betterhomes

Future*living*

Report 2026



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Foreword

Residents are taking a more measured view of the property market while their commitment to Dubai has deepened.

Welcome to the third edition of the Future Living Report, our annual study of how Dubai residents live, rent, buy and invest. This year we surveyed 1,714 residents across June and July 2026.

This year's findings capture a residential market moving into a more measured phase. After several years of strong price and rental growth, expectations have moderated considerably. In 2024, 72% of respondents expected sales prices to rise over the following year. In 2026, that figure stands at 32%. Among tenants, the share expecting a rent increase at renewal has fallen from 77% in 2024 to 34% in 2026.

What is particularly significant, however, is that this shift in outlook has not been matched by the same movement in long-term intent. Homeownership among respondents has increased from 23% in 2024 to 32% in 2026, while 69% now intend to remain in Dubai for at least another ten years. Tenant purchase intent has also remained virtually unchanged at 55%, despite the change in expectations for property prices.

Even among tenants who expect sales prices to fall, 57% intend to buy within the next one to three years, almost identical to the 56% recorded among those who expect prices to rise. The same pattern is visible in rent expectations: purchase intent sits between 54% and 57% among tenants expecting rents to rise, remain unchanged or fall at renewal.

That commitment is not unconditional. A third of respondents have made significant lifestyle adjustments to manage rising costs, and a further 14% have seriously considered relocating. Cost of living is the clearest constraint on long-term residence identified by the survey.

The survey was also conducted following a period of regional disruption, giving us an important reading of how residents responded to a more uncertain environment. 67% came through that period with their confidence in Dubai unchanged or improved: 45% said it had increased and 23% reported no impact. By contrast, 27% became more cautious about their long-term plans, while 6% said they were reconsidering their plans in the region. At the same time, almost a quarter said they had slowed or paused property decisions, reinforcing the distinction between confidence in Dubai and short-term behaviour in the property market.

During the same period, government initiatives continued to widen access to homeownership. 70% of respondents say policies or initiatives influenced their property decisions, while programmes such as Dubai's First-Time Home Buyer Programme continued to bring developers and banks together to support access to the market.

This year's findings also point to a clear information gap in the property journey. Residents are looking for transparent comparisons, stronger market data and advice they can verify independently.

That emphasis on verification also carries into the way residents use technology. 41% have used a general AI assistant during a property search, yet among those who have used a digital tool, 52% say AI is helpful but still cross-check it with a human expert. Technology is becoming part of the search process, but it is complementing rather than replacing trusted human advice.

For betterhomes, Future Living is about understanding not only where the market is today, but how the people living in Dubai expect it to evolve. As the city and its residential market continue to mature, that perspective becomes increasingly important.

I invite you to explore the findings of the Future Living Report 2026 and the trends shaping the next phase of Dubai's residential market.

Richard Waind, CEO, betterhomes



Executive Summary

Across three editions, residents' expectations of Dubai's property market have shifted. Their long-term commitment to the city has remained resilient.

32% expect sale prices to rise.
Down from 72% in 2024

32% own their home.
Up from 23% in 2024 and 28% in 2025

55% of tenants intend to buy within 1-3 years.
Unchanged from 2025

69% intend to stay ten years or more.
Up from 59% in 2025

70% say government policies influenced their property decision.
33% call them a primary reason

67% say confidence held or improved following recent regional developments.
33% became more cautious or reconsidered plans

52% of AI users say it helps but still cross-check with a human expert.
only 4% distrust it

All respondents: 1,714; tenant measures: 1,163; AI findings: 894 respondents who had used at least one AI or digital tool. Tenant purchase intent varies little by market outlook: 57% of those expecting sale prices to fall intend to buy, compared with 56% of those expecting prices to rise. Across rent expectations, purchase intent remains within a similarly narrow range of 54% to 57%. The exception is tenants expecting sale prices to remain unchanged, where purchase intent falls to 47%. Fieldwork ran from 17 June to 19 July 2026. Percentages are rounded to whole numbers.

The 2026 findings point to more cautious market expectations alongside resilient long-term commitment. After several years of strong price and rental growth, and against an uncertain regional and economic backdrop, expectations have cooled. 32% now expect sale prices to rise, down from 72% in 2024, while 34% of tenants expect a rent increase at renewal, down from 77%. Yet purchase intent remains stable at 55%, homeownership has risen to 32% from 23% in 2024, and 69% now intend to stay for ten years or more, up from 59% in 2025.

Cost of living is the clearest pressure on long-term commitment. 47% of respondents have either made significant lifestyle adjustments to manage rising costs or seriously considered relocating from Dubai.

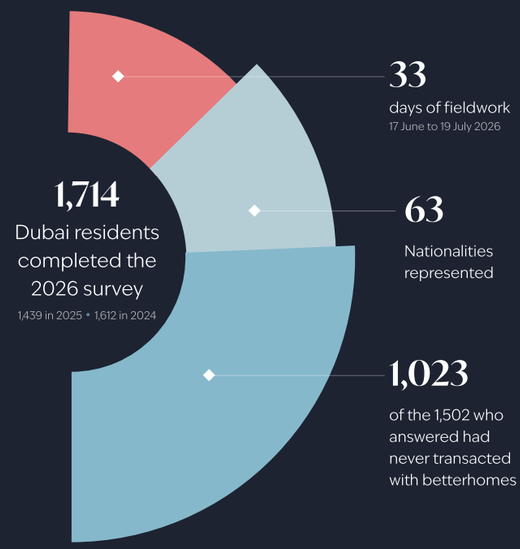
Regional confidence is one of the report's standout findings. 67% said their confidence in Dubai either increased or was unaffected by recent regional developments, while 33% became more cautious or reconsidered their longer-term plans.

Finding	2026	Comparison
Sale price expectations have reversed	32% expect prices to rise	In 2024, 72% expected property prices to rise. By 2026, expectations had shifted significantly, with 53% anticipating a decline, including 27% who expect prices to fall by more than 10%.
Rent expectations have cooled sharply	34% of tenants expect a rent increase	The share expecting an increase has fallen consistently, from 77% in 2024 to 64% in 2025 and 34% in 2026. A further 35% now expect no change and 31% expect a decrease.
Homeownership among respondents has risen across all three editions	32% own their home	Homeownership has increased from 23% in 2024 to 28% in 2025 and 32% in 2026.
Long-term commitment has strengthened	69% intend to stay for 10+ years	This is up from 59% in 2025. Respondents resident in Dubai for more than a decade also increased from 52% in 2025 to 73% in 2026.
Tenant purchase intent remains resilient	55% intend to buy within 1–3 years	Tenant purchase intent remains unchanged from 2025, with little difference between those expecting prices to fall (57%) and those anticipating an increase (56%).
Intending buyers are looking for larger homes	23% want four bedrooms or more	This is up from 15% in 2025. Three-bedroom preference remains strongest at 35%, while two-bedroom preference has fallen.
More residents gained confidence from regional developments than lost it	67% say confidence held or improved	45% said their confidence in Dubai increased and 23% reported no impact, while 27% became more cautious and 6% were reconsidering their long-term plans in the region.
Government policy is influencing property decisions	70% say policies or initiatives influenced their decision	33% describe policy as a primary reason for investing, while 5% were unaware of the relevant initiatives.
AI is becoming part of the search, but human verification remains important	52% of AI users cross-check it with a human expert	Among those who have used an AI or digital tool, 15% rely on AI without cross-checking and only 4% distrust it. Distrust rises to 39% among respondents who have never used a tool.

Every figure is reported with its base at the point of use in the sections that follow. Changes are stated in percentage points, not percentage changes. Respondent percentages are rounded to whole numbers, so a stated change may differ by one point from the difference between two rounded figures.

Survey methodology

Future Living is betterhomes' annual survey of Dubai residents. This is the third edition and the first conducted following a period of regional disruption.



All three editions cover Dubai only, and every figure in this report is drawn from people living in Dubai. The survey was distributed through betterhomes' own channels, and participation was voluntary.

Roughly two thirds of respondents had never transacted with betterhomes. Of the 1,502 who answered the question, 1,023 said they had not previously bought, sold or rented through the brokerage.

That distribution is important when interpreting the findings. This is a self-selected sample of Dubai residents rather than a probability sample of the city, so the results describe the people who responded rather than the population as a whole. Sub-group findings based on small samples are labelled as indicative throughout, and no figure in this report is presented as an estimate of all Dubai residents.

Sample and fieldwork across three editions

Edition	2024	2025	2026
Respondents	1,612	1,439	1,714
Fieldwork window	July – August 2024	July – August 2025	17 June – 19 July 2026

The 2026 survey was conducted approximately six weeks earlier than previous editions. Differences in fieldwork timing may therefore have influenced year-on-year comparisons.

How comparisons are made

Year-on-year comparisons are included only where the data can be compared consistently. Four rules govern every figure in this report.

- Matched bases. Measures are compared only where the respondent universe is equivalent. Where an earlier edition reported a figure on a different base, that year is shown as unavailable rather than compared.
- Consistent question formats. Where a question changed from single selection to multiple selection between editions, percentages are not treated as directly comparable and no percentage trend is claimed. Rank order may be shown where appropriate.
- Comparable answer bands. Where response bands differ between editions, categories are combined only where a defensible comparison can be made, and the regrouping is disclosed.
- Consistent underlying data. Where an earlier published measure cannot be reconciled with its source data, it is excluded from year-on-year comparison.
- Rounding. Combined percentages are calculated from the underlying response counts and rounded once, rather than by adding figures that have already been rounded. Headline respondent percentages are shown as whole numbers, while detailed tables may use one decimal place where greater precision is useful. Market and transaction data drawn from published sources retain the level of precision used by the source.

Question types in this edition

Four question types appear in the 2026 survey and each is interpreted differently. Single-choice questions give percentages that sum to 100. Select-all questions do not, and are reported as the share of respondents choosing each option rather than as a share of selections.

Ranked questions asked respondents to place up to five options in order; these are reported both as the share mentioning an option within their top five and as the share ranking it first, because the two measures can produce materially different results.

Free-number questions covering rent, property value and mortgage instalments were entered directly by respondents. Medians are therefore used rather than means where appropriate, and implausible entries are excluded from the relevant calculations and recorded.

Two free-text questions were coded into themes for the first time in this edition. A single response may be assigned to more than one theme, so percentages may sum to more than 100%.

A note on language

The questionnaire referred throughout to "recent regional developments". It named no events, countries or parties, and this report uses the same terminology. A survey establishes what respondents say, but not necessarily why they say it. Except where respondents were specifically asked to attribute a change or decision themselves, the survey does not establish causation. Where this report offers an explanation or interpretation, it is identified as such.

A note on sources and how figures are attributed

Every external figure in this section comes from the publishing institution's own release, never from press reporting of it. Transaction volumes and values, average prices, enquiry levels and leasing figures are from the betterhomes Dubai residential market reports for Q1 and Q2 2026. Economic output and population figures are from Digital Dubai and the Dubai Data and Statistics Establishment; passenger figures from Dubai Airports; index movements from the ValuStrat Price Index; and completed-project and policy figures from the Dubai Land Department.

Market statistics are included as context only. They are not survey findings and are not used to establish why respondents answered as they did unless explicitly stated.

Economic and market context

This section provides the economic and residential market context in which the 2026 survey was conducted. All external figures are drawn from published official data or independent market indices and are presented separately from the survey findings.

AED 232 bn

Dubai GDP, Q1 2026
Up 2.4% from Q1 2025

4.78 M

Dubai population YTD
Up 4.4% from 4.58m at the end of 2025

AED 84 bn

residential sales transaction value, Q2 2026
across 34,850 transactions

5 M

monthly air passengers, June 2026
Up from 2.5M in March 2026

Sources: Digital Dubai and the Dubai Data and Statistics Establishment; betterhomes Dubai residential market report; Dubai Airports. Market statistics are context only. They are not survey findings.

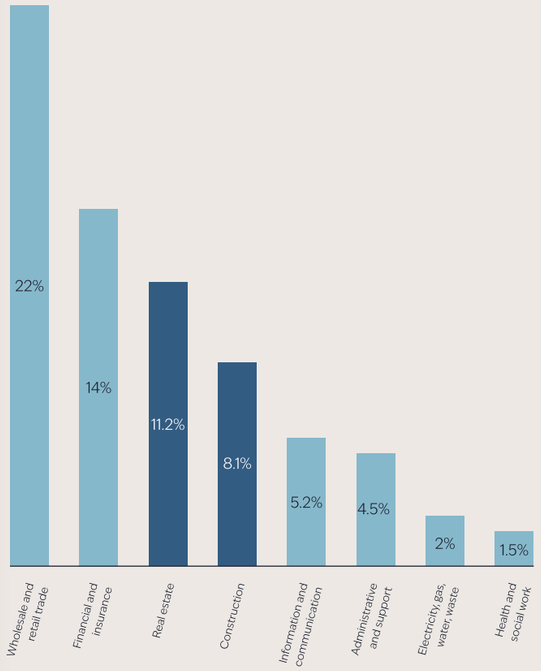
Dubai entered 2026 following three consecutive years of residential price growth. Regional disruption emerged in March and eased by mid-June. Survey fieldwork ran from 17 June to 19 July, placing it at a point when published indicators had begun to recover. The following pages set out the economic, population, property-market and policy context in which respondents were answering.

Dubai's economy and real estate's role within it

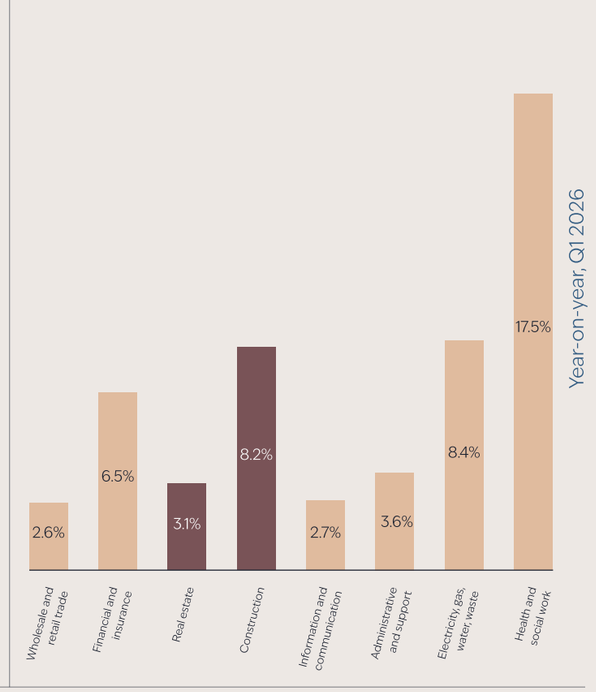
Dubai's economy grew 2.4% from Q1 2025, led by trade and supported by real estate and construction

Dubai's gross domestic product reached AED 232bn (USD 63.2bn) in the first quarter of 2026, representing real growth of 2.4% year-on-year. Wholesale and retail trade remained the largest sector, accounting for 22.0% of output, followed by financial and insurance services at 14.0%. Real estate accounted for 11.2% and construction a further 8.1%.

Share of Dubai GDP



Sector growth



Real estate and construction shown in the darker tone: 19.3% of output between them. Dubai GDP by sector, first quarter of 2026.
Source: Digital Dubai and the Dubai Data and Statistics Establishment, 8 July 2026.

Together, real estate and construction account for just under a fifth of Dubai's economy. Property is therefore an important contributor to economic activity, but it sits within a considerably broader economic base. Construction also recorded growth of 8.2% year-on-year during the quarter, indicating that development activity continued despite slower headline economic growth.

Population growth continued through the 2026 disruption

Dubai's population reached 4.78 million, up 4.4% from the end of 2025.

4.78 M
residents on 8 September 2026
growth of approximately about 4.4% in eight months

4.580 M
residents at the end of 2025
up approximately 332,000 in the year, growth of 7.5%

Population growth remained strong in 2026. By 8 September, Dubai's resident population had increased by approximately 200,000 from the end of 2025, a rise of about 4.4%. Growth therefore continued through a period of significant regional disruption, although at a slower pace than the exceptional rate recorded in 2025.

Dubai added approximately 332,000 residents during 2025, representing annual growth of 7.5%. Its average daytime population was considerably higher at 6.392 million, reflecting the additional people present in the emirate each day for work, tourism, business and leisure.

The 4.78 million figure is the Dubai Statistics Center Population Clock at data.dubai, as read on 8 September 2026. The Clock is a continuously updated dashboard rather than a dated release, so the figure is stated with its reading date and will move. Population figures for the close of 2025 are from Digital Dubai and the Dubai Data and Statistics Establishment, published 30 July 2026.



Air traffic recovered during Q2 despite regional disruption

Passenger numbers doubled between March and June 2026, from 2.5 million to 5 million

2.5 M
passengers in March 2026, the low point
down 65.7% on March 2025

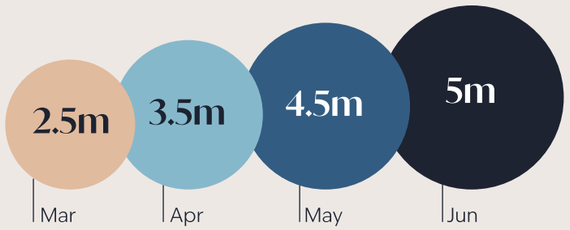
5 M
passengers in June 2026
double the March 2026 figure

31.5 M
passengers in H1 2026
down 31.3% on H1 2025

220
ValuStrat Price Index at end June 2026
broadly level on end June 2025

Air traffic recovered through Q2

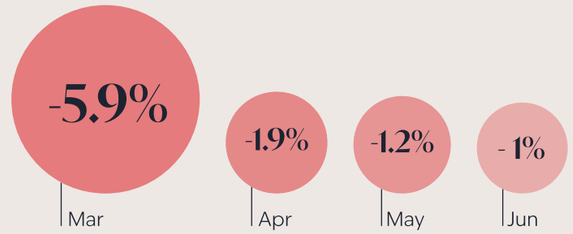
Dubai International, monthly passengers, millions



March passenger traffic was 65.7% below a year earlier. By June, monthly passenger numbers had doubled from the March low.

Monthly price declines narrowed after March

ValuStrat Price Index, month-on-month change



The monthly decline narrowed from 5.9% in March to 1.0% in June. The index ended the half at 220 points, broadly level with June 2025.

