

Rated People  
**HOME IMPROVEMENT**  
TRENDS REPORT: 2021



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## METHODOLOGY

Rated People undertook the following research and data analysis to produce this report:

1. Analysis of 536,040 jobs posted on Rated People throughout 2019 and 2020 – a representative sample of organic jobs.

2. A nationwide survey to 2,000 UK residents.

3. Google search volume analysis of 50+ key interior design trends and home improvements.

4. Interior design trend analysis of 100+ images of home offices on Instagram.

*Note: References to years 2019 and 2020 in this report cover the 1st January – 15th December time period, for their respective years. References to 'lockdown' refer to the first national lockdown period of 23rd March – 4th July 2020.*

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO, ADRIENNE MINSTER

Welcome to the 2021 edition of the Rated People Home Improvement Trends Report.

If this is your first look at one of our reports, hello! This is your guide to what's going on in the world of UK home renovation – from the updates we've been making, to the improvements being planned for the year ahead.

The past year has been a year like no other. Most of us have spent more time indoors than ever before and there have been changes to every aspect of our lives – from how and where we work, to how we spend our free time, and who we spend it with. With so much change, you won't be surprised to hear that it's influencing the improvements we're choosing to make to our homes.

Many of us have kept ourselves occupied by having a go at our own home improvements, or by bringing in a tradesperson to breathe new life into areas that have felt more restrictive over time. Our outside spaces have become real lifelines, and we've focused on them as a way to escape from the same four walls that we've been working, relaxing, and sleeping in.

Within these pages, you'll see how the pandemic has led to us rethinking our priorities for our homes and discover the features now adding the most £'s to the value of our properties. If you're one of many looking to become more eco-friendly, you might find our section on 'The most 'future-forward' areas' particularly interesting, where we delve into our collective response to being kinder to our planet (most recently influenced by the Government's Green Homes Grant).

I hope you enjoy it, and as always, do let us know how you're planning to improve your home this year, and if there's anything you'd like included in next year's report. You can reach us at [yourfeedback@ratedpeople.com](mailto:yourfeedback@ratedpeople.com).

*Adrienne*

Adrienne Minster, CEO Rated People



# 2021 HOME IMPROVEMENT TRENDS

2020 was the year no one expected. We all spent much more time indoors due to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, and that was reflected in the number and type of home improvements we made last year.

The journey to creating a home that's great for both work and play is only just beginning, as more than half of us are planning to improve our homes in 2021. So, whether you're interested in unique home improvements like a 'cloffice' or extra space to work out in, or you're simply looking to update your interior décor – here are four key trends we're predicting for this year.

## A PLACE WITH MORE SPACE

The pandemic has changed UK homeowners' priorities when it comes to what we want from our homes. Lots of us want to add space to our homes in 2021, and jobs such as building an extension, adding bespoke storage and knocking walls down to create an open plan, multi-functional space are amongst the top jobs planned.

The race for space isn't limited to our existing properties either; **25%** of UK residents want to move to a bigger property in the next year, whilst **29%** want to move to a property that has more outdoor space.

Potential buyers are willing to cough up the cash for a home that has the extra space, too. Features promising privacy add the most value to your property, with homeowners expecting to pay around **£14,000** more for a self-contained annex. Smaller upgrades are also highly desired – a vegetable patch could get you over **£6,000** more for your home.

## SHINY NEW OFFICES

**55%** of the UK worked from home in 2020, but many of our home office set-ups didn't inspire productivity. **41%** of those working from home told us they didn't have a proper desk, and **24%** said they were embarrassed by their background on video calls. So, it's no surprise that **38%** of us want to improve our home offices in 2021.

The number of 'home office' jobs posted on Rated People more than doubled in 2020 and **43%** of UK residents say they plan to work from home more than they did before (even if COVID-19 were to completely disappear), so we're definitely expecting this trend to continue into 2021 and beyond.

When it comes to home office design, our analysis of home offices on Instagram reveals that Scandi styling was increasingly popular in 2020, and neutral colours, house plants and simple furniture are shaping up to be key trends for 2021.

## RESPONSIBLE LIFESTYLES

**57%** of UK residents told us they wanted to be more eco-friendly in 2021 – whether that's recycling more, eating less meat, or making home improvements to make our homes more eco-friendly or more energy-efficient.

Government initiatives such as the Green Homes Grant are helping homeowners to improve their homes in different ways, and in 2020, uPVC windows and doors, roof insulation and solar panel installation were amongst the top 15 eco jobs posted on Rated People. This year, another **4%** of the UK say they plan to apply for the Green Homes Grant, to help them complete green upgrades.

## GARDENS GALORE

Our gardens were a sanctuary for many of us in 2020. **39%** of us got more into gardening during lockdown, and **64%** of UK residents now say they wouldn't buy a home if it didn't have any outside space.

Many of the top gardening jobs completed in 2020 also made their way onto gardening wishlists for 2021. **47%** of UK residents are planning improvements for their gardens this year, and the top jobs that gardeners are keen to tackle are: planting new flowers and trees, creating a vegetable patch; and installing a new shed, fencing and external lighting.

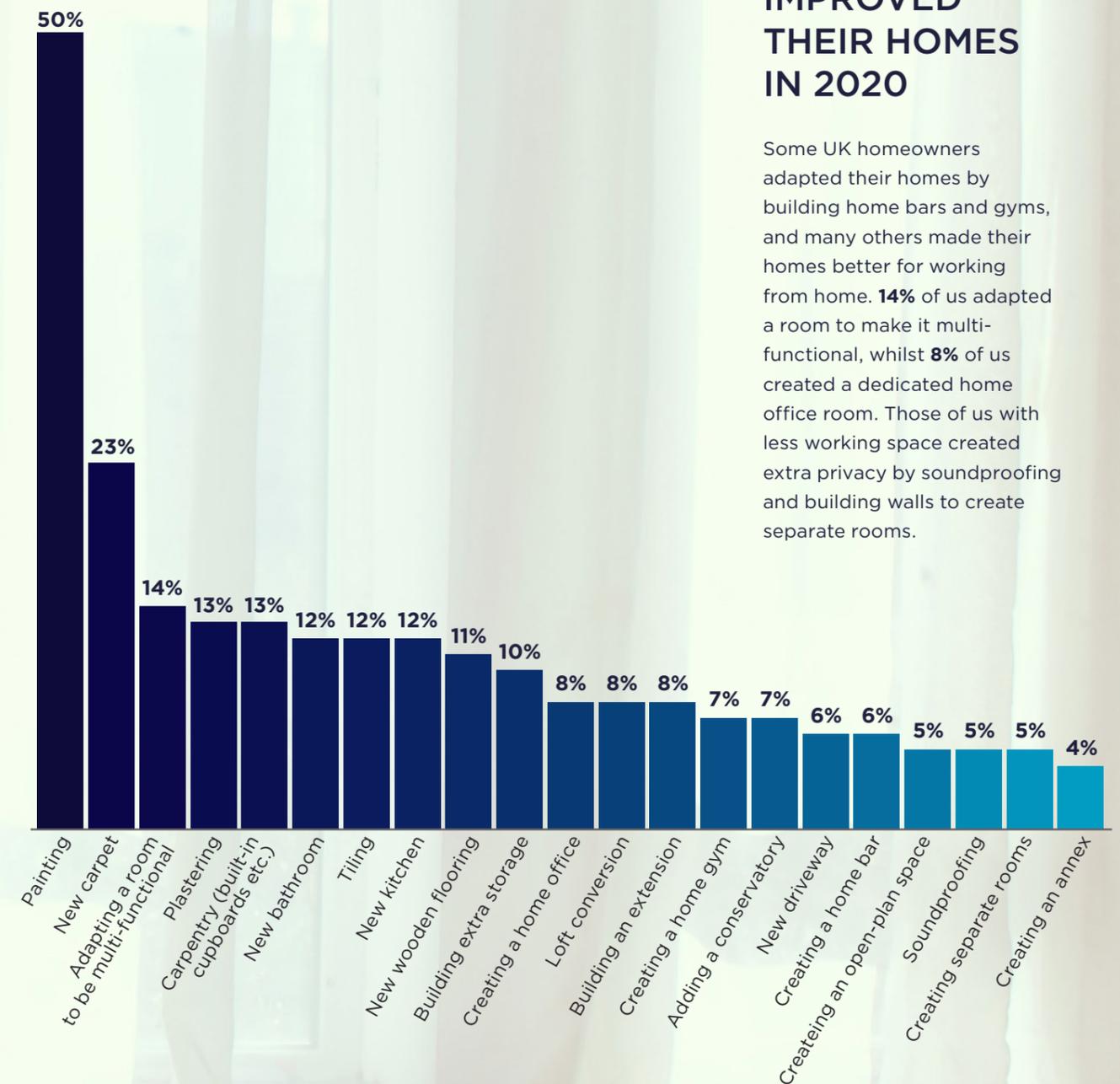
# 2020:

THE YEAR WE FOUND NEW MEANING IN OUR HOMES

## A LOOK AT HOW WE CHANGED OUR HOMES IN 2020

From repainting, to building a home office, **46%** of UK homeowners made their homes better places to spend lots of time in.

