



LONDON
SQUARE

AN ALDAR COMPANY

WHAT THE WORLD THINKS OF LONDON

2026





FOREWORD

London has always been a city defined by its ability to adapt, evolve and endure. At moments of global uncertainty, it is easy for the narrative around world cities to focus on the challenges they face rather than opportunity. This research provides a timely and valuable counterpoint.

Our findings confirm what many of us who are in London continue to see first hand: that the city's global appeal as a place to live, learn, work and invest is enviable.

Nearly two thirds of the 1000 people, canvassed from Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore and Paris would choose to live in London if given the opportunity, and, despite often negative headlines, perceptions of the city are improving for a significant proportion of people worldwide.

What stands out most is the breadth of London's strengths. Culture, education, diversity, stability and career opportunity continue to define the city's reputation on the global stage.

These are not short term attributes. They are deep rooted advantages that have sustained London through decades of economic cycles, political change and social transformation.

For those of us involved in delivering homes and places across the capital this research reinforces the long term resilience of London's housing market, underpinned by sustained global demand and a continued desire to build lives here. While affordability and access remain real challenges that must be addressed, confidence in London as a place to invest, settle and belong remains firmly intact.

This research provides reassurance, but also a reminder: London's strength lies not just in its global reputation, but in how we continue to shape its ability to welcome people of all backgrounds to build lives here.

Adam Lawrence
CEO
London Square

LONDON’S GLOBAL REPUTATION IS POSITIVE AND STRENGTHENING

The vast majority of respondents had a positive perception of London, with just 2% of expressing a ‘very negative’ view vs 20% expressing a ‘very positive’ view of the city.

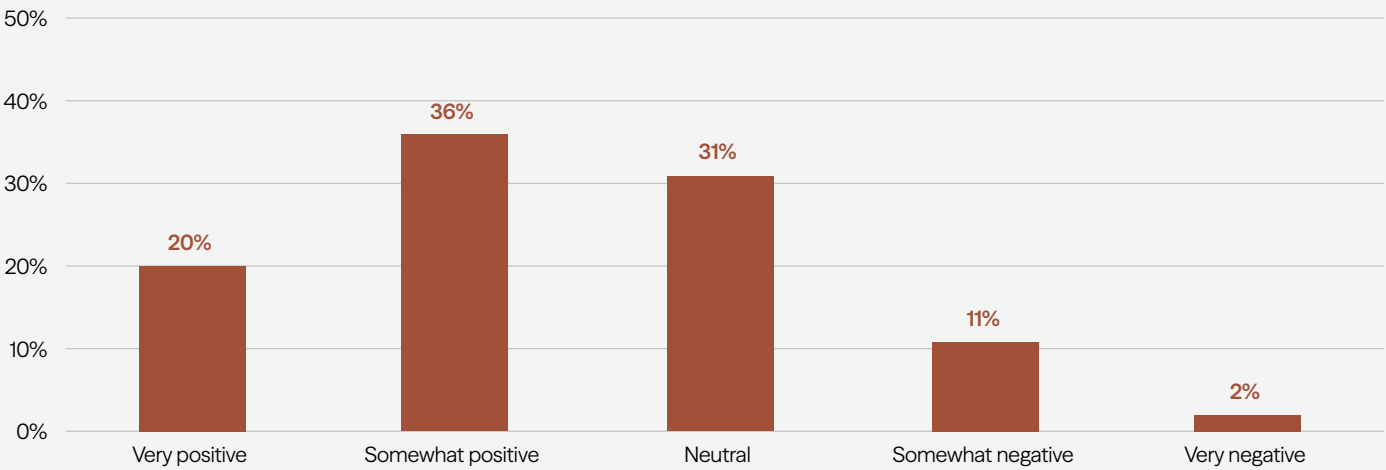
Perceptions of London also appear to be strengthening, with 39% stating their perception over the last five years had improved, compared with just 14% who believe it has worsened over the last five years. Nearly half (46%) said perceptions have remained the same.

The fact that nearly three times as many respondents say their perception has improved rather than worsened suggests that London’s global brand remains resilient despite periodic economic or political uncertainty.

