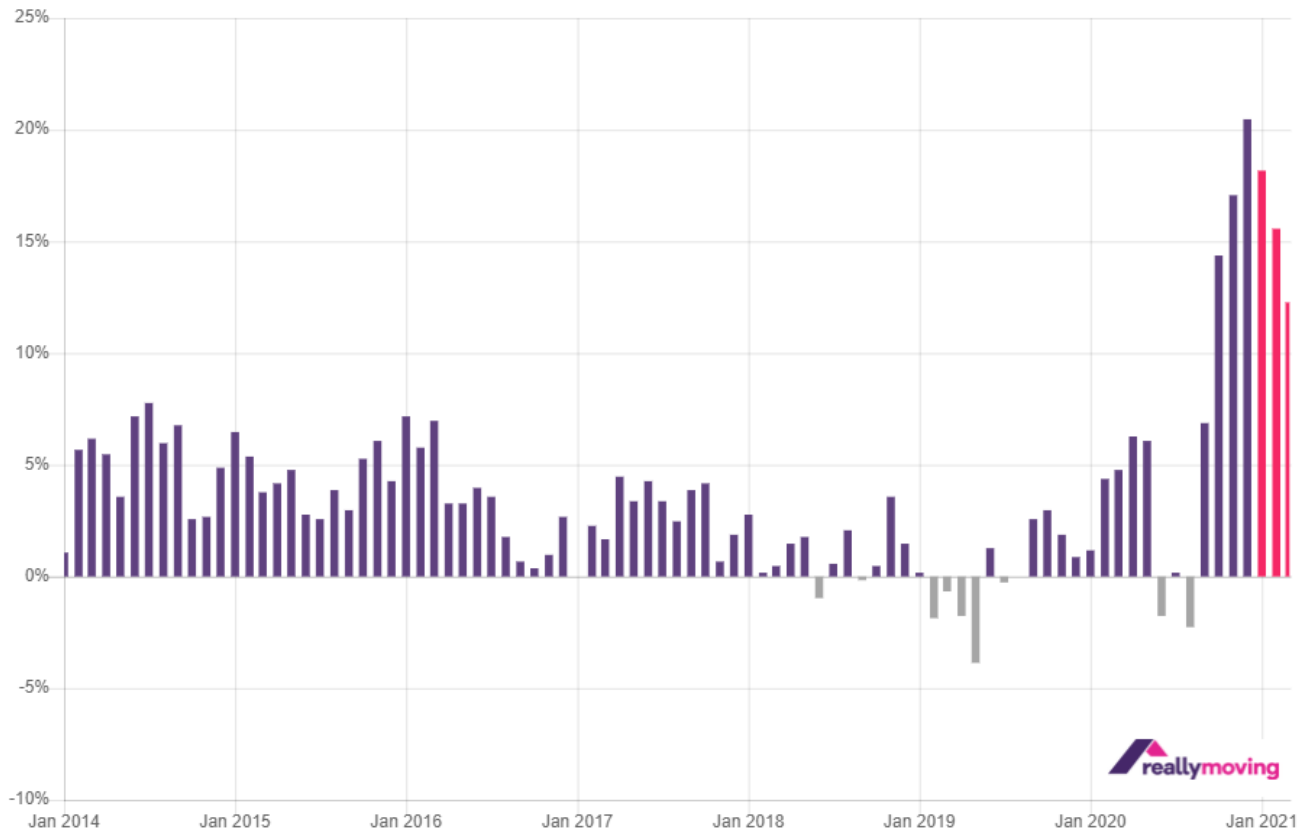
Pandemic-induced anxiety, regional restrictions on movement and continued uncertainty over Brexit meant that demand for property tailed off the last three months of 2020, reflected in price falls in the first quarter of this year, bringing to an end an extraordinary period of growth.

While temporary measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic remain in place, such as the furlough scheme, a ban on repossessions and a stamp duty holiday, a second extended national lockdown is eroding consumer confidence and job security, despite the vaccine roll-out bringing hope for a return to normal life later this year. Average prices in England and Wales will decrease by 1.2% in January, 2.5% in February and a further 2.6% in March – totalling a 6.2% over the first three months of the year.

