The First Time Buyer Anxiety Index 2026

Exploring the impact of homebuying for those getting on the property ladder for the first time.

LPL

Introducing The First Time Buyer Anxiety Index 2026

Getting on the property ladder is an exciting period for first-time buyers, but it comes with its challenges too. From gazumping to delays in receiving the keys, mortgage applications to actually finding the home of your dreams, a first-time buyer will go through a wealth of emotions.

This report explores the journey of the first time buyer, analysing the impact of each step on excitement, enjoyment, stress and anxiety.

Surveying 500 first-time buyers split into two segments - 250 currently going through the process and 250 having completed on their first home within the last two years - the report looks to understand both those in the midst of it all, and those looking back on their journey, where hindsight is perhaps a wonderful thing.

Louise Stephens-Pantoja
Head of Operations

Contents

Executive Summary

First time buyers start with confidence

- **90%** of first time buyers go into the journey confident in their understanding of the process
- Confidence is at its peak upon first property visit, while excitement peaks at viewing four to five.
- First time buyers are most confident in saving for a deposit, government schemes and support, and making an offer on a property - things they are in control of.

Excitement builds before stress and frustration take over

- Excitement builds for home viewings in an inverted U shape, while stress levels climb from day one.
- Stress levels accelerate the more viewings a first-time buyer visits.
- There's a confidence gap - despite **90%** claiming to understand the process, **71%** hit unexpected costs, **62%** were gazumped and **62%** had a mortgage application rejected.

It's the unknown that drives the most anxiety

- Legal processes, paperwork and aspects out of a buyer's control drive the highest levels of anxiety.
- Stress and anxiety at key stages recognised more from those that have completed, taking a step back to recognise their emotions.
- Excitement levels are at their highest for solo first-time buyers, and we appear to get more anxious when buying with others, particularly partners.