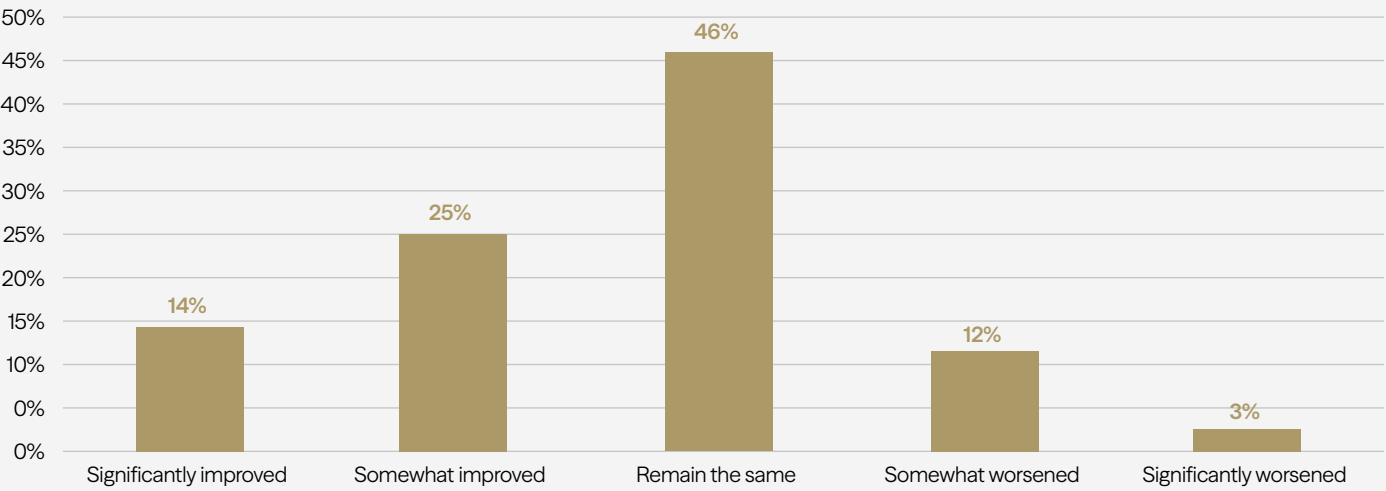
Crucially, London’s appeal extends beyond those who know the city well. While fewer than half of respondents say they are highly familiar with London, many

more express a willingness to live there or invest in property. This indicates that London’s international reputation and appeal functions as a powerful brand in its own right, shaping perceptions even among those without direct experience of the city.

OVERALL, HOW POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF LONDON?



HAS YOUR PERCEPTION OF LONDON IMPROVED OR WORSENERD OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS?





THE FOUNDATIONS OF LONDON'S GLOBAL APPEAL ARE BROAD

The survey's findings illustrate the breadth of London's appeal vs its global peers. The city is not defined by a single strength but by a combination of cultural depth, educational excellence, career opportunity and global openness.

Education is clearly seen as one of London's defining advantages. Nearly four in five respondents associate London with high-quality schools and universities, and London is also frequently identified as the world's leading city for education in direct comparisons with other global centres.

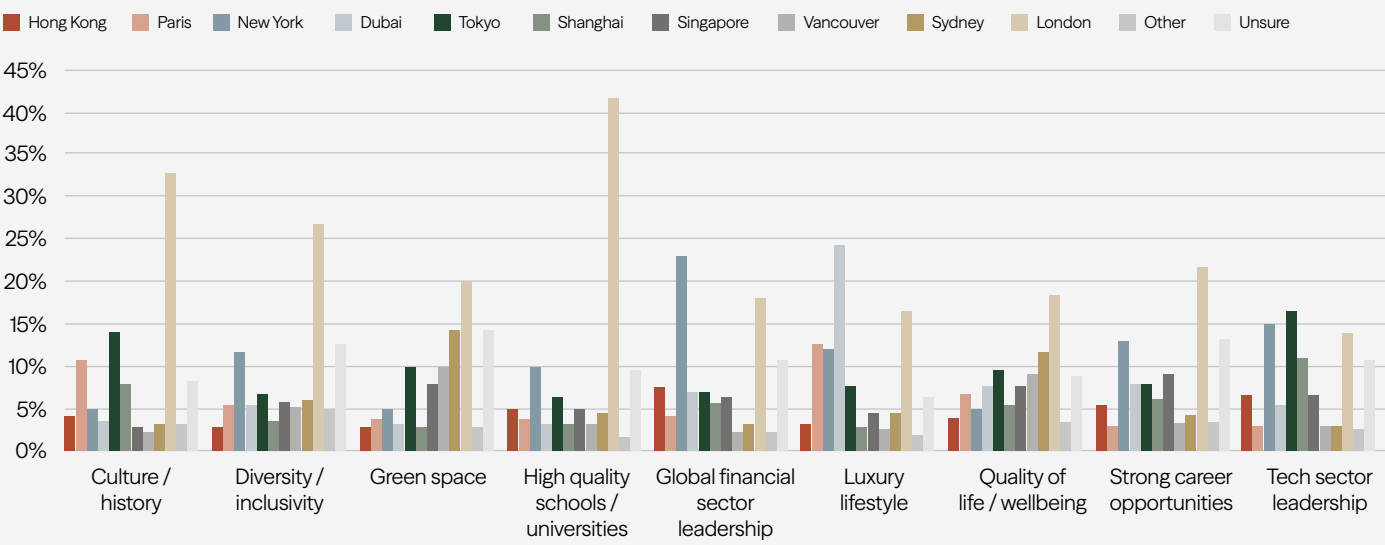
Culture and heritage also stand as one of London's most distinctive assets. The city's concentration of museums, historic landmarks and creative institutions continues to differentiate it from many competing global cities.