Price falls are likely to attract First Time Buyers to the market later in the spring who may have held off as prices rose over the last few months, particularly if lenders continue to warm towards higher loan to value loans and ease restrictions around gifted deposits.

Once the stamp duty holiday has ended pressure on conveyancers, surveyors and removals firms will ease, alleviating congestion in the system and bringing more reliability to the home move process.

Graph 2: Year on Year average price changes (England and Wales) including 3-month forecast



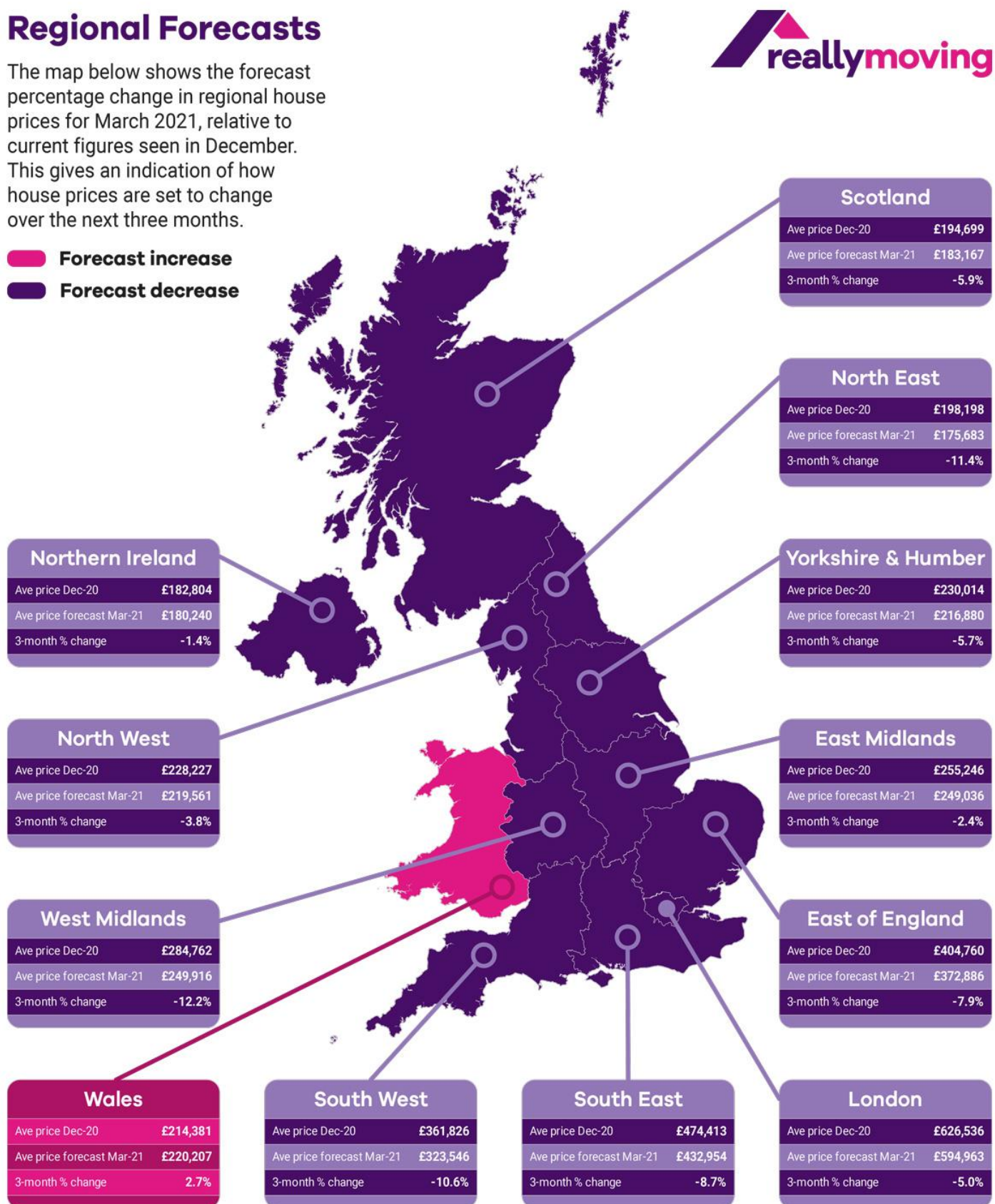
Regional Forecasts



The map below shows the forecast percentage change in regional house prices for March 2021, relative to current figures seen in December.

