

#### **FOREWORD**

Location has always been a hot topic for our industry, but perhaps it's now more pertinent than ever. Uncertainty about remote or office work, along with global unrest, the cost of living crisis and even climate change have all served to heighten the importance of choosing the right place to buy, rent or build.

Here at HomeViews we've now expanded the reach of our verified resident reviews to cover the UK – over 36,000 in total. For the first time we're able to collate our Location ratings and reviews to reveal what UK buyers and tenants are saying about where they live.

For this report we analysed 28,962 verified reviews on HomeViews to find the highest-rated locations across the UK and within Greater London. We also assessed the impact of Covid on Location ratings, and how living in a new build affected residents' experiences of their area.

"THE RATINGS WEBSITE THAT'S CHANGING HOUSING"

THE TIMES

In addition, we were able to see what residents were saying about the locations they loved and those they didn't. Our partner developers also enjoy access to an expanded report version, breaking down Location ratings by resident age, specific locations, resident types and development types.

HomeViews exists to collect and publish these kinds of real-world insights into where people want to live and why – from a wider regional view right down to specific developments. We hope our findings prove useful to both developers and property hunters alike.

Rory Cramer, Co-founder and CEO





# TOTAL OF 28,962

verified reviews on HomeViews submitted between 2017 and May 2022

24,246

verified reviews of new build developments on HomeViews.com

4,716

London postcode reviews on streets.homeviews.com

# "HOMEVIEWS PROVIDES A VALUED SERVICE FOR OUR INDUSTRY AND ITS CUSTOMERS. THEIR INDEPENDENT RESIDENT INSIGHTS SHINE A LIGHT ON RESIDENT EXPERIENCES AND INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE."

Ian Fletcher
Director of Policy (Real Estate)
British Property Federation



#### **ABOUT HOMEVIEWS**

#### THE HOMEVIEWS MISSION

One of the biggest decisions we ever make, financially and emotionally, is choosing a home. Right now, a new generation of residents are considering and living in new-build developments for the first time. Our mission at HomeViews is to share useful, trustworthy insights about these properties to support both renters and buyers in choosing where to live.

#### TRUSTED, VERIFIED REVIEWS

HomeViews launched in February 2019 and has since published over 36,000 reviews from more than 2,300 apartment and housing developments across the UK.

We aim to provide valuable, insightful, and trustworthy content, which is why we have robust review guidelines in place. We always seek to verify resident reviews and use a number of processes and tools to do this. 85% of our resident reviews are verified and it is these reviews that count towards HomeViews ratings and have been included in this report.

As well as careful verification, reviews can also be attributed to a number of types of resident: tenants, owners, from-new owners, shared owners and first time buyers. Other detailed metrics, such as resident age and sustainability data, also add to the quality of our dataset.

#### FAIR, BALANCED DATA

We believe the best information about a residential development comes from the people who live there. HomeViews invites residents to review their homes and rate a number of factors, including its Design, Facilities, Location, Value, and Management. They also share insights on the buying experience, the build quality, timeline, customer service and aftersales care.

By asking questions around multiple rating categories, we aim to avoid reviews that reflect a vocal minority sparked by single issues. Instead, we are able to collect more detailed and balanced reviews that consider the wider experience of living in a development and the service provided.

#### PROACTIVE DATA COLLECTION

Reviews are collected through a number of methods: organic, social media advertising, customer satisfaction surveys, HomeViews team on the ground and mailings directly to residents. This also ensures reviews reflect a fair and balanced appraisal of the resident experience in each development.

Hannah Marsh, Co-founder of HomeViews

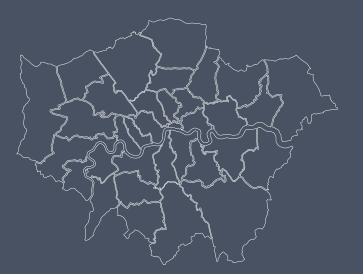






Edinburgh is the best place to live in the UK according to verified resident ratings that give an average Location score of 4.72 out of 5

Edinburgh residents cited **proximity to the centre, green spaces, community feel and local amenities** as reasons for high Location ratings



London Location ratings dipped during lockdowns and recovered to pre-Covid levels, while **regional locations saw a boost during lockdowns** and emerged higher post-Covid

London's new build residents give more positive Location ratings than those in other housing types

For wider London areas, **North East London was the highest-rated**, with West and North West London the lowest

**Bromley is the highest-rated London borough**, with Barking & Dagenham the lowest-rated. Provision of local amenities was a key factor for both



#### HomeViews supports those looking for a new home with over 160 UK area guides, ranking the top rated new build developments in those locations.