Top jobs completed by UK homeowners in 2020



### HOW UK HOMEOWNERS IMPROVED THEIR HOMES IN 2020

Some UK homeowners adapted their homes by building home bars and gyms, and many others made their homes better for working from home. **14%** of us adapted a room to make it multi-functional, whilst **8%** of us created a dedicated home office room. Those of us with less working space created extra privacy by soundproofing and building walls to create separate rooms.

Ranked by the % of people who said they carried out each improvement

# THE MOST POPULAR HOME IMPROVEMENTS IN 2020

Top 10 home improvement jobs on Rated People in 2020

1. Home maintenance and repair
2. Plumbing repair and maintenance
3. Internal painting and decorating
4. Electrical installation and testing
5. Bathroom/kitchen/WC plumbing
6. Garden maintenance
7. Home improvements
8. Slate and tiled roof
9. Wooden doors - internal
10. Internal lighting

Ranked by volume of jobs posted on Rated People through non-paid channels in 2020

In 2020, home improvement jobs posted on Rated People were up by **12%**, and if you noticed the queues outside DIY shops, it'll be no surprise to hear DIY also shot up in popularity across the whole of the UK.

Top 10 cities where the most people did home improvement work in 2020



## THE AREAS THAT IMPROVED THEIR HOMES THE MOST IN 2020

From Glasgow to Brighton, around half the country decided to improve their homes in some form last year. Birmingham takes the top spot, with **53%** of residents upgrading their homes, whilst other big cities like London and Liverpool also make the top 10.

Ranked by the % of residents that said they did home improvement work in 2020

# LOCKDOWN 2020: HOW WE IMPROVED OUR HOMES

The first national lockdown in 2020 was probably the most severe, and with the bars, pubs and sporting venues closed, it's easy to see why many of us decided to take on a bit more DIY with our extra time at home.

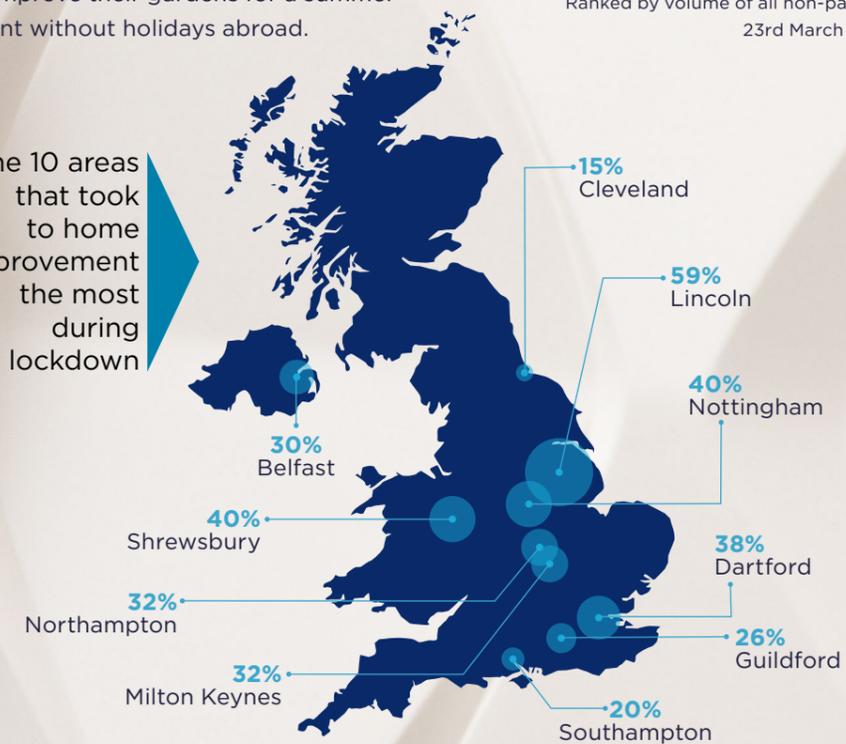
**11% fewer jobs were posted** on Rated People when compared to the same period the year before, but as the year progressed and we started to get used to our 'new normal', Britain's **trades industry bounced right back**. After restrictions were lifted, there was a boom in demand, particularly for outdoor work, as people were keen to improve their gardens for a summer spent without holidays abroad.

The 10 most popular home improvement jobs on Rated People during the first national lockdown

- 1 Home maintenance and repair
- 2 Garden maintenance
- 3 Plumbing repair and maintenance
- 4 Internal painting and decorating
- 5 Electrical installation and testing
- 6 Bathroom, kitchen and WC plumbing
- 7 Landscaping
- 8 Home improvements
- 9 Wooden, metal or wire fences
- 10 Garden clearance

Ranked by volume of all non-paid jobs posted on Rated People from 23rd March to 4th July 2020

The 10 areas that took to home improvement the most during lockdown



Ranked by the YoY % increase in the volume of jobs posted on Rated People from 23rd March to 4th July 2020, when compared to 23rd March to 4th July 2019

## TOP LOCKDOWN HOME IMPROVERS

Lincoln residents were the most keen to tackle home improvements during lockdown, with jobs on Rated People increasing by **59%** when compared to the same period the year before. Dartford is the only southern town in the top five, with Nottingham, Shrewsbury and Northampton making up the rest.

# 2021:

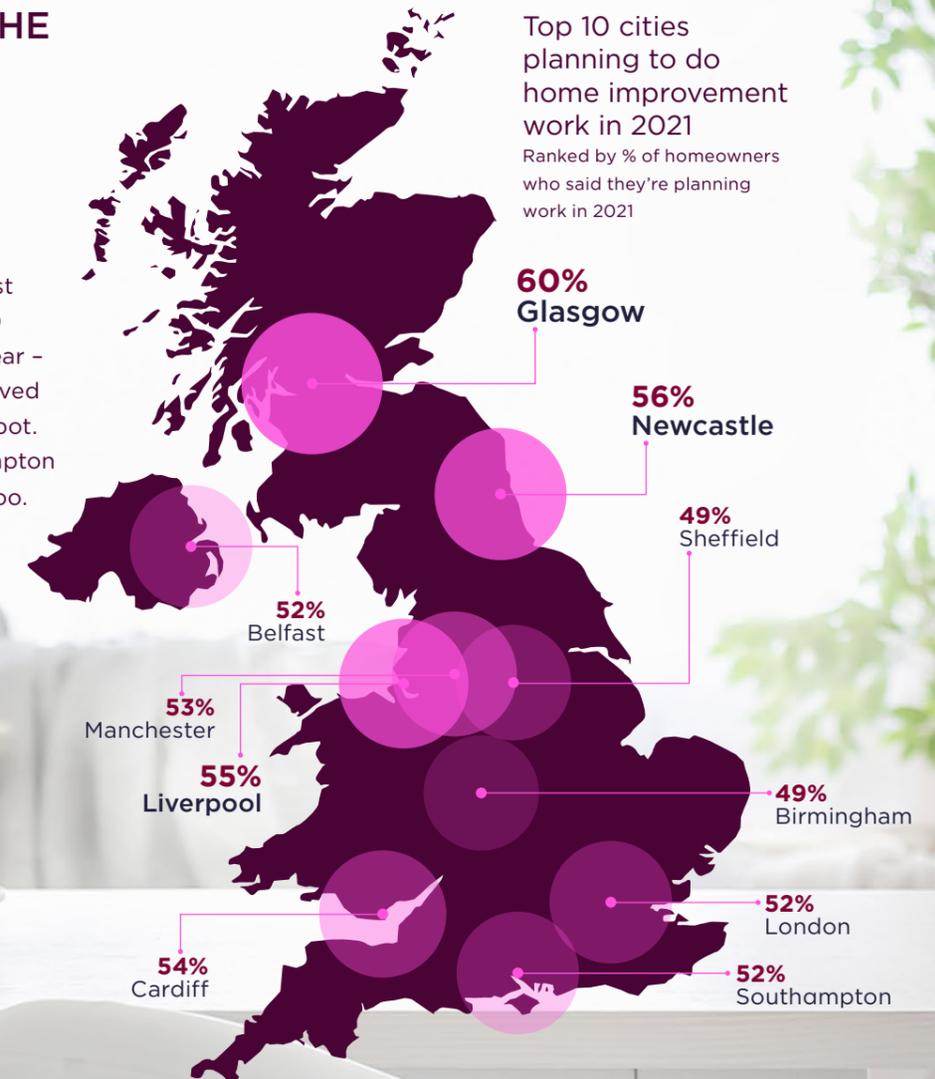
## THE POST-COVID HOME

# HOW THE PANDEMIC WILL INFLUENCE THE DESIGN OF OUR HOMES IN 2021

The momentum that drove home improvement trends throughout 2020 doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon. Whether we're taking on a DIY project or hiring a tradesperson, more than half (**51%**) of people in the UK are set to enhance their homes in 2021.

