



Checkatrade.com

HOME PRIDE INDEX 2021

Checkatrade's report on the value
Brits place on their homes

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Mike Fairman, CEO Checkatrade

Introduction

2020 has been an unprecedented year in many ways – not least in transforming our relationships with our homes

Last year saw many of us spending more time at home than ever before – but how did that affect our relationships with our homes? Did it make us more likely to take on home improvements? Did it make us more adventurous in creating new spaces in the home to match our new lifestyles?

We wanted to explore this further and surveyed 2,000 homeowners around the UK about their attitudes towards the home, spending habits, interior design inspiration and trends – all with the aim of finding out whether we value our homes more than ever before.

In this Home Pride Index, our very first annual report looking at people’s relationships with their homes, Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe, Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey, shares her expertise and insights to shine a light on why various home improvement changes and trends might have taken place. We have also asked for some additional thoughts from some of our vetted trade members too.

There’s no need to overstate that the environment in which we live has been tested beyond all expectations in 2020. It’s also clear that the ‘Stay At Home’ era has driven a deep-seated need to have pride in where we live, with our latest research showing that 54% of British homeowners love their home more now than ever before.

“ It’s also clear that the ‘Stay At Home’ era has driven a deep-seated need to have pride in where we live

The trends that we’ve discovered are also reflected on our own platform and despite the difficult situation the world found itself in, 2020 was a record-breaking year for Checkatrade in many ways, with searches on our platform up 84% year-on-year.

We hope you find these trends insightful and the tips from our tradespeople helpful.

Stay safe and keep inspired.

Mike Fairman, CEO, Checkatrade

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The home is typically a refuge for many. It is a place that we expect to have a long-term association with, to have control over, and that we feel attached to. It is where we go to recover after a long workday and to spend quality time with loved ones.

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey



Pride of Place

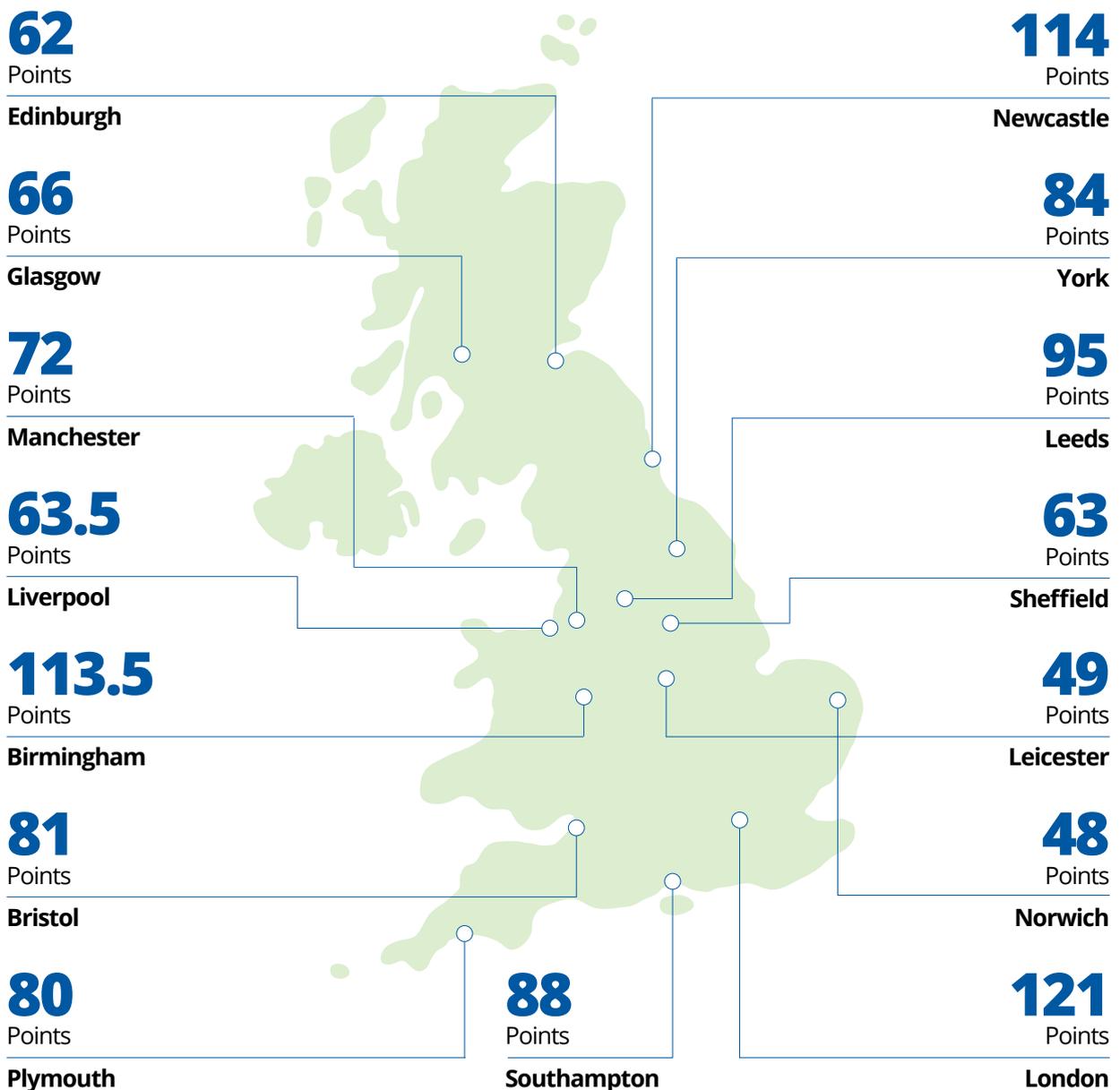
Over the course of the last 12 months, our relationship with our homes has dramatically changed, not least because many of us have been spending more time in them than ever before.

In this Home Index Report, Checkatrade takes a detailed look at how proud we are of our homes to highlight how the nation's love for their homes has increased.

In fact, research from Checkatrade¹ shows how house proud (62%) we are with homeowners from London, Newcastle and Birmingham being more house proud than any other area of the UK – in comparison to Edinburgh, Leicester and Norwich, which come bottom of the list.

Based on the responses of 2,000 homeowners, 15 cities were awarded points taking into consideration factors such as money spent on renovations, time spent doing DIY as well as the number of unfinished jobs in order to determine who reigns supreme as the most house-proud city.

Top 15 most house-proud cities¹



¹<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494405801963>

Meanwhile, academic research on our favourite places within the home during the UK's COVID-19 lockdown of March – May 2020² indicates that residents value both places where they can be with others (e.g. kitchen, living room, dining room) and places where they can withdraw to be alone and/or relax (e.g. the bedroom, the garden), depending on energy levels and needs.

Looking at Checkatrade's own research, places where people can be with others are those we take the most pride in. For instance, the living room (26%) is the room that British homeowners say they are the proudest of, followed by the kitchen (16%).

Rooms homeowners are most proud of



²Ratcliffe, E., et al. (in preparation). Favourite places and activities at home during COVID-19 lockdown in the United Kingdom.

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Being proud of one's home and the way it looks is a key aspect of feeling attached to this important place, and is a way to bring residents of a community together.³ For individuals, a home that one can be proud of is a way to “boost” self-esteem,⁴ which is itself related to wider wellbeing outcomes such as happiness and having a sense of meaning and purpose.