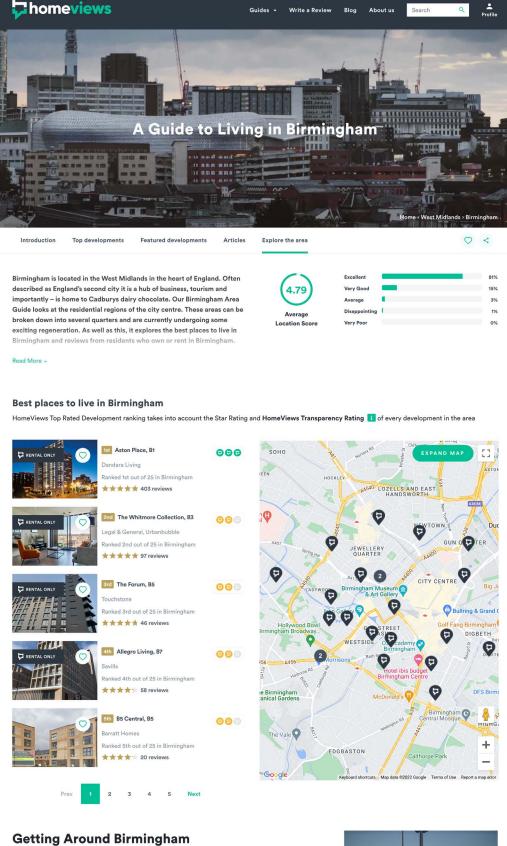


We publish hundreds of blog articles, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors searching for advice on finding their next home.



www.homeviews.com > company > greenwich-peninsula • Greenwich Peninsula Reviews | Read resident reviews on ... Read resident reviews of Greenwich Peninsula. Discover the rating of each development, by category, from facilities to building management. \*\*\* Rating: 4.2 · 208 reviews www.homeviews.com > Developments \* No.3 Upper Riverside, Greenwich Peninsula, SE10 Reviews. Read resident reviews of No.3 Upper Riverside, Greenwich Peninsula, SE10. Discover overall resident ratings, from facilities to building management. \*\*\* Rating: 4 · 24 reviews

Over 80% of our site traffic comes from organic Google searches. This is buyers and renters looking for the UK's best locations, developers and developments, as well as advice on their purchase or tenancy.



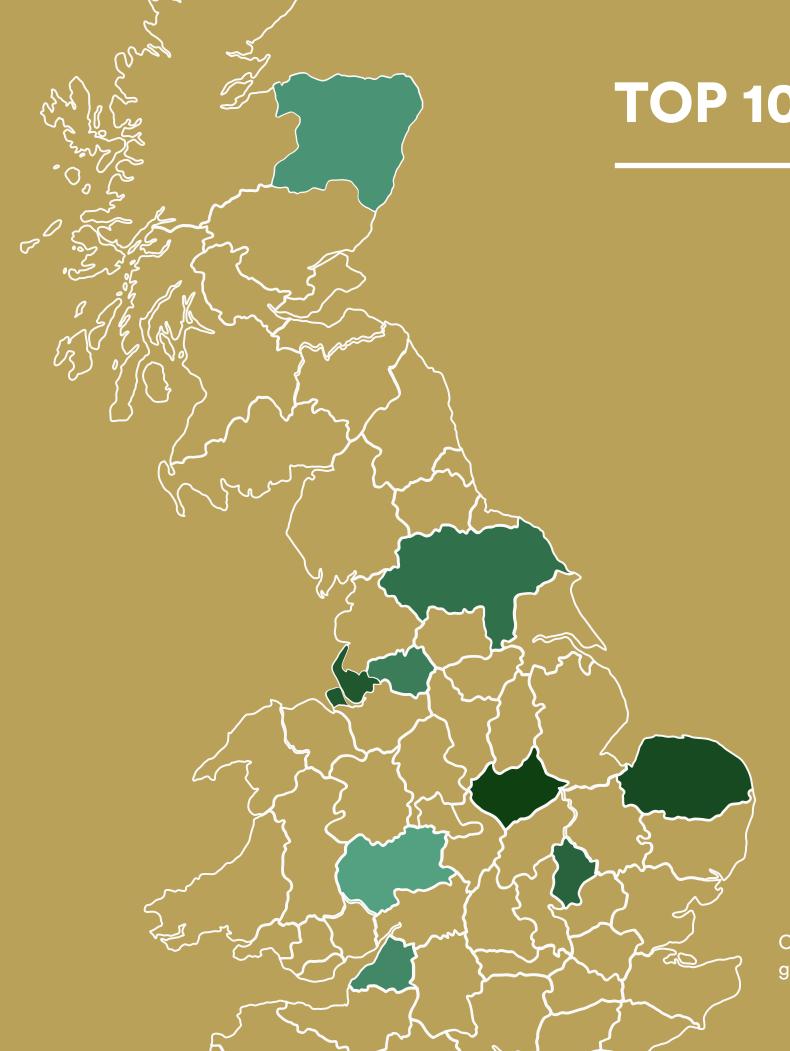
Birmingham city is very much at the heart of the UK. It thrives off links to all the major motorways with links to the M5, M6, M40 and M42 via the Spaghetti Junction. As a transport hub with national bus and train link and a smart new tram system, Birmingham is easily connected to the rest of the UK. Also, Birmingham's Finance district highest number of insurance and finance businesses outside of London. With a number of luxury offices with restaurants, cafés or commercial outlets there are also a growing number of residentia





#### The Jewellery Quarter





#### TOP 10 REGIONS TO LIVE IN THE UK

Avg. Score

1	CITY OF EDINBURGH	4.72
2	WORCESTERSHIRE	4.67
3	CITY OF ABERDEEN	4.63
4	BRISTOL METROPOLITAN AREA	4.62
5	GREATER MANCHESTER	4.62
6	NORTH YORKSHIRE	4.59
7	BEDFORDSHIRE	4.59
8	MERSEYSIDE	4.58
9	NORFOLK	4.58
10	LEICESTERSHIRE	4.57

Minimum 50 verified reviews to qualify

Click on the regions to see full area guides with all ratings and reviews.