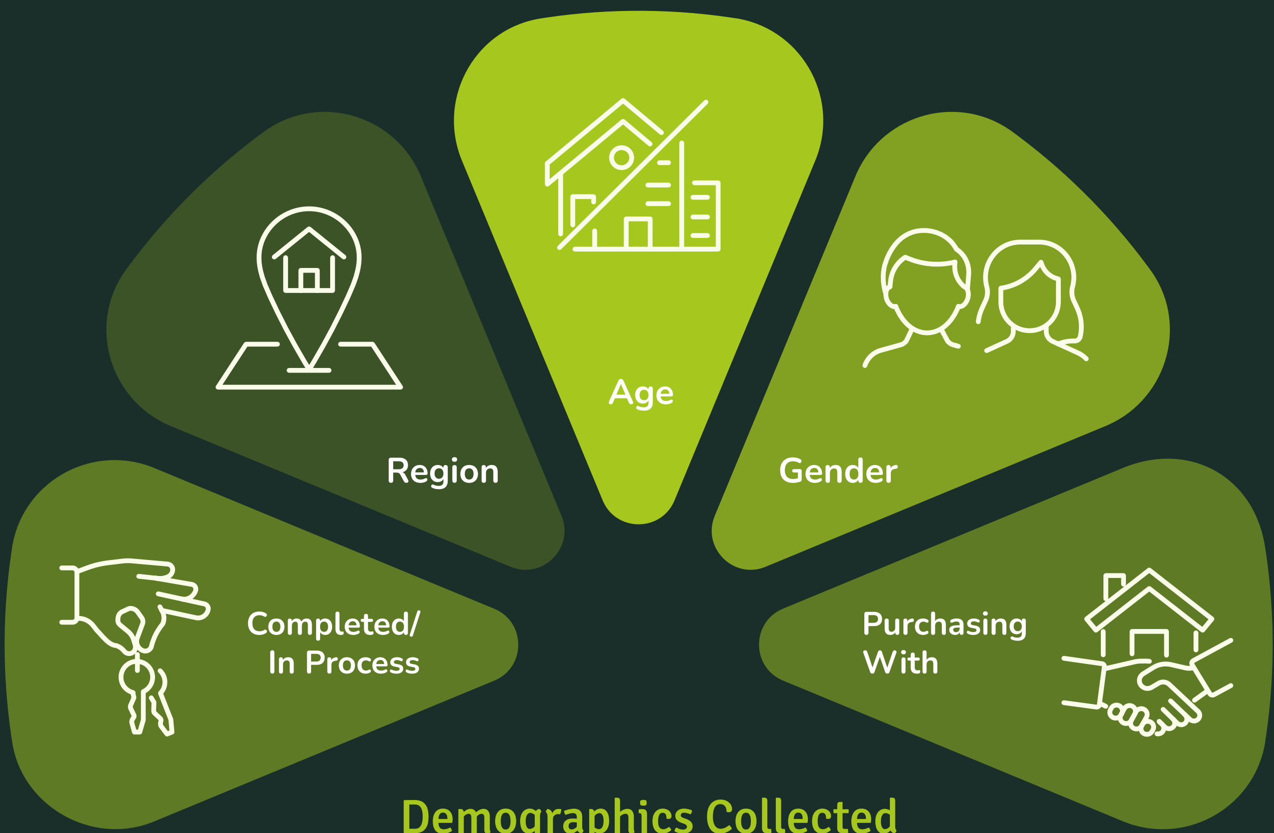
← Back to Contents

Meet Today's First Time Buyer

Who we Surveyed

To understand the experiences of first time buyers in 2026, we surveyed 500 people, half currently going through the process and yet to complete and half having completed within the last two years.

First time buyers were based across the UK, with demographics collected including age, gender, region and who theyere buying with, whether that be alone, with a partner, friend, family member or anyone else.



Demographics Collected

Starting Strong: Confidence Before Buying

Confidence levels outweigh anxiety during initial stages

Prior to starting the process, confidence levels are high among first time buyers, particularly when it comes to understanding the process. Around 90% of first-time buyers feel confident in what lies ahead.

That figure rises to almost 95% of those aged 25-34 years old, with social media and online resources the driving force behind that. Almost 50% of people within that age bracket utilised social media and viewed it as the most helpful resource. However, it proves a slightly different story when retrospectively looking back on the experience (see page 12).

"

It's pleasing to see that the overwhelming feeling going into the buying process is optimism and confidence. It's a special time in anyone's life, but preparation is key.

What is clear, though, is that it isn't getting people started on the journey, it's preparing them for what comes next..."

Louise Stephens-Pantoja | Head of Operations

Percentage of people who believe they understood the buying process prior to starting

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
70%	94.3%	88.7%	87.4%	53.9%