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey

³<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494402001172?via%3Dihub>
⁴<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494496900171?via%3Dihub>

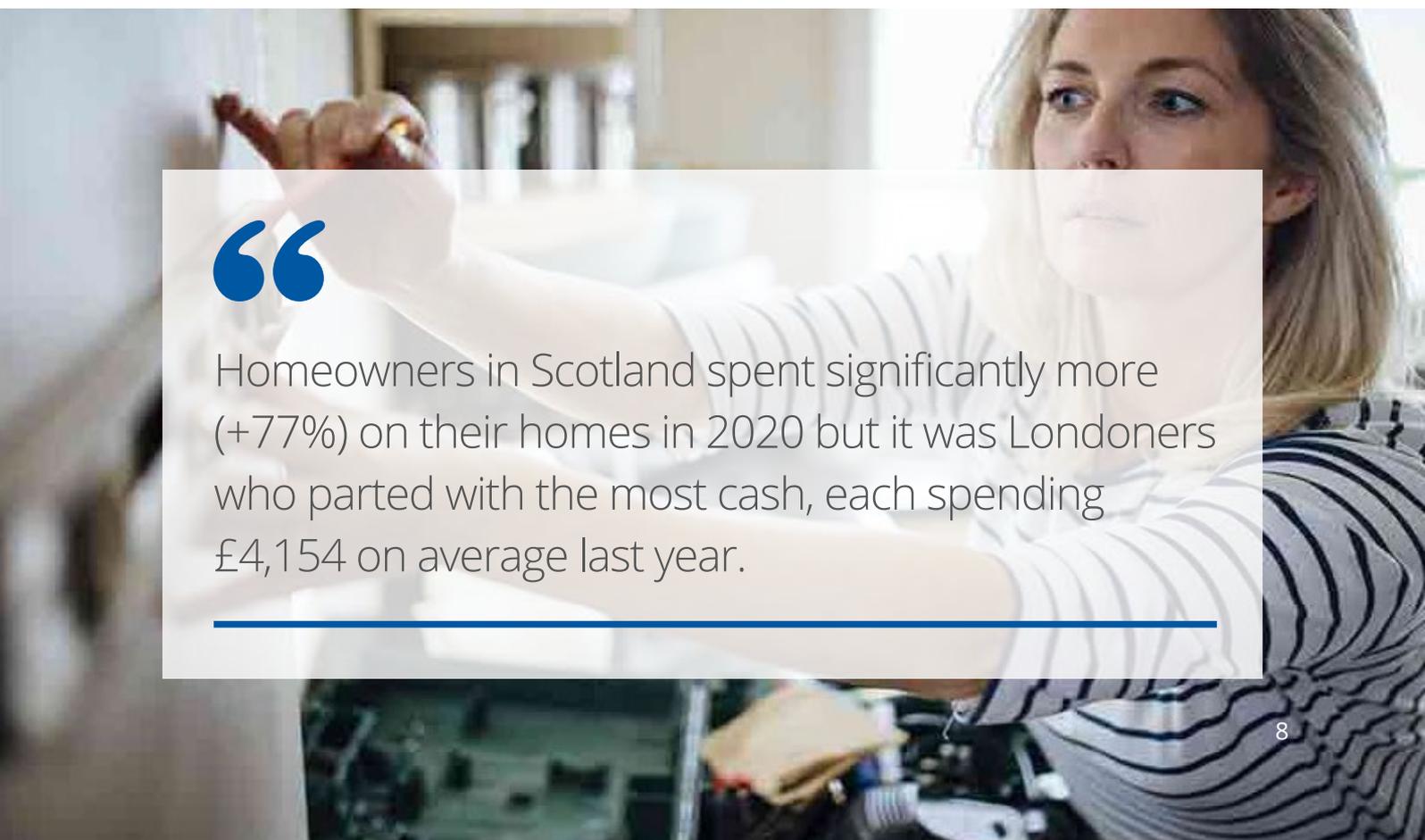
Image copyrighted @victoria_road_restoration

House Fund

When it comes to financially investing in our homes, British homeowners have on average spent £2,608 on home improvements this year – that's £338 more than 2019 and up 15% collectively.

Across the country, homeowners in Scotland spent 77% more on their homes in 2020 than the previous year, with Londoners the overall biggest spenders in 2020 (£4,154). Meanwhile, homeowners in Northern Ireland have spent the least on home improvements (£1,635) compared to the rest of the UK but increased their spend 5% from last year.

REGION	TOTAL SPENT ON HOME IMPROVEMENTS*		
	2019	2020	% change
Scotland	£1,661	£2,936	+77%
Yorkshire and Humber	£2,176	£2,929	+35%
South West	£2,194	£2,829	+29%
North West	£1,944	£2,400	+23%
Wales	£1,804	£2,156	+20%
London	£3,652	£4,154	+14%
West Midlands	£2,210	£2,356	+7%
Northern Ireland	£1,551	£1,635	+5%
North East	£1,961	£2,004	+2%
South East	£2,681	£2,665	-1%
East Midlands	£2,154	£2,118	-2%
East Anglia	£2,031	£1,754	-14%



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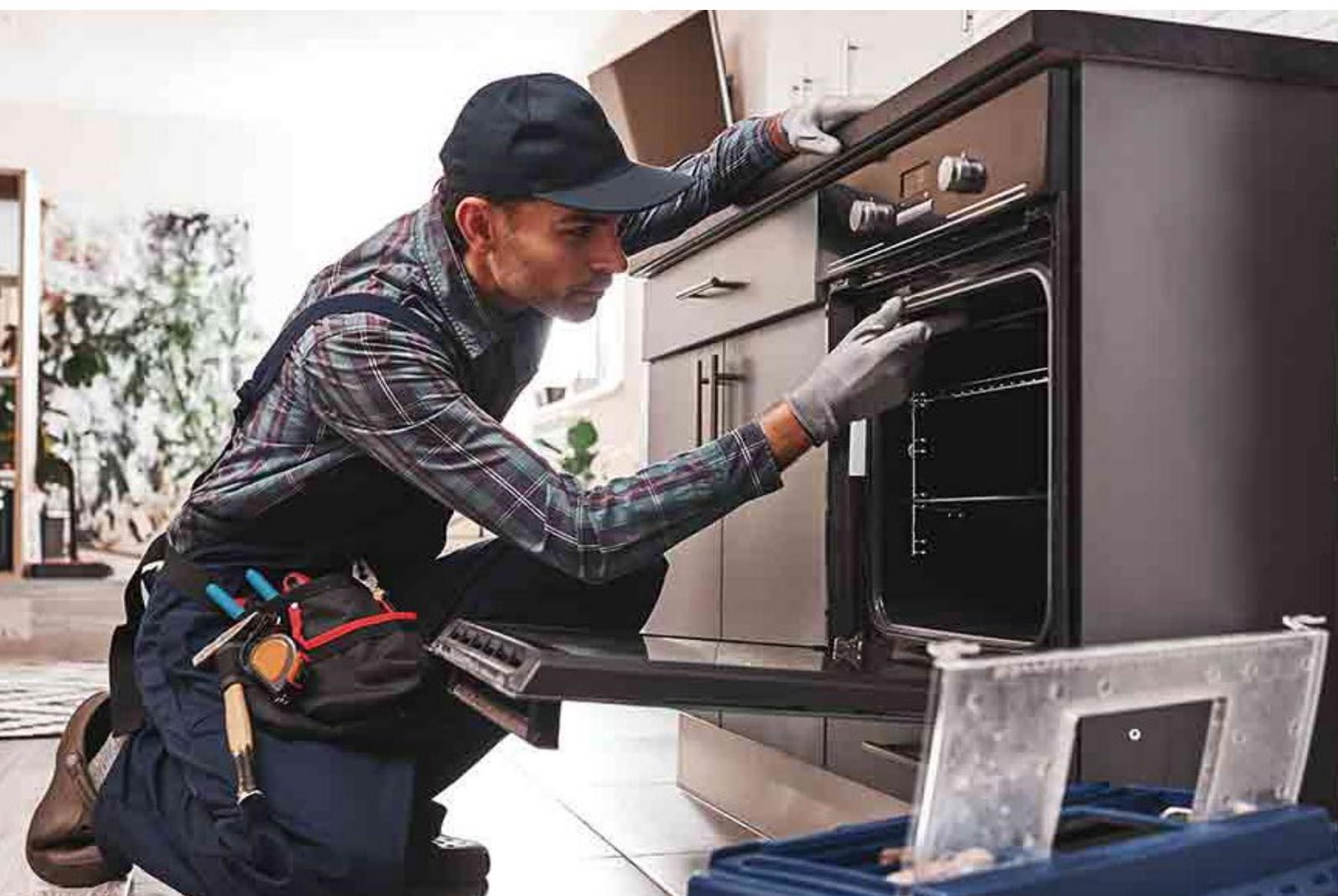
Homeowners in Scotland spent significantly more (+77%) on their homes in 2020 but it was Londoners who parted with the most cash, each spending £4,154 on average last year.