# EDINBURGH IS THE HIGHEST RATED PLACE TO LIVE IN THE UK WITH AN AVERAGE LOCATION RATING OF 4.72 OUT OF 5

**Aberdeen** joins Edinburgh to place two Scottish cities within the top three UK locations

Scotland and the North West were the two highest-rated of the wider UK regions

**London** was the UK's lowest-rated wider region, but with a respectable location rating of 4.29 out of 5

"THIS IS A FANTASTIC AREA TO LIVE IN.
LEITH SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST UP AND COMING AREAS IN EDINBURGH. THE DEVELOPMENT IS ONLY A MILE AND A QUARTER FROM THE CITY CENTRE."



#### **EDINBURGH IN FOCUS: WHY DO RESIDENTS LOVE IT?**



#### **Public transport**

connections were praised by residents

#### Restaurants and shops

were valued for their variety and close proximity

#### Accessible walking options

were mentioned often, including the beach, canals and parks

#### 80%

of residents gave Edinburgh a Location rating of 5 out of 5

#### 100%

of reviews for The Strand on Portobello Beach gave the location a 5-star rating\*



#### **EDINBURGH IN FOCUS: WHY DO RESIDENTS LOVE IT?**

Edinburgh new build developments reviewed and rated on HomeViews include a mix of apartments and houses, and cover a variety of areas. However, from the city centre and Leith to Portobello Beach, all are rated highly for their locations.

"Very convinient location, close to Leith Links, Tesco's, GP and well connected with different bus lines and the (eventually) tram. Other developments are in progress in the area which will renew the whole neighbourhood."

Verified owner at The Ropeworks by Teague Group Jan 2021 "The development is in a beautiful and historic suburb of Edinburgh- Cramond. Very close to the development are several interesting walks with stunning views across the Firth of Forth. There is also easy access to the beach, the only beach in the city of Edinburgh. The nearest supermarket is Tesco at Davidson's Mains, a five minute drive away. It would be difficult to go to a local shop without a car."

Gordon C Verified owner at Caer Amon Apartments by Ama Homes April 2022

"Living in Lochrin Quay is ideal for working in the city centre. Close to local shops, supermarkets, bus links, entertainment facilities, as well as local/tourist attractions.."

> Cozzy Verified tenant at Lochrin Quay by JLL March 2022

"Close to High Street amenities with all retailers providing a valued service and range. Desirable area to live includes sporting and leisure facilities close at hand. A growing neighbourhood of similar, smart modern apartments and townhouses - very friendly and well catered for community feel."

Kit Verified HA tenant at The Strand by Barratt Homes Jan 2021

"Bonnington is just a few minutes' walk to several buzzing areas (the Shore, Leith Walk, Cannonmils, Broughton). A lot of the area is currently being re-developed, with several pockets of industrial property still around, but as this evolves over time I think more facilities will crop up ever nearer, bringing more to the neighbourhood."

> CM Verified owner at Bonnington Mill by Miller Homes Jan 2021



### LIVING IN THE UK'S HIGHEST RATED LOCATION: THE McEWAN BY MODA

The McEwan is the highest-rated development in Edinburgh according to verified residents on HomeViews (July 2022).



4.69 (14 reviews)









2022 Value ward of Excellence



"Location location – fantastic place close to everything you would want living in a city like Edinburgh. Great restaurants and bars or pubs, nice safe area, no complaints from me, just love it. I just wish they would sell it to me rather than renting"

Tom Verified tenant on HomeViews, April 2022

"I am loving this area as it's at the heart and within walking distance, of many parts of the city that I spend time in. I walk along the canal every morning, which is just across the road, and chose this location as it's so close to parks."

Rachel R-S Verified tenant on HomeViews, May 2022

"The neighbourhood feels quiet and community-led yet very close to Haymarket station (Under 10 min walk) and it's also so close to the main city centre at just a 25 min walk directly to Waverley station and Edinburgh Castle. Personally, it's the perfect balance for us by feeling close to the city centre and having it within our reach but also to feel a little out of the way to have our community feel."

Shelley Verified tenant on HomeViews, May 2022

"The local area is busy and well populated with restaurants, takeout food places, good public transport links, a multiplex cinema and bowling alley. Can't comment about parking availability as the development itself has underground parking included."

