

# First-time buyers Whatsapp their broker at least weekly, finds Santander's latest Broker Perception Barometer

- Mortgage brokers remain central to the homebuying journey, with two-fifths of first-time buyers admitting to Whatsapping their broker at least weekly and seeking support from their broker more than their friends
- For the second quarter running, two thirds (63%) of all homeowners say they couldn't have gone through the homebuying or remortgaging process without a broker
- Santander today launches its quarterly 'Broker Perception Barometer' survey, as the lender reports 89% of all property purchases to date this year, took place through a broker, up 3% since 2024

Brokers remain the backbone of the homebuying journey in today's ever-changing economic backdrop, with two thirds (63%) of borrowers admitting they couldn't have gone through the homebuying process without the support of a broker for the second quarter running, according to research released today by Santander.

The lender's latest 'Broker Perception Barometer', a quarterly survey of 500 mortgage holders to measure consumer attitudes and sentiment toward brokers, shows that homeowners continue to rely on using a broker for their mortgage needs, with more than four fifths (83%) stating that they would use a broker again if purchasing a new property or changing mortgage provider.

## A new generation with new expectations

Santander's previous Broker Perception Barometer last December highlighted the power of human touch in a tech enabled world, something demonstrated again this quarter, with one in ten (11%) homeowners looking for empathy in their broker (rising to 14% for first-time buyers).

Today's research also reveals differences in how younger borrowers engage with brokers, showing a clear preference for pace, with 75% of those aged 18- to 34- years old considering their broker as "responsive", compared to 90% of those aged 35-years old and above. This age group were also most likely to have found their broker using social media (13%) or an AI tool (8%) and most likely to communicate with their broker using Whatsapp (42%) at least once a week, in comparison to half (50%) of their older peers who have never used it for the same purpose.

When asked who they turned to the most during the homebuying journey, first-time buyers admit to speaking to their mortgage broker (24%) more than their friends (22%) when seeking support with the process.

## Providing clarity and reassurance

In today's market, shaped by rising economic certainty, consumers perceive brokers as playing a critical role in supporting buyers progress confidently with the homebuying journey (85%). This is particularly true for 83% of those who have just bought their first home in the past year, who said their broker made them feel more secure about the process.

At a time of heightened living costs, affordability - something an overwhelming 95% of first-time buyers said their broker helped them fully understand - remains at the forefront of borrowers' minds. When asked to imagine they were buying their home again in 2026, pressures from the

cost-of-living crisis (25%), budgeting for upfront costs (26%) and rising interest rates (30%) were the three things homeowners would be most concerned about. First-time buyers said they would be particularly worried about (21%) overpaying for a property when prices are so volatile.

### **More than just money: importance of emotional support**

Three quarters (73%) of those who bought, remortgaged or took out a product transfer in the last year saved money as a direct result of working with a broker. The average first-time buyer saved £123 a month on their monthly payments, just shy of the overall average savings of £127.

Santander's research shows it's not all about the money for those buying their first home. When compared to second (35%) and third-time buyers (39%), saving money is at the forefront of only a quarter (23%) of first-time buyers' minds when working with a broker. They place more value on their broker saving them time (28%) and helping them understand complex information (24%).

***Graham Sellar, Head of Intermediary Channels, Santander UK, said:***

*"During a time of global economic uncertainty, more than ever, borrowers look for guidance and a sense of security that they are getting the best possible outcome for their mortgage needs. Brokers play a hugely vital role in this - not only by securing the best deals and saving homeowners money - but providing reassurance and emotional support too."*

One in 10 (9%) first-time buyers list emotional support as one of the most important aspects of the broker service - rising to 12% for younger borrowers (aged 18-35 years old), four times more than those over 35 years old.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editors:**

1. Research conducted by Opinium on behalf of Santander amongst 500 adults between 18 - 25 February 2026.

**Contact Information**

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