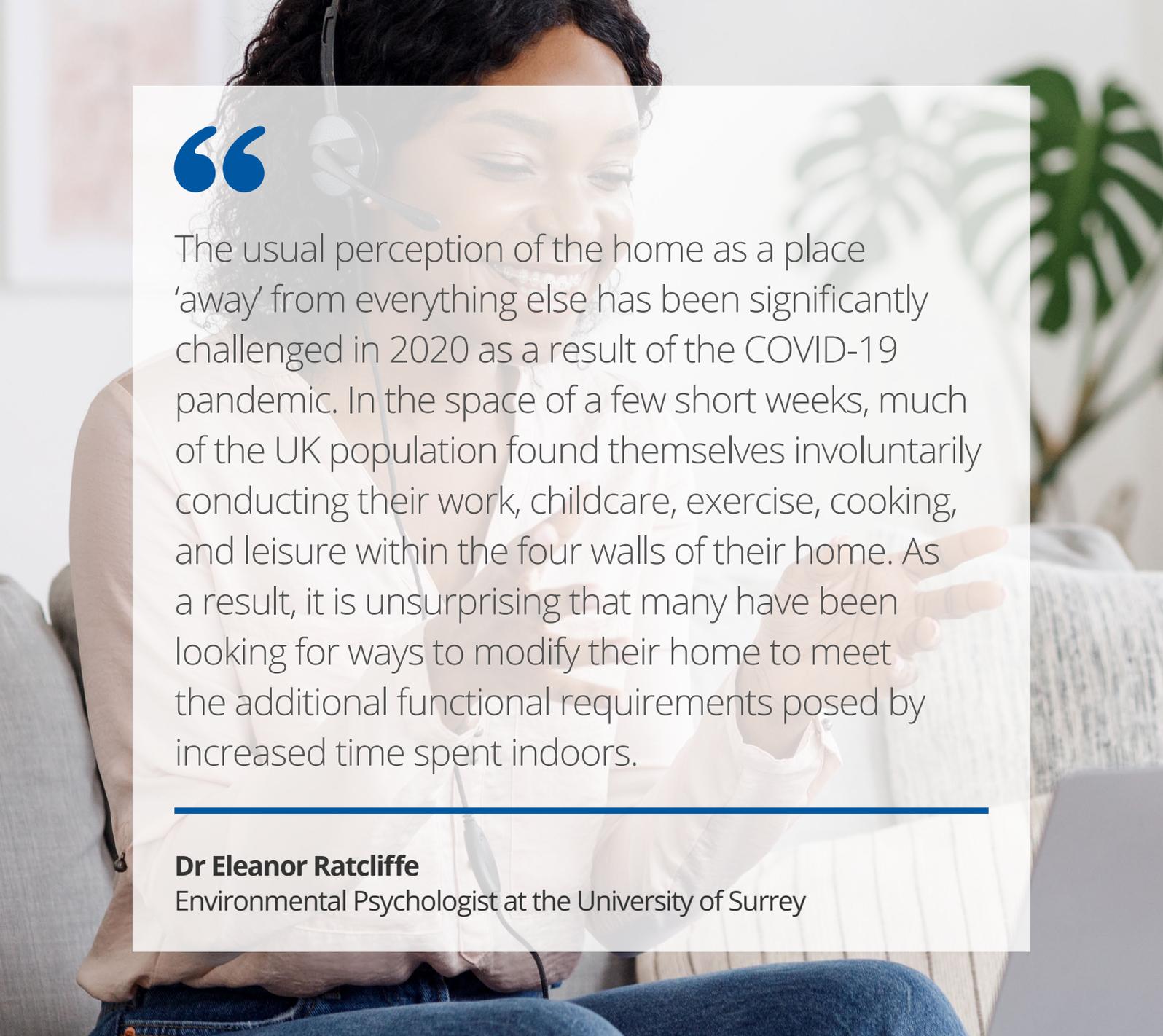
Looking at the areas of the home, kitchens and gardens had the most money invested into them, with £435 and £392 on average being spent respectively across the nation, suggesting these are the spaces we have been spending the most time in – with gardens (+43%) and home offices (+21%) showing the biggest percentage increase in money spent respectively.

Interestingly, with many more people working from home this year, Londoners in particular spent money on renovating or converting a space into a home office, spending on average £621 per person.

Meanwhile, those in the North East spent more on their gardens than any other region in the UK, with the average household spending around £886 – more than double the national average of £392.

Room	TOP 10 SPACES BRITS SPENT MONEY IMPROVING YEAR-ON-YEAR		
	2019	2020	% change
Garden	£274	£392	43%
Home Office	£184	£222	21%
Driveway	£192	£223	16%
Bedrooms	£260	£302	16%
Kitchen	£389	£435	12%
Living Room	£301	£311	3%
Bathroom	£322	£333	3%
Loft	£161	£163	1%
Utility Room	£207	£204	-1%
Hallway	£181	£168	-7%





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The usual perception of the home as a place 'away' from everything else has been significantly challenged in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the space of a few short weeks, much of the UK population found themselves involuntarily conducting their work, childcare, exercise, cooking, and leisure within the four walls of their home. As a result, it is unsurprising that many have been looking for ways to modify their home to meet the additional functional requirements posed by increased time spent indoors.

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey

2020 changed many people's plans and appears to have actually encouraged some to renovate their homes. Charles Brooks, 49, from Ruislip, London, decided to invest planned holiday savings of £6,000 into his home when the pandemic hit and he was spending so much more time in the house it with his family.