The Emotional Journey

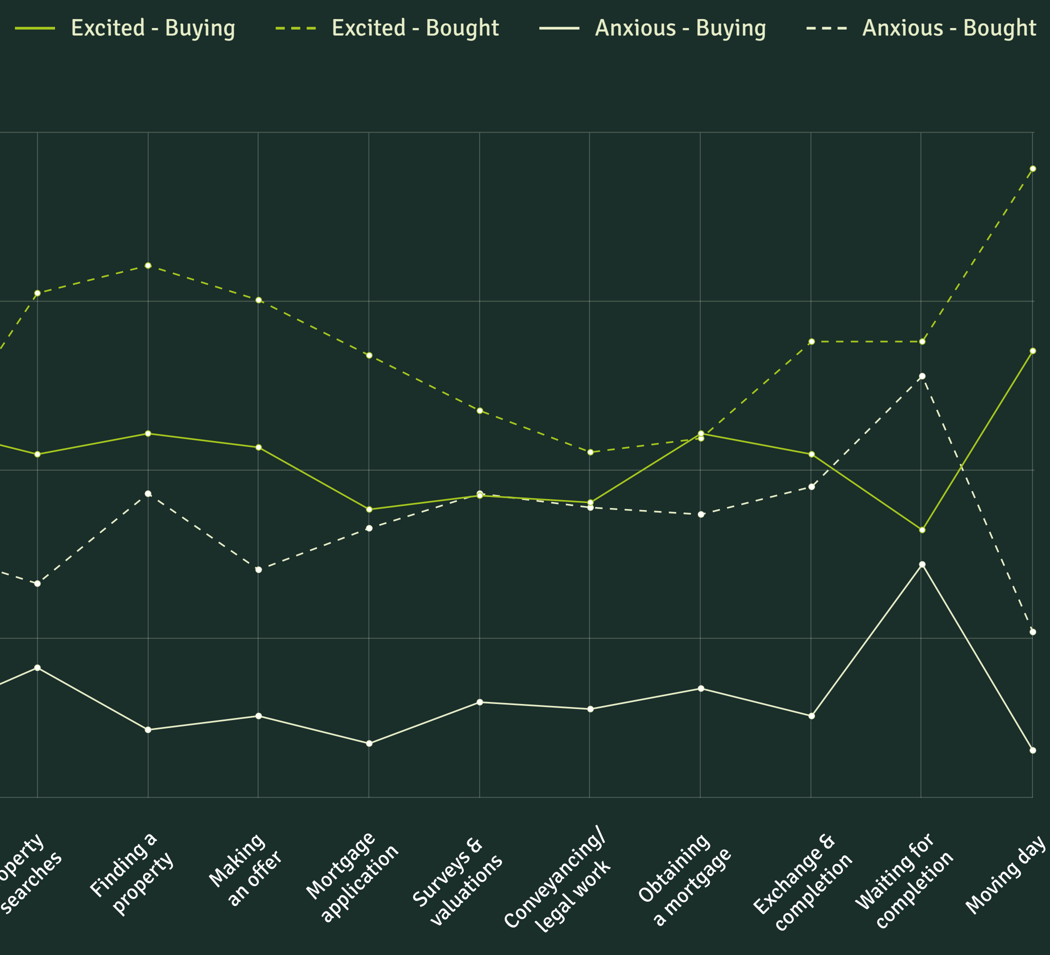
How Emotions Change Throughout The Process

As anyone who has purchased a house, the process throws up a range of emotions from start to finish, with the likes of stress, anxiety, frustration and, of course, excitement and confidence fluctuating as milestones are hit and challenges are met.

Anxiety peaks during the wait for completion, while one in five first time buyers felt anxiety levels rise during surveys, conveyancing, and obtaining a mortgage.

Perhaps what's most interesting is the difference between those currently in the bubble of buying a property and those that have already completed, with people retrospectively looking back and believing that they were significantly more anxious than those currently going through it.

An Emotional Timeline



The Hidden Cost of House Hunting

The Very Real Issue of Viewing Fatigue

There is a direct relationship between the number of viewings and excitement and stress levels. Excitement builds among first time buyers between the first and fourth to fifth viewings, peaking at this point before tailing off again in an inverted U shape. However, during this period, stress and anxiety builds from viewing one, with these being the overwhelming feelings after viewing four to five.

Four To Five Viewings The Sweet Spot For Buyers

Viewings	Exited Percentage	Stressed Percentage	Anxious Percentage	Confident Percentage
1	20	11.1	17.8	28.9
2 to 3	32.3	16.8	16.1	24.2
4 to 5	47.2	17	23.9	17
6 to 10	30.2	19.8	23.6	16
11 to 20	25	33.3	25	16.7

