

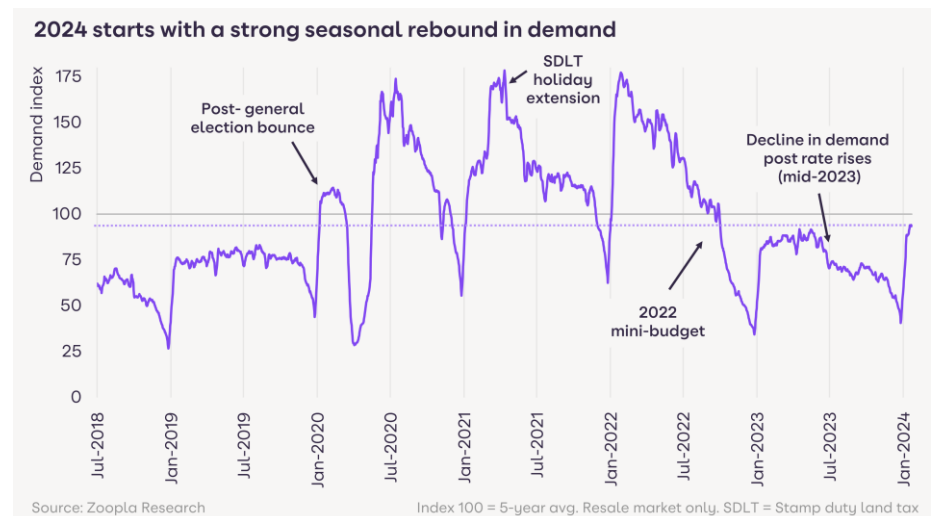
+13%

Sales agreed in first 3 weeks of January vs same period a year ago

2024 starts with rebound in sales market activity

Housing demand and sales agreed have registered a strong seasonal rebound over the first three weeks of 2024 as sub-5% mortgage rates support market activity. Buyer demand is 12% higher than a year ago but remains 13% below the five-year average, which includes the pandemic ‘boom years’ (2021-2022).

It’s a positive start, reflecting a return of pent-up demand following a weak 2023 H2, when many buyers delayed moving decisions in the face of rising mortgage rates.



All measures of sales activity are up year-on-year

We reported an increase in sales agreed in the final weeks of 2023 and this trend has continued into 2024. New sales agreed are 13% higher than last year and higher across all countries and regions. Sales are up the most in Yorkshire and the Humber (+19%) and the West Midlands (+17%). This is evidence that buyers and sellers are becoming more aligned on pricing.

A greater flow of homes listed for sale also indicates that sellers, many of whom are also buyers, feel more confident. Overall supply is 22% higher than last year. The average estate agent has 28 homes for sale, boosting buyers’ choice and keeping prices in check.

Pace of annual price falls slows as more sales agreed

Improving market conditions, in particular more sales, is supporting pricing levels. Our UK house price index recorded annual price falls of -0.8% in December 2023, up from a -1.4% low in October 2023.

House prices continue to adjust to higher mortgage rates through modest price falls. On a regional basis, we register the largest price falls in the East of England (-2.5%) and the South West (-2.2%). Northern Ireland is an outlier with house prices up 3.2% over 2023.