The survey also highlights London's reputation as a diverse and internationally connected city. More than seven in ten respondents associate London with diversity and inclusivity, reinforcing its image as a destination where global talent and international families can establish long-term lives.

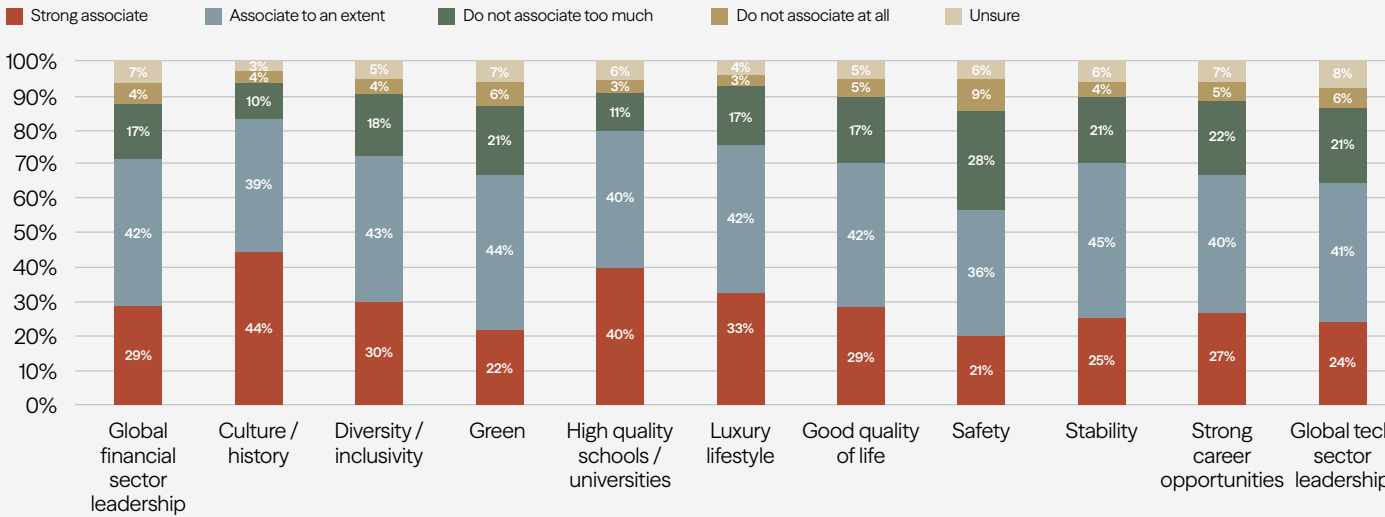
No city surveyed had a stand out position in tech sector leadership.

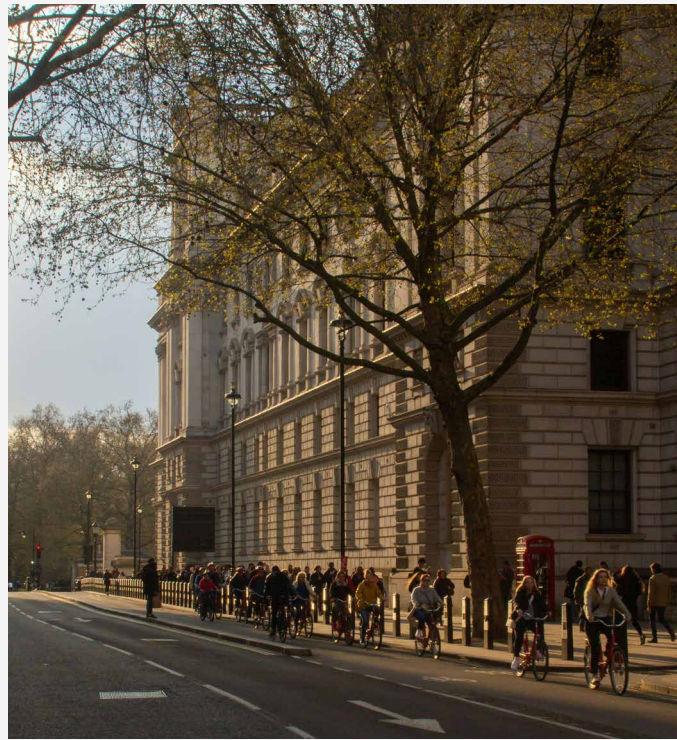
Powered by world leading universities, deep technical talent and a concentration of venture capital, London now hosts one of the largest AI ecosystem outside San Francisco. This is a clear future area of opportunity for the city and perceptions of it as a future facing city with a diversified economy.