Air traffic provides one of the clearest published measures of the disruption. Dubai International carried 18.6 million passengers in Q1 2026, down 20.6% from Q1 2025. March was particularly affected, with passenger numbers falling 65.7% year on year to 2.5 million as regional airspace restrictions took effect. Across the first half of 2026, Dubai International handled 31.5 million passengers, down 31.3% from H1 2025, while aircraft movements fell 32.1% and cargo volumes 28.7%.

The recovery through Q2 was clear. Monthly passenger traffic rose from 3.5 million in April to 4.5 million in May and 5.0 million in June, meaning June traffic was twice the March level.

Residential prices also moderated after March. The ValuStrat Price Index fell 5.9% in March, followed by declines of 1.9% in April, 1.2% in May and 1.0% in June. The index ended June at 220 points, broadly level with June 2025, with the monthly decline narrowing in each of the three months after March.

Survey fieldwork ran from 17 June to 19 July 2026, when the recovery was visible but its durability was not yet established. The confidence and commitment findings should therefore be read in that context: respondents were answering while the disruption was still recent and the longer-term outcome remained uncertain.

Dubai residential market, Q2 2026

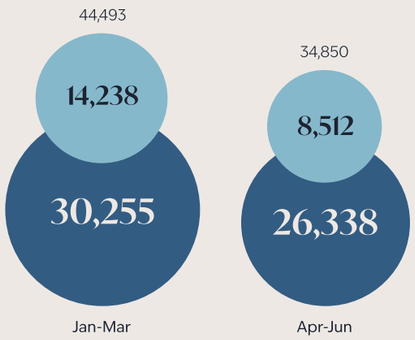
Q2 2026 reset from Q1 highs, with activity recovering in June

Q2 recorded 34,850 transactions worth AED 84.9bn. May marked the low point of the quarter before activity rebounded in June, while off-plan's share of transactions rose to 76%.

Transactions

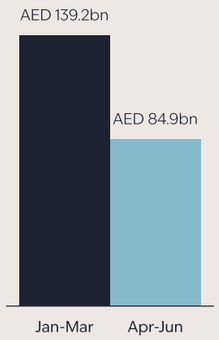
Off-plan Secondary

-22% quarter on quarter



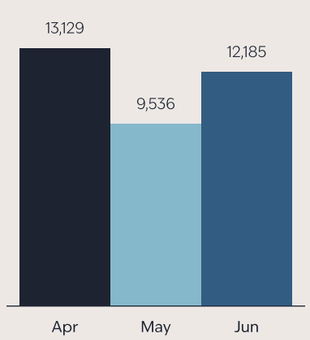
Transaction value

-38% quarter on quarter



Month by month

June rebounded 28% on May



Measure	Jan–Mar 2026	Apr–Jun 2026	Change
Total transactions	44,493	34,850	−22%
— off-plan	30,255	26,338	−12%
— secondary	14,238	8,512	−41%
Off-plan share of activity	68%	76%	+8 pp
Total transaction value	AED 139.2bn	AED 84.9bn	−38%
Average apartment price	AED 2.01m	AED 1.79m	−11%
Average townhouse price	AED 4.19m	AED 3.65m	−13%
Average villa price	AED 12.23m	AED 13.77m	+13%
Sales above AED 15m	1,214	578	−52%
Buyer enquiries, year on year	−18%	−33%	weakened
Tenant enquiries, year on year	+7%	+20%	strengthened

Source: betterhomes Dubai residential market reports for January to March and April to June 2026. The off-plan and secondary splits for January to March are derived from the published 68% off-plan share; every other figure is as published.

Transactions between April and June totalled 34,850, down 31% year on year and 22% from Q1 2026, while transaction value fell 45% year on year to AED 84.9 billion. Even so, Q2 2026 remained the third-highest second quarter on record, behind only 2024 and 2025, indicating that activity remained historically elevated despite moving away from the exceptional levels of the previous two years.

The composition of activity shifted towards off-plan. Off-plan transactions declined 12% year on year, while secondary transactions fell 41% from Q1 and 59% year on year. As a result, off-plan's share of transactions increased from 68% in Q1 to 76% in Q2. The sharper contraction in secondary activity also helps explain why transaction value fell more heavily than transaction volume.

Prices were comparatively more resilient. The average residential sale price fell 5.9% from Q1 but remained 3.2% above Q2 2025. The market report attributes the quarterly decline primarily to a change in the mix of properties transacted rather than a broad weakening in values, while price per square foot continued to rise year on year across most tracked communities. By property type, average apartment prices fell 11% quarter on quarter and townhouse prices 13%, while the average villa price rose 13%.

This contrasts with the survey finding in Section 4.7, where the share of resident owners preferring off-plan for their next purchase fell from 46% in 2025 to 27% in 2026. The two measures cover different populations: market data captures all buyers, including investors and purchasers based outside the UAE, while the survey records the stated preferences of 551 resident owners. During Q2, this change in stated preference was not yet visible in the overall transaction mix, with off-plan still accounting for 76% of activity.



June marked a 28% rebound in transactions as confidence remained resilient

Monthly registered transactions fell from 13,129 in April to 9,536 in May, before rising 28% to 12,185 in June. Activity had not yet returned to April levels, but June marked a clear change in direction, in the same month that survey fieldwork began.

Registered transactions can lag changes in market activity because sales are recorded when they are registered rather than when terms are first agreed. betterhomes' own data pointed to an earlier improvement, new secondary-market sales agreed in June recovered to 96% of their June 2025 level.

The leasing market was also active. June 2026 recorded more than 40,000 new and renewed tenancy contracts, the highest monthly total recorded in Dubai.

Respondents answered between 17 June and 19 July, as activity was beginning to improve following the May slowdown. The findings show a similar distinction between confidence and behaviour, 67% said their confidence in Dubai had either held or increased, while around a third had slowed or were reassessing a property decision.

Leasing activity and contract cancellations

Rental cancellations fell 25% in Q1 2026 as renewals outnumbered new contracts

118,385

new rental contracts, Q1 2026

135,607

renewals, Q1 2026
AED 32.2bn combined contract value



rental contract cancellations,
Compared with Q1 2025

Dubai's rental market remained highly active in Q1 2026, with 118,385 new contracts and 135,607 renewals recorded during the quarter. Rental contract cancellations were 25% lower than in Q1 2025. Together, the figures point to fewer contract terminations and a high level of renewal activity.

This is consistent with the survey finding in section 2.4, where the share of tenants saying they would move if their rent increased fell from 69% in 2025 to 59% in 2026.

betterhomes Dubai residential market report, January to March 2026

Policy and access to homeownership

Access to homeownership widened in 2026, while 70% say policy influenced their property decisions

21

developers participating in the First-Time Home Buyer Programme

5

banks participating

AED 5 m

property value ceiling for eligibility



say policies or initiatives influenced their property decision
33% call policy a primary reason for investing

Government policy continued to broaden access to homeownership during a period of regional uncertainty. The Dubai Land Department introduced measures aimed at first-time resident buyers, while the survey shows that policy was relevant to respondents' decisions. 70% say government policies or initiatives influenced their property decision, including 33% who describe policy as a primary influence.

The Dubai Land Department's First-Time Home Buyer Programme gives eligible residents who do not already own a freehold property in Dubai access to benefits including priority access to new launches, preferential pricing on off-plan units, improved mortgage terms and the ability to pay registration fees by card. The programme applies to properties valued below AED 5 million, with 21 developers and five banks participating.

The measures are designed to reduce some of the financial and administrative barriers to first-time ownership. That direction is relevant to the survey findings. Homeownership among respondents has risen across all three editions, from 23% in 2024 to 28% in 2025 and 32% in 2026. Mortgaged owners also account for a slightly larger share of the owner base in 2026, at 51%, compared with 46% in 2025, while 67% of tenants intending to buy plan to use a mortgage.

q59, all respondents. 37% say policy influenced their decision somewhat and 33% significantly, giving the combined 70% figure. 25% were neutral and 5% were unaware of the relevant initiatives. The Dubai Land Department does not publish a cumulative buyer or sales total for the First-Time Home Buyer Programme, so none is included here.

01

Respondent profile



1,714 Dubai residents completed the survey

1,439 in 2025
1,612 in 2024

32% own their home.

23% in 2024
28% in 2025

73% have lived in Dubai over ten years

52% in 2025

69% intend to stay ten years or more.

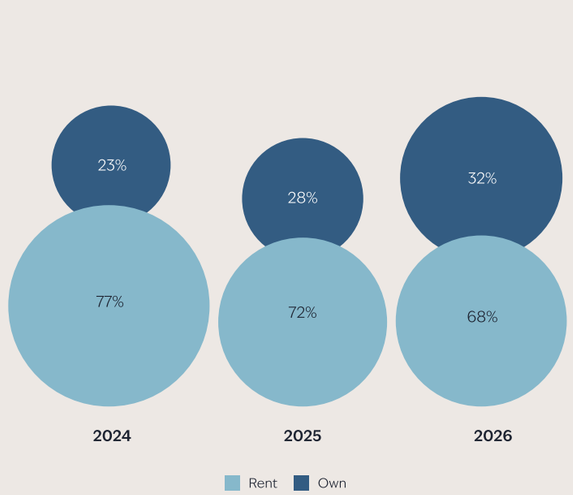
59% in 2025

The 2026 sample includes a higher share of homeowners and long-term residents than either previous edition, with stronger stated intentions to remain in Dubai. These shifts in the respondent profile should be considered when comparing results across editions.

Key takeaways

- Homeowners account for 32% of the 2026 sample, up from 28% in 2025 and 23% in 2024. Among homeowners, 51% now have a mortgage, making mortgaged ownership the majority for the first time across the three editions.
- The share of respondents who have lived in Dubai for more than ten years rose from 52% in 2025 to 73% in 2026, one of the largest shifts in the respondent profile across the three editions.
- 69% intend to remain in Dubai for at least another ten years, up from 59% in 2025. Part of this increase may reflect the larger share of long-term residents in the 2026 sample.
- The British share of the sample declined from 12% in 2025 to 8% in 2026. This matters when comparing results across editions because British respondents show a different pattern from the overall sample on several measures.
- The 2026 sample is 67% male, 80% married, 59% living with a partner and children and 60% employed in the private sector.

Housing tenure



Length of residence and intended stay

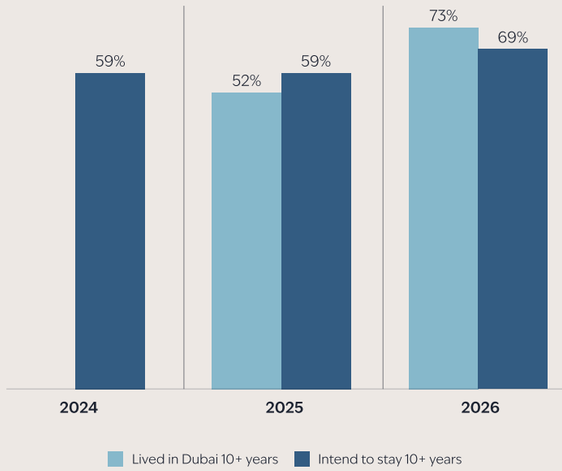


Figure 1.1 Ownership rose in every edition, from 23% to 32%, while long-term residents grew from 52% to 73% of the sample. The 2024 edition measured residence tenure at a five-year threshold rather than ten, reporting that 72% had lived in Dubai over five years. On the same basis, at least 85% of 2026 respondents had. No ten-year figure is available for 2024.

1.1 | Renting and owning across three editions

Ownership has risen in every edition, from 23% in 2024 to 32% in 2026

Within the owner group the balance has shifted towards mortgaged ownership for the first time, from a majority owning outright to a slight majority using finance. It is consistent with the rise in intended mortgage use among prospective buyers reported in Section 3.0.

Measure	2024	2025	2026	Change
Tenants (share of sample)	77%	72%	68%	-4 pp
Owners (share of sample)	23%	28%	32%	+4 pp
Long-term rental (share of tenants)	79%	71%	81%	+10 pp
Owned outright (share of owners)	53%	54%	49%	-5pp
Owned with a mortgage (share of owners)	47%	46%	51%	+5 pp

Base: all respondents in each edition. 2026 owner count 551, tenant count 1,163.

1.2 | Top respondent nationalities and how the sample changed

Indian respondents made up a larger share of the 2026 sample, while the British share fell by a third

Share of respondents by nationality, top ten

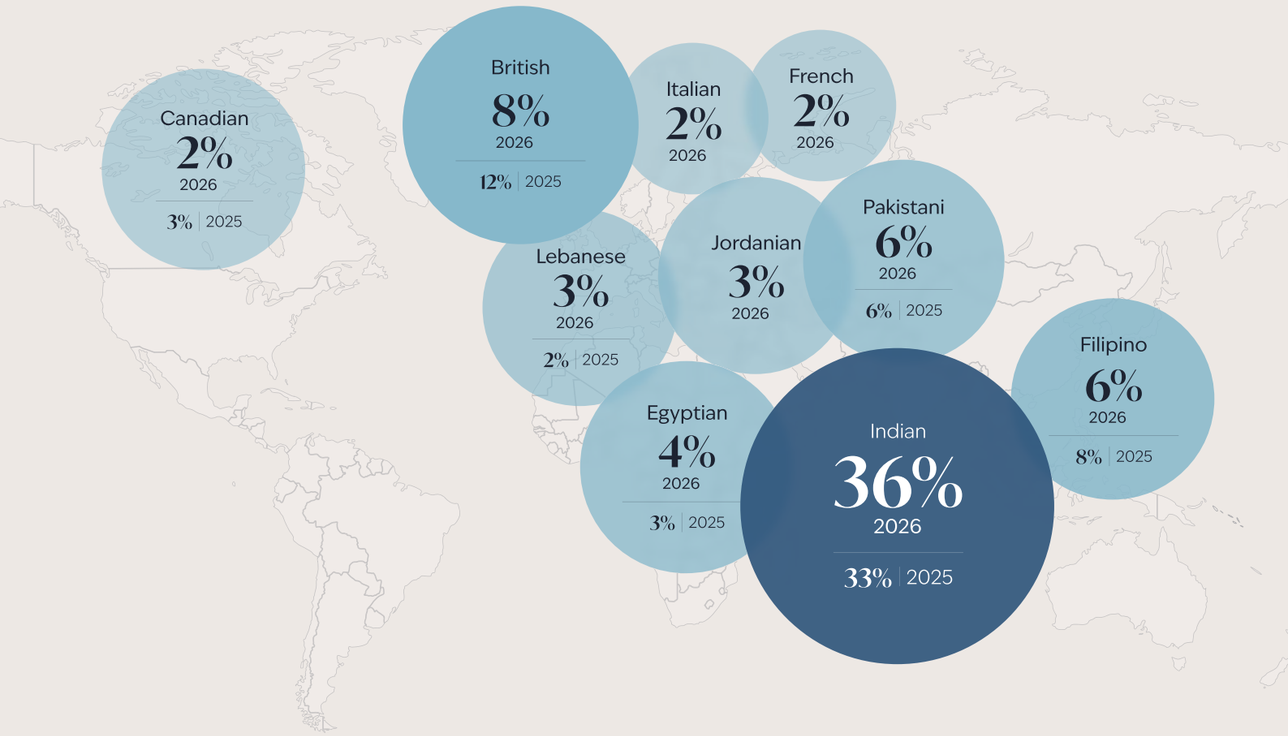


Figure 1.2 The ten most represented nationalities. The British share fell by roughly a third, from 12% to 8%, while the Indian share rose to 36%. q3, all respondents. The 2024 edition published no nationality breakdown. Dubai respondents represented 63 nationalities in 2026. The method used to count nationalities in earlier editions is not documented, so the total number of nationalities is not compared across years.

Figure 1.3 British and Indian respondents show contrasting patterns of long-term commitment and investment behaviour

British and Indian respondents show contrasting patterns of long-term commitment and investment behaviour

Measure	British	Indian	All respondents
Intend to remain ten years or more	44%	80%	69%
Considering or planning property abroad	60%	39%	47%
Confidence rose after regional developments	19%	48%	45%
Policy was a primary reason for investing	20%	42%	33%
Own their home	39%	32%	32%

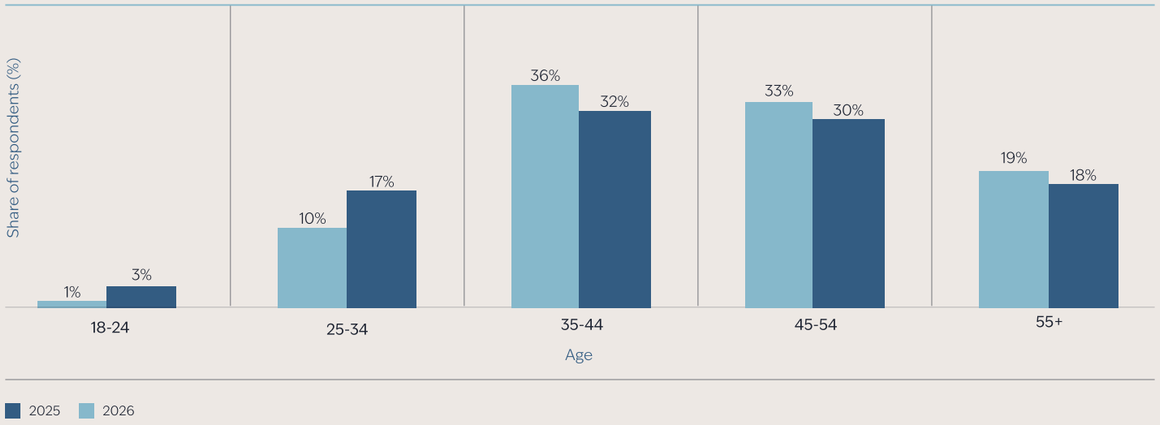
The British respondent sample was smaller than the Indian sample, so findings for British respondents should be treated as directional.

These differences should not be attributed to nationality alone. The British base is smaller, and other factors such as age, household profile, homeownership and length of residence may also contribute to the pattern.