He said, *'We started off our renovation journey by only intending to redecorate our sons' bedrooms, but as we went along we realised the carpets could do with changing so laid wooden floors ... then before we knew it, we had a whole house renovation going on.'*

Charles used Checkatrade to source tradespeople to fit the carpets, do the plastering and wallpapering, and a carpenter to update doors and floors.

He explains, *"I was amazed with the ease of finding reliable tradespeople online – it was efficient and trustworthy because I could look at other people's reviews!"*

While 2020 was a difficult year, it encouraged Charles to take action and make a change to his home – having moved into the house eight years ago, now was the time for him and his family to make it their own.

He explains, “We really wouldn’t have had the money or time to redecorate in regular circumstances! When the pandemic hit, we were all working from home – me, my wife and kids, plus we weren’t doing anything on the weekends like we usually would so the footfall in our house had increased a lot and we thought it was time to make our house perfect for us.”

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Making modifications to the home is related to ownership and sense of pride⁵ which are pathways to increasing one’s self-esteem. Being actively involved in improving one’s home through renovation or redecoration is a way to create something unique and personalised, and it can also be an empowering endeavour that leads to happiness and a sense of achievement.⁶ These activities don’t need to involve significant expense or structural changes; choosing furniture, putting up pictures, or arranging symbolic decorative items⁷ can be a creative activity that strengthens connection to one’s home. Introducing nature into the living environment (e.g., houseplants) is another way to increase positive mood.⁸

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey

⁵<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277953608006205?via%3Dihub>

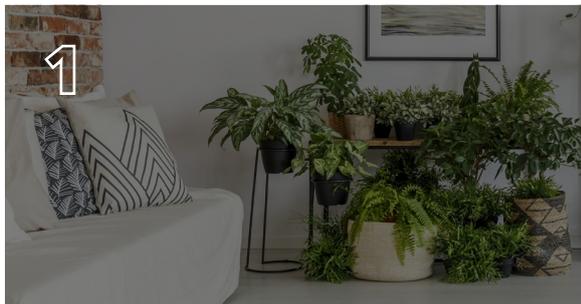
⁶<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13162-011-0021-2>

⁷<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718519301277?via%3Dihub>

⁸<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/16/4506>

Top tips from the trades

Small things to do to feel more comfortable at home



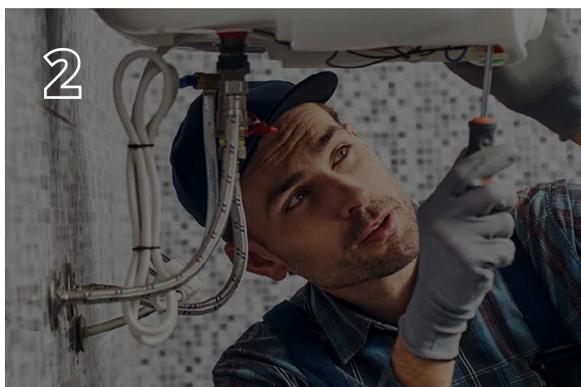
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Adding plants, changing your lighting or old curtains and nets for modern blinds will completely change the look of a room.

Lesley Kamara

Interior decorator at Lady Decorators
Hampshire, Southampton



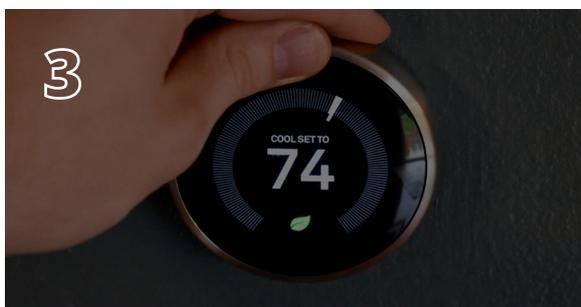
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Regular boiler maintenance should be a key consideration. With people at home more, boilers will obviously be working harder, which will raise the failure rate. Modulating internet controls are a fantastic way of increasing comfort and efficiency.

Matt Butler

Minor Works Director at Miller Freeman and Sons,
Nottingham



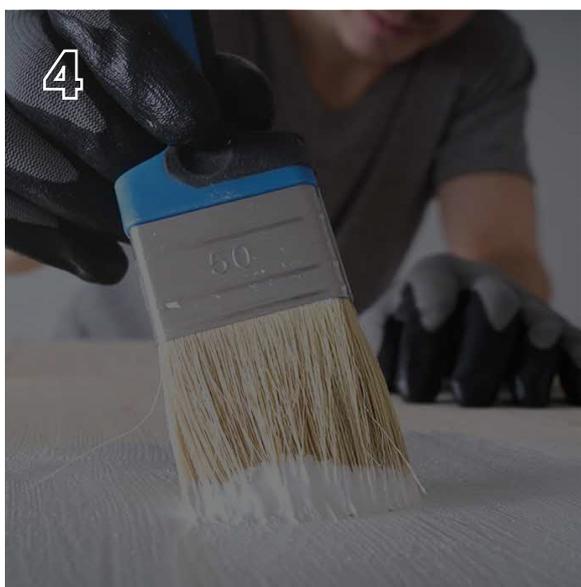
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A smart thermostat is a fantastic way to make your house comfortable and also save energy and money.

Daniel Khanlarpour

Gas Engineer at Gas Guru,
Newcastle



4

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Everyone is different, so the homeowner must first decide if there is a part of their home that gets them down. If it's wallpaper or something small like cleaning the windows which they could either do themselves or get a professional in, that would be a great start to help make them feel better. The main thing is to take action. If their boiler is dodgy or the guttering is leaking – or even worse, falling off! – then of course a professional would be best placed to help