Gillian M Verified tenant on HomeViews, May 2022

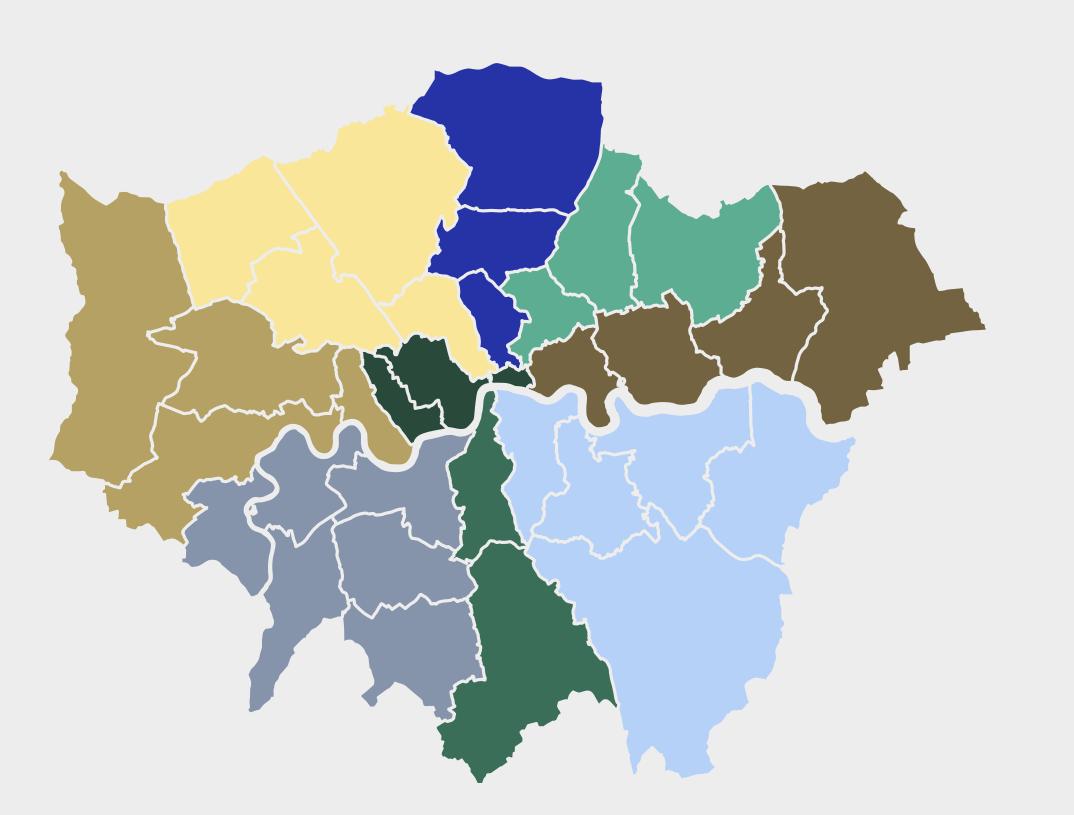




#### TOP RATED LOCATIONS: LONDON

HomeViews provides a definitive view of what it's like to live in London. Over 17,000 of our verified reviews cover the capital, and these include residents in existing housing as well as new build developments.

#### LONDON REGIONS BY AVERAGE LOCATION SCORE

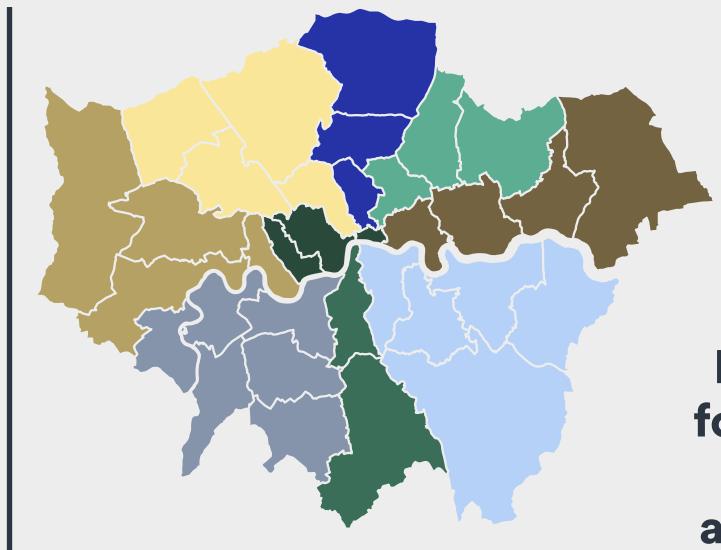


	No. of Reviews	Avg. Score
NORTH EAST	1,217	4.40
SOUTH	1,313	4.38
<b>CENTRAL</b>	568	4.36
NORTH	1,249	4.36
SOUTH WEST	1,023	4.34
SOUTH EAST	2,886	4.32
EAST	4,393	4.28
WEST	1,713	4.20
NORTH WEST	2,591	4.18
TOTAL AVERA	<b>IGE</b> 16,953	4.29

Click on the regions above to see full area guides with all ratings and reviews.