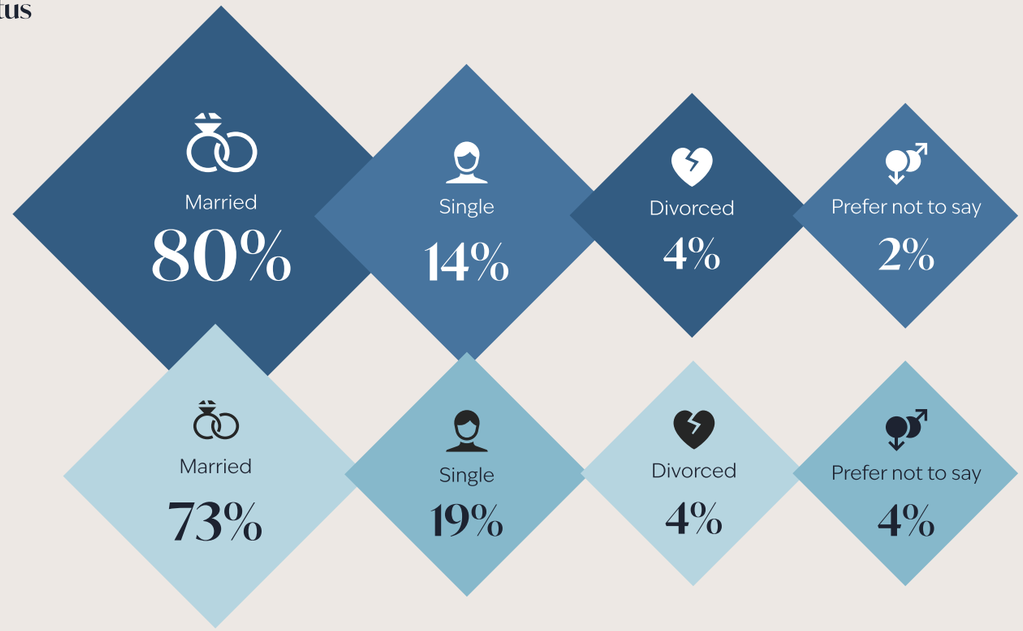
The changing nationality mix is relevant when interpreting the rise in long-term commitment across editions. Groups representing a larger share of the 2026 sample, including Indian and Pakistani respondents, report higher intentions to remain in Dubai for ten years or more than British respondents.

1.3 | Age, marital status and household composition

The 2026 respondent profile has shifted towards older, more established households



Marital status



Compared with 2025, the 2026 sample contains fewer younger adults and a greater concentration of respondents in their main family-forming years. At the same time, married respondents and households with children make up a larger share of the sample.

These characteristics also overlap with length of residence. Respondents who have lived in Dubai for longer are more likely to be married and living with children than more recent arrivals. The result is a 2026 respondent base that is not simply older, but more established in Dubai and more likely to be making housing decisions around family and long-term residence.

Household composition

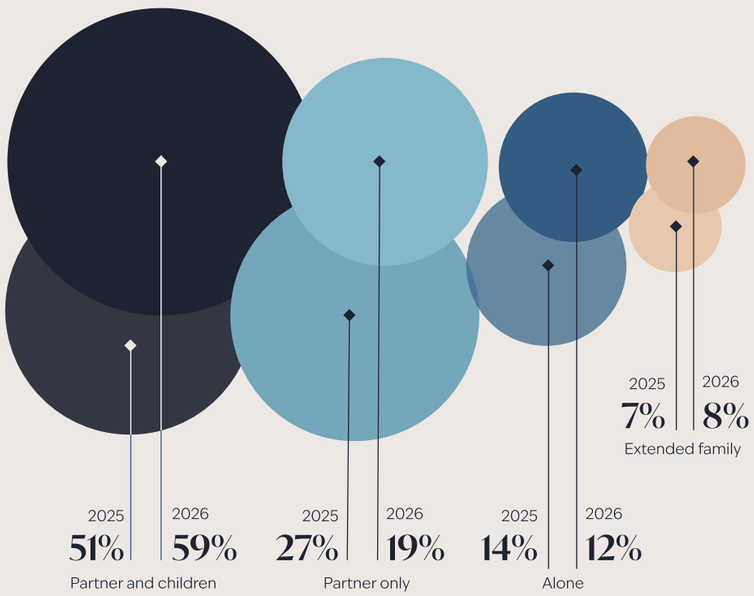


Figure 1.4 | Age, marital status and household composition, 2026. The share of respondents aged 25–34 fell from 17% in 2025 to 10% in 2026, while the 35–44 and 45–54 groups both increased. Q2, Q4 and Q5, all respondents, single choice. The 35–44 and 45–54 age bands are directly comparable with 2025. Estimated mean age in 2026: 46, calculated from grouped age bands using the midpoint method.

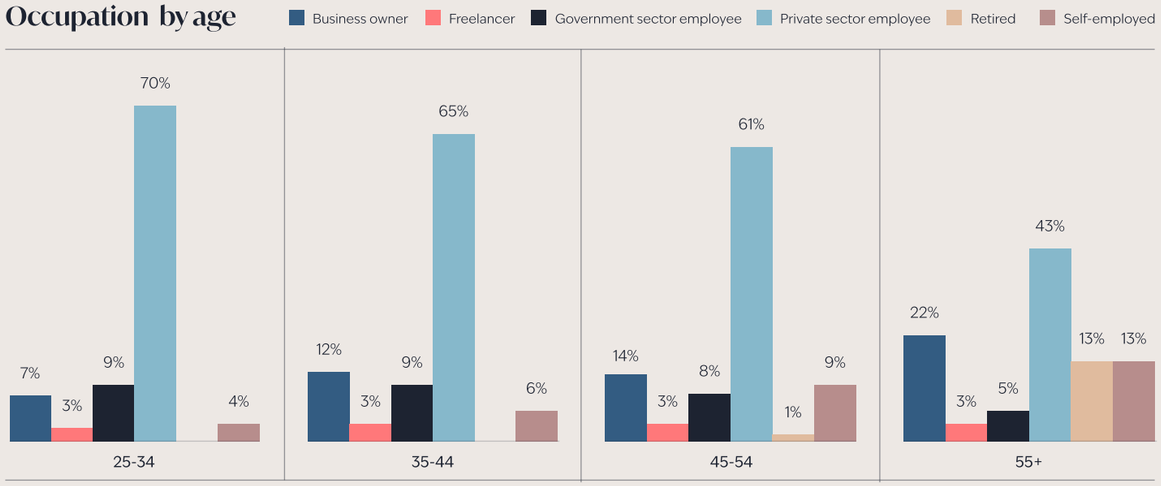
1.4 | Occupation, earners and household income

Private-sector employment falls from 70% to 43% with age, while business-ownership rises from 7% to 22%

The occupational profile changes noticeably across age groups. Younger respondents are much more concentrated in private-sector employment, while older respondents are increasingly represented among business owners and the self-employed. This suggests a gradual shift from salaried employment towards greater economic independence later in working life.

Figure 1.5 Self-employment also rises with age, from 4% to 13%, while government employment falls from 9% to 5%.
Q6 with Q2, all respondents, single choice. The 18–24 group is not shown because too few respondents fell into it. Unemployed, student and other responses are also excluded from the chart and account for between 3% and 6% of each age group. In 2025, private-sector employment across the four age groups shown was 75%, 73%, 63% and 38%, while business ownership was 8%, 9%, 15% and 23%.

Occupation by age



% represents respondents within each age group, 2026

Households with three or more earners rose from 17% to 20% in 2026

The change is modest but consistent, every category with three or more earners increased. That points to a slightly broader household income base in 2026, which is relevant when interpreting affordability and purchasing power later in the report.

Q7, all respondents, single choice. 2025 shares: 39%, 44%, 8%, 6% and 3%. 2026 shares are rounded and sum to 101%.

Earning members per household

Share of all respondents, 2025 and 2026

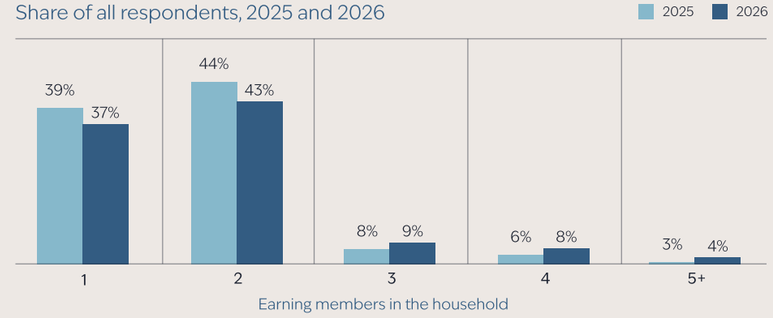
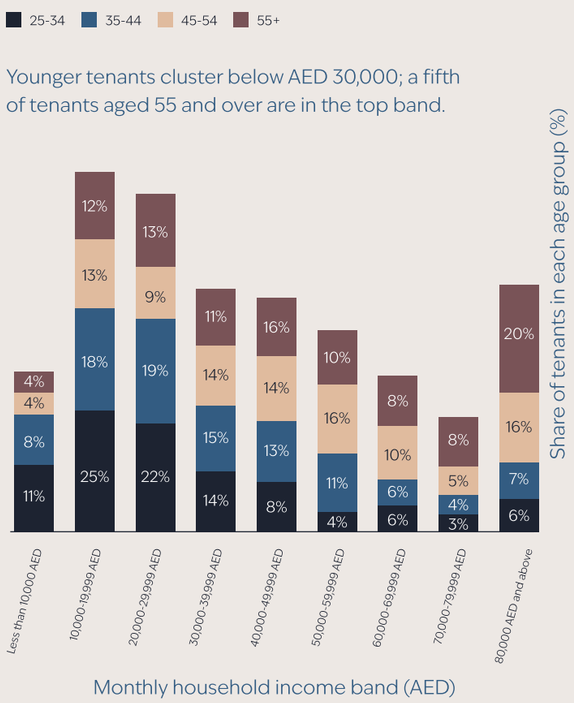


Figure 1.6 Households with three or more earners rose from 17% in 2025 to 20%.

Monthly household income

27% of owners report household income of AED 80,000 or more, compared with 11% of tenants

Household income distribution among tenants, by age



Homeowners monthly household income compared to age group

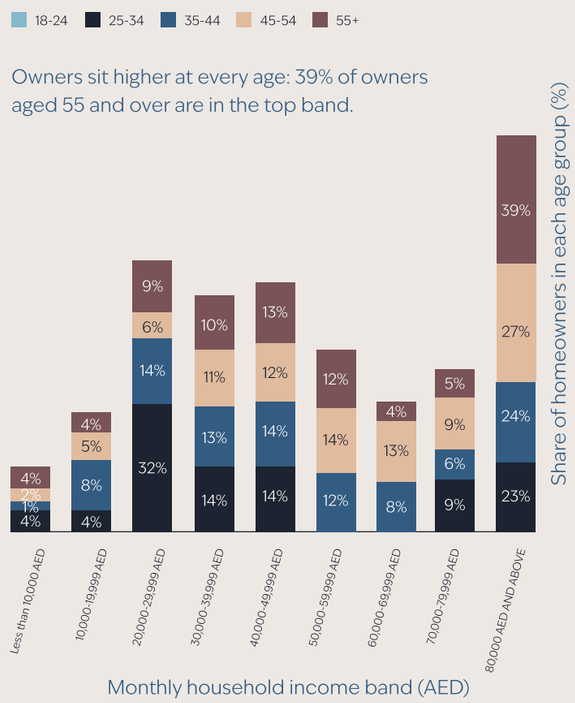


Figure 1.7 Owners out-earn tenants in every age group shown, and the gap is widest at 55 and over.

Across the full sample, 16% report monthly household income of AED 80,000 or more, while the median among those who provided an income falls in the AED 40,000–50,000 band.

Owners report higher household incomes than tenants across every age group shown, with the gap widening among older respondents. This suggests that tenure and income become more closely aligned later in life, although the survey cannot establish whether income, age, length of residence or other factors are driving the difference.

Income also rises with age within both tenure groups, particularly among tenants, where lower-income households become progressively less common across the older age bands

The 2025 edition reported average household income by tenure. A direct comparison is not possible in 2026 because income is now collected in bands and the highest category is open-ended.

Q8 analysed by age (Q2) and tenure (Q11). Median income is based on respondents who provided an income. Percentages sum to 100% within each age and tenure group, so they should be read within each group rather than across the full sample.

1.5 | Length of residence and intended stay

73% have lived in Dubai for more than a decade, up from 52% in 2025

Residents currently based in Dubai

Long-term residence is now the norm

73% of respondents have lived in Dubai for more than ten years

from 52% in 2025

Plan to live in Dubai

Intended stay is the highest of the three editions



of respondents plan to stay in Dubai for ten years or more

from 59% in 2025

Residence of ten years or more, by tenure, 2026

Tenants **71%**

Owners **77%**

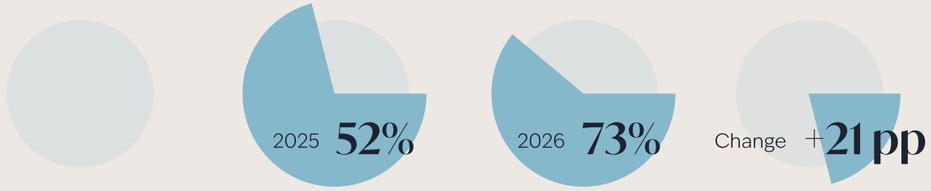
Intended stay of ten years or more, by tenure, 2026

Tenants **67%**

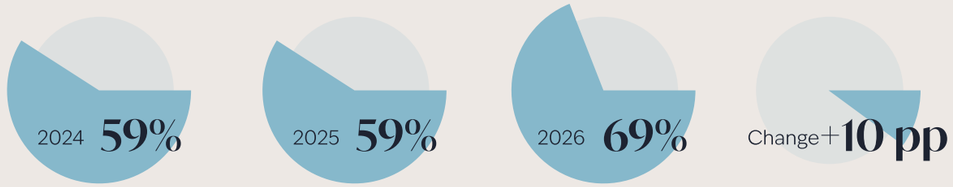
Owners **73%**

Figure 1.8 73% have lived in Dubai more than ten years and 69% intend to stay another decade; owners commit for longer than tenants on both measures.

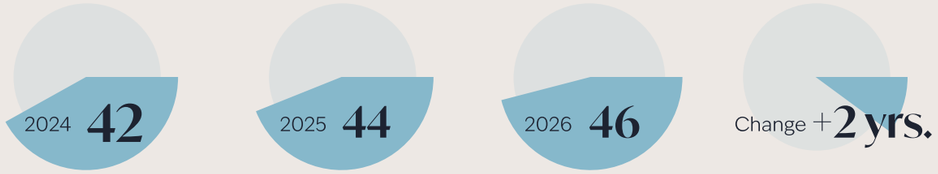
Have lived in Dubai more than ten years
Measure



Intend to remain ten years or more
Measure



Average respondent age
Measure



The 2024 edition measured length of residence using a five-year threshold rather than ten years, so no directly comparable ten-year figure is available. Its intended-stay figure is derived from the two figures published in the 2024 report. Average age for 2026 is estimated from grouped age bands using the midpoint method, which reproduces the mean published in the 2025 report.

The increase in long-term residents is one of the clearest differences between the 2025 and 2026 samples. The respondent base has also become older across editions, suggesting that part of the change reflects who responded to the survey, rather than the same group simply ageing over time.

Tenure shows a much smaller divide. Owners are more established and more likely to intend to stay long term than tenants, but the gap is only six percentage points on both measures. Length of residence therefore appears to distinguish long-term commitment more strongly than tenure alone.

Age adds another dimension. Respondents aged 55 and over are the only age group whose intention to remain in Dubai for another decade falls below the overall sample. This remains true even among those who have already lived in Dubai for more than ten years, suggesting that intended stay does not simply continue to rise with age.

Average length of residence is not reported for 2026 because the highest response category is “more than ten years”. With 73% of respondents in this category, calculating a mean would require assumptions about their actual length of residence beyond what the survey measured.

1.6 | How the changing respondent profile may explain part of the rise in commitment

Intended stay rises from 24% among the newest residents to 75% among the longest-standing

In 2025, 52% of respondents had lived in Dubai for more than ten years. In 2026, that share rose to 73%, a 21 percentage-point increase. This difference needs to be considered when interpreting changes in long-term commitment.

The longer people have been here, the longer they plan to stay

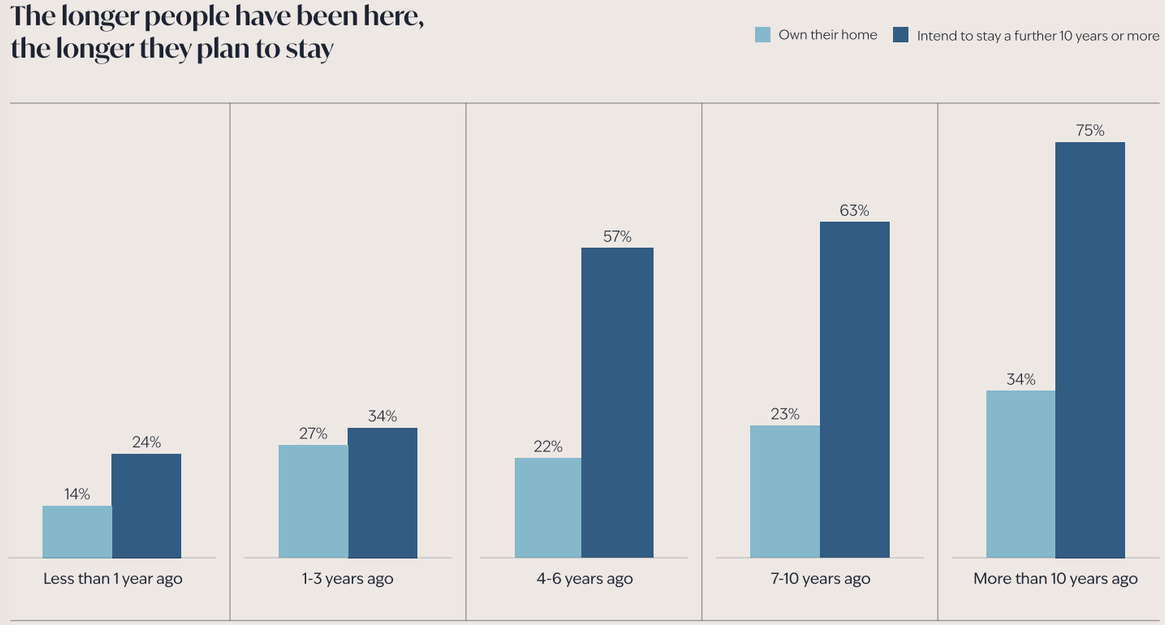


Figure 1.9 Ownership follows the same path, rising from 14% of the newest residents to 34% of the longest-standing.