Adrian Goodwin

Founder of Homestyle World,
Stoke-on-Trent

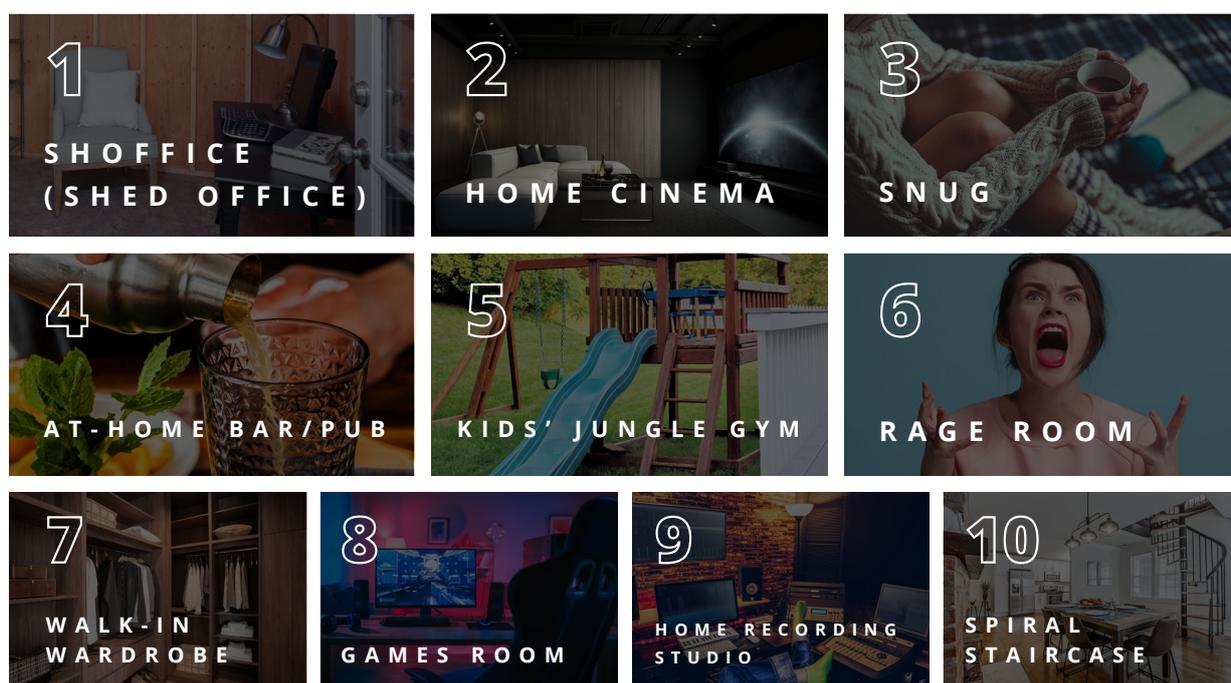
Personalisation at Home

2020 was also the year where people began experimenting more with their homes, with ‘shoffices’ (shed offices) at the top of the agenda, followed by home cinemas, snugs then an at-home bar.

It’s clear that the additional time spent at home has made us more adventurous when it comes to making changes, prioritising new spaces that allow us to focus (like the shoffice, to make working from home easier) and creating new spaces that help us relax – as well as a home cinema and a games room, even a rage room made the top 10.

Most popular changes Brits made at home in 2020

The top 10 home makeovers or created by transforming a space they already had, in order of popularity:



Meanwhile, according to Checkatrade’s own search data, the most popular services in 2020 were plumbing, building and electrics – very to similar to 2019 where plumbers, electricians and builders were the most utilised.

Service With Biggest YoY Percentage Change		
1	Building	+63%
2	Electrical	+56%
3	Landscaping	+55%
4	Plumbing	+48%
5	Painting	+37%
6	Central Heating	+34%
7	Gutter Repair	+18%
8	Roofing	+13%

⁹<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494405801963>

¹⁰<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494486800020>

¹¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264852995_Personalising_the_Home

¹²<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494417300518?via%3Dihub>

¹³<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494420306812?via%3Dihub>

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The home is our primary territory and is a physical means of expressing our own identity.⁹

Personalisation, in the form of renovation or redecoration, is one way in which we can adapt our homes in order to show others what kind of person we are,¹⁰ the values and attitudes that we have, what our interests are, and so on.

Personalisation through decoration, renovation, and upkeep can also increase our sense of being attached¹¹ (meaningfully connected) to the home. Feeling attached or connected to important places in our lives, such as the home, is important for psychological wellbeing¹² and is positively related to mental health.¹³ Being attached to a place goes hand-in-hand with having positive memories and feeling happy and relaxed, belonging to a community, feeling secure and comfortable, and having opportunities for personal freedom and growth.

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey

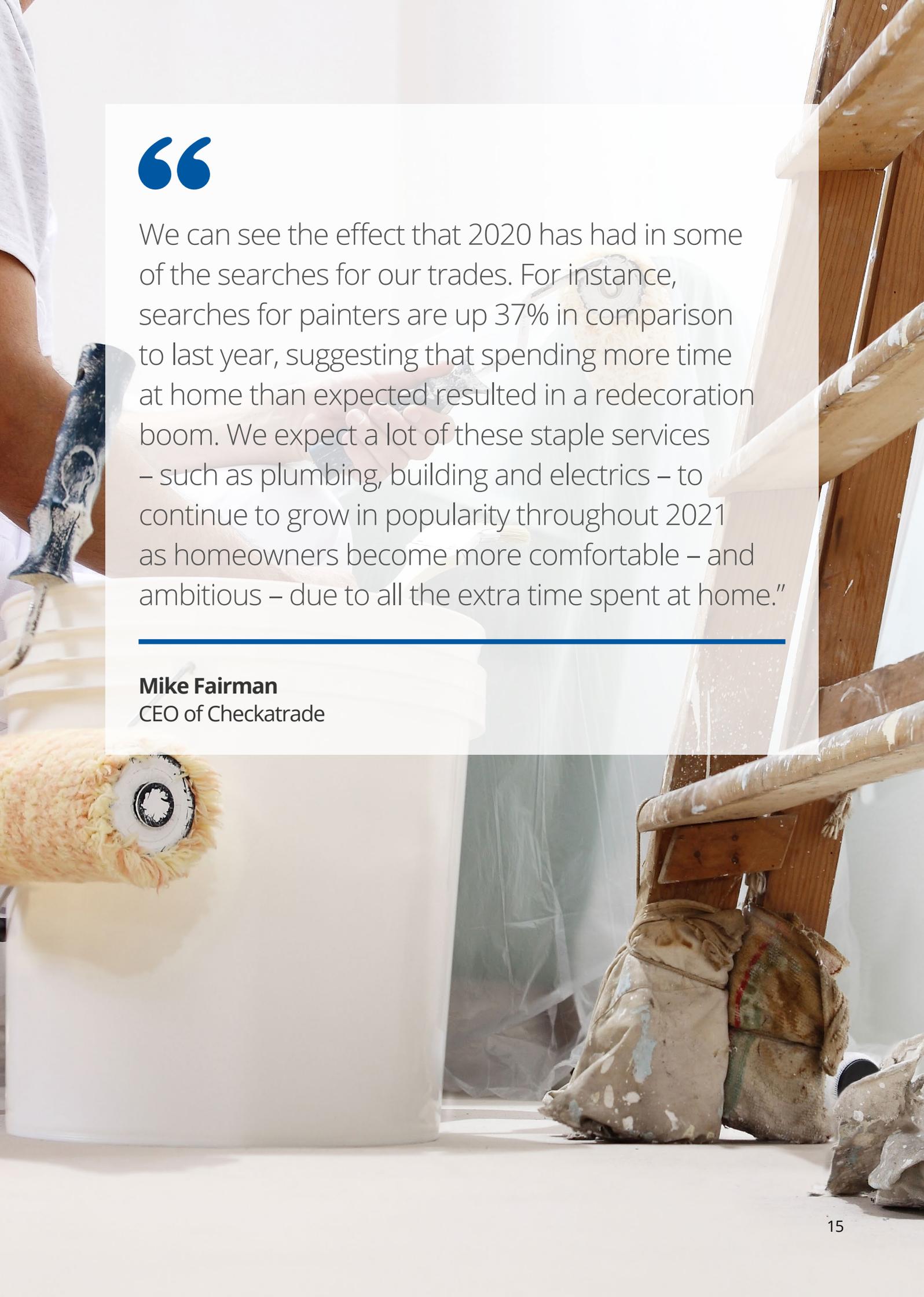
⁹<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494405801963>

¹⁰<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494486800020>

¹¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264852995_Personalising_the_Home

¹²<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494417300518?via%3Dihub>

¹³<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494420306812?via%3Dihub>



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We can see the effect that 2020 has had in some of the searches for our trades. For instance, searches for painters are up 37% in comparison to last year, suggesting that spending more time at home than expected resulted in a redecoration boom. We expect a lot of these staple services – such as plumbing, building and electricians – to continue to grow in popularity throughout 2021 as homeowners become more comfortable – and ambitious – due to all the extra time spent at home.”