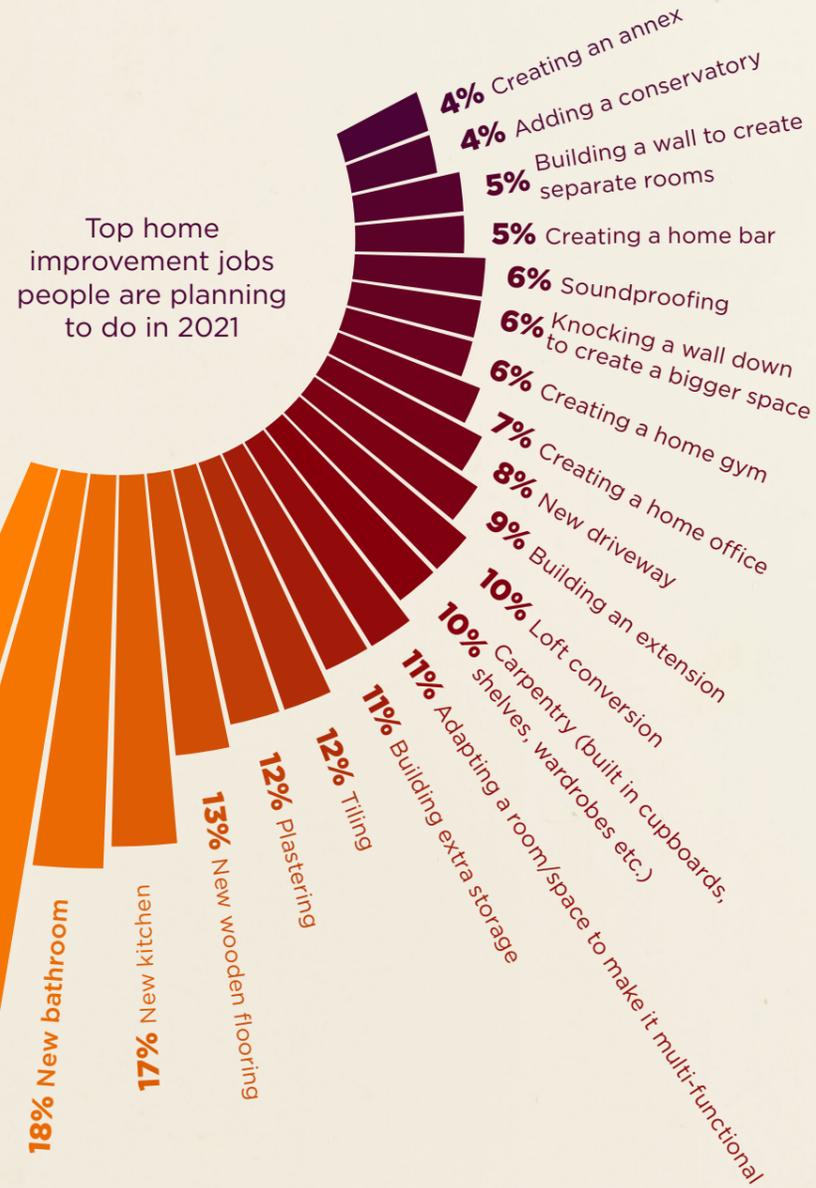
### WHICH AREAS IN THE UK WILL BE DOING THE MOST HOME IMPROVEMENTS IN 2021?

Lots of the cities that did the most home improvement work in 2020 are still topping the charts this year – including Glasgow, which has moved up a place and secured the top spot. Cardiff, Manchester and Southampton have joined the 2021 top 10 list, too.



## JOBS THAT UK HOMEOWNERS ARE PLANNING FOR 2021

Just like 2020, painting is the number one job that UK homeowners are most keen to tackle. Lots of us are looking to add more space to our homes too, with big renovations planned for the bathroom (18%), kitchen (17%) and loft (10%).



Ranked by % of homeowners who said they're doing each job in 2021

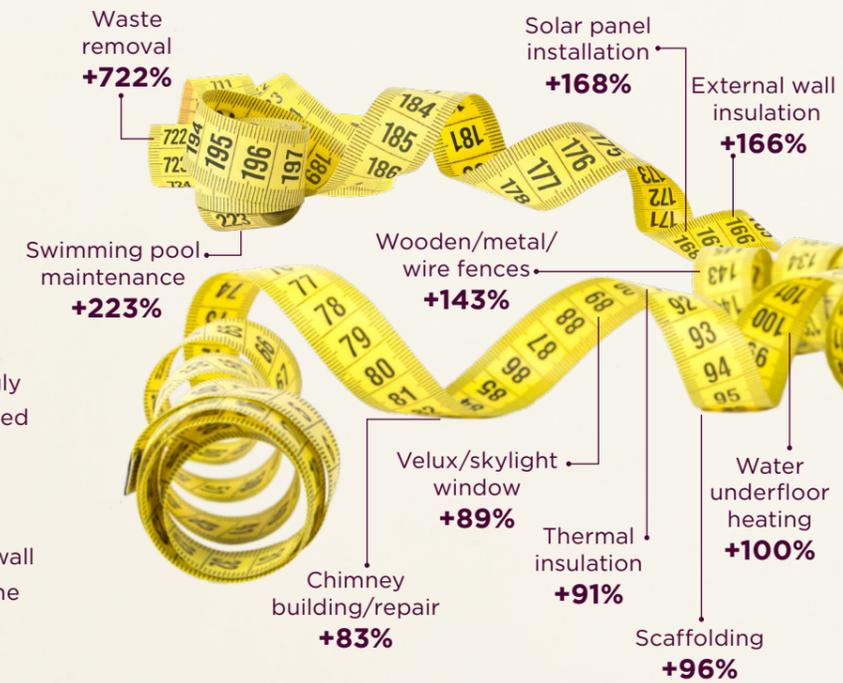
## HOME IMPROVEMENT TRENDS FOR 2021

One of the main ways UK homeowners adapted to lockdown restrictions was by upgrading their homes to suit new ways of living, and this is set to continue into 2021.

Home improvements and maintenance that connect us to the outside world are increasingly popular - swimming pool maintenance increased by 223% in 2020, and skylight window installation increased by 89%.

Eco jobs like solar panel installation, external wall insulation and underfloor heating also made the top 10, and thanks to the Government's Green Homes Grant Scheme, interest should remain high in 2021 and beyond.