IN YOUR OPINION WHICH IS THE BEST CITY OF THE WORLD FOR THE FOLLOWING FACTORS



HOW STRONGLY DO YOU ASSOCIATE LONDON WITH THE FOLLOWING?





PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE IN LONDON

In addition to career opportunities, the survey results also point to sustained international interest in London as a place to live and buy property.

Importantly, London's attractiveness extends beyond lifestyle and careers into property and investment confidence.

Nearly two thirds of respondents say buying residential property in London is attractive. This reinforces London's status as a trusted long term market, even as global capital becomes more selective and risk aware.

This level of interest is significant given that the respondents are drawn from other major global cities, New York, Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong and Paris which are highly attractive destinations in their own right.

Attitudes towards London's residential market are similarly positive. London is considered more desirable for residential investment than all 9 global cities tested, including New York, Singapore, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

These perceptions reinforce London's longstanding reputation as a stable and prestigious property market with global appeal.

64%

OF RESPONDENTS SAY THEY WOULD LIVE IN LONDON IF THE OPPORTUNITY AROSE.

A LEADING DESTINATION FOR GLOBAL TALENT

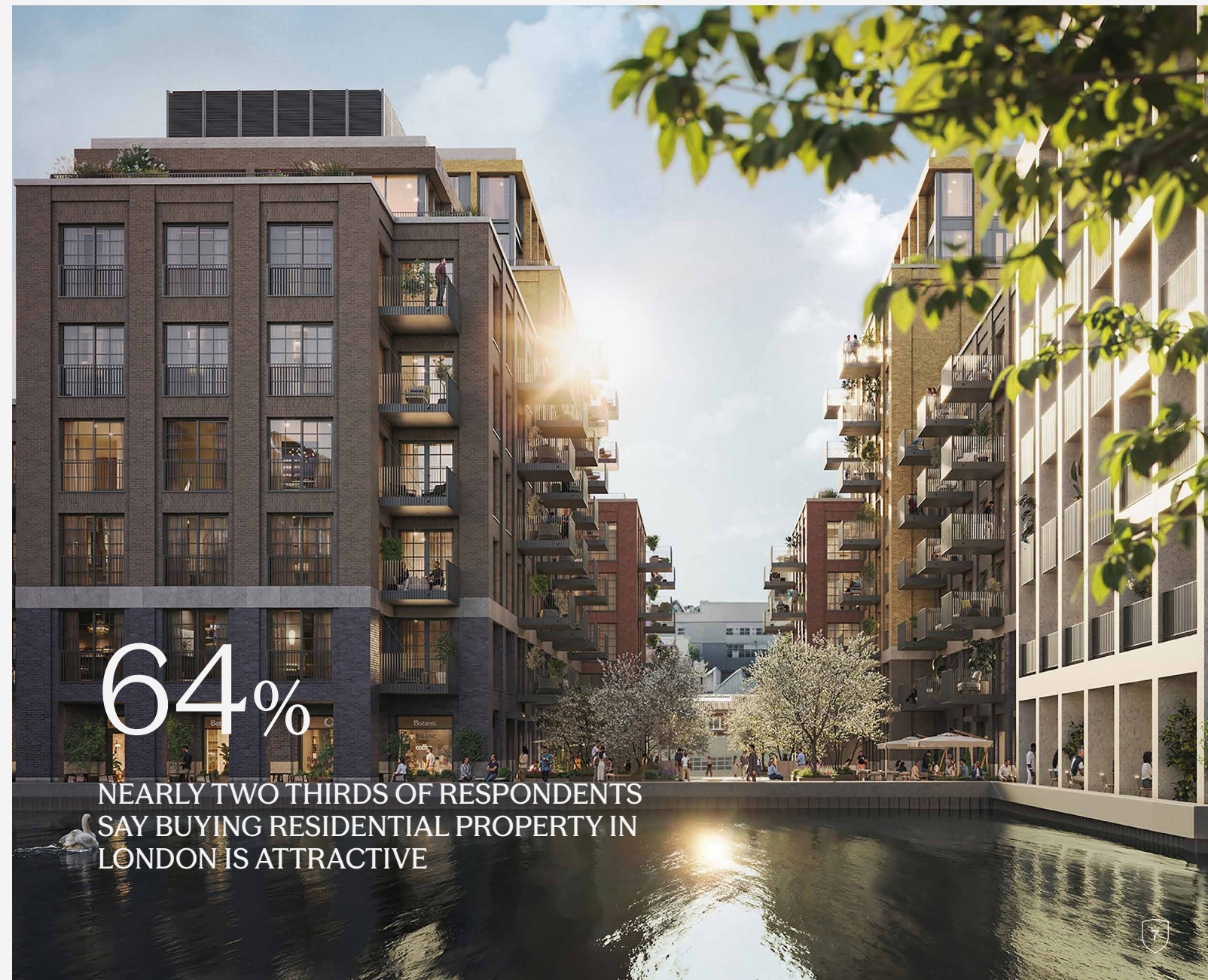
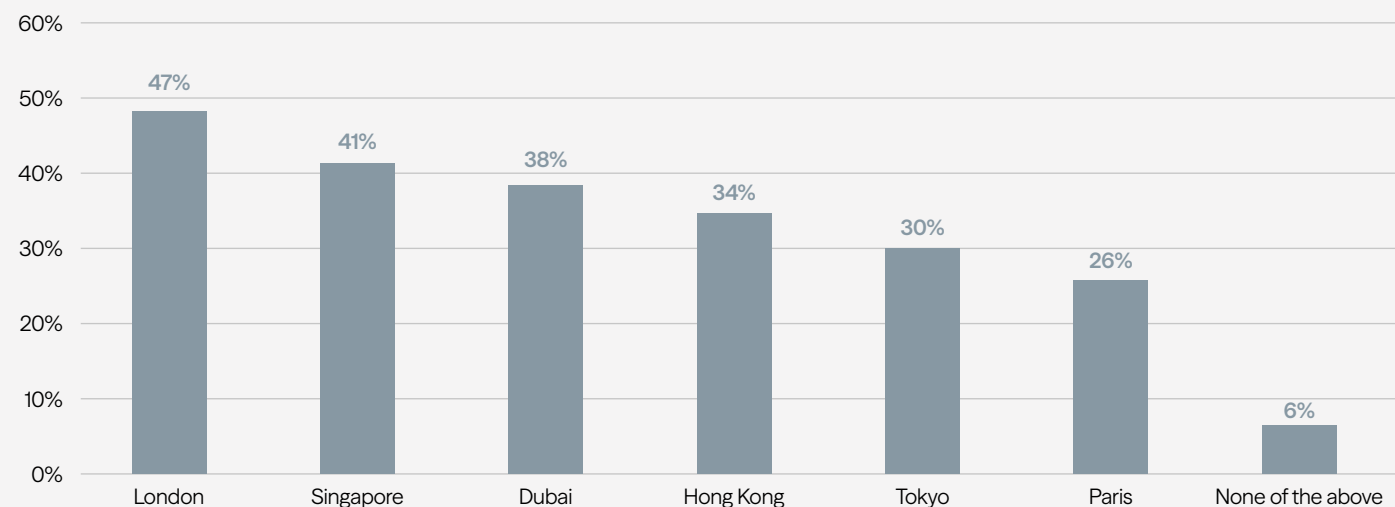
Beyond perceptions of lifestyle and culture, the research also points to London's continued strength as a city providing career opportunity.

In the survey, London was the most frequently selected city for providing the best opportunities for career advancement, highlighting its continued importance as a global employment hub.

This perception is reinforced by broader measures of competitiveness. When respondents compare London with other global cities, it performs particularly strongly on attributes such as education, culture, quality of life and innovation.

For internationally mobile professionals, this combination of career opportunity and lifestyle appeal is a powerful draw.

WHICH CITIES DO YOU THINK PROVIDE THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLED PROFESSIONALS LOOKING TO ADVANCE THEIR CAREER? (SELECT UP TO 3)



