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Happiness is a town called Harrogate – destination named happiest place to live for THIRD year running

- Harrogate comes first once again as the happiest place to live in Great Britain, with residents feeling safe, proud of their home and happy with the area's general upkeep
- Shrewsbury takes second place, and Ipswich flies the flag for the East of England in third
- Inverness tops the Scottish survey, Llandrindod Wells comes first in Wales and Richmond wins London's happiness crown
- Rightmove's annual Happy at Home Index asks residents to rate their local area on 12 factors which are combined to create the happiness factor of 130 areas across the country

Harrogate may soon be changing its name to 'Happygate', as it has been named the happiest place to live for the third year in a row.

Rightmove's annual Happy at Home Index asks residents to rank a number of factors both in their home and in their local community, with Harrogate residents ranking the place high for safety, being proud of their home, and being happy with the general upkeep of the area.

The twelve factors range from neighbourliness and how much there is to do in the area, to how happy people are with their home's décor, value, and costs to run it.

The top five happiest towns in the Rightmove survey of more than 24,000 people include the northern locations of York and Chester, just after second-placed Shrewsbury and third-ranked Ipswich.

TOP FIVE		
Rank	Place	Region
1	Harrogate	Yorkshire & the Humber
2	Shrewsbury	West Midlands
3	Ipswich	East of England
4	York	Yorkshire & the Humber
5	Chester	North West

Home is where the happy is

The findings reveal that the people of Dundee are happiest with how their home is furnished, Blackpool residents say they have plenty of space, and those in Hemel Hempstead feel most 'at home' in their property.

The seaside town of Torquay comes top for people saying they're never stuck for things to do, compared to the Scottish town of Paisley which comes bottom. If you're looking for a friendly neighbour Llandrindod Wells would be a good place to start, as the residents say that's where the most polite people live.

Calculating the costs

Residents in Falkirk say they find the costs of running their home most manageable, compared to those in the London Borough of Hounslow who find it hardest to cope. When it comes to the price of property, Newport residents worry least about their home's value, whereas those in Luton worry the most. This is despite the fact that over the past year asking prices have gone up 8.6% in Luton and only 1.8% in Newport.

Rightmove's Housing Expert Miles Shipside comments: *"To come top of our Happy at Home Index three years in a row is no mean feat, and we'll be expecting a spike in people having a look on Rightmove to see what they might be able to afford to buy or rent in the Harrogate area. How people define happiness obviously varies, which is why we've come up with a number of factors both inside the home and in the community, to reveal the most contented towns and cities in the UK."*

“So what’s so great about Harrogate? Maybe it’s the quaint tea-rooms or perhaps it’s the beautiful countryside. Anyone who is thinking of making a move there should bear in mind that property asking prices are higher than the national average, so perhaps it’s well-worth a look at the below national average places of Shrewsbury and Ipswich, that make it in to second and third place.”

Quotes from Harrogate

Michael Newby, Director of Visit Harrogate said: *“This is fantastic news – to come top two years running was great, but to be named the happiest place for a third time is just amazing. This is no flash in the pan and shows why visitors rate us so highly. According to Visit England the number of visitors who rate the cleanliness and tidiness of our environment as very good or excellent greatly exceeds the national average, as does the number who think we are friendly and welcoming. This is a great place to live and great place to visit – let’s just keep smiling!”*

Councillor Richard Cooper, Leader of Harrogate Borough Council said: *“Harrogate is a fantastic part of the world in which to live. We are surrounded by some of the UK’s most beautiful scenery, have fantastic shopping, a wide variety of restaurants and cafes, and great entertainment and leisure opportunities - including some unique experiences such as the elegant Turkish Baths. As a floral town, we are also extremely lucky to have a significant number of parks and gardens in the immediate vicinity - which are a joy to discover. Resident’s benefit from a great quality of life with low unemployment, low crime, excellent local services, on-going investment, highly regarded schooling and a great community spirit. People are proud of their homes and proud of their town. When these elements are brought together it really does make Harrogate a desirable place to live.”*

Simon Myring, Director of Myrings Estate Agents in Harrogate comments: *“It is no surprise to the residents and visitors to our town that Harrogate has been voted the happiest place live in the UK for the third year running. Harrogate really does have it all with its wonderful Georgian architecture, wide open green spaces, band concerts in the Valley Gardens, its Theatre, Restaurants and Shops – and of course Betty’s Tearooms for a real Yorkshire cream tea. There is the romance of walking in the footsteps of Lord Byron and William Wordsworth, the Royalty of Europe and Agatha Christie, but it’s the thriving businesses, superb schools and proximity to the major roads/ railway network and International Airport at Leeds Bradford which underpins the prosperity and happiness of the town. This prosperity is reflected in the cost of buying and renting in the town where demand often exceeds supply as quite understandably who wouldn’t want to live in the place we are all happy and very pleased to call home?”*

THE TWELVE FACTORS*	TOP	BOTTOM
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Décor	Dundee	City of London (Borough)
Space	Blackpool	Islington
Contentment	Hemel Hempstead	Hounslow
Value	Newport	Luton
Community	Westminster	Barking & Dagenham
Area upkeep	Harrogate	Barking & Dagenham
Pride	Harrogate	Aberdeen
Costs	Falkirk	Hounslow
Safety	Harrogate	Barking & Dagenham
Amenities	Kensington & Chelsea	Barking & Dagenham
Recreation	Torquay	Paisley
Neighbourliness	Landrindod Wells	Barking & Dagenham

The Index

The 12 measures which contribute to the overall level of happiness we feel in our home and community cover a broad range of factors and are divided into three categories: your property, your home and your community. Responses for each of the 12 measures are averaged to provide both a category score and an overall score – the ‘Happy at Home Index’.