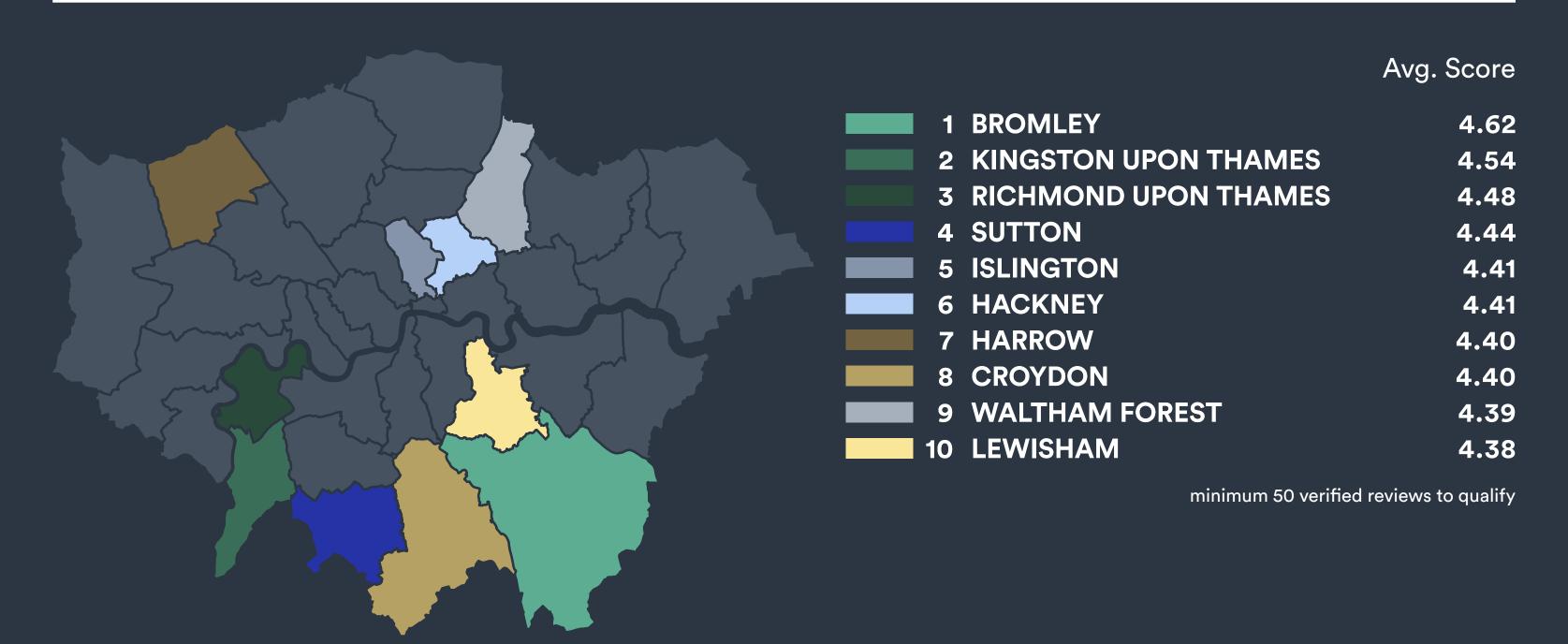






Looking at average Location ratings for wider London areas, there is little to distinguish between the highest and lowest rated. North East London is highest-rated at 4.40 out of five, while lowest-rated North West London is not far behind at 4.18. More variation can be seen in the more detailed borough-level breakdown on the next page.

#### **TOP 10 LONDON BOROUGHS**



Click on the boroughs to see full area guides with all ratings and reviews.



#### LONDON BOROUGH LOCATION RATINGS

# BROMLEY IS THE HIGHEST-RATED LONDON BOROUGH WITH AN AVERAGE LOCATION SCORE OF 4.62 OUT OF 5

Bromley's location rating is the same as that given by residents in Bristol and Greater Manchester – two highly-rated regional locations

South of the river wins over the north, with all of the top four boroughs and six of the top 10 being south

Barking & Dagenham was the lowest rated borough in London, with an average location rating of 3.82 – significantly lower than anywhere else in London

In June 2022, the Zoopla Pricing Index reported that London registered the slowest price growth in May, with average prices up +3.9% on the year. However, homes in Barking & Dagenham (the lowest-rated London location on HomeViews) registered an average rise of +7.2% over the last 12 months. In contrast, Camden averaged a strong HomeViews Location rating of 4.33, but average home values were up just 1.8%.



#### **BROMLEY VS. BARKING & DAGENHAM: WHY THE RATINGS?**

#### BROMLEY ★★★★★ HIGHEST-RATED LONDON BOROUGH

Positive reviews for Bromley often mentioned easy access to transport connections. The quality and variety of local amenities was also a common theme among residents.

#### EASE AND PROXIMITY OF TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS

"Crystal Palace triangle is a brilliant place to be near, and the rail links mean that you can get to anywhere in central London easily."

"I love how quickly I can get to central without the price tag of central zone. The shopping and all amenities are within reaching distance."

#### **RANGE OF SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS**

"The area is very good as you can find everything you need here: supermarkets, dry cleaners, pharmacies, library, gym, a couple of parks, nurseries, schools, etc."

"Bromley also has a great range of local pubs and restaurants, we've been here for two years and we still haven't tried them all."