Mike Fairman
CEO of Checkatrade



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We always recommend making sure that the roof includes fascias, soffits, gutters, the down pipes are water-tight and that the building or property is not letting in any water anywhere.

Top tips from the trades: what spaces to update first

Lesley Kamara, interior decorator at Lady Decorators Hampshire, Southampton: *“If you’re renovating your entire property, always start at the top and work your way down. If you’re spending more time at home because your working routine has changed, then the room you spend more time in would be the ideal place to redecorate. It’s also a good time to declutter as too much going on in a room can make it over-crowded and messy – removing this creates space and calm.”*

Matt Butler, Minor Works Director at Miller Freeman and Sons, Nottingham: *“With the increase in people working from home over the past year, making sure your central heating is working well – that is, getting in a professional to make sure it’s efficient and reliable – should be the main priority to ensure your comfort levels are where they should be.”*

Daniel Khanlarpour, Gas Engineer at Gas Guru, Newcastle: *“With more people working from home than ever before, the home office is a good space to focus on. My advice is to ALWAYS make sure the plumbing and heating is renewed or in good working order before any renovation work begins – the last thing I want to be doing is cutting through a lovely new carpet to access leaking pipes or replace radiators on brand new wallpapered walls.”*

Adrian Goodwin, Founder of Homestyle World, Stoke-on-Trent: *“We always recommend making sure that the roof includes fascias, soffits, gutters, the down pipes are water-tight and that the building or property is not letting in any water anywhere. Then you can start on the inside, safe in the knowledge that it won’t get ruined by any leaks.”*

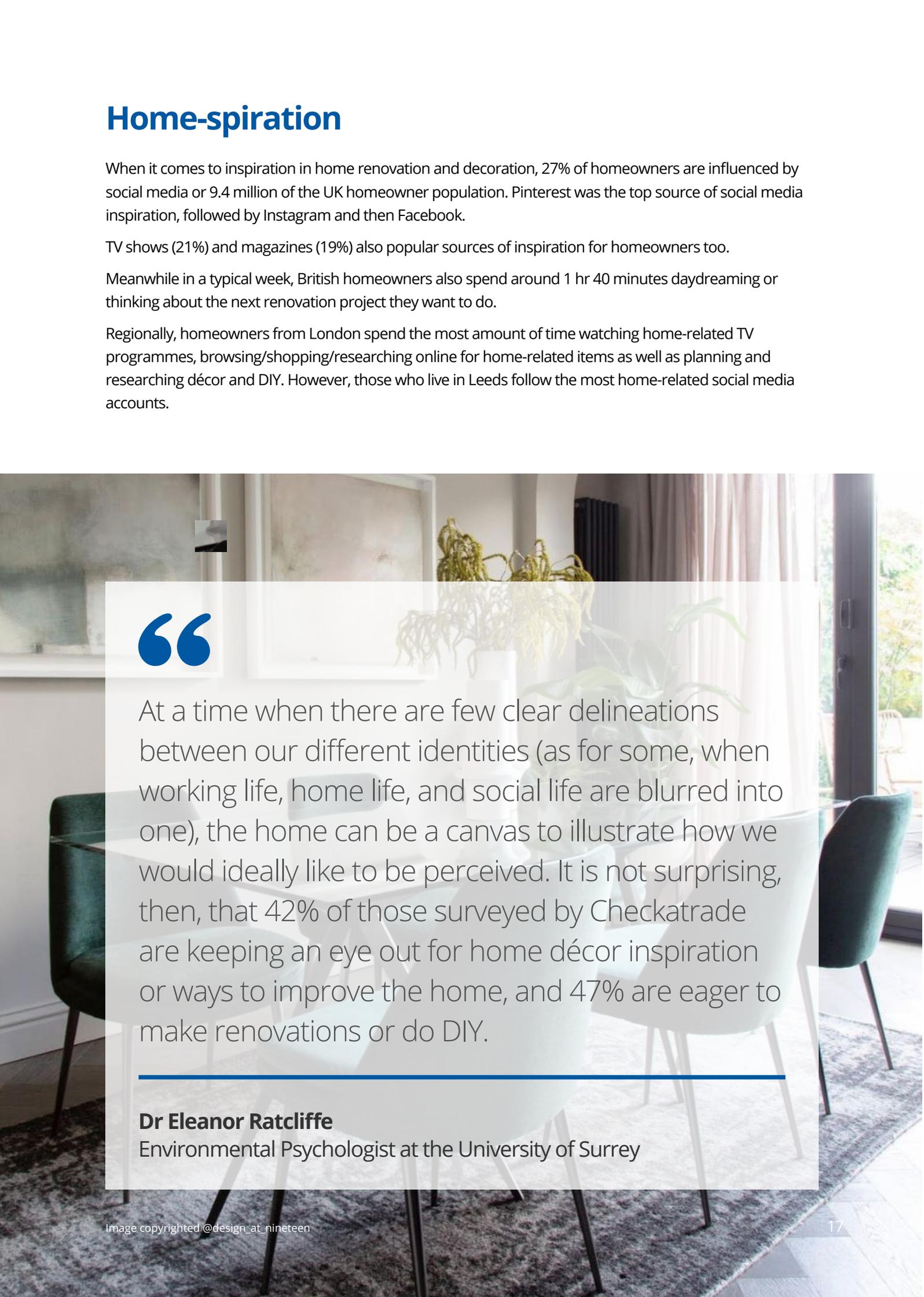
Home-spiration

When it comes to inspiration in home renovation and decoration, 27% of homeowners are influenced by social media or 9.4 million of the UK homeowner population. Pinterest was the top source of social media inspiration, followed by Instagram and then Facebook.

TV shows (21%) and magazines (19%) also popular sources of inspiration for homeowners too.

Meanwhile in a typical week, British homeowners also spend around 1 hr 40 minutes daydreaming or thinking about the next renovation project they want to do.

Regionally, homeowners from London spend the most amount of time watching home-related TV programmes, browsing/shopping/researching online for home-related items as well as planning and researching décor and DIY. However, those who live in Leeds follow the most home-related social media accounts.



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At a time when there are few clear delineations between our different identities (as for some, when working life, home life, and social life are blurred into one), the home can be a canvas to illustrate how we would ideally like to be perceived. It is not surprising, then, that 42% of those surveyed by Checkatrade are keeping an eye out for home décor inspiration or ways to improve the home, and 47% are eager to make renovations or do DIY.

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey

Rise of the Insta-Home

2020 more than any other year has seen people take to social media in droves to document their renovations, DIY efforts or just show off the interiors they are proudest of.

A quick search of #homerenovation and #homeimprovement on Instagram shows 2.6 million posts and 3.3 million posts respectively, with consumer research from Checkatasde also revealing that one in ten (11%) homeowners have turned – or would turn – their home renovations into social media followings.

One couple has done just that and are currently documented the highs, lows, and fun of renovating their London home on their Instagram account [@rona_renovation](#), which currently has 18.8 thousand followers.



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We got the keys to our first home in April 2020, the very same week the first lockdown was announced. Everything was uncertain, and everywhere was closed with tradespeople also unsure if they could work. What's more, builders' merchants were operational but struggling with supplies - and we had an entire house to renovate!