24,424 people responded to Rightmove’s Happy At Home Index survey.

Regional rankings

East Anglia

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Ipswich	3rd	1st
Cambridge	34th	2nd
Norwich	37th	3rd
Colchester	62nd	4th
Peterborough	93rd	5th

Yorkshire

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Harrogate	1st	1st
York	4th	2nd
Halifax	38th	3rd
Sheffield	60th	4th
Huddersfield	66th	5th
Bradford	69th	6th
Leeds	73rd	7th
Doncaster	79th	8th
Wakefield	105th	9th

North West

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Chester	5th	1st
Blackpool	10th	2nd
Carlisle	12th	3rd
Lancaster	14th	4th
Stockport	31st	5th
Warrington	45th	6th
Crewe	64th	7th
Liverpool	83rd	8th
Wigan	84th	9th
Preston	85th	10th
Manchester	91st	11th
Blackburn	97th	12th
Oldham	116th	13th
Bolton	118th	14th

South West

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Truro	15th	1st
Torquay	17th	2nd
Dorchester	18th	3rd
Exeter	21st	4th
Bath	25th	5th
Bristol	29th	6th
Plymouth	32nd	7th
Taunton	40th	8th
Gloucester	50th	9th
Bournemouth	51st	10th
Salisbury	75th	11th
Swindon	94th	12th

South East

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Hemel Hempstead	8th	1st
Watford	9th	2nd
Guildford	22nd	3rd
Chelmsford	23rd	4th
Tonbridge	24th	5th
St. Albans	35th	6th
Stevenage	42nd	7th
Reading	46th	8th
Brighton	47th	9th
Oxford	48th	10th
Portsmouth	52nd	11th
Milton Keynes	56th	12th
Canterbury	58th	13th

Southampton	65th	14th
Redhill	71st	15th
Southend on Sea	74th	16th
Rochester	98th	17th
Slough	100th	18th
Dartford	108th	19th
Luton	123rd	20th

Greater London

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Richmond upon Thames	19th	1st
Kingston upon Thames	20th	2nd
Bromley	30th	3rd
Sutton	44th	4th
Havering	54th	5th
Kensington and Chelsea	55th	6th
Westminster	68th	7th
Bexley	76th	8th
Wandsworth	82nd	9th
Southwark	86th	10th
Hammersmith & Fulham	90th	11th
Camden	95th	12th
Barnet	96th	13th
Waltham Forest	101st	14th
Enfield	104th	15th
City of London	107th	16th
Redbridge	109th	17th
Croydon	111th	18th
Islington	112th	19th
Hackney	113th	20th

Lambeth	114th	21st
Ealing	115th	22nd
Merton	117th	23rd
Lewisham	120th	24th
Haringey	121st	25th
Hillingdon	122nd	26th
Greenwich	124th	27th
Tower Hamlets	125th	28th
Newham	126th	29th
Harrow	127th	30th
Brent	128th	31st
Hounslow	129th	32nd
Barking & Dagenham	130th	33rd

West Midlands

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Shrewsbury	2nd	1st
Stoke on Trent	11th	2nd
Worcester	13th	3rd
Telford	28th	4th
Hereford	39th	5th
Northampton	43rd	6th
Walsall	53rd	7th
Dudley	70th	8th
Coventry	81st	9th
Birmingham	92nd	10th
Wolverhampton	102nd	11th

Wales

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
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Llandrindod Wells	7th	1st
Swansea	26th	2nd
Llandudno	57th	3rd
Cardiff	80th	4th
Newport	103rd	5th

North East

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Hull	27th	1st
Cleveland	33rd	2nd
Darlington	49th	3rd
Newcastle upon Tyne	61st	4th
Middlesbrough	72nd	5th
Sunderland	77th	6th
Durham	99th	7th

East Midlands

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Lincoln	59th	1st
Derby	67th	2nd
Nottingham	78th	3rd
Leicester	89th	4th

Scotland

Town / City	National ranking	Regional ranking
Inverness	6th	1st
Falkirk	16th	2nd
Dundee	36th	3rd

Perth	41st	4th
Edinburgh	63rd	5th
Kirkcaldy	87th	6th
Glasgow	88th	7th
Aberdeen	106th	8th
Kilmarnock	110th	9th
Paisley	119th	10th

—ENDS—

For further information please contact Amy Funston on 0207 087 0605 or email amy.funston@rightmove.co.uk.

* The statements used for each of the 12 factors were as follows:

Décor	I like the way my home is decorated/furnished
Space	I have enough living space to live comfortably
Value	I do not worry about the value of my property
Pride	I feel proud of my home
Costs	The cost of running my home is manageable
Safety	I rarely feel unsafe in the community in which I live
Amenities	The local amenities are satisfactory compared to other areas I know
Recreation	I am never stuck for things to do in my area
Community	I like the local area in which I live
Contentment	The property I live in feels like home
Neighbourliness	Generally, the people who live in my area are friendly and polite
Area upkeep	I am satisfied with the upkeep of my local area