#### BARKING & DAGENHAM LOWEST-RATED LONDON BOROUGH



Where people scored their location lower they referenced limited local amenities and safety as issues. 14% of new build residents complained about limited parking.

#### LIMITED LOCAL AMENITIES AND PARKING

"Only one shop nearby and 10 minutes to the rest of them. You must take the bus to the Barking town centre for 10 min. Not good transport links, though."

"We only have one convenience shop and a pharmacy. Very limited open space area to enjoy. Parking availability is very limited too and there's quite a lot of neighbourhood noise around our block of flats, especially on weekends."

#### **MIXED COMMENTS ON SAFETY**

"Unfortunately, Barking is not a nice area to live, especially for females. The tube station and city centre is run down, dirty and anti-social behaviour is a daily activity. I avoid the area in the evenings as it feels unsafe and I often got harassed when walking home from the station."

"The area is safe and secure, with no recent crime problems. We have to walk 20 minutes just to get to the station which is annoying."

#### LIVING IN LONDON'S HIGHEST RATED BOROUGH: **VENUE, BY FAIRVIEW NEW HOMES**

Location is the highest rated category for Venue, with an impressive average of 4.57 out of 5 stars.







4.05



4.04 (21 reviews)



**Facilities** 

Value Design





"I like the area as it is close to two stations, two high streets and spoilt for choice for parks. I Especially like the fact that the development is cut off from the main road."

> Janine Mallia Verified owner on HomeViews, Sept 2020

"The Area is great, local pubs, bars and parks as well as every local amenity you could need from supermarkets and sports facilities are right on the doorstep. Travel is easy, with Anerley and Crystal Palace stations both within 10 min walk and with bus stops right by the development taking you into central as well as Croydon, Peckham, Brixton, Clapham and many more."

Oliver Verified owner on HomeViews, August 2020 "The area is amazing. Love living near Crystal Palace. So many lovely shops, restaurants and markets. And the park is beautiful. Great transport links from Crystal Palace and Anerley too."

Alison Verified owner on HomeViews, August 2019

"With Crystal Palace triangle a 10-15 minute walk away, you really have everything on your doorstep. I love the local gypsy Hill brewery taproom, which is just around the corner and the bakery van which comes every Friday with fresh bread and treats."

Matt S Verified owner on HomeViews, August 2020

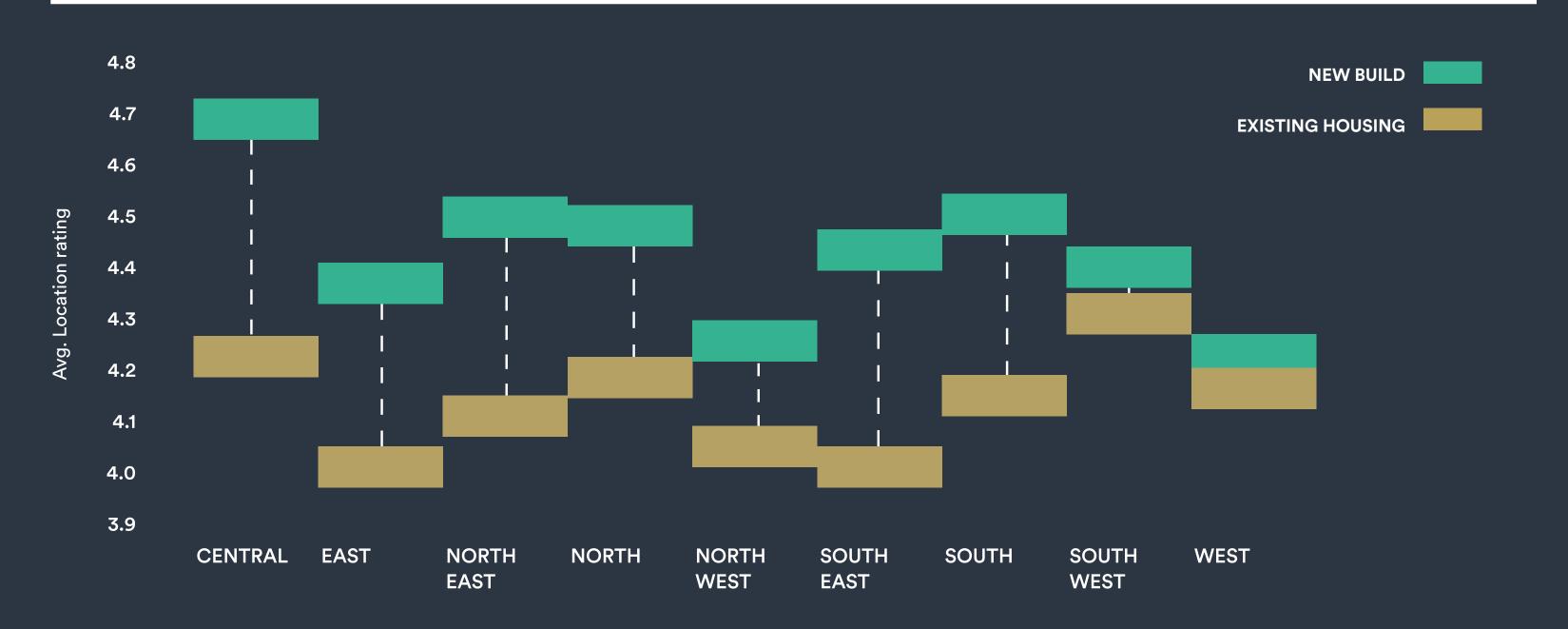




## DOES THE TYPE OF HOME AFFECT LOCATION RATINGS?

HomeViews data for London allows us to compare Location ratings from new build residents with those from people living in existing housing. We discover how the type of home can impact a resident's experience of their area.