Top 10 home improvement jobs increasing in popularity the most ahead of 2021



Top 10 interior trends in the UK for 2021



Dried flowers  
+235%



Light blue kitchen  
+175%



Wall panelling  
+173%



Cloffice (closet-office)  
+150%



Dark blue kitchen  
+140%



Black kitchen  
+128%



Macrame  
+124%



Line art  
+124%



Herringbone floor  
+124%



Two tone kitchen  
+122%

Ranked by YoY % increase in the number of UK Google searches from 2019 - 2020

## INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2021

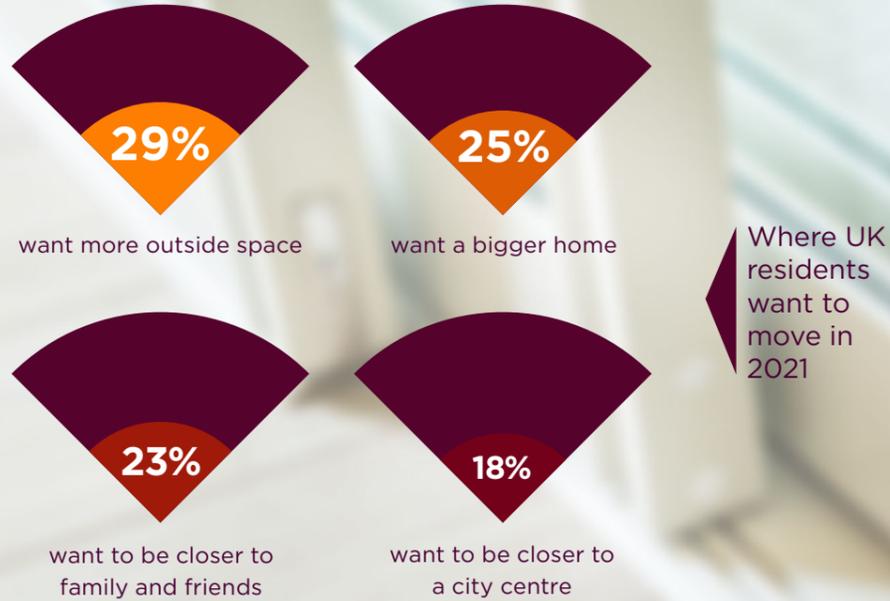
Kitchens in moodier hues like dark blue and black, natural materials like dried flowers, and herringbone floors dominate the top 10 interior design trends for 2021.

# WHAT BUYERS NOW VALUE THE MOST

## AND WHAT PUTS THEM OFF

### THE RACE FOR SPACE

Bigger properties and more outdoor space are on our home wishlists for 2021, as we've been re-evaluating our housing needs during the coronavirus pandemic.



### WHAT PUTS POTENTIAL BUYERS OFF

Understandably, given the emphasis on washing hands, social distancing and cleanliness in general, a messy or dirty home could now seriously spoil your chances of securing a good offer if you're looking to sell.



Fixable issues, like scuffed paintwork and damaged fixtures, could also lead to buyers reducing their offers.

You could lose around **£10,000** if your home has signs of damp/mould, and **£9,000** for any bad smells!

The issues that could knock the most value off your home



Cash values created according to UK homeowners' estimations

## WHAT BUYERS WANT

You can attract potential buyers by investing in home improvements that add space, improve functionality and bring your home up to date with on-trend styling.

Many of the features that buyers now value are outside; summerhouses, garden offices and landscaped gardens could increase the value of your home by almost **£30,000** collectively.

It's clear that people are looking for their homes to have lots of extra room, with the increased time spent inside them during the pandemic bringing our need for more space and privacy to the forefront.

The kitchen is the hub of your home, so it's no surprise that an extension to create a large kitchen diner is considered to be the third most valuable home improvement you can make.

And if you're keen for your new kitchen to appeal to as many buyers as possible when you come to sell, lighter, more neutral colours are deemed the most attractive.

The home improvements that add the most value to a home in 2021



Ranked by the value placed on each improvement by UK homebuyers

The top 10 kitchen colours that attract the most buyers



Ranked according to the percentage of people who said they would be more likely to buy a property if the kitchen units were this colour

# THE RISE OF THE HOME OFFICE

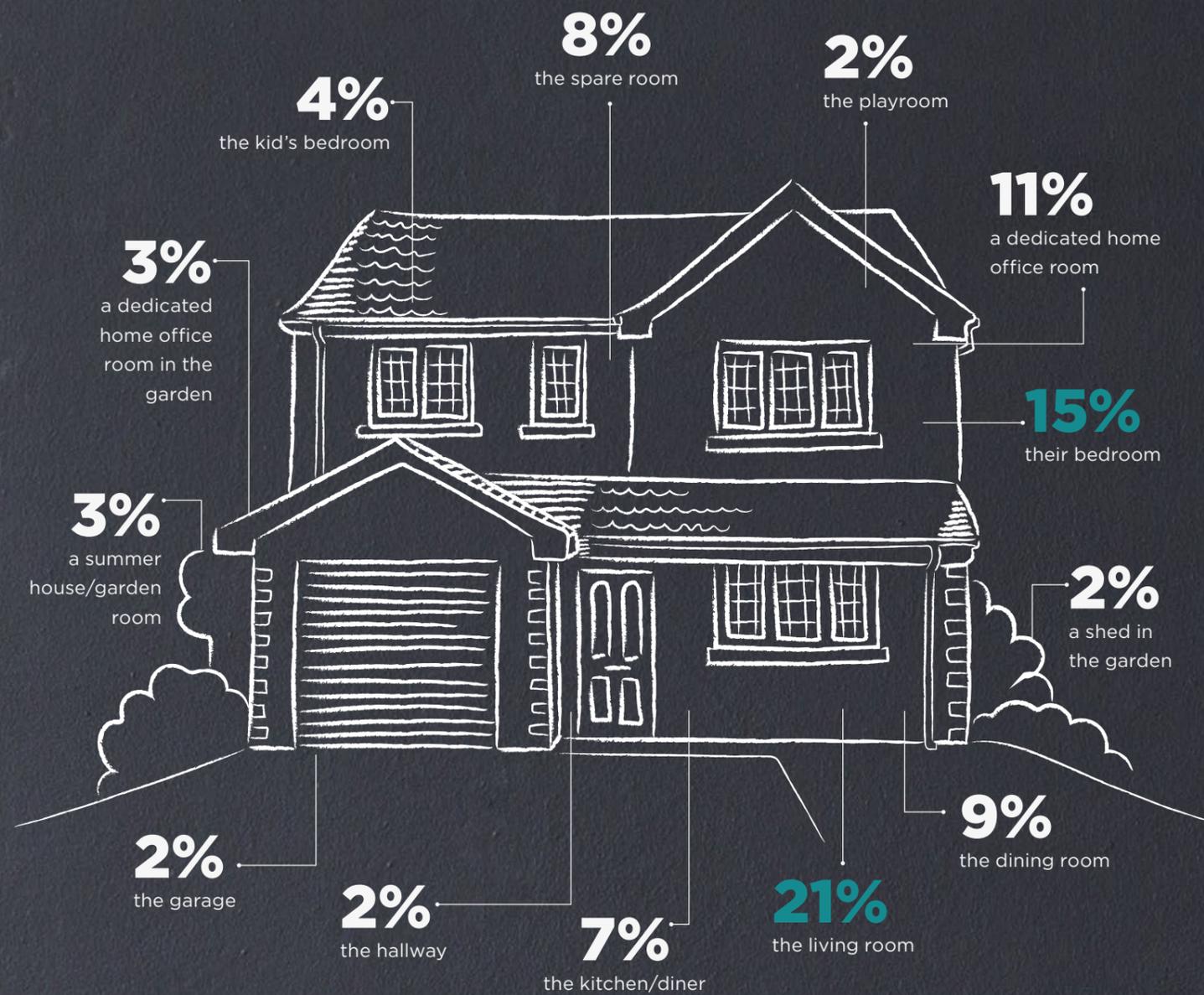


## THE REALITY OF WORKING FROM HOME IN 2020

Last year, more than half (**55%**) of the UK worked from home.

To adapt to this unprecedented way of working, employees and employers up and down the country transformed different areas of their homes to accommodate remote working.

Where we worked from home in 2020



Ranked by % of people who said this location is where they work from home the most

## BALANCING WORK AND HOME

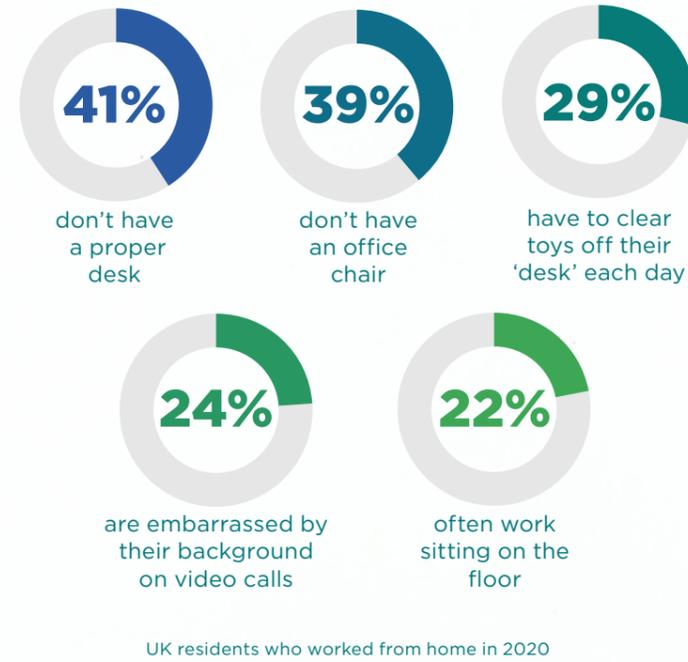
Although working from home has its benefits, it can also make separating work from home life a challenge.