This gives an indication of how house prices are set to change over the next three months.

- Forecast increase
- Forecast decrease

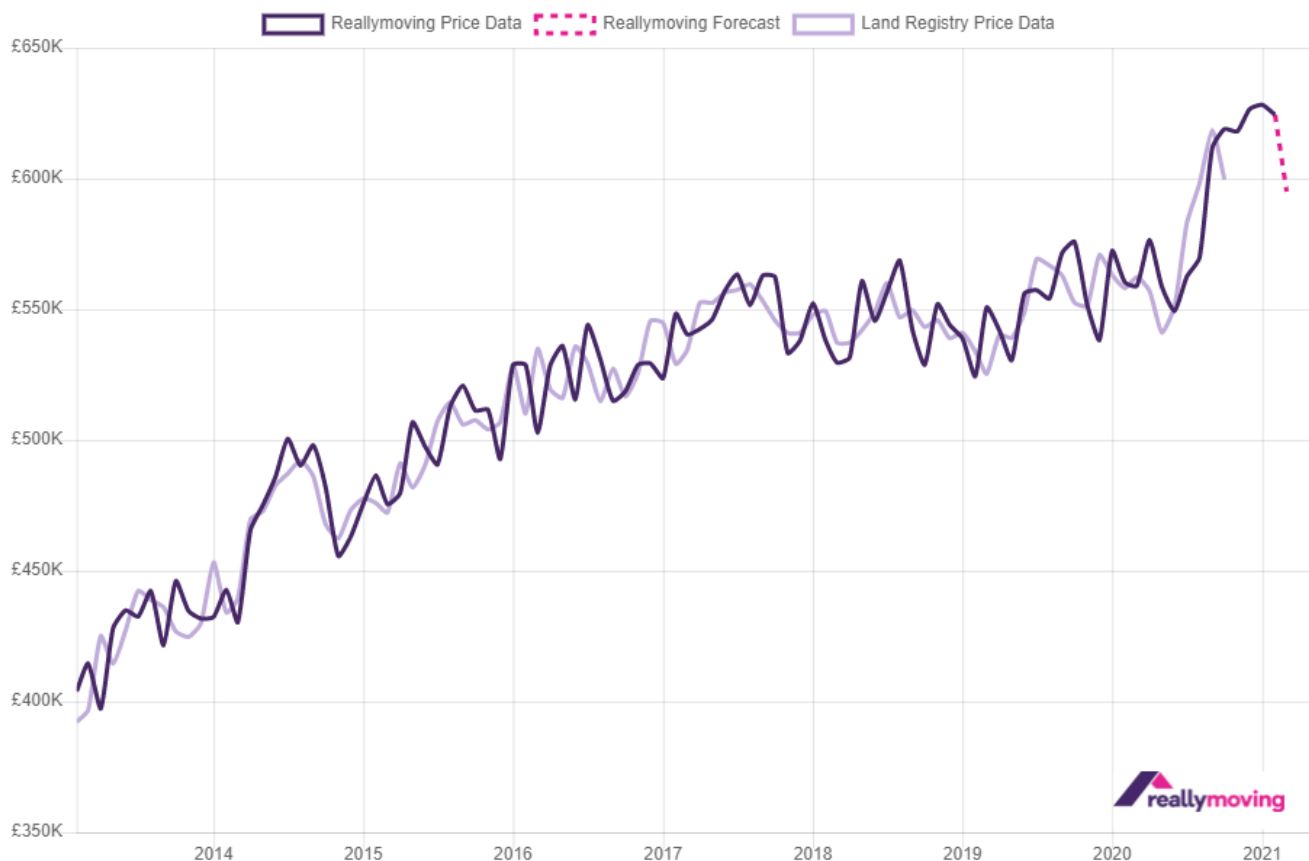


Regional 3-month price forecasts

The national trend is also being played out at a regional level, with eleven out of twelve UK regions set to see average house prices fall over the first quarter. The most significant decreases will be in the West Midlands (-12.2%), North East (-11.4%) and South West (-10.6%). Wales is the only region to see prices rise, which could be due to strong demand for extra space, rural lifestyles and second homes post-lockdown, although price gains of 2.7% in January and 2.8% in February will be partly negated by a 2.7% fall in March, suggesting the correction being seen across the rest of the UK may simply be delayed in Wales.

Reallymoving's online [House Price Forecast](#) is an interactive tool providing house price information and forecasts for every region of the UK alongside Land Registry Price Paid data. Highlighting London this month, average prices are set to fall by 5% in Q1 2021 from £626,536 in December to £594,963 in March, as the stamp duty holiday window closes and buyer demand in the capital declines.

Graph 3: reallymoving House Price Index (London) including 3-month price forecast



Analysis and commentary

Rob Houghton, CEO of reallymoving, comments: *“Considering the wider economic context of the post-lockdown property market boom, it was never a matter of if it would end, but when. In the second half of 2020 buyers faced stiff competition for homes, forcing them to pay more and in many cases wiping out the stamp duty saving, but already this year we’re seeing demand falling to more normal levels and prices heading back down again. The extent of the decline depends on the length of the current lockdown and the Chancellor’s generosity in mitigating its impact, the speed of the vaccine roll out and the subsequent economic recovery. The market is yet to be truly tested by the end of the furlough scheme and mortgage payment holidays, both of which are currently masking job losses and distressed property sales.*

“As we head towards the end of the stamp duty holiday on 31st March sellers should prepare for an increase in gazundering, where buyers reduce their offer just prior to exchange. A large number of deals will be hinged on an



assumed stamp duty saving and if they fail to complete in time, buyers will suddenly need to find a significant amount of cash – or renegotiate the price.