LPL

When Anxiety Peaks

Where First Time Buyers Struggle Most

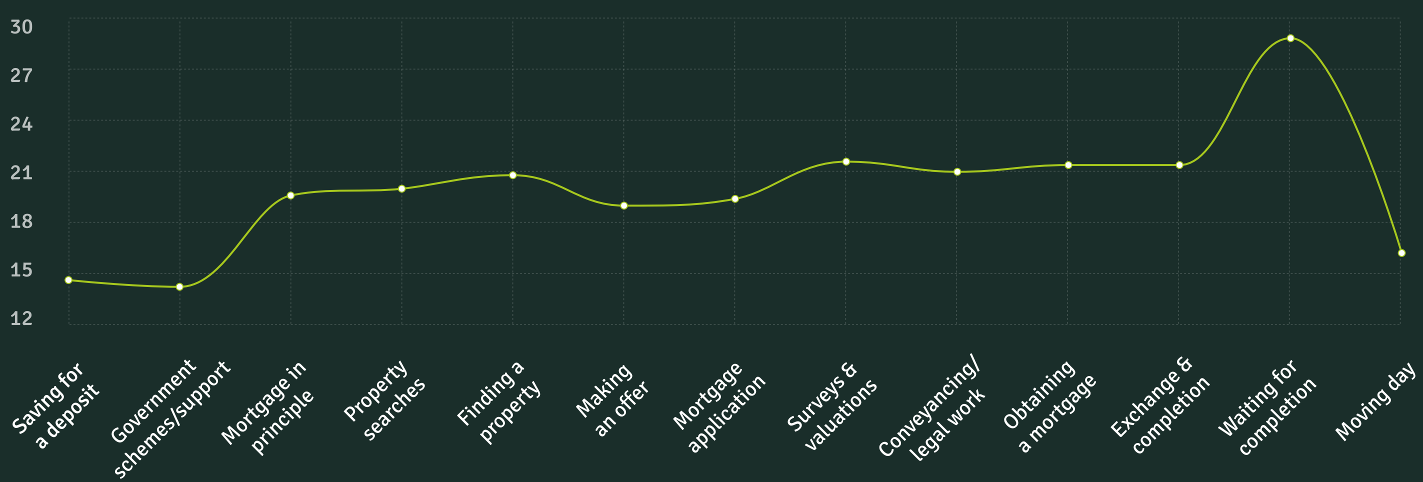
As the process gathers momentum, it's actually not the purchasing of a house that provides the biggest pain point, but rather the waiting for everyone else. Conveyancing, legal work, administration and paperwork have the biggest impact on mental health, where control is out of the hands of the buyer.

That's no more prevalent than at the final stage, waiting for completion, where anxiety peaks at **28%**, albeit it is still exceeded by excitement **(31%)**.

> *We often see buyers come to us who are nervous about the next stages of their move. However, a good conveyancer and professional support can really help ease the situation, as proven when it comes to the most useful advice during the journey (page 12).*
>
> *At LPL we understand that it's a particularly vulnerable and stressful time for a buyer, which is why we take a different approach to others within the industry, providing support and clear communication every step of the way."*