Lots of us had to create makeshift office spaces in the rooms we'd usually relax in, so many of us had a less than perfect home office environment.

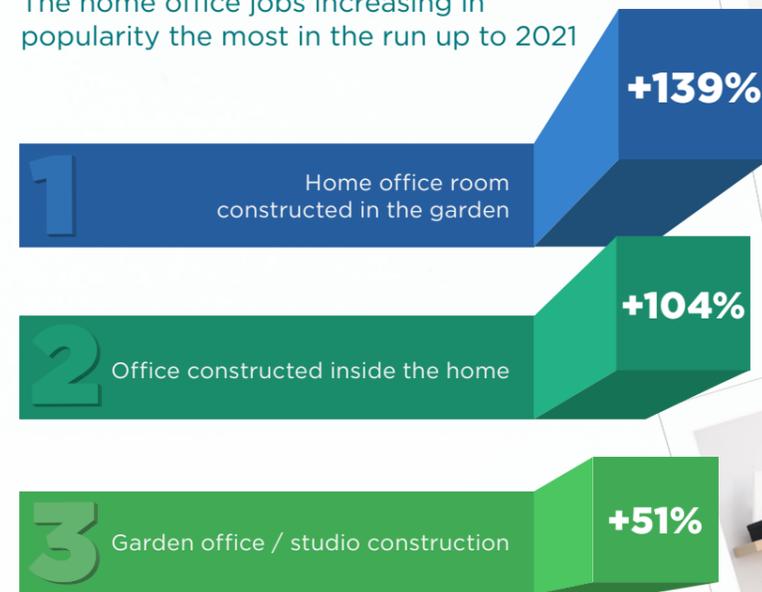
In 2020, 57% more home improvement jobs mentioning 'home office' were posted on Rated People compared to 2019.

In 2021, **43%** of UK residents plan to work from home more than they did before (even if COVID-19 was to completely disappear) and **38%** of us want to improve our home working environment this year. We predict home office improvements will be one of the biggest trends for 2021.

### Room for improvement



The home office jobs increasing in popularity the most in the run up to 2021

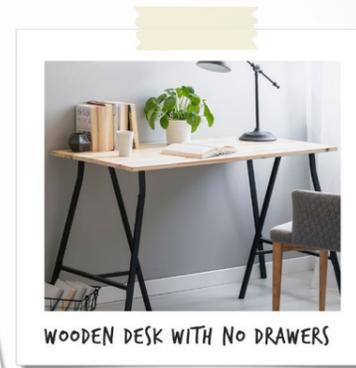


Ranked by YoY % volume increase in jobs posted to Rated People from 2019 to 2020

## HOW TO DESIGN THE PERFECT HOME OFFICE

Social media is a popular source of design inspiration. In 2019, we found that **30%** of 25-34 year olds turned to Instagram for inspiration and new ideas.

So, we looked at more than 100 of the most-liked images of home offices, tagged with #homeofficeideas, to find out how to create the most Instagram-worthy home office.



The magic formula for a stylish home office, according to Instagram, is:

**white walls + a wooden, writing style desk with no drawers + a white, fabric fixed leg chair + medium wood bare floorboards + fixed simple shelves + two houseplants + a framed print of the outdoors**



# THE MOST 'FUTURE-FORWARD' AREAS IN THE UK

## FROM ELECTRIC CARS TO BIOMASS BOILERS, THESE ARE THE MOST ECO PLACES IN THE UK

Sustainability campaigners, the Government's Green Homes Grant and, of course, popular nature documentaries such as those hosted by David Attenborough, have all played their part in increasing the UK's awareness of the need to be more eco-friendly.

As a result, more UK homeowners have been adopting eco-friendly practices at home; in total they posted **41%** more eco-friendly home improvement jobs on Rated People in 2020 than in 2019.

### WHICH AREAS IN THE UK MADE THEIR HOMES MORE ECO-FRIENDLY IN 2020?

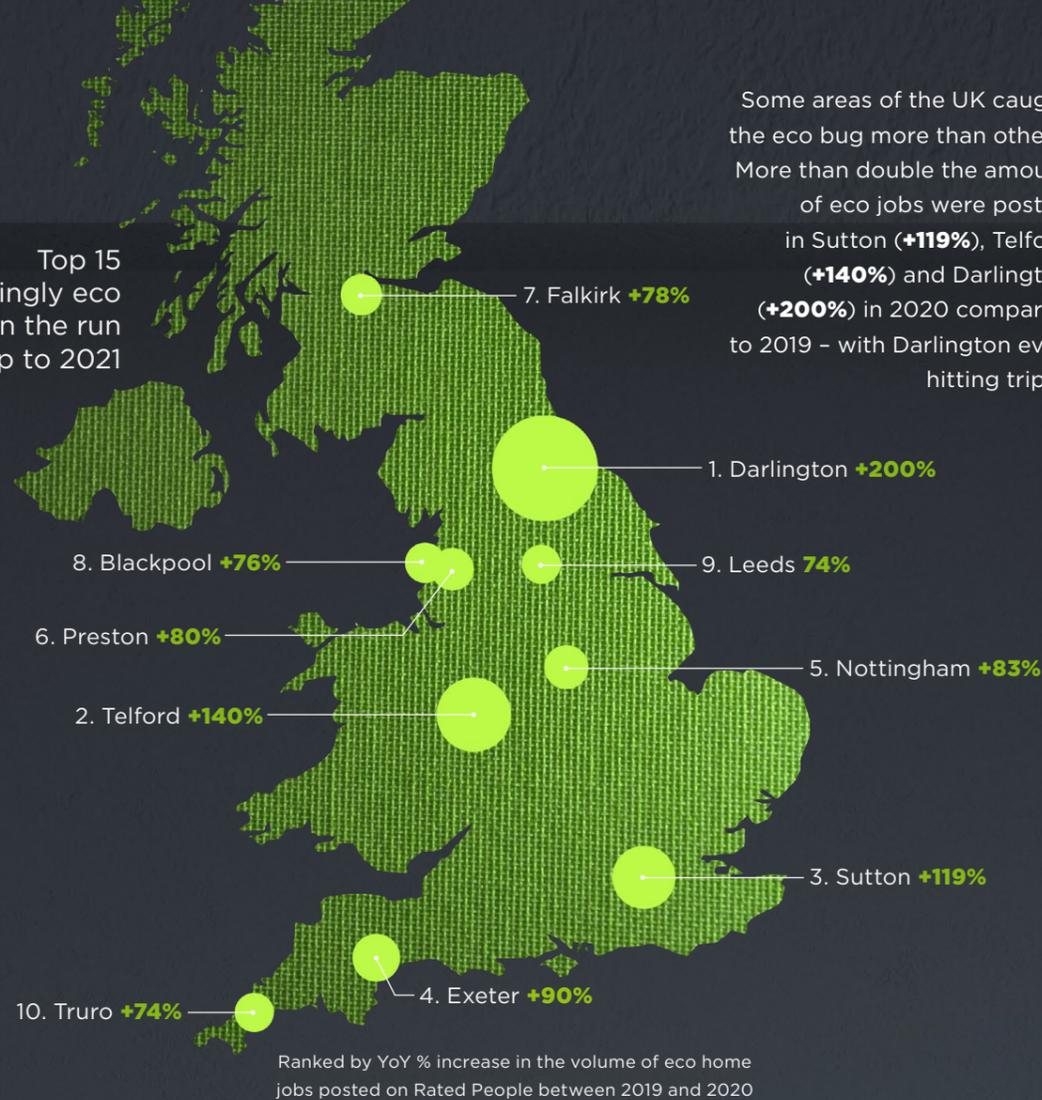
It was a close call, but the most jobs posted on Rated People to make homes more eco-friendly and energy-efficient came from Birmingham, with Manchester and South East London following close behind.