As a result, I turned to Instagram to find out how others were navigating their renovations and ended up becoming part of an online community who were sharing ideas and helping each other with practical advice in a time where everything was digital. I don't know how we would've coped without it! Our account grew really organically, and it's been incredible documenting such a special (and bizarre) time in our home ownership journey.

Nadine Bacchus-Garrick
of Rona Renovation

With a growing following, Nadine and Julius of [@rona_renovation](#) are not the only people that have documented their home renovations and improvements across social media. There's renovation inspiration all over Instagram, from do it yourself spruce ups from the likes of [Victoria_road_restoration](#), desirable interior design accounts including [fourcornersinteriors](#) and [design_at_nineteen](#), to full remodel jobs where the house ends up completely unrecognisable such as [85_wf](#), [Renovating_a_nightmare](#) and [no_8](#).



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COVID-19 meant that in 2020 we were able to physically welcome fewer people into our homes. Yet, the impact of being able to virtually share our homes – and look into others – via social media has meant that all of these symbols of our self-identity are more publicly visible than ever. For some this may be seen as a positive – a way to reach a much broader audience for self-expression - and for others it may be a stressor since the once-private home is now the background to almost all social media updates and activities. For those keen on renovation, though, the volume of home design content on social media can be a source of inspiration, in tandem with the rise of garden- and houseplant-focused content.

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe

Environmental Psychologist at the University of Surrey

Homes of the Future

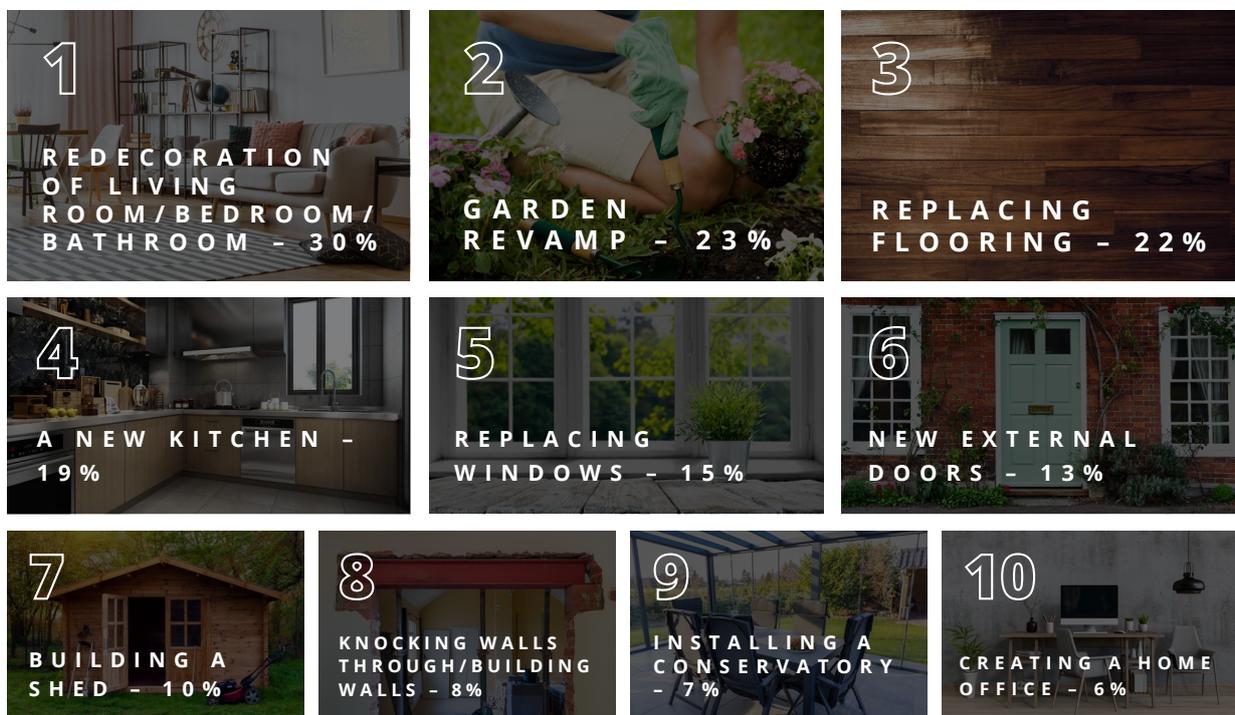
Future renovations

Despite how house proud we are, 79% of homeowners think there's still room for improvement in their homes.

Dr Ratcliffe claims, "Redecoration can be a way to create a psychological sense of newness or difference at home which may be particularly important after a year of staying almost exclusively in the same environment."

According to Checkatrade's research, redecorating the living room/bedroom/bathroom (30%), giving the garden a revamp (23%) and flooring (22%) are amongst the top renovations people want to do.

Top renovations homeowners are planning to make in the future



A photograph of a living room. In the center, there is a chandelier with multiple light bulbs. Below it is a light-colored sofa with several cushions. In front of the sofa is a coffee table with a glass top and a gold frame. To the right, there is a blue ottoman. The room has light-colored walls and a wooden floor.

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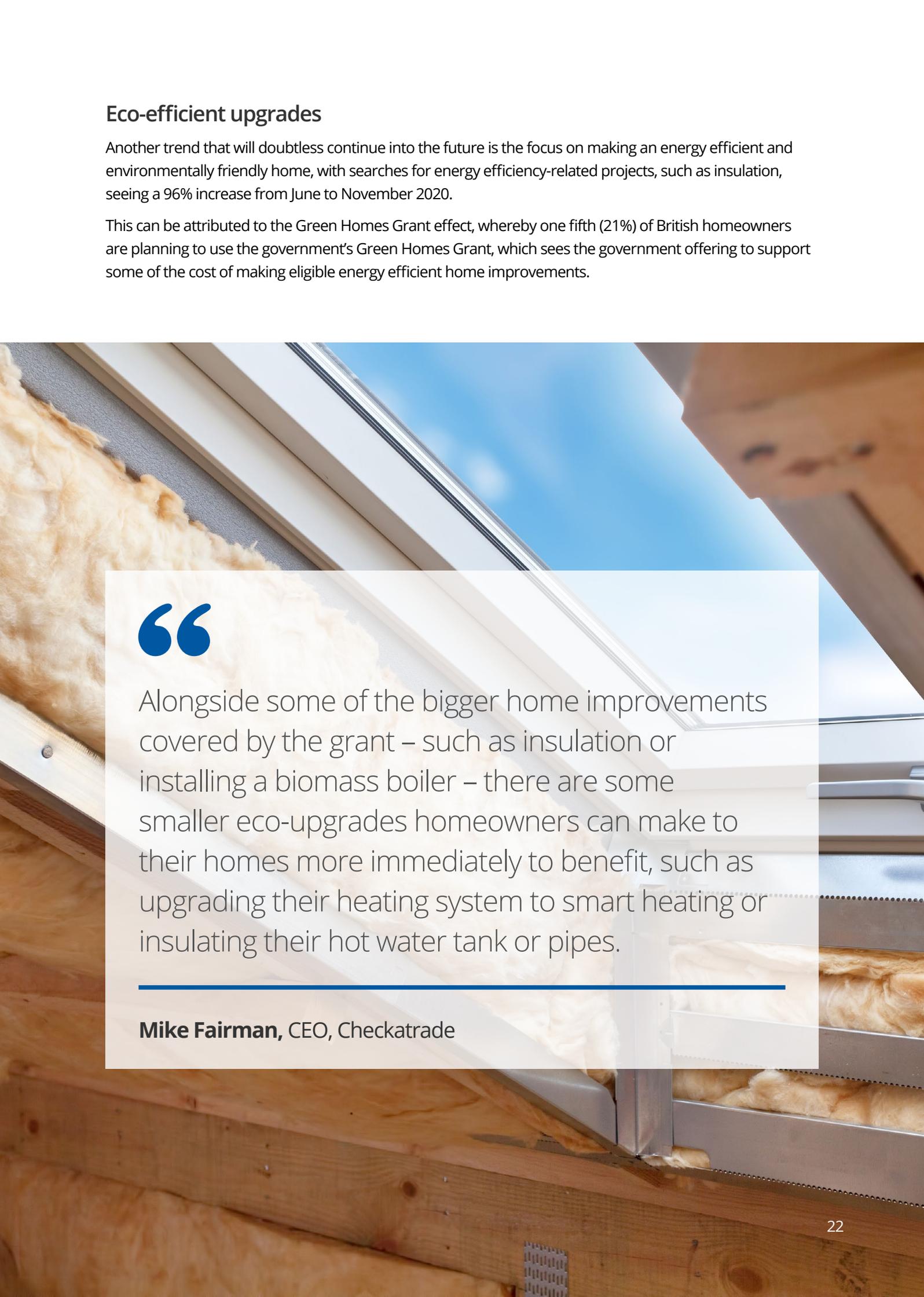
We've seen increased interest in insulation searches – particularly since the Green Homes Grant was announced in July 2020 in comparison to November 2020, with searches surging by 54% - suggesting that making eco efficient upgrades to the home will continue well into 2021, perhaps due to the recent extension of the grant until March 2022. Alongside some of the bigger home improvements covered by the grant – such as insulation or installing a biomass boiler – there are some smaller eco-upgrades homeowners can make to their homes more immediately to benefit, such as upgrading their heating system to smart heating or insulating their hot water tank or pipes. Smart thermostats are a great solution for people looking to cut their energy bills or those who want more control over their heating when they are out of the house – and this eco-friendly upgrade costs around £225.