# AVERAGE LOCATION SCORE: NEW BUILD VS. EXISTING HOUSING IN LONDON



HomeViews' London data includes reviews from residents in existing housing as well as new build developments. As this graph shows, when we compared Location ratings for each type of home, residents in new build developments rated their locations higher.





### NEW BUILD RESIDENTS HAPPIER WITH THEIR LOCATIONS THAN THOSE IN OTHER HOUSING TYPES

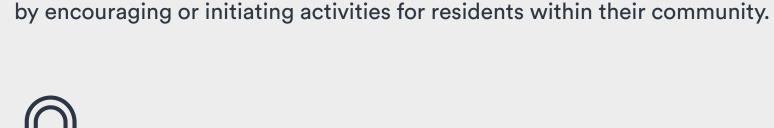
Reviewers in both samples were living in close proximity – the only difference was the style of building they lived in.

So, why do we see a difference in the location rating?



#### **COMMUNITY**

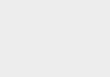
When there is a strong local community residents feel more involved and attached to their local area. A new build development offers a ready-made community with additional opportunities to meet and connect with others.



#### SECURITY

New developments often offer 12 or 24 hour security and concierge, along with well-lit paths that are clean and covered by security cameras, giving residents a stronger sense of security.

Our reviews show that new build management teams play a significant role



#### **THE VIEW**

Many new developments in London are over 20 storeys high and offer residents views over a local area rather than a street view. HomeViews data shows that residents in tall buildings rated their homes higher than those in developments under 20 storeys tall\*.



#### TRAFFIC

Many new developments are set back from main roads and rat runs, or offer homes high above the road, meaning residents are less affected by traffic noise.



#### LOCATION AND LOCKDOWN

We look at how Location ratings changed during the pandemic and how scores for London and the regions compared during the various phases of lockdown.

#### HOW DID COVID IMPACT LOCATION RATINGS?

- Lockdown announced in March 2020
- November lockdown with stricter restrictions in London
- Portals reporting a return of demand to cities and London

- REGIONAL
- LONDON

July 2020 property market opened

4 Restrictions lifting



Regional Location ratings enjoyed a boost during lockdowns and emerged higher post-Covid.

In contrast, London Location ratings dipped considerably during lockdowns, recovering to pre-Covid levels once restrictions eased.



#### THE COVID EFFECT

#### Q1 2020 Q2 2021

HomeViews data and Location ratings mirror the story seen across the property sector and regularly reported by agents and portals. As Covid first hit in spring 2020, an exodus from cities began as demand for suburban and rural homes increased.

In Q1 2020, Londoners were still rating their locations higher than regional residents. However, six months later our data shows an immediate spike in more positive ratings for regional locations, alongside a steady drop for locations in the capital. Following this, all location ratings began to drop as lockdown fatigue set in, but the regions still remained higher than London throughout.

As restrictions lift in Q2 2021, Location ratings soon begin to recover. London locations ratings return to pre-covid ratings by the end of Q2 2022, but regional ratings improve further to emerge higher post-Covid than before the pandemic began. When looking at the Location data for this report (2017 - May 2022), London sits at the bottom of the list of all UK regions ranked by Location score. This is also reflected in H1 2022 figures for the buying market, which show that almost 8% of regional homes were bought by Londoners during that period.\*

\*https://www.hamptons.co.uk/research/#/





#### **WORKING WITH HOMEVIEWS**

HomeViews partners with over 40 of the property industry's leading house builders, developers, housing associations and BTR operators. In this final section, we explain what makes us different from other review sites and the many ways companies benefit from their partnership with us.



#### **HOW IS HOMEVIEWS DIFFERENT?**

HomeViews is the UK's only dedicated residential review platform.

Verified resident reviews mean you know the reviewer lives in your development, and lets you provide trust and transparency to prospective customers. Development-level profiles let you see your ratings and reviews by building, providing much more value to consumers than a brand level profile page found on other review sites.

All that data is then available to you through comprehensive dashboard reporting that relies on over 18 different resident data points where you can segment by building, resident type and even benchmark against your competitors and segmented property industry standards.

WITH DEVELOPMENT LEVEL
PAGES, AREA GUIDES AND
BLOGS HOMEVIEWS ACHIEVES
4X MORE SEO TRAFFIC TO YOUR
REVIEW PAGES COMPARED
TO OTHER LEADING REVIEW
PLATFORMS.