Top 10 UK areas that posted the most eco jobs in 2020



Ranked by % of all eco jobs posted on Rated People in 2020

Top 15 increasingly eco areas in the run up to 2021



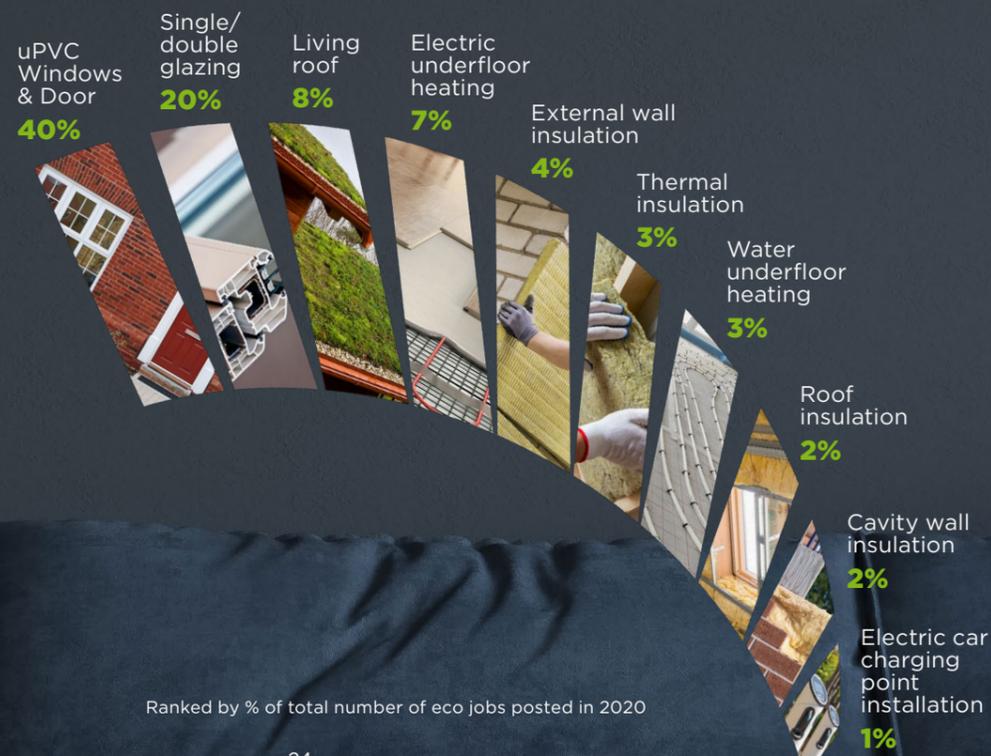
Some areas of the UK caught the eco bug more than others. More than double the amount of eco jobs were posted in Sutton (+119%), Telford (+140%) and Darlington (+200%) in 2020 compared to 2019 - with Darlington even hitting triple.

Ranked by YoY % increase in the volume of eco home jobs posted on Rated People between 2019 and 2020

## THE ECO IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED IN 2020

Energy-efficient home upgrades work to cut your carbon footprint and can potentially shave thousands of pounds off your energy bill. UK homeowners were keen to make their homes more eco-friendly in 2020, by getting everything from classic double glazing (20%) to living roofs (8%) installed.

Top 10 eco jobs posted to Rated People in 2020



Ranked by % of total number of eco jobs posted in 2020

## MOVING TOWARDS A GREENER FUTURE

Government initiatives, such as the Green Homes Grant, have made an energy-efficient home more achievable for many UK homeowners.

According to our research, 4% of homeowners used the Green Homes Grant to improve their homes in 2020. And, 11% of homeowners plan to make their homes more energy-efficient and eco-friendly this year, compared to 9% who made improvements last year. This increase is likely helped by the Green Homes Grant scheme now being in full swing.



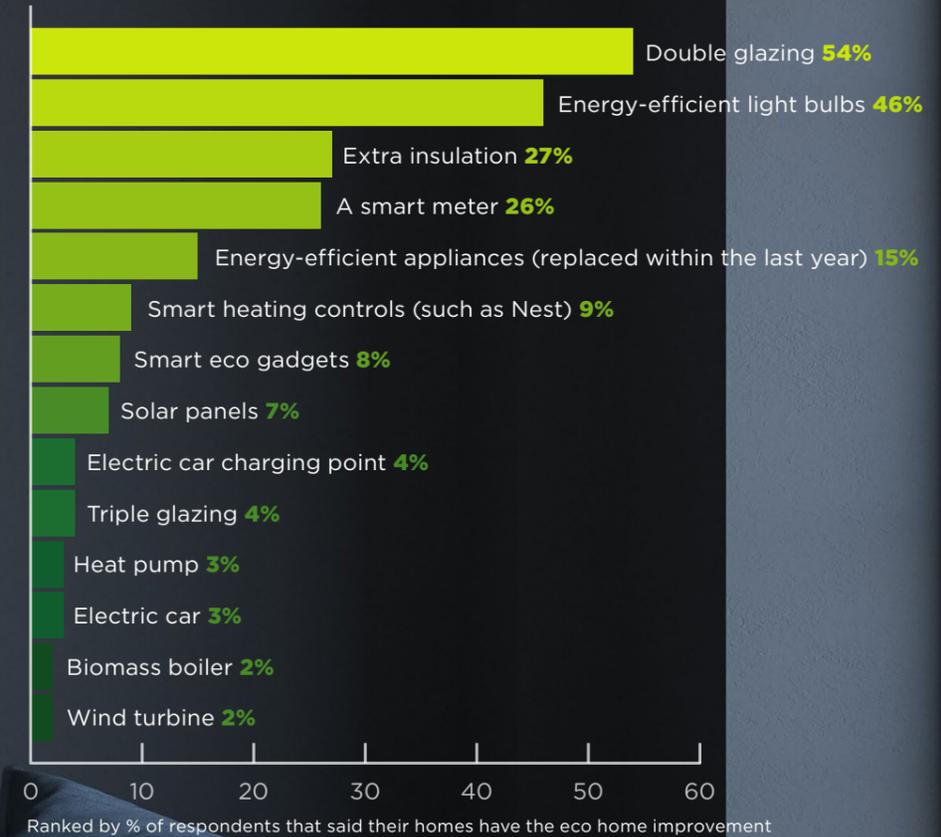
What's the Green Homes Grant?

A government voucher scheme offering homeowners and landlords a voucher worth up to **£5,000** (or **£10,000** for low-income households) to pay towards the cost of installing specific energy-saving home upgrades.

## HOW ECO-FRIENDLY WERE UK HOMES IN 2020?

All good things take time and making our properties more eco-friendly isn't always easy. Encouragingly, the UK is off to a good start; in 2020, **54%** of our homes already had double glazing, **46%** were using energy-efficient light bulbs and **27%** had extra insulation installed.

How eco-friendly our homes are in the UK



## HOW ECO-FRIENDLY UK HOMES ARE SET TO BE IN 2021

We've got big plans for the next five years. Not only do UK homeowners want to reap the aesthetic and energy-saving benefits of new home appliances, but many of us also want to get involved with new technology, like buying an electric car.



**17%**

Replace old appliances with more energy-efficient models



**17%**

Get an electric car



**4%**

Apply for the Green Homes Grant

## A GREENER FUTURE FOR THE UK

Half of UK homeowners consider themselves to be eco-conscious, and even more of us recognise that we want to do more and be more eco-friendly.