Mike Fairman
CEO of Checkatrade

Eco-efficient upgrades

Another trend that will doubtless continue into the future is the focus on making an energy efficient and environmentally friendly home, with searches for energy efficiency-related projects, such as insulation, seeing a 96% increase from June to November 2020.

This can be attributed to the Green Homes Grant effect, whereby one fifth (21%) of British homeowners are planning to use the government's Green Homes Grant, which sees the government offering to support some of the cost of making eligible energy efficient home improvements.



“

Alongside some of the bigger home improvements covered by the grant – such as insulation or installing a biomass boiler – there are some smaller eco-upgrades homeowners can make to their homes more immediately to benefit, such as upgrading their heating system to smart heating or insulating their hot water tank or pipes.

Mike Fairman, CEO, Checktrade

2021 trends according to the trades

Daniel Khanlarpour

Gas Engineer at Gas Guru, Newcastle, has identified an increase focus on home offices as one of the key trends for 2021.

He says: *“Most of my customers have been upgrading the kitchen, lounge and main bedrooms lately, as well as a few loft conversions to use as home offices. In 2021 I'd expect to see more home offices than ever before due to more people continuing to work from home. In my opinion, the 'home office' is often just a bland extra bedroom or a corner of the dining table and I think having a dedicated office which is comfortable, bright and warm will make it less soul destroying to spend your working day in – and people are starting to recognise that and are likely to invest more into creating their home office spaces in 2021.”*

Adrian Goodwin

Homestyle World, Stoke-on-Trent believes the use of uPVC plastic will continue into the future.

He comments: *“uPVC plastic gives people that bit more free time to themselves as they don't have to paint wood. We have been trading for 13 years and recently visited homes we worked on way back in 2007 – the uPVC window frames still look amazing as the material is so durable and long lasting.”*

Lesley Kamara

Interior decorator at Lady Decorators Hampshire, Southampton, thinks gardens will see more attention in 2021.

She notes, *“Surprisingly, 2020 has been a very busy year for tradespeople as customers have spent money renovating their properties instead of travelling abroad. I think 2021 will see people investing more in their gardens so they can spend more time outside.”*

Other Checkatrade tradespeople identified the following home renovation trends for 2021:

- Creating a new space (particularly home office solutions) to make spending so much time at home easier
- Making eco-upgrades to the home
- Home renovation updates to make homes look more like celebrities' properties
- A bigger focus on security systems



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I think 2021 will see people investing more in their gardens so they can spend more time outside.

Conclusion

It's clear that many elements equate to 'home pride'. It is not just about how much you spend on a renovation or how much time you spend in a certain room.

In fact, **Dr Ratcliffe says**, *"Feeling proud about where we live is part of a wider sense of connection to our home and our neighbours. Improving the physical appearance and structure of the home is one route to being houseproud, and being actively engaged in a renovation process can generate a sense of psychological achievement and meaning."*

The benefits of undertaking renovation projects are therefore much more than superficial, with the potential for positive emotional results – but it's not just huge home transformations that can have this positive effect on our mood while spending time at home.

Dr Ratcliffe explains, *"Even small changes can make us proud of our homes too: a fresh coat of paint; introducing artwork, houseplants, or new furnishings; or even rearranging what is already there to create a sense of 'newness'. Feeling houseproud is, at its heart, about identity. Making sure that your home reflects who you are is a key part of feeling good in this important space."*

This connection between investing in the home (be it time, money or effort) and investing in our own well-being suggests we're in for a year of exciting home updates. From changing the wallpaper to creating a home cinema, home improvements large and small are sure to be an ongoing focus for the British public in 2021.



Experts

Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe is a Lecturer in Environmental Psychology at University of Surrey. Her research and teaching focuses on links between environment and wellbeing, especially psychologically restorative experiences of nature; place attachment; and designing in the built environment for wellbeing outcomes.

Trade experts

The trade experts featured in the report sharing their tips are vetted Checkatrade members who collectively have 73 years of experience in the industry and have received 575 reviews from Checkatrade customers.

Methodology

***Consumer Research**

2,000 British Homeowners were surveyed online between 4th – 8th December 2020 by OnePoll

****House Pride Index Methodology**

To determine how house proud the cities polled are, each location was awarded points based on the responses from those residing in those areas.

15 points were given for the highest average total, 14 for the second highest, 13 for the third highest and so on - right through to one point for the lowest.

This is with the exception of the number of DIY jobs left on to do lists where 15 points were awarded to the lowest average figure.

The categories cities were scored on included money spent on renovation in 2020, money spent on in 2020 on other aspects of their property, number of unfinished DIY jobs remaining, and number of social media accounts followed.

Other categories included the amount of time spent watching home-related TV programmes, time spent browsing, shopping and/or researching online for home décor inspiration - along with the amount of DIY jobs completed in 2020, and number of tradespeople used.

Points were also awarded for time spent cleaning, tidying, and organising their homes, and amount of time set spent planning future home improvement projects.

*****British Homeowners Influenced by Social Media**

27.45% of homeowners are influenced by social media or 9.4 million of the UK homeowner population.

To determine this figure, we estimate the UK homeowner population as 34,343,078 so 27.45% of which would be 9,427,175.

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