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GREEN HOMES HAVE MORE APPEAL FOR BUYERS

Nationwide research reveals what buyers look for in a home

According to a recent study by Nationwide Building Society, the majority of UK homebuyers preferred a house with environmentally friendly features. Given the choice between two properties of a similar size and value, 82% of respondents claimed a house with features such as solar panels, had more of an influence on their decision to buy than attic rooms (68%), period features (63%) and walk-in wardrobes (62%).

As part of the research, respondents were also asked what is important to them when deciding on which area to live in. A pleasant neighbourhood was rated as important by almost all respondents (97%). In fact, location of a property is higher on the agenda than a good school catchment (41%) or the likelihood of future house price rises in the area (65%). Adequate parking facilities also factored highly with 89% of respondents.

Over half (54%) of those questioned believed the kitchen to be the most influential room of a house, when it comes to making a decision to buy. This was followed closely by the sitting room (30% of respondents). The bathroom was one of the rooms least likely to influence a purchase decision, with only 2% of the votes.

When asked what put them off buying a property:

- 94% would be put off by a home that was potentially at risk of flooding;
- Poor building work or DIY was also a big turn off according to almost 91% of respondents;
- 88% claimed their decision would be affected by the property being close to a busy road or railway line;
- Tidiness was important to the majority of potential buyers - an untidy house was more of a turn off (55%) than the direction of the garden e.g. north facing (48%);
- Jacuzzis, wet rooms and garden decking were least likely to tempt potential buyers into making that all important offer.

Nationwide chief economist, Fionnuala Earley, said: "It is great to see that, given the choice, most of us would opt for a 'green' home, although there's currently no evidence to suggest that environmentally friendly properties command a higher price. Having said that, with the recent publication of the government's climate change bill and the pressure on households to become more energy efficient, it is inevitable that environmental home improvements will have some impact on house prices over the long-term".

Regional research results:

- Those living in the **North West** (95%) were the most likely to be put off by a house that was near a council estate or rundown neighbourhood, whilst residents of **Northern Ireland** (75%) were least concerned about this;
- People in the **East Midlands** (98%) were the most likely to be put off by poor DIY, whereas the **Welsh** (84%) were least likely to worry about this;
- An environmentally friendly home was most likely to influence the purchasing decision of those living in the **North East** (88%), while those living in **Northern Ireland** (75%) were least likely to be concerned about this;
- Residents of the **West Midlands** (69%) and **Northern Ireland** (69%) were most likely to be influenced by a home with period features such as an old fireplace, whereas those in the **South West** (58%) were least influenced by this;
- People living in the **East** (51%) and **East Midlands** (46%) were more likely to be influenced by a house with a jacuzzi, while the **Scots** (25%) were much less likely to be interested in this feature.

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Case study available on request

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Notes to editors

- **Research** based on a sample of 1,000 respondents, conducted by Marketing Sciences' Panelwizard for Nationwide Building Society (March 2007)