want to be more eco-friendly

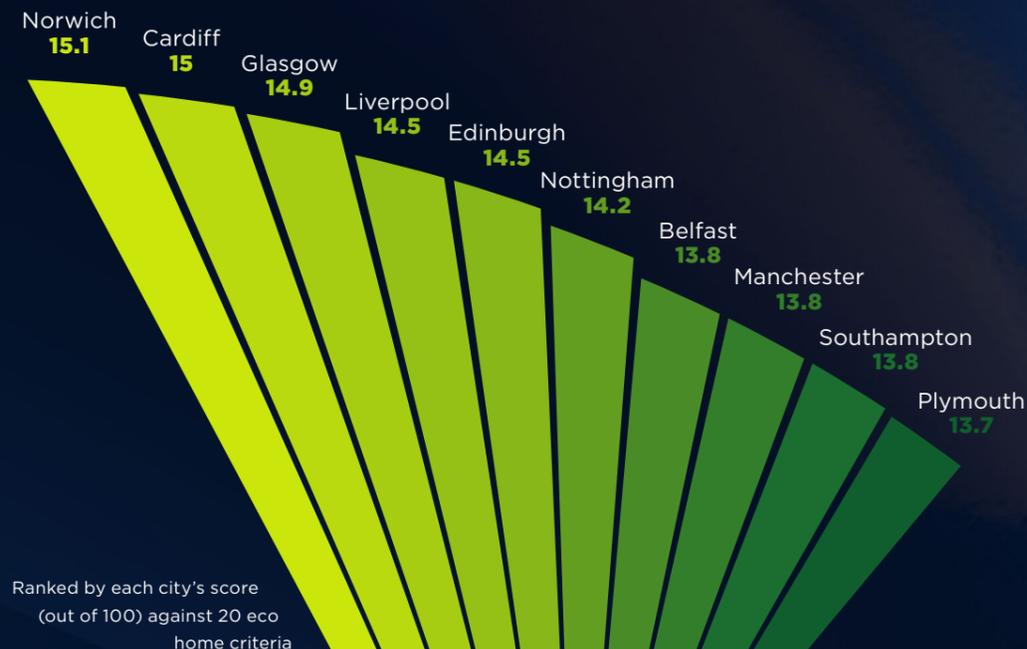


consider themselves to be eco-conscious

When it comes to the most future-forward places in the UK, we looked at how homes in different cities compare against 20 eco home criteria - from the percentage of homes that have double glazing and extra insulation installed, to how many residents already have an electric car.

Looking at UK cities, Norwich's homes are the most eco-friendly - the city scored 15.1 out of 100, the highest in the country. **65%** of homes in Norwich have double glazing, **35%** use smart meters, **20%** of residents plan to get an electric car within the next five years and **15%** have upgraded old appliances to more eco-friendly models in the last year.

### UK areas with the most eco-friendly homes



## LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Eco-friendly living isn't restricted to our homes. UK homeowners are adapting their daily activities to have less of an environmental impact too.

To discover which parts of the nation have the most eco-minded people, we found out how many residents in different parts of the country were making changes to be more eco-friendly. We looked at 14 lifestyle criteria, like eating less meat, separating recycling and buying second-hand products, and Plymouth, scoring 52.2 out of 100, is the city where people appear to have the most eco-friendly lifestyles.

### UK areas with the most eco-minded people



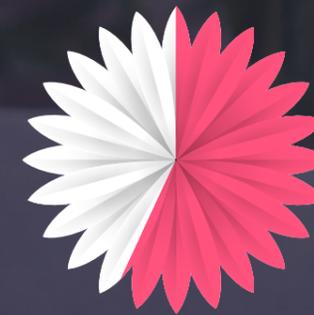
# THE VALUE OF SPACE

## HOW OUR GARDENS AND OUTSIDE SPACE HELPED US GET THROUGH 2020

The pandemic has changed the way we spend our free time. During the first national lockdown, our daily screen time surged to **6 hours and 25 minutes** on average, according to Ofcom. But, many of us also picked up gardening as a new hobby and it ended up helping some of us through a difficult time.

Our appreciation for our gardens has also changed our priorities when it comes to house buying. Outdoor space is now more important than ever when we're looking to buy a new home.

How our gardens and outside spaces helped us through 2020



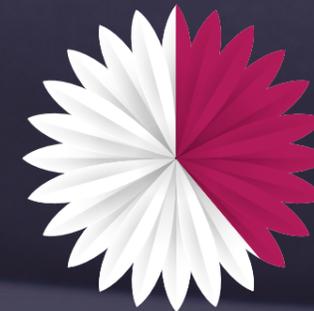
**57%**

said their garden/outside space helped them to get through the pandemic



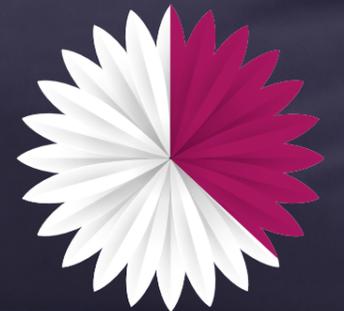
**44%**

said they couldn't have seen family members during the pandemic if they didn't have a garden/outside space



**39%**

said they got more into gardening during the pandemic



**37%**

said that not having a garden/outside space during the pandemic affected their mental health

Ranked by % of UK residents who said they agreed with each statement



**64%**

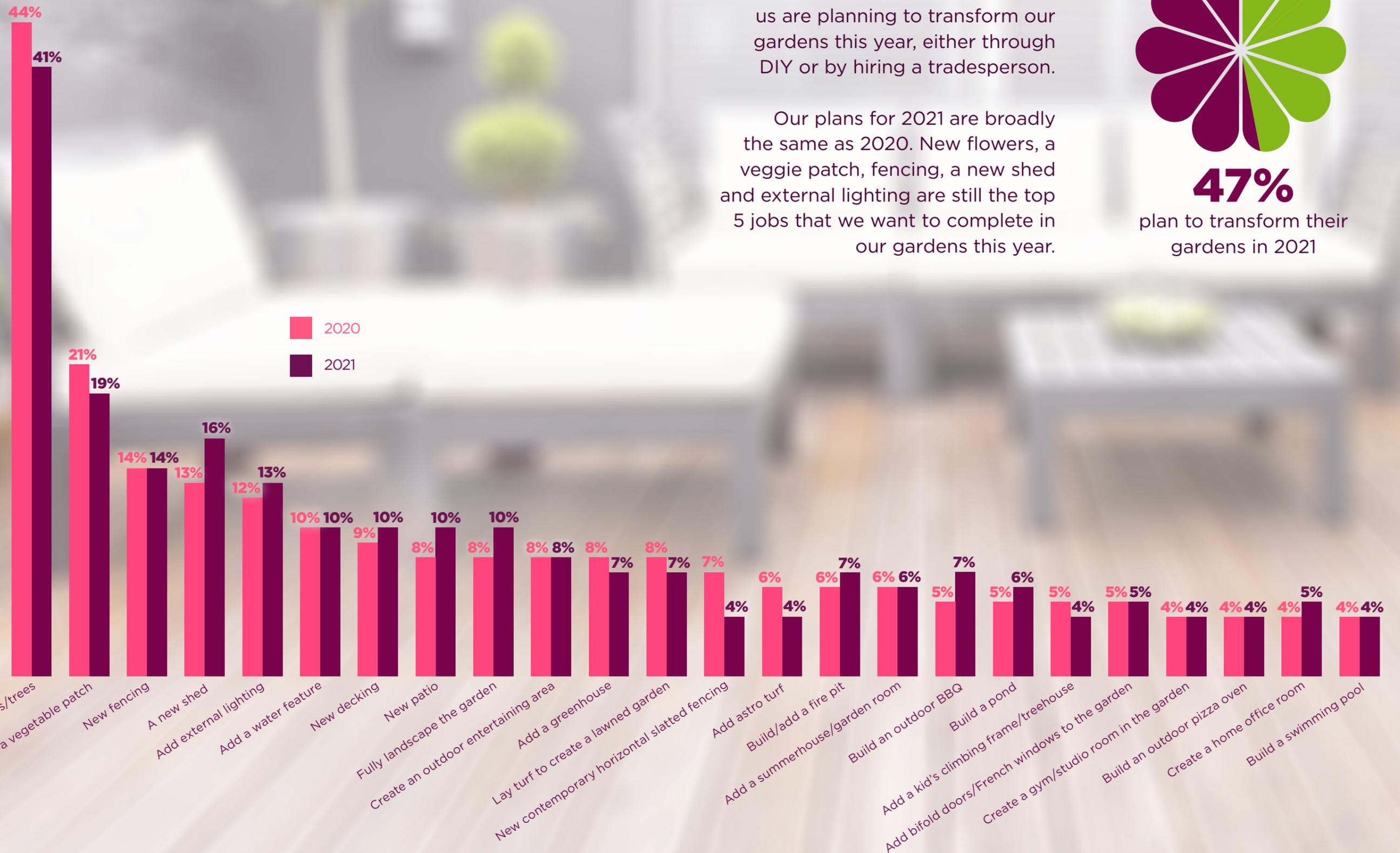
of UK residents now say they wouldn't buy a home if it didn't have an outside space



**30%**

of UK residents now say that when looking to buy a home, a property's outside space is actually more important than the inside space

The most popular garden improvements in 2020 compared to how we're planning to upgrade our gardens in 2021



Ranked by % of people who said they did each task in 2020, and those planning to do them in 2021

2020 VS 2021

This increasing love for our gardens is continuing into 2021. **47%** of us are planning to transform our gardens this year, either through DIY or by hiring a tradesperson.