64%

NEARLY TWO THIRDS OF RESPONDENTS SAY BUYING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IN LONDON IS ATTRACTIVE

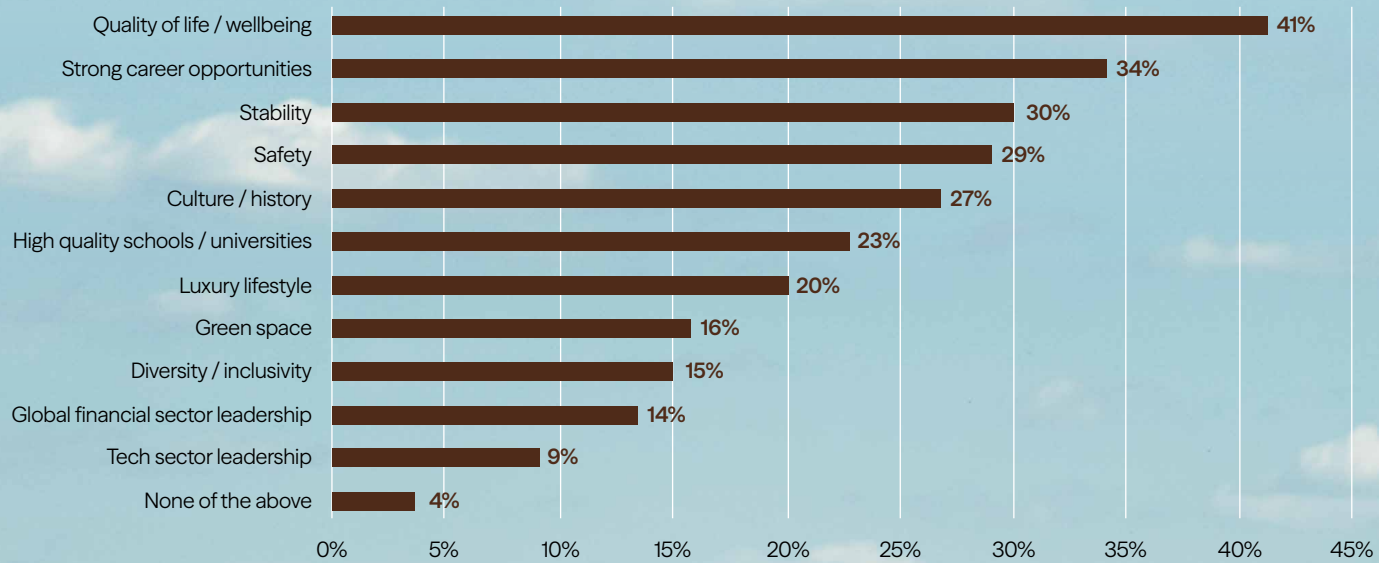
A NUANCED STORY AROUND LIVEABILITY

The research also highlights a more nuanced story around liveability. While the cost of living and housing prices remain the biggest perceived barriers to moving to London, quality of life and wellbeing emerge as the single strongest motivators for those open to relocating.

The key barriers are overwhelmingly economic. Cost of living and housing affordability dominate respondents' concerns, suggesting that access to London's housing market is the primary constraint on international demand.

In other words, London's challenge is not a lack of desirability, it is the difficulty many potential residents perceive in accessing the city.

WHICH OF THESE FACTORS, IF ANY, WOULD MOST MOTIVATE YOU TO LIVE IN LONDON?



STABILITY AND SAFETY: FUTURE ATTRIBUTES OF GLOBAL GATEWAY CITIES?

While 'strong career opportunities' and 'quality of life / wellbeing' are cited as the top two factors 'motivating' people to live in London 'stability' (30%) and 'safety' (29%) also rank highly for respondents.

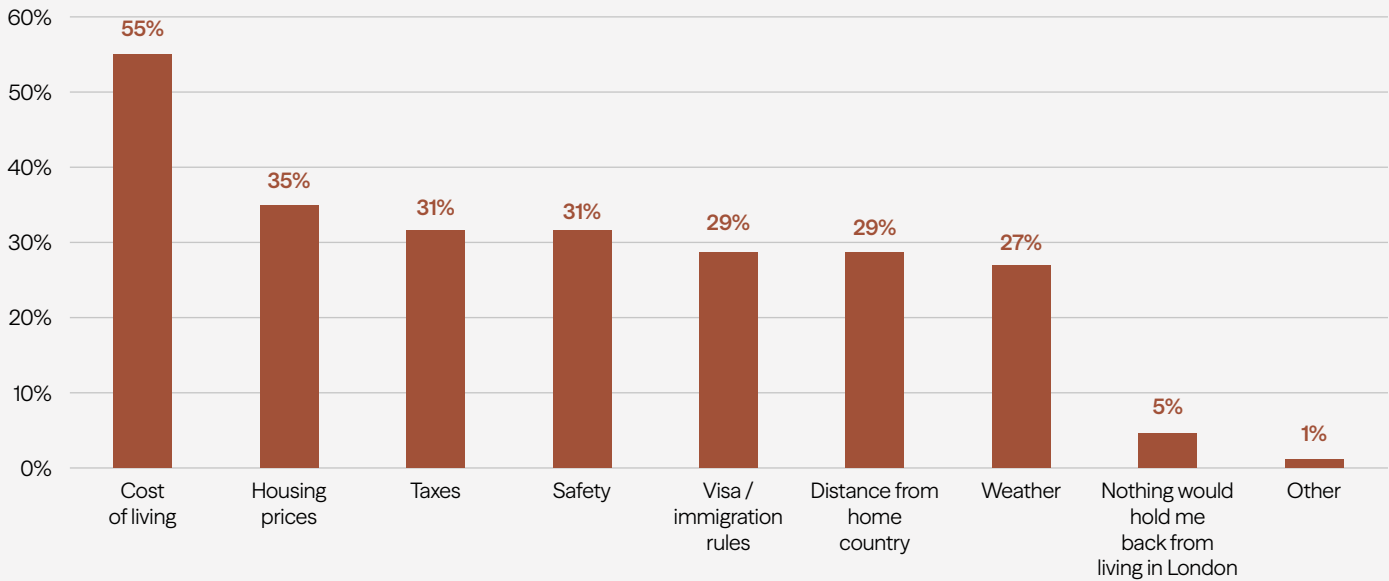
Notably, these factors rank above culture and education, two areas London is consistently rated highly in.