This matters because the 2026 sample contains a much larger share of the respondents who are already most likely to report long-term commitment. Among the respondents currently living in Dubai, 75% of those residing for more than ten years intend to stay another decade, compared with 55% of those who have lived in Dubai for ten years or less.

1.7 | Cost of living as the constraint on commitment

47% report cost pressure, and 61% of those who considered leaving still intend to stay

Cost of living and intended stay, 2026

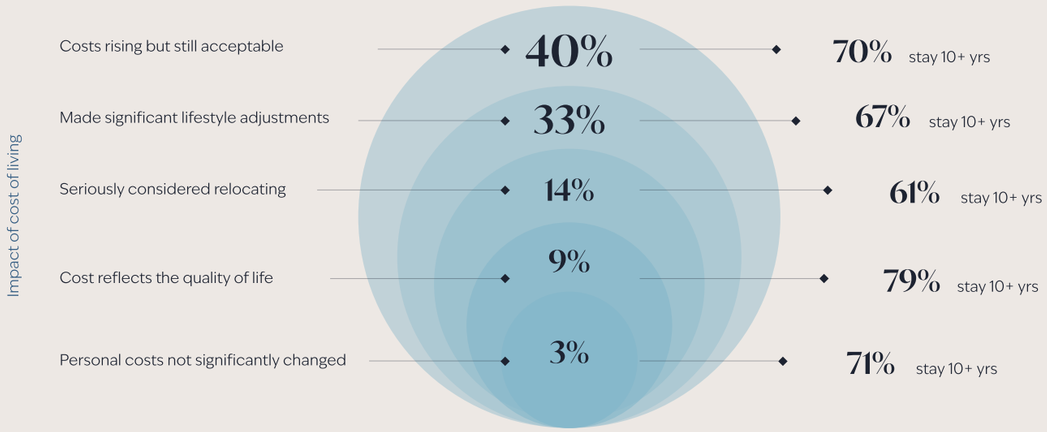


Figure 1.10 Intended stay reaches 79% among respondents who feel the cost of living is matched by the quality of life.

A third of respondents say they have made significant lifestyle adjustments in response to rising costs, while a further 14% have seriously considered relocating. Together, these groups account for 47% of respondents and show that cost pressures remain significant even as long-term commitment to Dubai has strengthened.

The relationship with intended stay is clear. Among respondents who have seriously considered relocating, 61% still intend to remain in Dubai for at least another ten years. That rises to 79% among those who say the cost of living reflects the quality of life they receive.

The 18 percentage-point gap between these groups suggests that cost of living is closely associated with long-term intentions. It is the clearest constraint on commitment identified by the survey, although the data does not establish that cost pressures alone determine whether residents stay or leave.

1.8 | What would make residents stay in Dubai longer

Career and income lead at 28%, followed by safety at 18% and residency status at 16%

Respondents who intend to stay in Dubai for less than three years were asked, in their own words, what might encourage them to stay longer.

What would make you stay in Dubai longer?

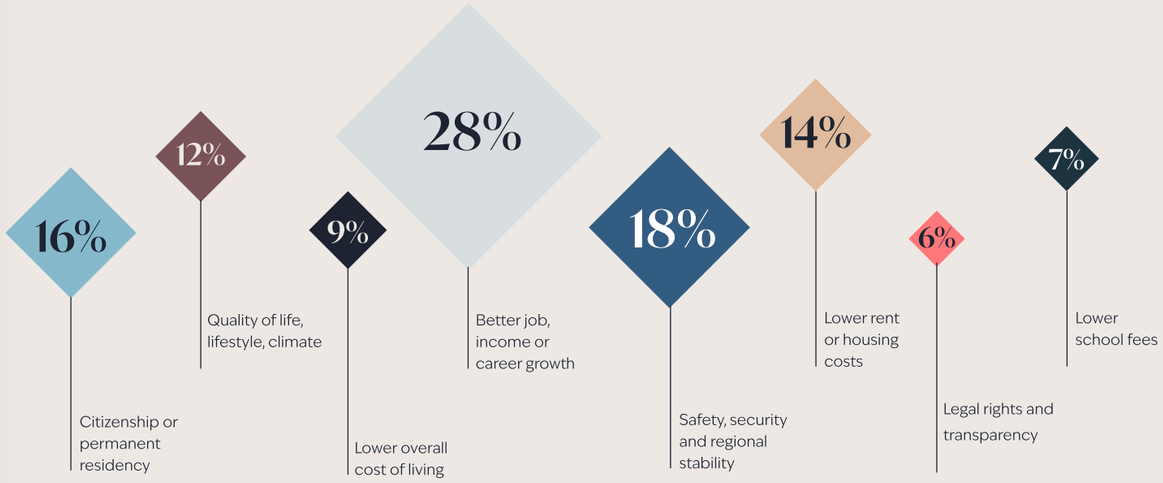


Figure 1.11 Lower rent or housing costs follow at 14%, ahead of quality of life at 12% and the wider cost of living at 9%. Responses to an optional free-text question, grouped into themes.

Career and income factors were mentioned most often, with 28% citing a better job, higher income or career progression. Safety, security and regional stability followed at 18%, while 16% mentioned citizenship or permanent residency. Lower rent or housing costs were cited by 14%, followed by quality of life, lifestyle or climate at 12% and lower overall cost of living at 9%.

The prominence of safety, security and regional stability at 18% is notable because the question did not mention regional developments or specific events. Elsewhere in the survey, 45% of the full sample said recent regional developments had increased their confidence in Dubai.

Citizenship or permanent residency sits alongside the wider finding that 70% of respondents said government policies or initiatives had influenced their property decisions, although the two questions measure different things.

1.9 | Why residents chose their current accommodation

Location leads at 83%, ahead of community and affordability

Location is the clear first consideration when residents choose where to live, standing 25 percentage points ahead of community. Beyond location, however, priorities are much more evenly spread across community, affordability, amenities and safety. This suggests that housing decisions are shaped by a combination of value and quality of life rather than price alone. Flexible payment terms rank lowest, indicating that the characteristics of the home and its surroundings matter more than payment structure for most respondents.

Why did you choose your current accommodation?

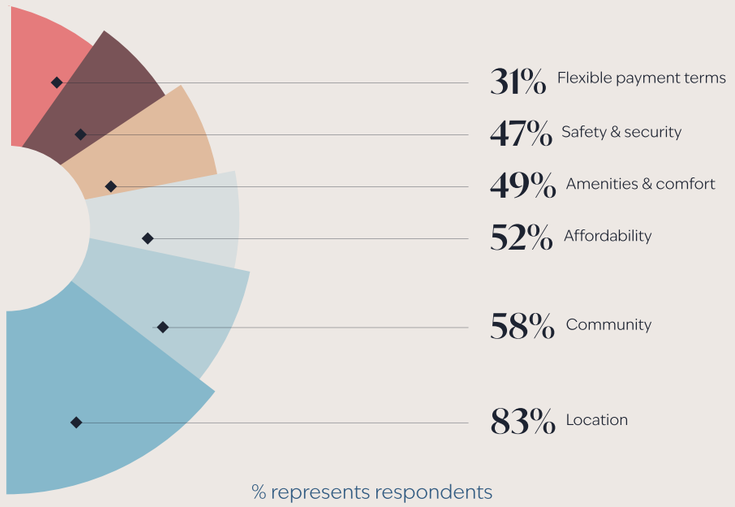


Figure 1.12 | Location stands apart as the most widely selected reason for choosing a home, while community, affordability, amenities and safety form a more closely grouped set of priorities. Q12, all respondents, multi-select.

1.10 | Commute tolerance and the effect of remote work

32% would commute 30 minutes or more, up from 21% in 2024

Willingness to travel from home to work

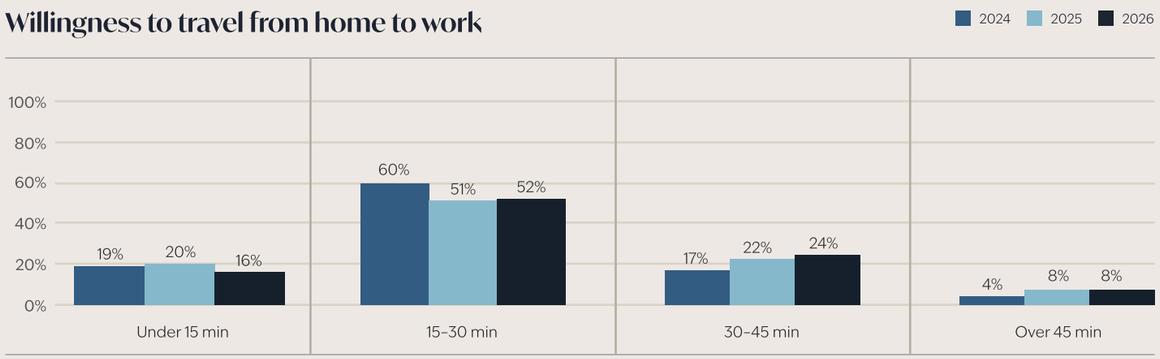


Figure 1.13 8% would travel more than 45 minutes, double the 4% recorded in 2024.

The 15–30 minute commute remains the most common preference, selected by 52% of commuters in 2026, compared with 51% in 2025 and 60% in 2024. At the same time, willingness to travel further has increased. 24% would accept a 30–45 minute commute and 8% more than 45 minutes, taking the share willing to travel at least 30 minutes to 32%, up from 30% in 2025 and 21% in 2024. The share preferring a commute of under 15 minutes fell from 20% in 2025 to 16% in 2026, compared with 19% in 2024.

The 2026 commute distribution is calculated on respondents who travel from home for work, excluding the 7% who work from home. This matches the basis used in the 2024 and 2025 editions.

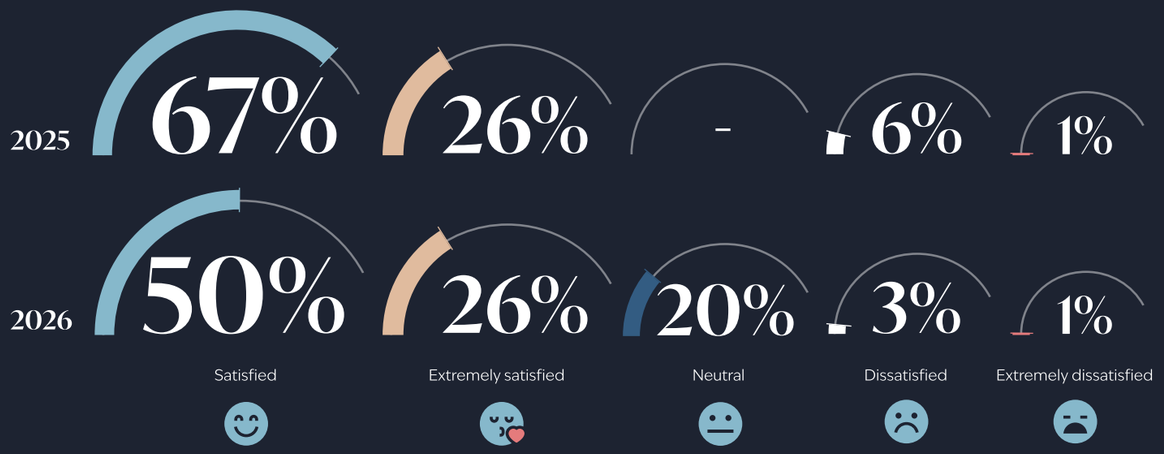
Remote work is also influencing what some residents want from their homes. Among respondents who provided an optional written response on how remote work had changed their housing preferences, 26% mentioned a dedicated home office or study, 14% a larger home, 14% a quieter community, 13% avoiding traffic and 11% the ability to live further from work.

These responses suggest that the effect of remote work is visible not only in location decisions, but also in the type and characteristics of the home residents want. Workplace proximity nevertheless remains relevant elsewhere in the survey, ranking fourth among tenant priorities behind retail, parks and healthcare. The two findings measure different aspects of housing choice: one captures how working arrangements have changed preferences, while the other measures the importance residents place on nearby amenities and destinations.

1.11 | Satisfaction with the current home

76% are satisfied with their current home, while dissatisfaction fell by three percentage points from 2025

Satisfaction with current accommodation



Q15, 2026 all respondents. The 2025 survey used a four-point scale with no neutral option. A neutral response was introduced in 2026 and selected by 20% of respondents, so the overall distribution should not be compared directly across the two editions.

Because a neutral option was introduced in 2026, the overall distribution cannot be compared directly with 2025. Both ends of the scale are comparable, and both moved in the same direction: the extremely satisfied share held while dissatisfaction fell on each measure.

The findings point to broad satisfaction with the home itself, despite pressure elsewhere in the survey. Residents' concerns appear to be more closely associated with the cost pressure reported in section 1.7 and the information gap reported later in this report than with their current home.

02

The evolving renter: what tenants pay, expect and want



Tenant rent expectations have shifted consistently across all three editions. The share expecting rents to rise has fallen sharply, while more tenants now expect rents to remain unchanged or decline.

Key takeaways

- Tenants expecting any rent increase at renewal fell from 77% in 2024 to 64% in 2025 and 34% in 2026. The 5–10% increase band, the largest single answer in both earlier editions, fell from 55% to 13%.
- 66% now expect their rent to stay flat or fall. In 2024 that group was 23%.
- The median tenant pays AED 90,000 a year, with the middle half paying between AED 65,000 and AED 140,000. The reported average rose 15% on 2025.
- Rental pressure eased on every measure tested: rents seen as overvalued fell 10 points between 2025 and 2026, and willingness to move if rent rises fell 10 points.
- Better property management, at 48%, is the second most-wanted improvement after price, ahead of amenities, payment flexibility and rent relief.
- Asked to rank priorities, 35% of tenants put metro or bus access first, ten points ahead of retail and malls at 25%, and well ahead of workplace proximity at 11%.

2.1 | Tenants' annual rent and how it is distributed

Tenants pay a median AED 90,000, with the reported average up 15% on 2025

AED 90K

median annual rent reported in 2026
no median published in 2025

AED 113.5K

mean (average) rent in 2026
AED 99,000 in 2025, up 15%



pay AED 100,000 or more
42% in 2025



pay AED 40,000 to 60,000
21% in 2025

This edition collected annual rent as a figure entered directly by respondents rather than through predefined bands, allowing a more detailed analysis of the rent distribution for the first time.

What tenants pay in annual rent

Median annual rent: AED 90,000. Half of tenants pay between AED 65,000 and AED 140,000.

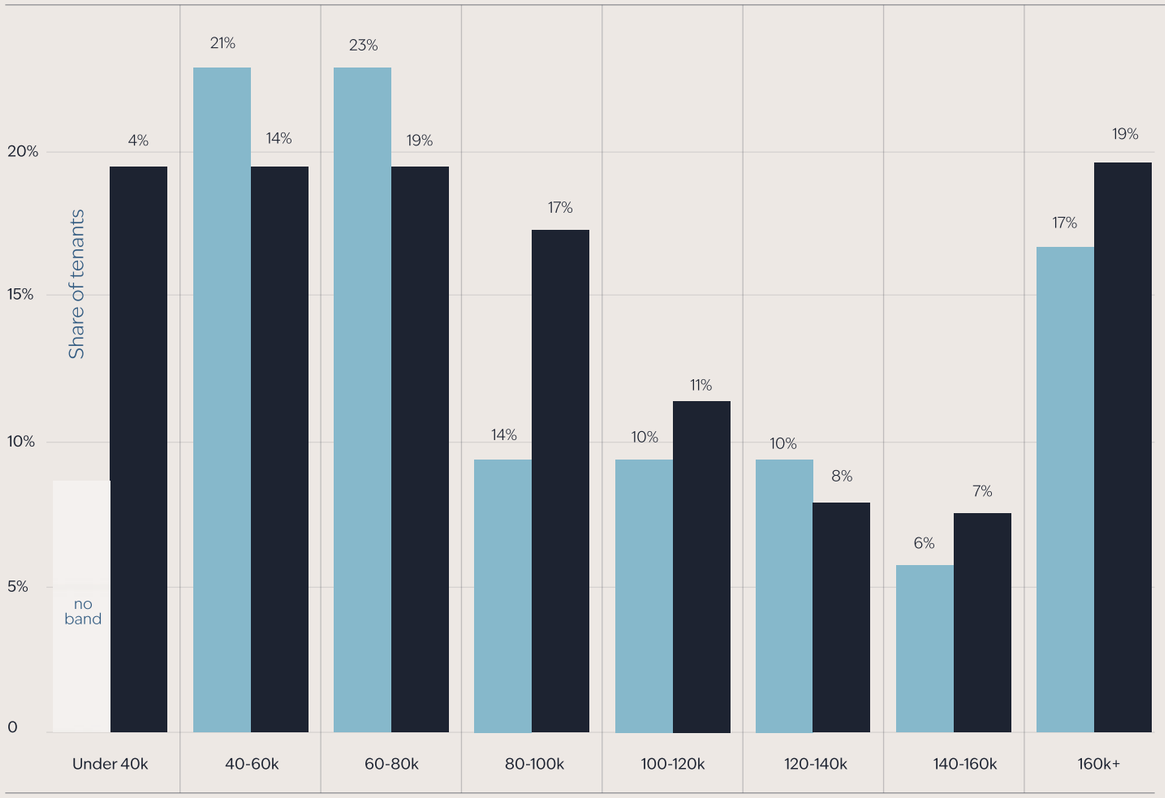


Figure 2.1 | The share of tenants paying AED 100,000 or more annually rose from 42% in 2025 to 46% in 2026.

The 2026 data gives a clearer picture of what tenants actually pay. The median annual rent is AED 90,000, while half of tenants pay between AED 65,000 and AED 140,000, showing a wide spread around the typical rent.

The mean is higher at AED 113,526, reflecting the influence of higher-value tenancies on the average. Compared with 2025, a slightly larger share of respondents now pay AED 100,000 or more, although changes in the respondent profile and question format mean this should not be read as equivalent market rental growth.

Q16, tenants who provided an annual rent figure. In 2025, 16% did not state their rent; those responses are excluded here for comparability. Rent bands above AED 100,000 differed between editions, so comparisons are made at the AED 100,000 threshold.