“It’s not all bad news though, with a Brexit deal finally agreed that brings to an end four years of uncertainty, and positive action from lenders to reintroduce high loan to value mortgages and overturn bans on gifted deposits. Combined with declining prices and the end of the stamp duty holiday, we could see favourable conditions for First Time Buyers to make a return to the market later this year.

-- ENDS --

Notes to Editors

About the reallymoving House Price Forecast

The Index, which launched in May 2019, uses average house prices calculated from data submitted on conveyancing quote forms at reallymoving.com. Registrations for conveyancing quotes are completed typically three months prior to the transaction date, giving reallymoving a unique perspective and forecast of house prices. As such, forecasted data for January – March 2021 is based on registrations from October to December respectively.

The data is mix adjusted but not seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted data is available on request.

Reallymoving recognises that, as a price comparison site, its average user profile is skewed towards the lower end of the market. Therefore, forecast values are lifted by the average difference seen between reallymoving and Land Registry Price Paid data during the previous quarter. The difference is fairly constant in percentage terms.

Only non-commercial properties between £40,000 and £2,000,000 are included in the calculation, to account for errors in submitting the quote form.

Between October – December 2020, reallymoving analysed data from 24,000 completed conveyancing quote forms to form the basis of its average property price projections for January - March 2021.

About reallymoving

Launched in 1999, reallymoving has become the UK’s leading provider of free instant quotes for home-moving services, serving over 2 million customers since its inception. It is an independent and privately financed company, majority owned by its management and directors.

During 2020 reallymoving received 280,000 registrations and generated almost a million quotes on behalf of its UK-wide network of partners, representing approximately £220 million worth of work in 12 months. Reallymoving believes approximately 9% of the UK’s home movers receive quotes from the site.

Reallymoving provides instant quotes for Conveyancing, Surveys, Removals, Home Reports (in Scotland) and Energy Performance Certificates.

Reallymoving also owns The Law Superstore, the comparison site for legal services.

www.reallymoving.com

For press information please contact: Sarah Lawrence sarah@lawrencepr.co.uk 07984 422 461