Separately 70% said they associate London with stability. This is roughly similar to the number that say they associate London with strong career opportunities, global tech sector leadership and diversity.

With the conflict in the Middle East ongoing as this report was written, London's safe haven status may well reassert itself as a driver of competitiveness.

General safety appears to act as both a pull factor and a meaningful brake on London's competitiveness and perceptions. However, despite consistently negative headlines, London is rated the same or better for safety compared to other major global cities by 79% of respondents. 53% say it is better than average, much better than average or the best (see p5).

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MIGHT HOLD YOU BACK FROM LIVING IN LONDON?



IMPLICATIONS FOR LONDON

Taken together, the survey findings present a clear and nuanced picture.

London continues to enjoy a powerful global reputation, underpinned by its cultural assets, world-class education system, diverse population and strong economic opportunities. These strengths sustain the city's ability to attract internationally mobile professionals, students and investors.

At the same time, the research highlights a widening gap between global demand for London living and the perceived accessibility of the city's housing market.

Strong interest in living in London, and in owning property there, suggests that the city remains deeply desirable internationally. Yet concerns around affordability indicate that many potential residents view London as difficult to access.

Equally small shifts in perceptions around matters like everyday safety could also meaningfully influence views on the capital. This is particularly relevant when the majority of London's residents (81%) reported in 2026 that they feel safe in their local area and key crime data is improving.

For policymakers, investors and developers, the implications are clear. London's global brand remains one of its greatest assets, continuing to attract talent and capital from around the world.

Ensuring that this demand can translate into accessible housing opportunities will be essential in sustaining London's competitiveness as a global city in the years ahead.

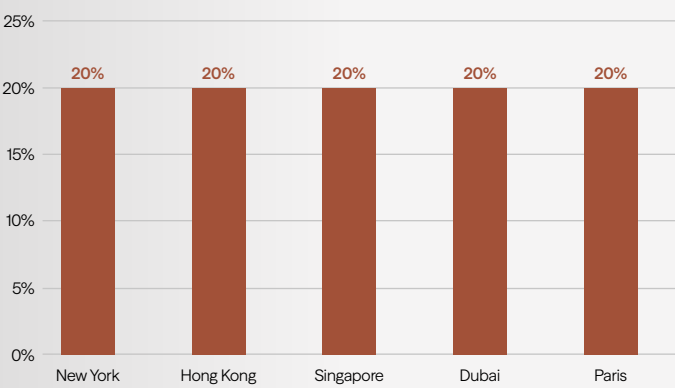


METHODOLOGY

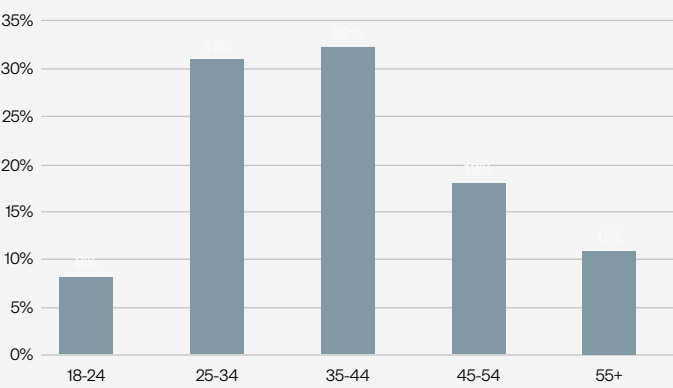
The research was conducted among a sample of 1003 respondents living in Dubai, New York, Hong Kong, Paris and Singapore with data collected between 26.02.2026 - 03.03.2026.