Louise Stephens-Pantoja | Head of Operations

The Anxiety Curve



How Buying Circumstances Affect Anxiety

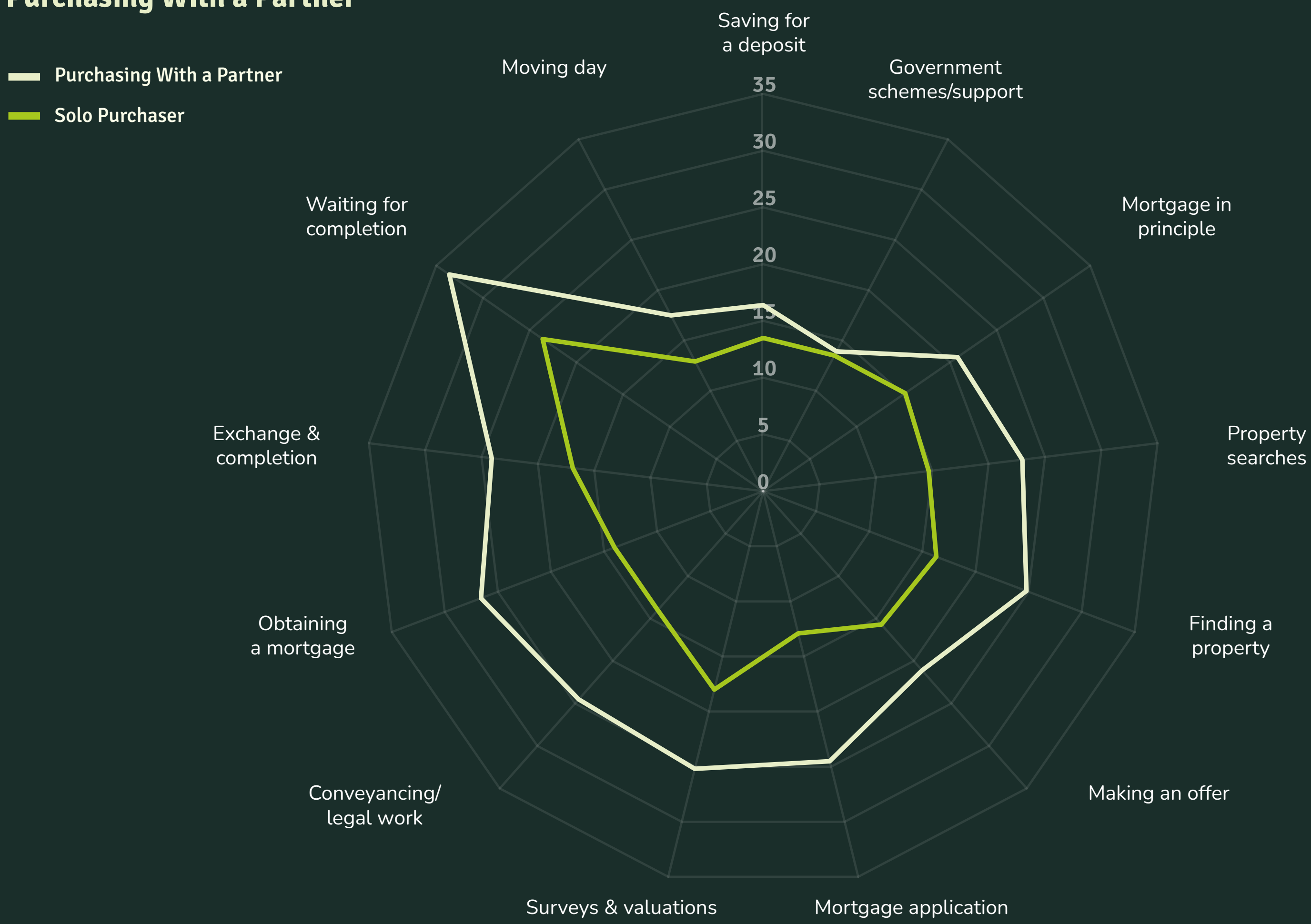
Buying Solo the Smoothest Journey

The element of uncertainty drives anxiety further in who you are buying a home with. Purchasing with a partner, family member or friend heightens anxiety and stress by over **10%** in some cases. Surprisingly, it also dampens excitement too.

Purchasing with a partner naturally brings in a new dynamic - additional opinions, other financial circumstances and the emotions of the other person too, all of which is again out of a buyer's control, even if it is the person they love dearest.

For solo purchasers, it's a different story, with anxiety levels significantly under the average.

Solo Purchasers vs Purchasing With a Partner



How Unexpected Challenges Affect Mental Health

Confidence Drops When The Unexpected Arrives

While the initial findings suggest that first time buyers are largely going into the process with confidence, there is a clear confidence gap too, and that is having an impact on mental health. It's here that more education is needed to ensure that the challenges faced are expected and, importantly, addressed in a manner that eases stress and anxiety.