2.2 | Tenants' outlook on the renewal cycle

66% of tenants now expect rent to hold or fall, compared with 23% in 2024

Rent expectations moderated over the last three years

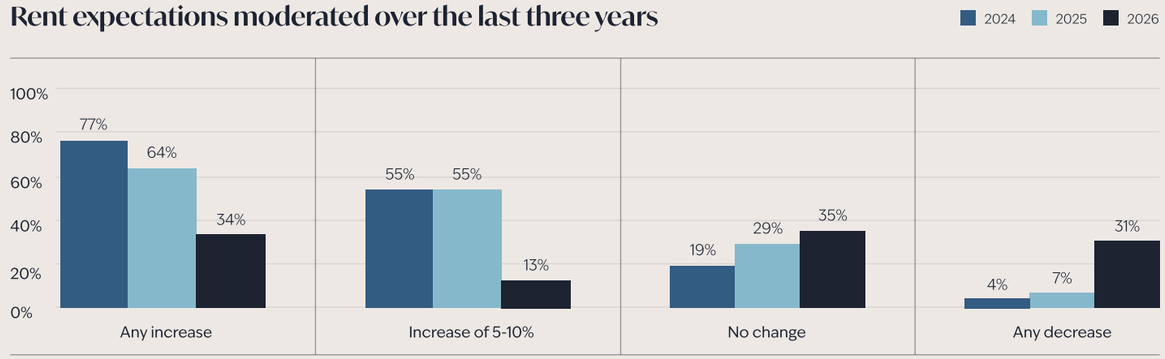
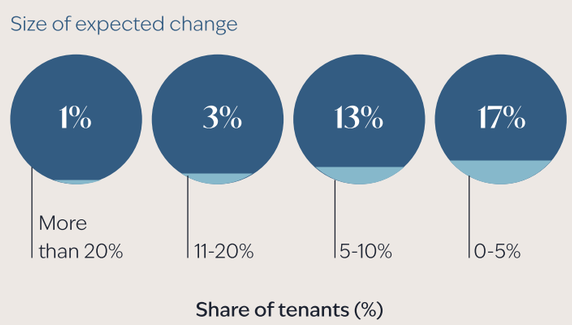


Figure 2.2 | The share of tenants expecting a rent increase fell from 77% in 2024 to 34% in 2026.

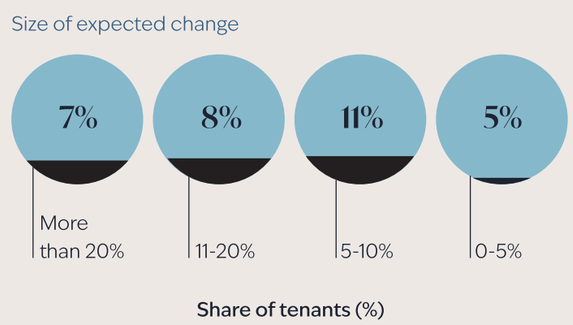
Tenants are no longer approaching their next renewal with a widespread expectation of higher rents. In 2026, expectations are much more evenly distributed between an increase, no change and a decrease, marking a clear shift from the previous two editions.

This is particularly notable given the higher rents reported by the 2026 sample. Tenants may be paying more today while expecting less upward pressure at their next renewal. These findings reflect respondents' expectations, however, rather than evidence that market rents have already begun to fall.

Tenants expecting a rent increase at next renewal



Tenants expecting a rent decrease at next renewal



Among tenants expecting their rent to rise, 88% anticipate an increase of 10% or less. Expectations of a decrease are more dispersed: almost half of those anticipating a fall expect it to exceed 10%. This suggests that while expectations of further increases have moderated, there is less agreement on the scale of any potential decline.

These findings reflect tenants' expectations at their next renewal and should not be interpreted as evidence that market rents have already begun to fall.

2.3 | Why rent expectations moderated: the index and new supply

Why expectations moderated: the rental index caps renewals and fewer tenants would move

The shift in tenant expectations is supported by changes in Dubai's rental market. The rental index framework limits the increase a landlord can apply at renewal according to how the existing rent compares with the benchmark for that area and property type. Where the gap is small, the permitted increase may be limited or zero. After several years of strong rental growth, this provides important context for why fewer tenants now expect significant increases at their next renewal.

Additional housing supply also gives tenants more choice. As new homes are completed, tenants may have more comparable options available within the same building or community. Together, greater supply and the rental index framework help explain why expectations have moderated. They may also help explain why fewer tenants now say they would move if their rent increased: fewer expect to face a substantial increase in the first place.

This should be read as an interpretation rather than evidence of cause and effect. Unlike sale-price expectations, however, rent expectations have moved consistently across all three editions and in the same direction as wider rental-market indicators.

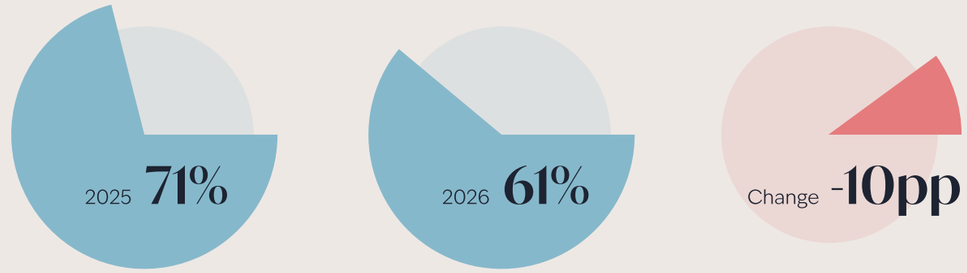


2.4 | Rent valuation and willingness to move

Rental pressure eased in 2026, as the share of tenants who perceived rents as overvalued fell from 71% to 61% and willingness to move if rents increased declined from 69% to 59%.

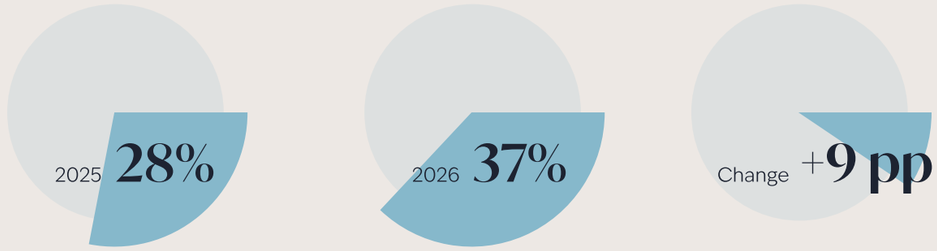
Tenants
Base

Say rents are overvalued
Measure



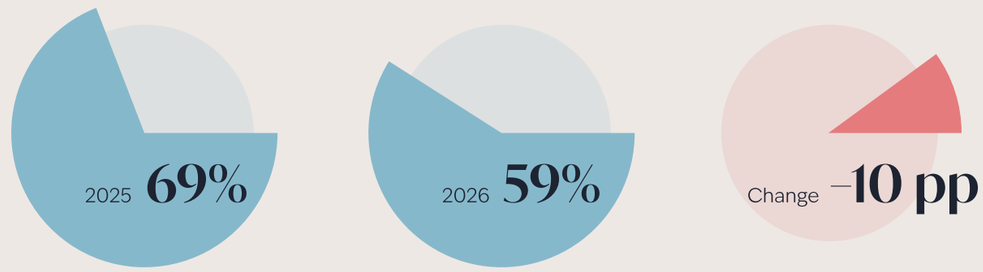
Tenants
Base

Say rents are fairly valued
Measure



Tenants
Base

Would move if their rent increased
Measure



q17 and q18b, tenants. 25% are undecided about moving and 16% would not move. 1% consider rents undervalued.

The movement is consistent across both rent valuation and willingness to move. Fewer tenants now see rents as overvalued, while more consider them fairly valued, and fewer say they would relocate if faced with an increase. Together, the findings suggest less pressure around the renewal decision than in 2025, although a majority still view rents as overvalued and would consider moving if rents rose.

2.5 | What would increase tenant satisfaction beyond price

Lower rent leads at 61%, while 48% want better property management

What would increase satisfaction as a tenant

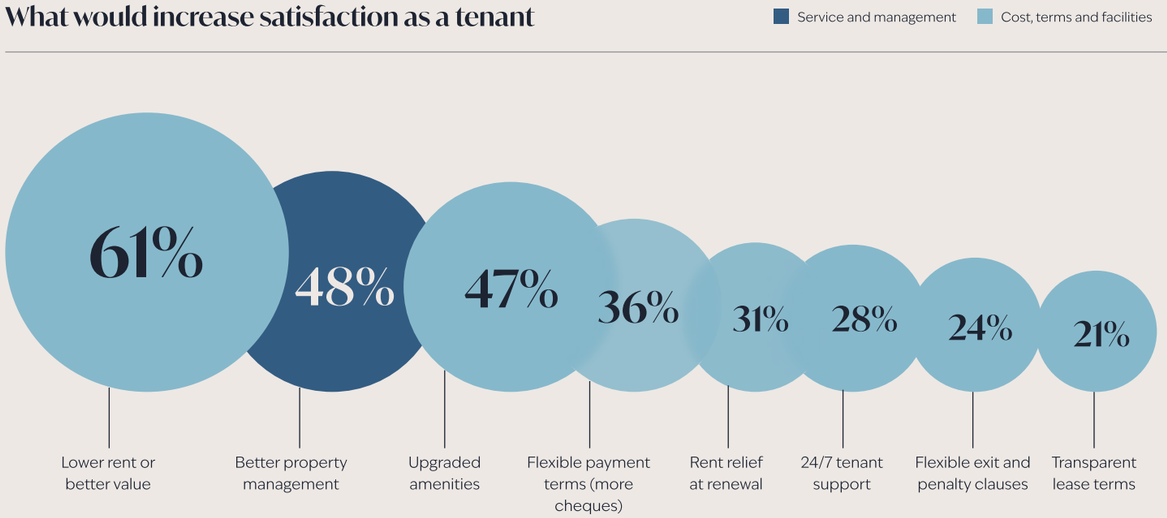


Figure 2.4 | Lower rent or better value is the most selected improvement, followed by better property management and upgraded amenities.

Lower rent or better value remains the most requested improvement, selected by 61% of tenants. The more notable finding is what comes next: 48% selected better property management, placing it ahead of upgraded amenities, flexible payment terms and rent relief at renewal. Set alongside section 4.5's finding that 80% of landlords in this sample self-manage their properties, the two findings point in the same direction: property management is an important part of the tenant experience and an area with scope for improvement.

2.6 | Proximity and amenity priorities when renting and buying

Transport ranks first for 35% of tenants, ahead of retail at 25%

What tenants prioritise when choosing where to live

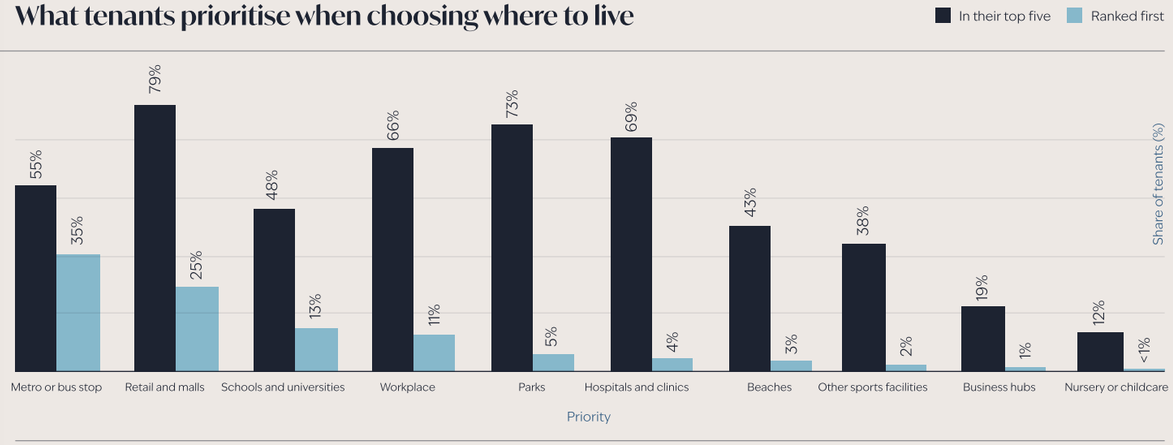


Figure 2.5 What tenants prioritise when choosing where to live. Retail appears most often in tenants' top five, while public transport is ranked first most frequently.

The distinction between what tenants value and what ultimately takes priority is important. Retail, parks and healthcare are widely valued, but public transport is more likely to become the deciding factor when tenants rank one consideration above the others. Owners show a similar pattern, reinforcing the importance of connectivity in residential decisions.

How important is proximity to the following?

Multi-select. Workplace falls fifteen points when the decision is a purchase.

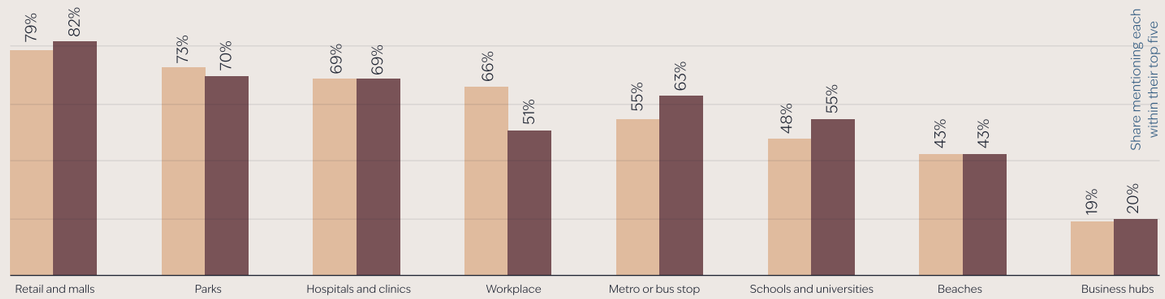


Figure 2.6 Workplace proximity shows the largest difference between renting and buying, with a 15-percentage-point gap.

The clearest difference between tenants and owners is proximity to work: 66% of tenants include it among their priorities, compared with 51% of owners. This suggests that workplace location plays a greater role when renting, while purchasing decisions are less closely tied to the daily commute.

Within communities, owners place somewhat greater importance on gated security (60% versus 52%), while preferences for children's play areas are similar.

Proximity and amenity questions about buying were put to all owners, not only to those intending a further purchase. "Owners" is used in that sense throughout this section.

Amenity priorities among tenants and owners

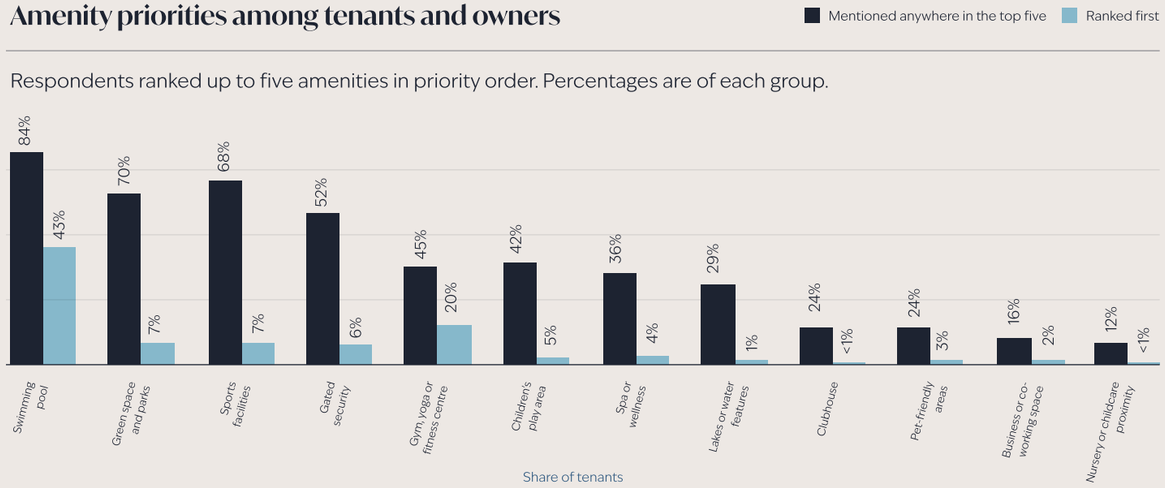


Figure 2.7 Swimming pools are both the most widely selected amenity and the most common first choice among tenants.

Amenity rankings show why overall popularity and first priority should be read separately. Swimming pools stand out on both measures, while green space is widely valued but much less likely to determine the final choice. The same broad pattern appears among owners.

Two options appear in the 2026 data that were not reported in earlier editions: pet-friendly areas, mentioned by 24% of tenants, and nursery or childcare proximity, mentioned by 12%. Neither has a prior-year benchmark.

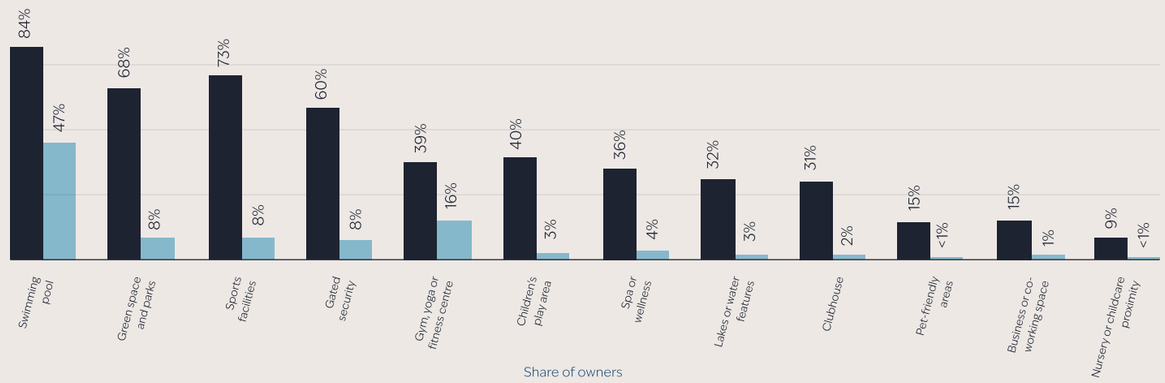


Figure 2.8 Swimming pools are both the most widely selected amenity and the most common first choice among owners.