Feature	homeviews	Other review sites
Dedicated new-build review site		×
Verified resident reviews		×
Development-level profiles and reviews		×
Segmentation of reviews and data by resident type		×
18 different resident data points		×
Benchmarking against competitors and segmented property industry standards	<b>✓</b>	×





#### DO REVIEWS MATTER?

98%

of people read online reviews for local businesses <sup>1</sup>

80%

would be 'likely' or 'highly likely' to leave a review if their initial negative experience was turned into a very positive one <sup>3</sup>

50%

Review Interaction Up by 50% from Pre-Pandemic Levels <sup>5</sup>

89%

of consumers are "highly" likely or "fairly" likely to use a business that responds to all of its online reviews <sup>2</sup>

70%

of renters decided to visit a property with a higher reputation score

47%

more leads generated for rental communities with just one review 4

4.5

The HomeViews audience is highly engaged, spending more than four and a half mintues on development pages.



Over 2 million people will visit Homeviews.com in 2022, with visitor numbers up 60% so far this year, compared with 2021.

#### **WORKING WITH HOMEVIEWS**

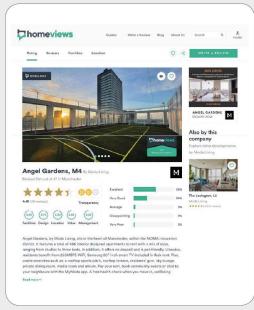
The industry's only dedicated review platform
Reviewing a home is very different from reviewing any
other product. HomeViews can help you better understand
your buildings and your customers' experiences.



02

#### Verified reviews that reflect a balanced range of experiences

We run independent checks to make sure reviewers are real residents writing about their own home. We also actively source reviews by building rather than waiting for residents to write one, and limit to one review per resident. This avoids only issueled reviews and ensures your reviews are fair and useful.

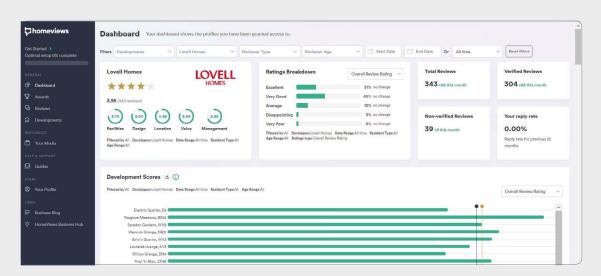


03 Unr

#### Unmatched insight into each building's performance

Access 'board-ready' reports with HomeViews data, tools and analytics. Set KPIs, inform strategies and benchmark against your portfolio, sector, region or country.

Customise your own surveys, receive regular reports from our team and benefit from the wealth of data not shown on our site.





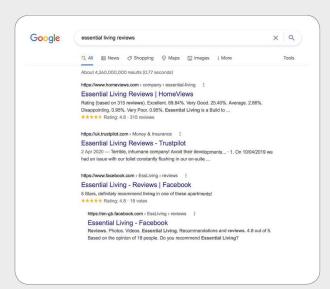
Positive reviews do the marketing for you
Customers won't take your word for it. They trust reviews

Need a leg-up on to the property ladder?

when choosing a home, just like they do for other purchases. Whether for your brand or buildings, and across print, digital, social and Out of Home advertising, we help you to amplify and broadcast what your happiest customers are saying.

Benefit from our authority on Google

People are searching for your brand and your buildings, as well as for locations and advice. And they're finding HomeViews. Our pages sit at the top of search results, giving people a balanced alternative to Trustpilot or Google ratings, as well as hundreds of articles based on resident insights.



#### SOME OF THE BRANDS WE ARE WORKING WITH







































#### HOMEVIEWS PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

Two things we love about HomeViews. Firstly, it drives transparency, which for us drives learning. So, we learn about what we do well and what we can do better. Secondly, it's about trust. We're really proud of the homes we create and we think transparency favours strong brands. HomeViews is an independent platform that we can use to say to residents, 'don't take our word for it – go and take a look at HomeViews. It's exactly the same with our Housing Association and local authority partners. We can tell them not to take our word for it, but to look at HomeViews.

Customer reviews have always been such a valuable insight for us across the business as a whole, but having development-led content has provided much more detailed information that we can really use to understand our buyers and what drew them to specific schemes and homes. Actively partnering with HomeViews to seek out more feedback from real buyers and those who rent homes in our new developments gives us great insight into the buying experience, helping us continually improve our services and our homes.

Darragh Hurley Managing Director Mount Anvil John Lumley Strategic Sales Director L&Q

As an independent platform, HomeViews provides detailed and actionable insights and analysis for our team to optimise our customer service with our residents. We are very proud of our offering and encourage our residents to use HomeViews to share their feedback. It is important to know how our residents perceive our services.

Sowgol Zarinchang MIRPM

Managing Director

Way of Life

HomeViews has enabled our residents to share their experiences and benefits of living in a Built to Rent scheme and for us to share their stories with prospective residents. It is an integral part of our marketing strategy, as we utilise our verified positive reviews, ratings and HomeViews Awards across our website and social media channels.

Nick Woodward
Director of Lettings
Essential Living