Where the confidence gap lies:

71% hit unexpected costs

68% had delays from solicitors

66% had survey issues

63% had a purchase fall through

62% got gazumped

62% had a mortgage application rejected

A quarter of people who face these challenges have had their mental health negatively affected, with this gap one of the core parts of the journey where more first time buyers do need help

The Role of Professional Guidance

Why Professional Support Matters

Guidance is offered by many quarters while going through the buying process, particularly for the first time. Parents and other family members, friends and today the many influencers and resources online.

That gives the first time buyer a real head start and is perhaps instrumental in the levels of confidence they have going into the process. However, what's noticeable is that not getting the advice and guidance from the right quarters could be instrumental in the confidence gap which is evident (page 11).

For those currently going through the process, online articles and family and friends are considered as most helpful, with people seemingly seeking first hand experience or information that we'd consider quick and easy to digest.

However, as first time buyers look back on their experience post-completion, it's the help of mortgage brokers, estate agents and lenders, as well as other professionals that, in hindsight, prove most valuable in removing the unexpected - the key anxiety and stress driver.

In fact, much of the advice given by those having completed revolved around seeking professional advice, with one stating: **"Don't do it yourself, engage with the services and experts in the space, including professional agents, surveyors and engineers."**

Those in the process vs those who have completed

	Currently Buying	Bought Within 2 Years
Family/friends	34.7%	39.6%
Online articles	33%	36%
Mortgage broker	25.9%	40%
Estate agent	24.3%	40.8%
Mortgage lender	25.1%	35.2%
Government websites	23.5%	31.6%
Solicitor	19.1%	25.6%

Professional support allows first time buyers to understand the process fully from those who are experts in the space. What is really evident from this study is that people spend a lot of time listening to friends and influencers during the process, and while they can of course provide valuable experience, actually in hindsight, it's the professional advice and guidance that comes up trumps for those looking back on the process having completed.

This is something we're always conscious of at LPL and is the reason why we're on hand every step of the way through the conveyancing process to ensure our clients are fully informed, have questions answered, and don't meet any bumps in the road."

Louise Stephens-Pantoja | Head of Operations

Key Findings

The Confidence Gap Needs Addressing to Aid First Time Buyers

Confidence at the beginning doesn't prevent anxiety later:

It is positive that first time buyers are going into the process feeling confident and excited about the journey ahead. However, that doesn't prevent anxiety further down the line, particularly for those who aren't utilising professional advice.

The emotional burden grows with every additional viewing:

While excitement peaks at viewing four to five, stress and anxiety becomes the overwhelming feeling after that point. Understanding core specifications and matching those with your viewings can help prevent viewing fatigue.

Legal stages and the "out of control" cause the largest amount of anxiety:

It's when a buyer hands over to control of the process to others that causes the highest levels of anxiety, whether it be applying for a mortgage, waiting on a survey or even having to take into account the opinion of a partner or family member.

That's furthered by the 'unexpected':

The confidence gap is real. A quarter of people are seeing their mental health affected by the unexpected, whether that be costs, delays, gazumping and other issues, a sign that better awareness of what could happen may be necessary for first time buyers.

Be patient and utilise experts:

Hindsight proves that expertise is the most valuable source of information throughout the process and actually taking on that as early as possible can soothe the unexpected. Providing advice for future first time buyers, seeking the help of experts was the second most common piece of advice. The first; be patient and understand that things don't always move at the pace you wish

Closing Statement

Getting on the property ladder should be an exciting milestone, but our findings show that uncertainty, delays and unexpected challenges can often affect a buyer's experience. What is clear from this research is that preparation, clear communication and access to professional guidance can help buyers navigate the process with greater confidence.

While not every challenge can be avoided, ensuring that buyers understand the process, know what to expect and have access to timely support can help reduce uncertainty at key stages of the journey. By working together, industry professionals can play an important role in helping first-time buyers feel informed, supported and better prepared for the road ahead.

LPL

Louise Stephens-Pantoja

Head of Operations

LPL