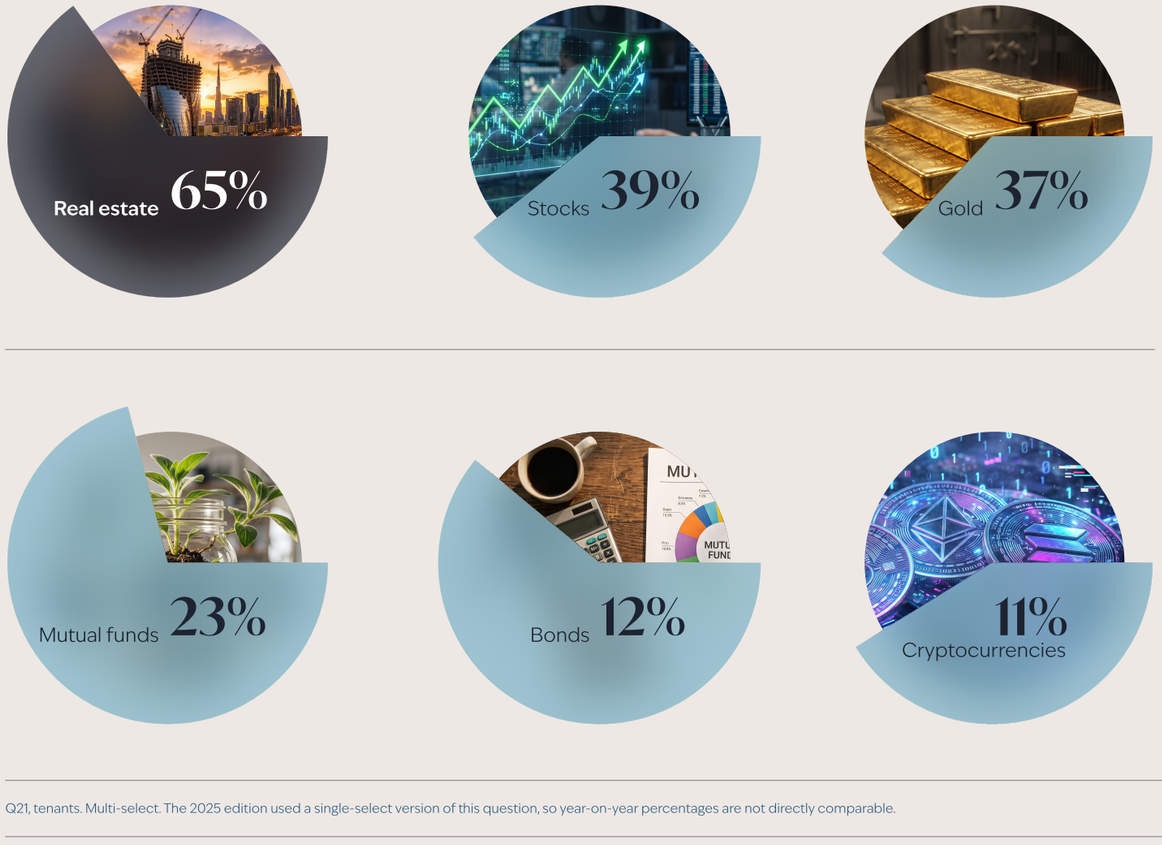
2.7 | Asset class preferences over the next three years

Real estate leads tenants' investment plans at 65%, ahead of stocks and gold

Intended investment over the next three years 2026

Nearly two-thirds of tenants include real estate in their investment plans for the next three years, well ahead of stocks at 39% and gold at 37%. As the most widely selected asset class, property remains prominent in tenants' longer-term investment plans despite them currently renting.

Stocks and gold attract similar levels of interest, while mutual funds follow at 23%. Bonds and cryptocurrencies are selected by around one in ten tenants.



Q21, tenants. Multi-select. The 2025 edition used a single-select version of this question, so year-on-year percentages are not directly comparable.

2.8 | Fractional ownership awareness and participation

Awareness of tokenised property platforms fell in 2026, while participation remained broadly flat at 7%

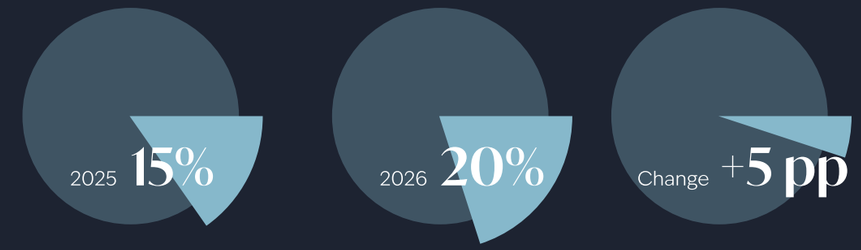
46%
are not aware of tokenised platforms
42% in 2025

28%
are aware but have not invested
37% in 2025

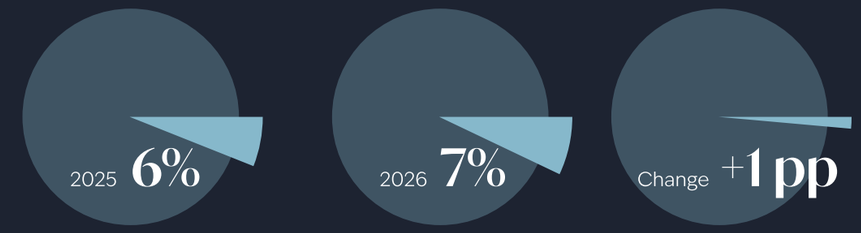
20%
are not interested
15% in 2025

7%
have invested and plan to invest more
6% in 2025

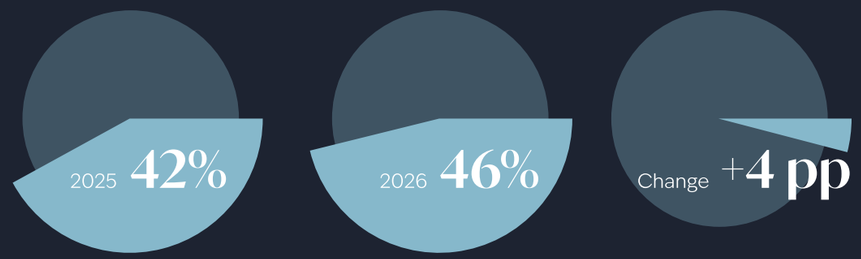
Awareness of blockchain-powered fractional platforms
Not interested



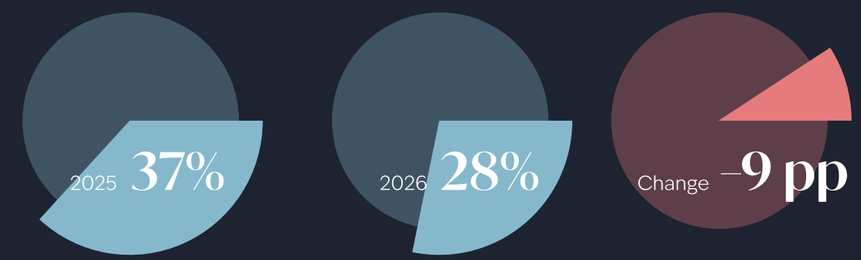
Awareness of blockchain-powered fractional platforms
Have invested and plan to invest more



Awareness of blockchain-powered fractional platforms
Not aware of this



Awareness of blockchain-powered fractional platforms
Aware but have not invested



Q23, tenants. Respondents selected one option only, so the four categories sum to 100%.

The main shift is among tenants who have not invested. Fewer describe themselves as aware but uninvested, while the shares who are either unaware of tokenised platforms or not interested have increased. Participation itself has barely moved, suggesting that wider exposure to the concept has not yet translated into greater adoption.

Among the tenants aware of fractional ownership, low entry cost was the strongest attraction at 44%, ahead of hassle-free ownership and liquidity. Blockchain and tokenisation ranked lower, suggesting that the appeal lies more in accessibility and convenience than in the underlying technology.



03

Tenants looking to buy



Tenant purchase intent has remained stable despite a sharp change in price expectations. More than half still intend to buy within the next one to three years, suggesting that short-term price expectations are not having much effect on longer-term plans to buy.

Key takeaways

- 55% of tenants intend to buy in Dubai within the next one to three years, virtually unchanged from 55% in 2025, even as the share expecting property prices to rise fell from 64% to 30%.
- Purchase intent is almost identical among tenants with opposing price views: 57% of those expecting prices to fall intend to buy, compared with 56% of those expecting prices to rise.
- 67% of intending buyers plan to use a mortgage, up from 61% in 2025, underlining the importance of finance to prospective buyers.
- Long-term residence is the leading reason for buying, selected by 71%, ahead of investment opportunity at 52% and rental income at 40%.
- Apartment preference fell from 54% in 2024 to 41% in 2026, while townhouse preference rose from 17% to 30%. Preference for four or more bedrooms rose from 15% in 2025 to 23% in 2026.

3.1 | Purchase intent against 12-month price expectations

Purchase intent held at 55% even as expectations of rising prices fell sharply

55% of tenants intend to buy within one to three years

Unchanged from 55% in 2025

67% of intending buyers plan to use a mortgage

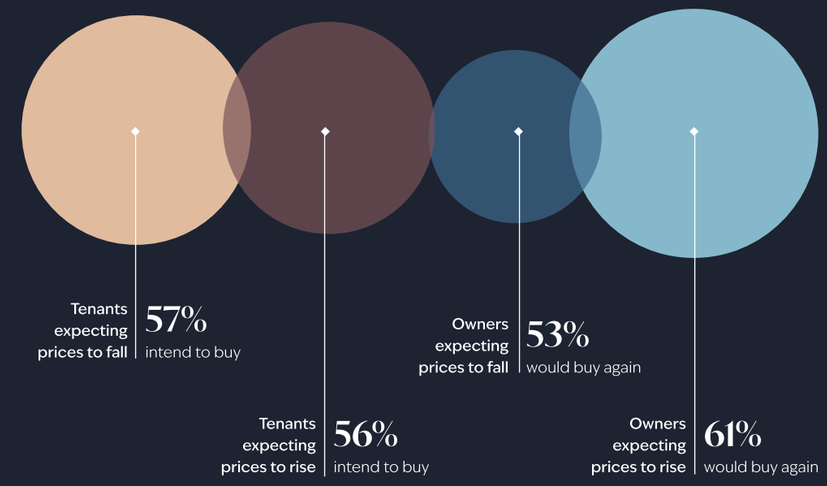
Up from 61% in 2025

57% of tenants intend to buy within one to three years expecting prices to fall

56% buy intent among tenants expecting prices to rise

Tenant purchase intent is almost identical among those expecting sale prices to rise and those expecting them to fall. This suggests that expectations for price movements over the next 12 months are not closely associated with plans to buy over the next one to three years. Purchase intent also remains unchanged from 2025, while reliance on mortgage finance has increased, with 67% of intending buyers now planning to use a mortgage.

Purchase intent by price expectation, 2026



Q51 analysed against 12-month price expectations for tenants and owners. Tenants expecting no change are excluded from this comparison. The difference between tenants expecting prices to rise and fall is less than one percentage point and does not indicate a meaningful difference. Owner findings should be treated as directional given the smaller groups.

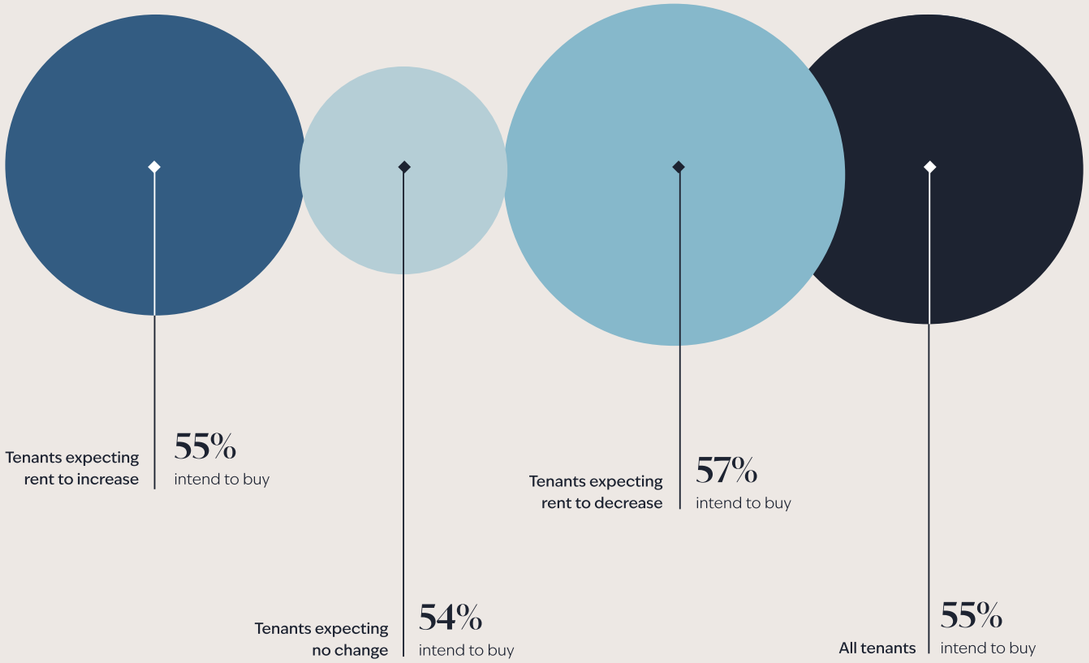
3.2 | Purchase intent by rent expectation at next renewal, 2026

Purchase intent remains between 54% and 57% regardless of whether tenants expect rents to rise, hold or fall

Rent expectations show the same pattern. Purchase intent is 55% among tenants expecting an increase, 54% among those expecting no change and 57% among those anticipating a decrease.

The three-percentage-point range is narrow, suggesting that expectations for the next rent renewal are also not closely associated with plans to buy. Taken together with the sale-price findings, tenant purchase intent remains relatively stable across different short-term market expectations.

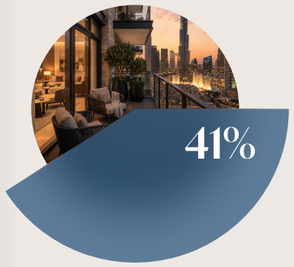
Purchase intent by rent expectation at next renewal, 2026



Q22 analysed against Q18. The three rent-expectation groups cover all tenants. The three-percentage-point range is too small to indicate a meaningful difference between them.

3.3 | Preferred property type, bedrooms and furnishing

Townhouse preference nearly doubled since 2024 as apartments fell from 54% to 41%



of intending buyers prefer an apartment

Down from 54% in 2024 and 51% in 2025



prefer a townhouse

Up from 17% in 2024 and 19% in 2025



prefer a villa

Broadly unchanged from 29% in 2024 and 30% in 2025



want four bedrooms or more

Up from 15% in 2025

Preferred property type	2024	2025	2026
Apartment	54%	51%	41%
Townhouse	17%	19%	30%
Villa	29%	30%	29%

Intending buyers. The three-year movement is largely from apartments to townhouses; villa preference is broadly flat across all three editions.

Apartment preference has fallen from 54% in 2024 to 41% in 2026, while townhouse preference has risen from 17% to 30%. Villa preference has remained broadly unchanged, at 29% in both 2024 and 2026. In a sample that is 80% married and 59% living with a partner and children, the shift is consistent with greater interest in homes that offer more space without moving into the villa segment. The stability of the villa share is the useful detail: this is not a move up the price ladder, it is a move sideways into a format that offers ground-level space at a lower entry point than a villa.

Furnishing preferences point in a similar direction. Among owners considering a further purchase, 52% intend to buy unfurnished, 32% prefer white goods only and 16% want a furnished property. The preference is therefore clearly towards homes buyers can furnish and shape themselves rather than fully turnkey properties.

04

Ownership outlook: strategy and sentiment



Owner responses show how a more cautious market outlook is translating into behaviour. The data points to changes in financing, ownership costs, property management and what owners want to buy next.

Key takeaways

- Homeownership reached 32% of respondents in 2026, up from 28% in 2025 and 23% in 2024.
- 33% of owners bought their first Dubai property within the past three years, up from 29% as published in 2025, a substantial share of relatively recent entrants to the owner base.
- 62% of owners cite service charges, maintenance costs or both as a challenge, making property running costs the clearest pressure point owners identify.
- Yield satisfaction remains broadly positive: 79% of owners rate returns satisfactory or robust. The strongest rating weakened, however, with the share describing yields as robust falling from 16% in 2025 to 8% in 2026.
- 80% of owners self-manage their property. The strongest reasons to consider professional management relate to reducing vacancy, securing quality tenants, reliable payments and transparent pricing.
- Off-plan preference fell from 46% in 2025 to 27% in 2026, while preference for ready property rose from 35% to 41%, pointing to a clear shift in what owners prefer for their next purchase.

4.1 | Homeownership, financing and repeat purchase intent

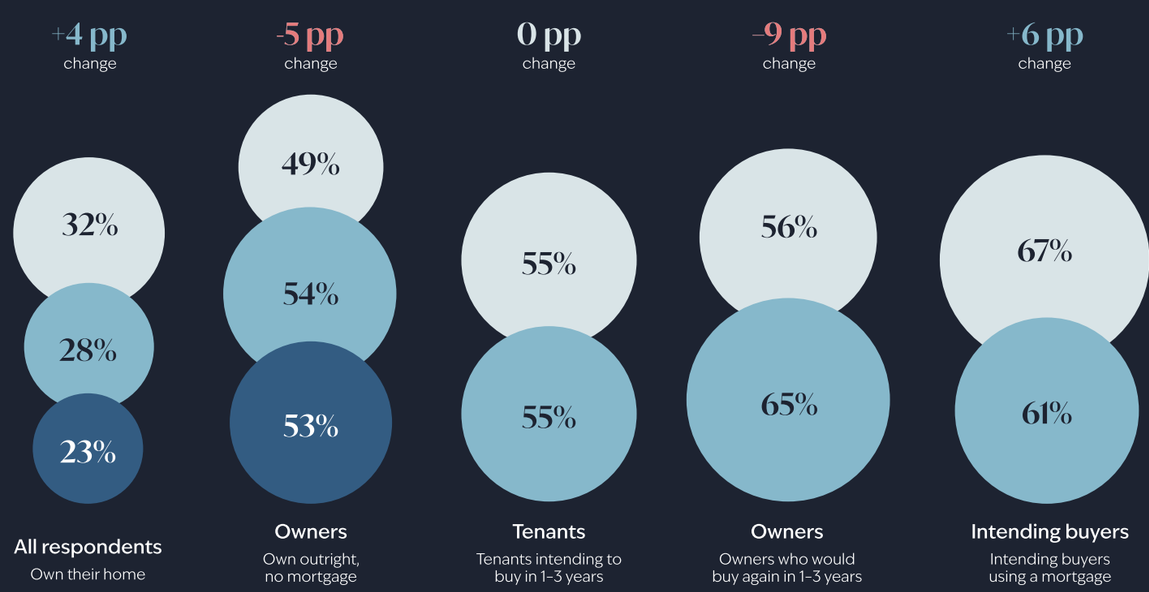
Homeownership rose to 32% as mortgage use increased, while repeat purchase intent among owners fell

32% of respondents own their home
Up from 28% in 2025 and 23% in 2024

51% of owners hold a mortgage
Up from 46% in 2025, a majority for the first time

55% of tenants intend to buy in one to three years
Unchanged from 55% in 2025

67% of intending buyers plan to use a mortgage
Up from 61% in 2025



Q11, Q22, Q25 and Q44. In 2024, owners were asked only whether they planned a further purchase for investment purposes, with 36% answering yes. The 2025 and 2026 questions covered any further purchase, so the 2024 figure is not directly comparable and is omitted from the table.