The research was conducted by Censuswide, a member of the Market Research Society and the British Polling Council, and a signatory of the Global Data Quality Pledge. This business adheres to the MRS Code of Conduct and ESOMAR principles

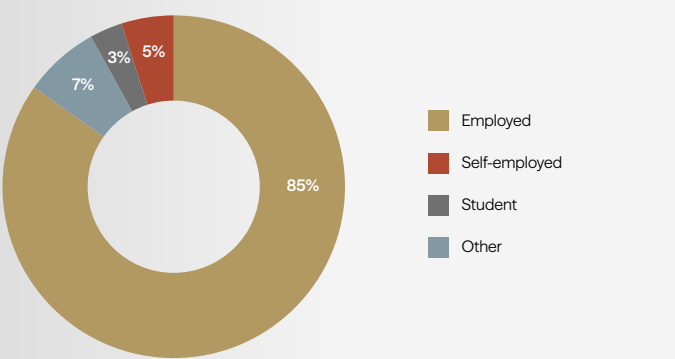
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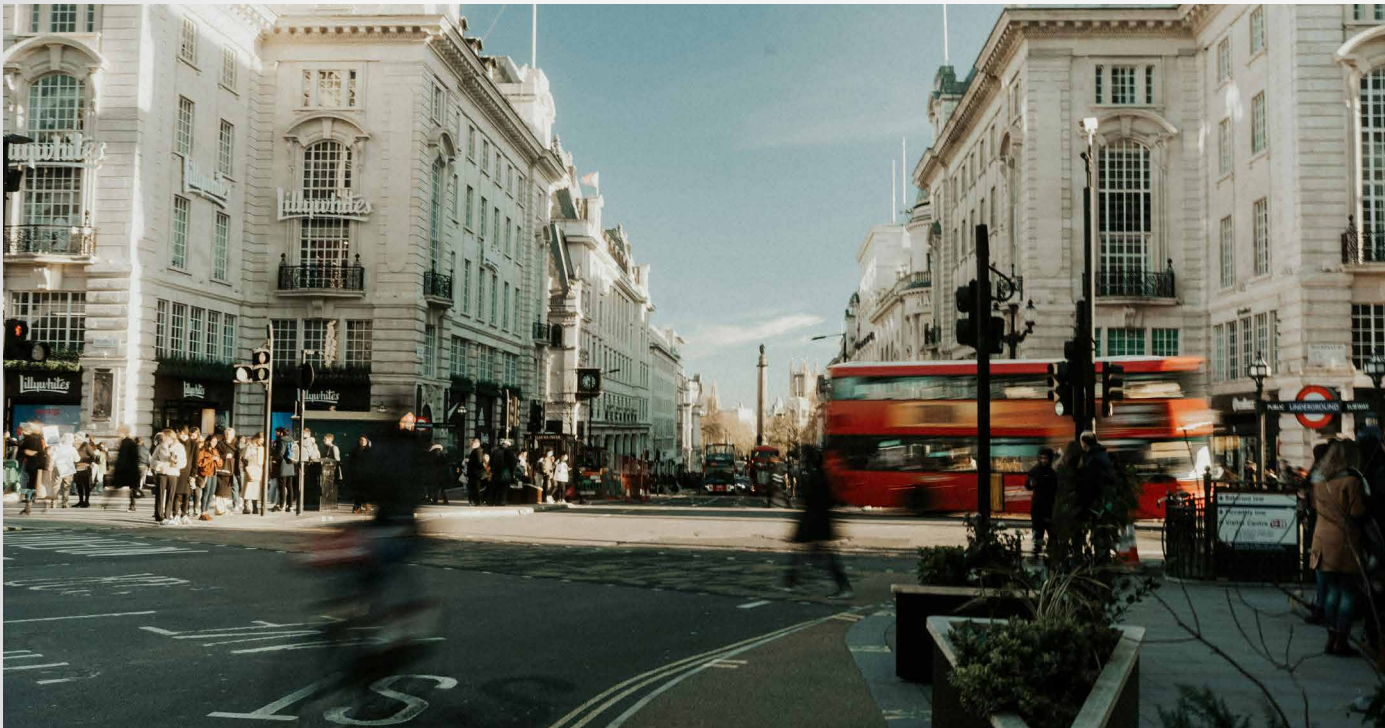
AGE



EMPLOYMENT STATUS



The full survey results are available on request. Please contact pressoffice@londonsquare.co.uk





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