Our plans for 2021 are broadly the same as 2020. New flowers, a veggie patch, fencing, a new shed and external lighting are still the top 5 jobs that we want to complete in our gardens this year.



**47%**

plan to transform their gardens in 2021

## THE EXPERT TOUCH

Even though many of us had more time on our hands in 2020, hiring a trusted gardener to help out was still a popular choice.

**21%** more gardening and external home improvement jobs were posted on Rated People in 2020, when compared with 2019.

Interestingly, the amount of gardening and external jobs rose by **11%** during the first national lockdown, too.

The top 10 gardening and external jobs posted on Rated People in 2020



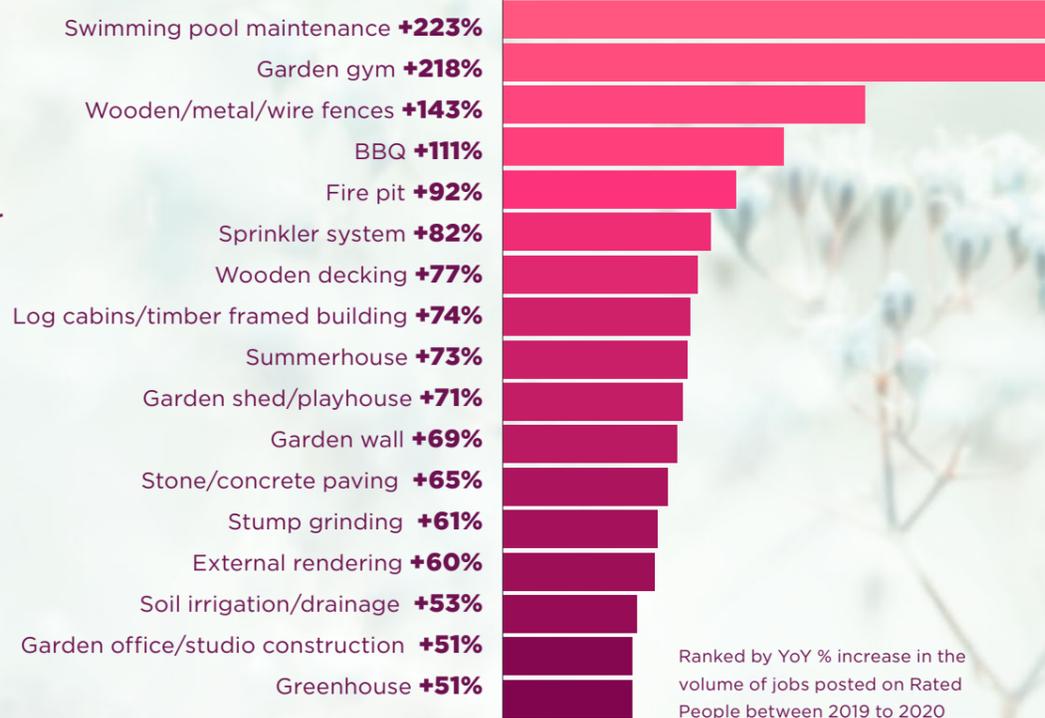
Ranked by volume of gardening/external jobs posted on Rated People in 2020

## NEW YEAR, NEW GARDEN?

Many of us transformed our gardens into multi-functional spaces for better lockdown living in 2020.

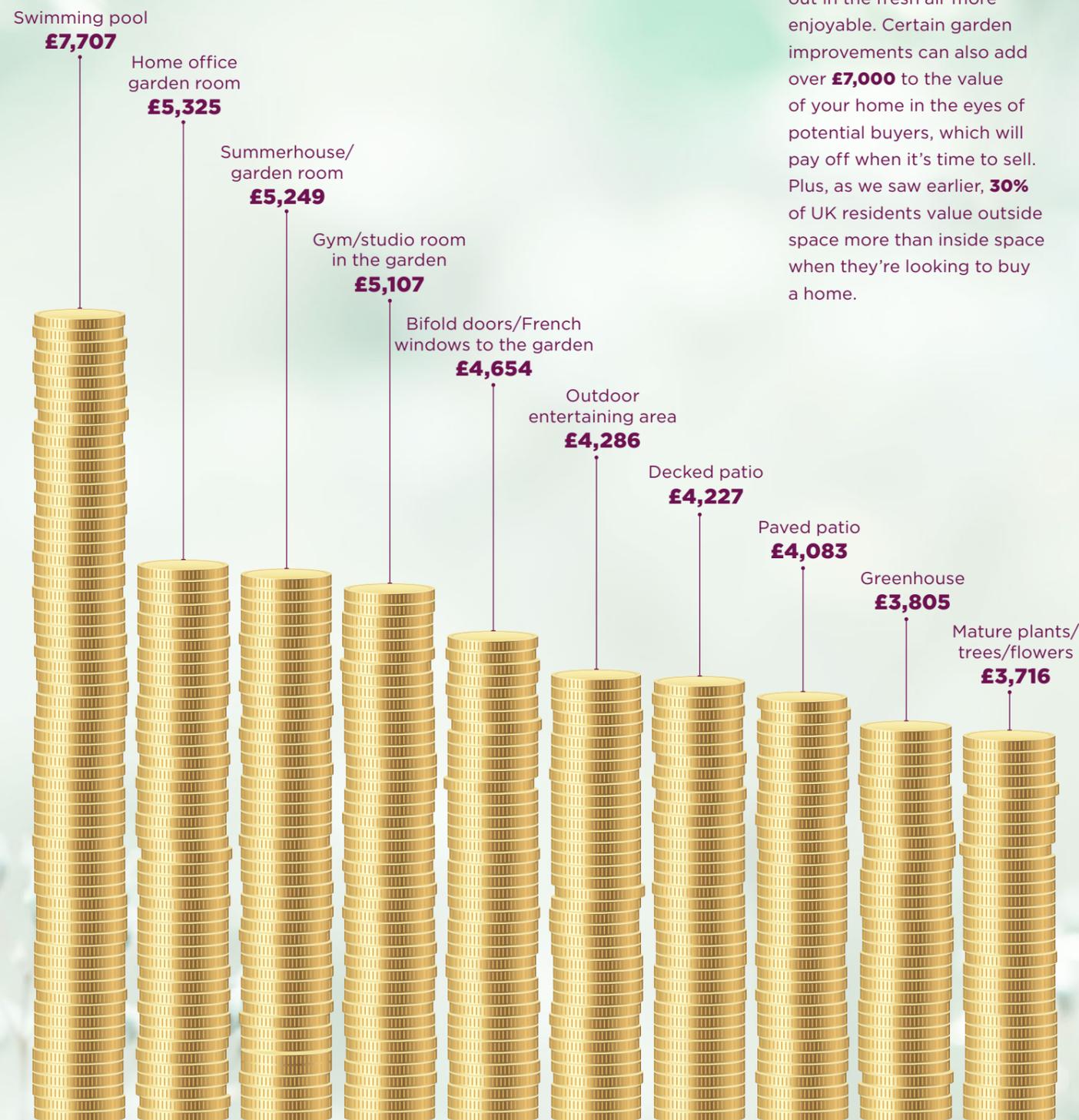
Whether it was by installing a built-in BBQ for summer or warming up the winter with a new fire pit, plenty of exciting jobs to help us spend more time in the great outdoors were posted on Rated People.

The gardening and external jobs rising in popularity in the run up to 2021



Ranked by YoY % increase in the volume of jobs posted on Rated People between 2019 to 2020

## The most value-adding garden improvements



Ranked by the value placed on each improvement, as estimated by UK homeowners

Adding undercover seating, fencing for privacy and other functionalities to your garden is a sure-fire way to make the time you spend out in the fresh air more enjoyable. Certain garden improvements can also add over **£7,000** to the value of your home in the eyes of potential buyers, which will pay off when it's time to sell. Plus, as we saw earlier, **30%** of UK residents value outside space more than inside space when they're looking to buy a home.



What are your home improvement goals for 2021?  
Share your ideas with us on our social media:



Stay up to date with the latest home improvement trends and connect with a local, skilled tradesperson by downloading our app on the **App Store** or **Google Play**.