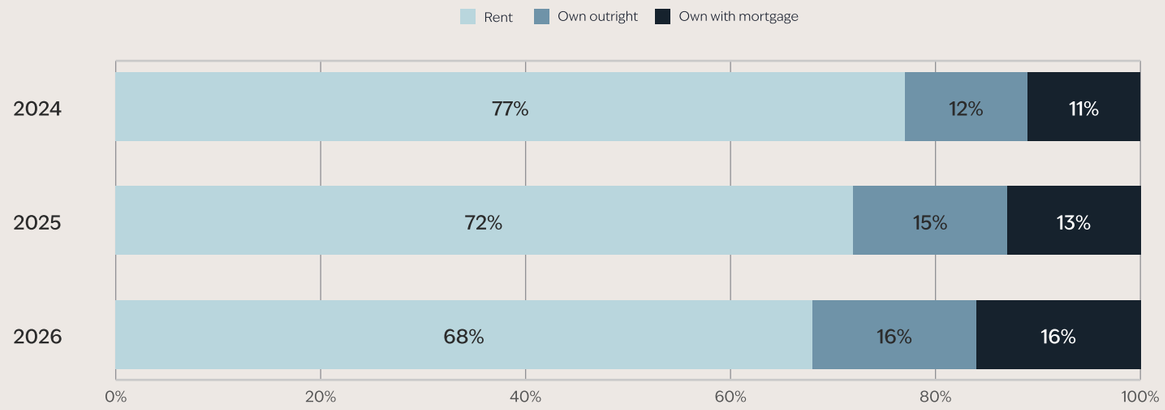


Figure 4.1 | Homeownership rose from 23% in 2024 to 32% in 2026, with mortgaged owners accounting for a growing share.

Homeownership among respondents has increased across all three editions, from 23% in 2024 to 28% in 2025 and 32% in 2026. The way owners finance their homes is also shifting: 51% now hold a mortgage, up from 46% in 2025, making mortgaged owners the majority for the first time.

Future demand is more mixed. Tenant purchase intent remains unchanged at 55%, and among those planning to buy, reliance on mortgage finance has risen from 61% to 67%. Existing owners, however, are less likely to say they would buy again within the next three years, with repeat-purchase intent falling from 65% to 56%.

What this shows: the rise in homeownership is continuing, but it is increasingly mortgage-supported and is not being matched by stronger repeat-purchase intent among existing owners.

4.2 | Portfolio size, estimated value and purchase history

54% of owners hold a single property, and a third bought within the past three years

54% of owners hold one Dubai property

22% hold three or more

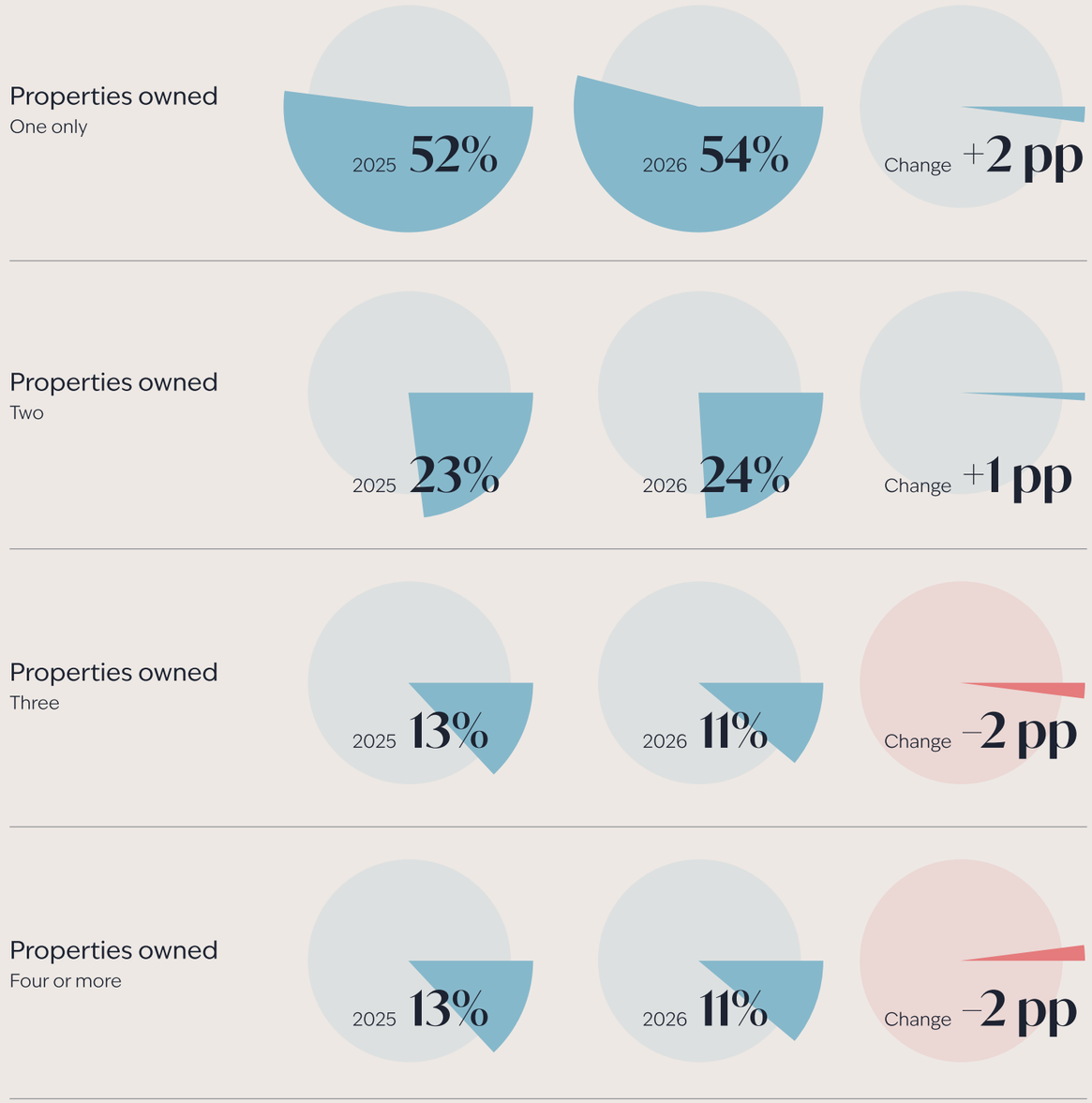
AED 3M median reported property value

mean AED 4.58m

33% bought their first Dubai property within three years

29% as published in 2025

How many properties owners hold in Dubai



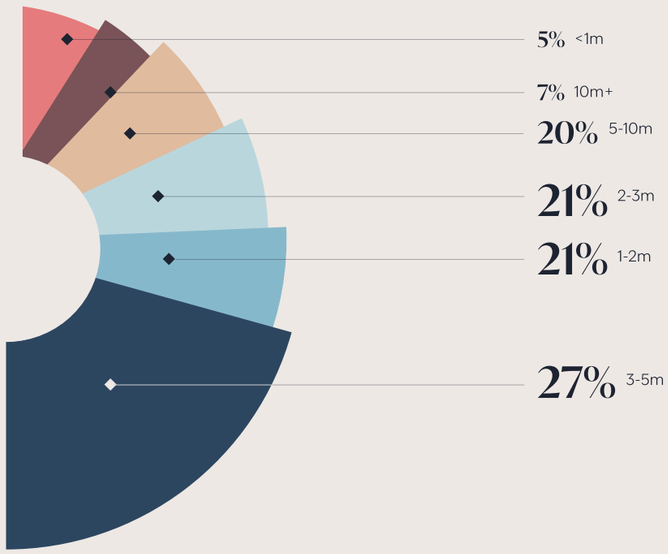
Q34. In 2025, 20% of owners did not state how many properties they owned. For a like-for-like comparison, the 2025 figures have been recalculated among respondents who answered the question.

Portfolio size changed little between 2025 and 2026, with ownership still concentrated among single-property owners. At the same time, 33% bought their first Dubai property within the past three years. Together, the findings suggest that the rise in homeownership among respondents has not been accompanied by a shift towards larger portfolios.

What owners hold, and how they hold it

AED 3m is the median owner-reported property value, with 27% valued between AED 3m and AED 5m

What owners say their property is worth



Owners were asked to estimate the current value of their property. The median is AED 3m, while the mean is higher at AED 4.58m, reflecting the influence of higher-value properties, including the 7% valued at AED 10m or more.

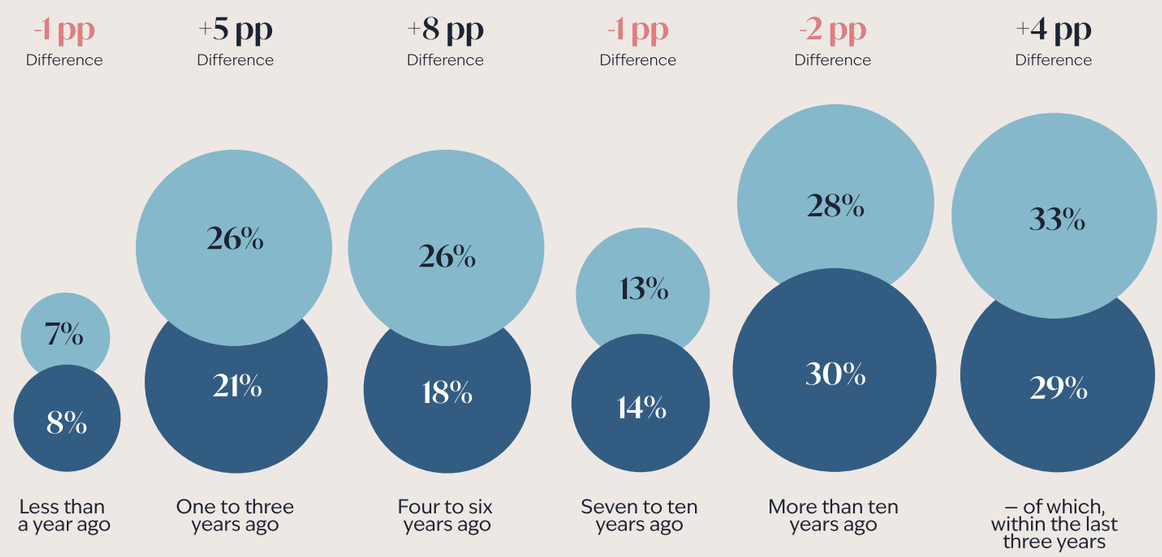
The mean is broadly unchanged from AED 4.5m in 2025, suggesting little movement in the average reported value between editions. Among owners with a mortgage, half have a remaining term of more than 15 years.

Measure	Base	2025	2026
Median property value	Owners	not published	AED 3m
Mean property value	Owners	AED 4.5m	AED 4.58m
Mortgage term of more than 15 years	Mortgaged Owners	not comparable	50%

Q32 and Q33a. One property-value response was excluded as a data-entry error. Values were entered directly by respondents, so the median is used as the clearest measure of the typical reported property value. The 2025 mortgage-term figure used a different respondent group and is not directly comparable.

When owners bought

A third of owners entered the Dubai market within the last three years, while 28% bought more than a decade ago



When they bought their first Dubai property

2025 2026

Q36, owners. The 2026 bands are mutually exclusive and sum to 100%. The 2025 figures are as published in Future Living 2025 and sum to 91%; that edition does not state what accounts for the remaining nine percentage points. Comparisons with 2026 should therefore be treated as directional rather than as precise year-on-year movements. The final row combines the first two bands and is already included within them.

The overall distribution is broadly similar to 2025. In 2026, 33% of owners say they bought their first Dubai property within the last three years, against 29% as published in 2025. At the other end of the distribution, 28% bought more than ten years ago, against 30% in 2025. Given the incomplete 2025 distribution, neither movement should be interpreted as a precise year-on-year change.

The largest differences appear within the middle bands. The share who bought four to six years ago rose from 18% to 26%, while the one-to-three-year group increased from 21% to 26%. Some movement between time bands is naturally expected as time passes, but these are separate annual samples rather than the same owners followed over time, so differences in respondent composition may also contribute.

What the 2026 distribution does establish is that a substantial share of the owner base is relatively recent to the market. 33% bought their first Dubai property within the last three years and 59% within the last six. That context is relevant when interpreting the findings that follow on yield satisfaction, ownership experience and expectations for property prices.

Why they bought

75% of owners bought for long-term residence, ahead of investment opportunity at 58%

The 2025 edition asked owners to select one key reason for buying, while the 2026 edition allowed several. The percentages therefore cannot be compared directly, but the rank order can, and it remains almost unchanged across the two years.

Reason for buying

2025 rank		2026, share of owners	2026 rank	
Long-term residence	1	75%	1	Long-term residence
Investment opportunity	2	58%	2	Investment opportunity
Stability and security	3	39%	3	Rental income
Rental income	4	34%	4	Stability and security
Tax-free advantage	5	14%	5	Tax-free advantage
Visa benefits, including the Golden Visa	6	13%	6	Visa benefits, including the Golden Visa

Q37, owners; multi-select in 2026. The 2025 edition asked respondents to select a single key reason, with published shares of 27%, 26%, 17%, 16%, 8% and 6%, summing to 100%. Because the question formats differ, only rank order is compared.

Rental income moves from fourth to third, while stability and security moves from third to fourth. Long-term residence remains the leading reason for buying, followed by investment opportunity. The stability of that ranking is notable given the weaker outlook for property prices in 2026, and is consistent with the wider finding that ownership decisions are associated with longer-term residence and investment objectives rather than short-term price expectations alone.

How properties were financed can only be reported for each group on its own terms, because the two questions were put to different people. Among the single-property owners who hold a mortgage, 64% financed the purchase with a mortgage alone and 31% with a combination of mortgage and cash. Among all owners of several properties, 40% bought outright, 31% used a combination and 22% used a mortgage alone. The single-property question was shown only to owners who already hold a mortgage, so the two sets of figures describe different populations and no direct comparison between them is made here.

Apartments dominate among single-property owners. Of the respondents who own one Dubai property, 61% own an apartment, against 20% who own a villa and 19% a townhouse. This current ownership profile contrasts with the stronger preference for villas and townhouses among respondents considering their next purchase.

4.3 | The challenges owners face, and what dominates them

Service charges and maintenance dominate owner concerns, cited by 62%

Challenges faced as a property owner

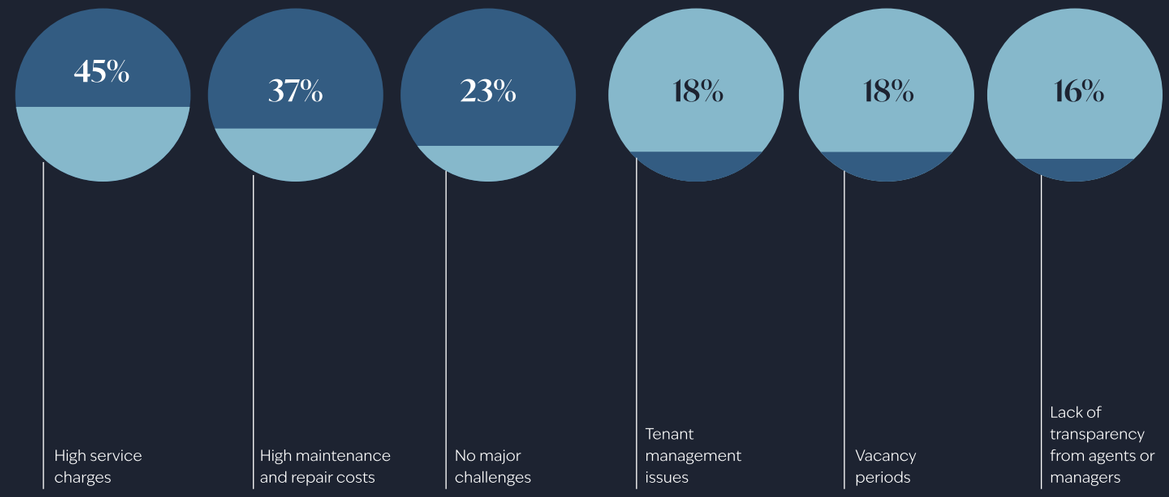


Figure 4.3 Tenant management and vacancy periods follow, each cited by 18% of owners. q41, owners, multi-select. 23% report no challenges.

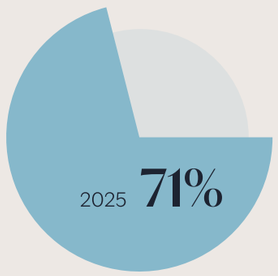
Recurring ownership costs dominate the challenges reported by owners. 45% cite high service charges and 37% maintenance and repair costs. Because respondents could select more than one answer, these groups overlap. Combined, 62% selected service charges, maintenance costs or both.

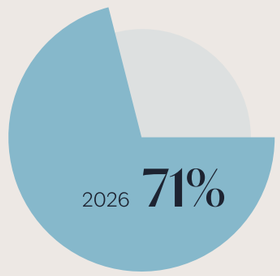
Nothing else comes close: tenant management issues are cited by 18%, vacancy periods by 18% and a lack of transparency from agents or managers by 16%. Among the challenges measured, the clearest pressure point is the ongoing cost of owning and maintaining the asset.

4.4 | Homeowners' perspectives on rental yields

71% rate rental yields satisfactory, unchanged from 2025, while 'robust' fell from 16% to 8%

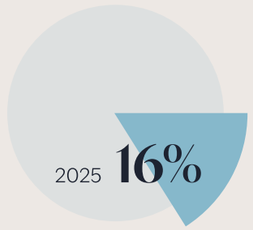
Satisfactory
Owner view of rental yields

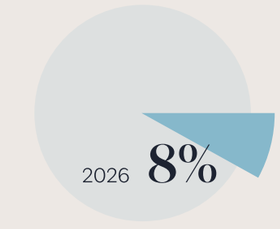






Robust
Owner view of rental yields

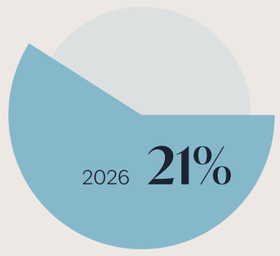


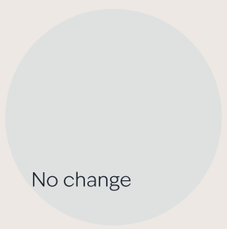




Less desirable
Owner view of rental yields







Q39, owners. The 2025 edition published the satisfactory and robust shares at 71% and 16% respectively, but did not publish the remaining response category. The combined positive rating of 79% is therefore reported for 2026 only and is not compared directly with 2025.

In 2026, 79% of owners describe their rental yields as satisfactory or robust, while 21% rate them as less desirable. The largest group remains those describing yields as satisfactory, at 71%.

4.5 | Property management and what would prompt a switch

80% of owners self-manage, but 50% would switch for zero vacancy and 48% for higher-quality tenants

80% of owners self-manage their property

13% use a fully managed service

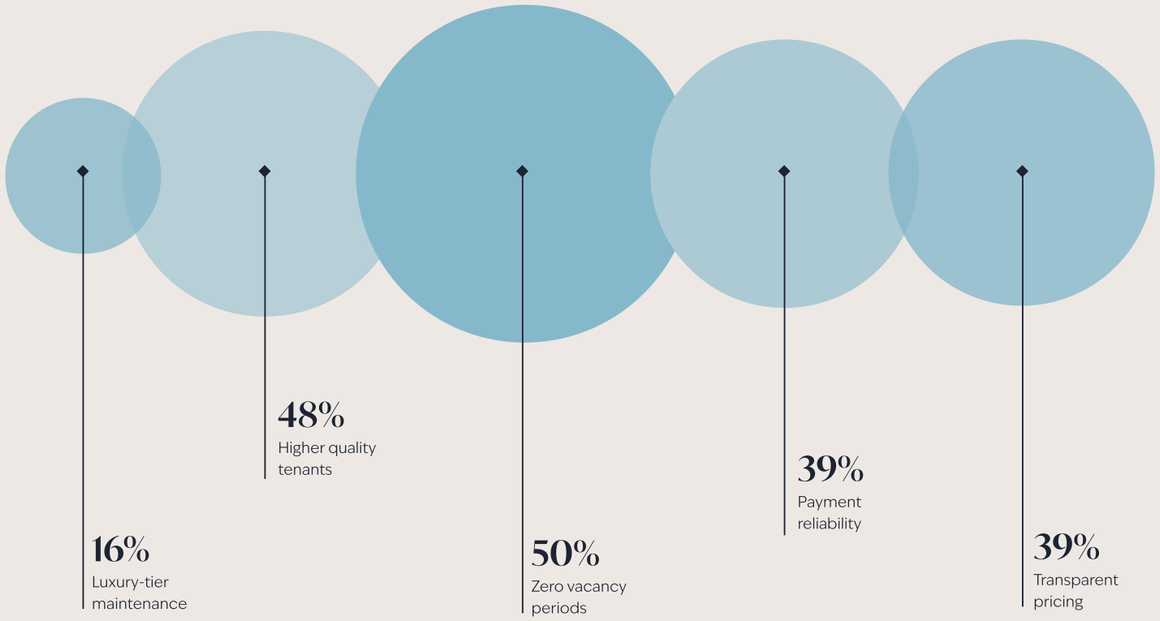
50% would switch for zero vacancy periods
self-managing owners

16% would switch for luxury-tier maintenance
the lowest-ranked reason

80% of owners self-manage their property, while 13% use a fully managed service and 7% use a let-only service. Among self-managing owners, the strongest reasons to consider switching to a managed service are practical and commercially focused.

What would prompt a switch to a managed service

2026



Q40a, self-managing owners, multi-select.

Zero vacancy periods rank first at 50%, closely followed by higher-quality tenants at 48%. Payment reliability and transparent pricing are each selected by 39%, while luxury-tier maintenance ranks considerably lower at 16%.

The pattern suggests that owners are more interested in reducing vacancy, securing reliable tenants and improving financial predictability than in premium service features alone. This also sits alongside the tenant findings in section 2.5, where 48% say better property management would improve their rental experience, showing that management quality matters on both sides of the landlord–tenant relationship.

4.6 | Overseas against Dubai investment performance

65% of owners holding property abroad say it did not outperform Dubai

Owners were asked whether their real estate investments outside Dubai had outperformed those within it. The base matters here because 30% of owners have no overseas property and selected “not applicable”.

Response	2025	2026	Share of owners with overseas property
Overseas did not outperform Dubai	44%	45%	65%
Overseas did outperform Dubai	27%	25%	35%
No investments outside Dubai	28%	30%	-

Q42, Dubai property owners. Some also own property outside Dubai. The 2025 and 2026 columns show responses across the full owner sample, including those with no overseas property. The final column looks only at owners who hold property both in Dubai and overseas.

Among the owners who hold property both in Dubai and overseas, 65% say their overseas property did not outperform their Dubai holding, while 35% say it did. This is the most relevant comparison because it looks only at owners able to assess both markets. On the directly comparable full-owner base, the result was broadly stable between editions, with 44% giving this response in 2025 and 45% in 2026.

This is an owner-reported assessment, not a measured comparison of investment returns. The finding supports the conclusion that most owners able to compare both markets do not consider their overseas holdings to have outperformed Dubai, but it does not establish by how much, or prove that Dubai delivered higher returns in absolute terms.



4.7 | Off-plan against ready-to-move-in preference

Off-plan preference fell to 27% in 2026 as ready property overtook it

27%
prefer off-plan for pricing and payment plans
46% in 2025

41%
prefer ready-to-move-in to avoid delays
35% in 2025

32%
are undecided
roughly 19% implied in 2025

Prefer off-plan for pricing and payment plans

Owner preference for the next purchase

2025 **46%** → 2026 **27%** Change **-19 pp**

Prefer ready-to-move-in to avoid delays

Owner preference for the next purchase

2025 **35%** → 2026 **41%** Change **+6 pp**

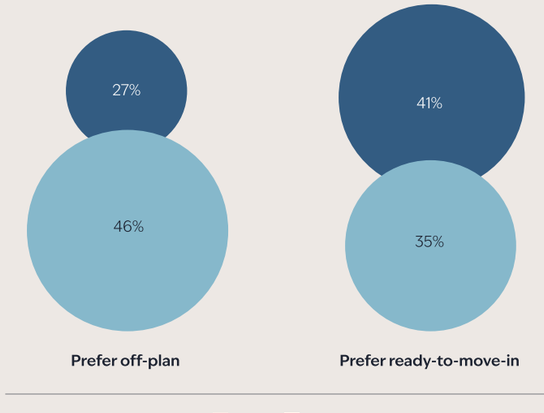
Undecided

Owner preference for the next purchase

2025 **not published** → 2026 **32%**

q49, owners. The 2025 edition offered an undecided option but did not publish its share; its two stated preferences sum to 81%, implying roughly 19% undecided. That option existed in both editions, so the dash denotes an unpublished value rather than an absent option.

Owner preference for next purchase



Preferred property type, intending buyers

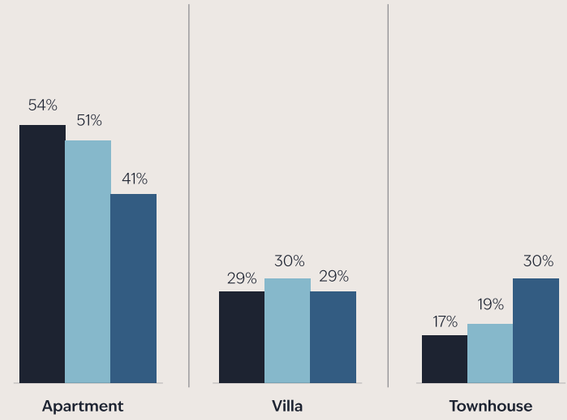


Figure 4.4 Off-plan preference fell from 46% to 27% in a year, while townhouse preference nearly doubled from 17% in 2024 to 30%.

Preference for off-plan property fell from 46% in 2025 to 27% in 2026, while preference for ready-to-move-in property rose from 35% to 41%. A further 32% are undecided. This is one of the larger shifts in the survey, and it sits alongside a greater emphasis on developer track record and delivery reported in section 4.8. Together the findings suggest owners are placing greater weight on certainty about what they are buying and who is delivering it.



4.8 | Developer quality, delivery and what owners prioritise

Developer satisfaction slipped to 57% in 2026, and dissatisfaction rose

57% are satisfied or better with developer quality and delivery

60% in 2025

76% prioritise reputation and track record when choosing a developer

33% are neutral

33% in 2025 unchanged

10% are dissatisfied

7% in 2025

Satisfaction with developer quality and delivery

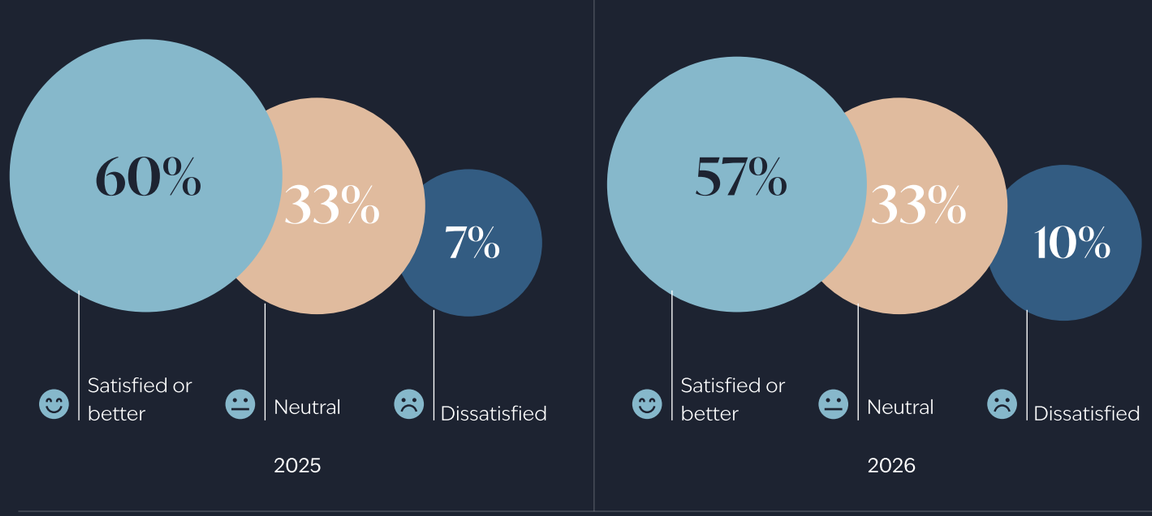


Figure 4.5 The neutral share was unchanged at 33% across both editions.

Owners were asked how satisfied they are with the quality and delivery of properties by Dubai developers. 57% are satisfied or better, 33% are neutral and 10% are dissatisfied. Satisfaction fell three percentage points from 60% in 2025, while dissatisfaction rose from 7% to 10%. The neutral share remained unchanged at 33%.

The movement is modest, but it comes during a period of strong development and handover activity, putting greater focus on delivery, snagging and build quality.

What owners prioritise when choosing a developer reinforces the importance of execution. Reputation and track record ranks first at 76%, followed closely by construction quality at 74%, while 58% select timely delivery. Together, these findings show that owners place considerable weight on a developer's ability to deliver consistently and to a high standard.



05

Development preferences and location demand



Owners prioritise green space, build quality, parking and walkability over more technology-led features. At the same time, intended purchases are concentrated in a different mix of communities from those where owners currently hold property.

Key takeaways

- 77% of owners want more green space, parks and walkable areas, making this the leading priority. Build quality and parking also rank highly, while smart-home technology is selected by 35%.
- Intended purchases are concentrated in a different mix of communities from current ownership. Dubai South, Dubai Hills Estate, Al Furjan and Emaar South lead intended purchases, while Dubai Marina, the most commonly owned location, ranks fifth.
- Parking is a major consideration, selected by 55% of owners and ranking ahead of public transport, community retail and sustainability.
- Prospective demand is shifting towards larger homes. Current owners are weighted towards two- and three-bedroom properties, while intended purchases show a stronger preference for three and four bedrooms: the share wanting four bedrooms or more rises from 20% of current holdings to 23% of intending buyers, while the share wanting two bedrooms falls from 28% to 24%.
- 53% are open to living in one emirate and working in another once Etihad Rail passenger services begin, including 43% of those who currently prefer a commute of less than fifteen minutes.

5.1 | Improvements owners want in future developments

77% of owners want green space; 35% want smart-home technology

Improvements most wanted in future developments

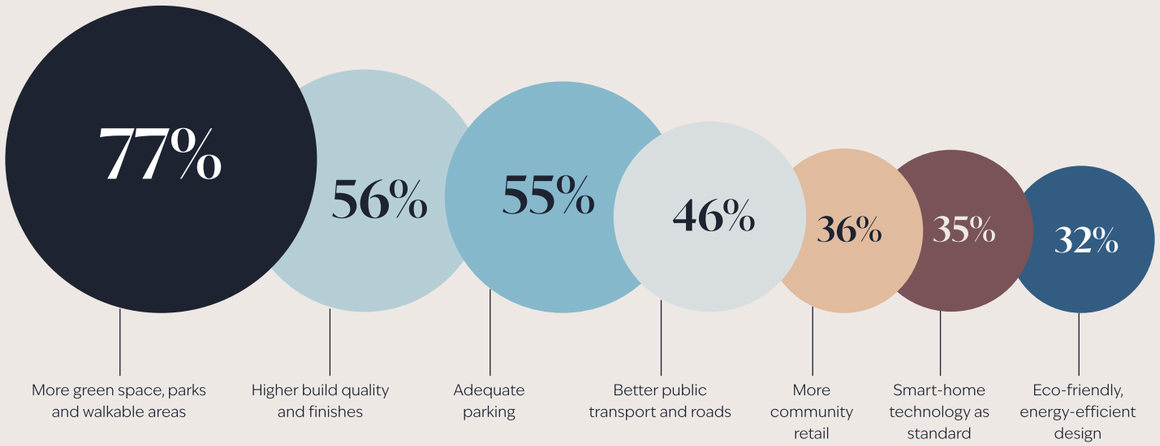


Figure 5.1 Build quality at 56% and parking at 55% both rank above public transport and roads at 46%.

The forty-two percentage-point gap between green space and smart-home technology is one of the clearest signals in this section. The four leading priorities are green space and walkability, build quality, parking and connectivity, suggesting owners place greater weight on the everyday functionality of a development than on technology-led features.

Parking is particularly notable. At 55%, it is selected by more owners than public transport and roads, community retail, smart-home technology or sustainable design. Its position in the ranking shows that practical considerations around how residents use a development remain central to what owners want developers to prioritise.

q49a, owners, multi-select. The question was asked of owners only, so the findings in this section describe owners rather than all respondents. Green space 77%, build quality 56%, parking 55%, public transport and roads 46%, community retail 36%, smart-home technology 35%, eco-friendly design 32%.

5.2 | Cross-emirate living and the Etihad Rail effect

53% would consider living in one emirate and working in another once Etihad Rail runs

53% of respondents are open to the possibility of living in one emirate and working in another once Etihad Rail passenger services are available. This comprises 20% who say they would be open to it and a further 33% who say it would depend on cost and convenience.

Would Etihad Rail influence where you live or buy?

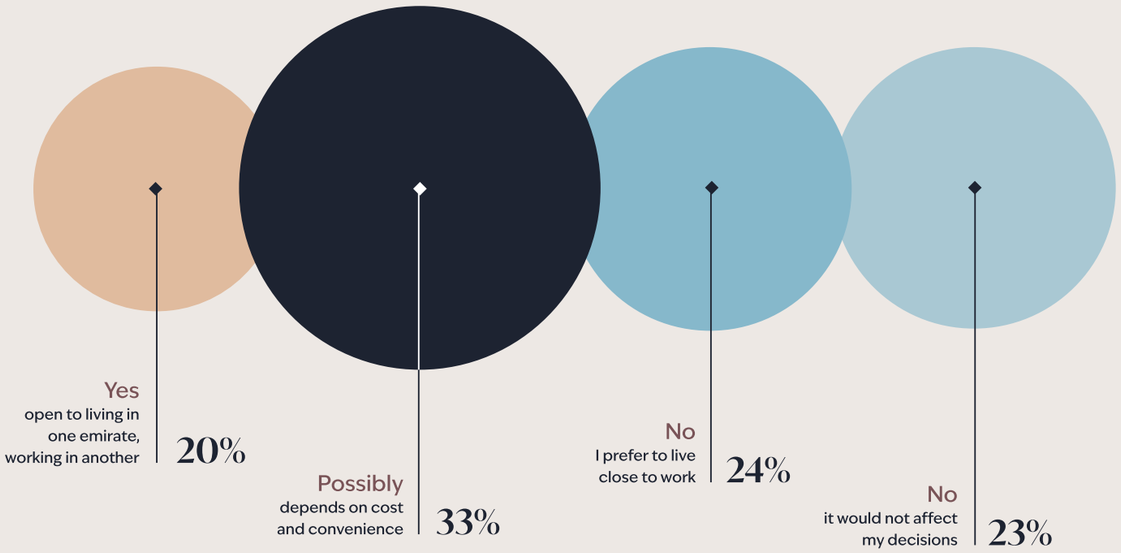


Figure 5.2 Only 23% say the service would not affect their property decisions at all.

One in five respondents is already open to cross-emirate living, while a further third would consider it depending on cost and convenience. Openness is higher among tenants at 56% than among owners at 47%. The difference does not come from owners being more attached to a short commute: almost identical shares of tenants and owners say they prefer to live close to where they work, at 24% and 23%. It comes from owners being nearly half as likely again to say the service would not affect their property decisions at all, at 30% against 20% of tenants. Owners are not rejecting cross-emirate living so much as reporting that it does not change a decision they have already made.

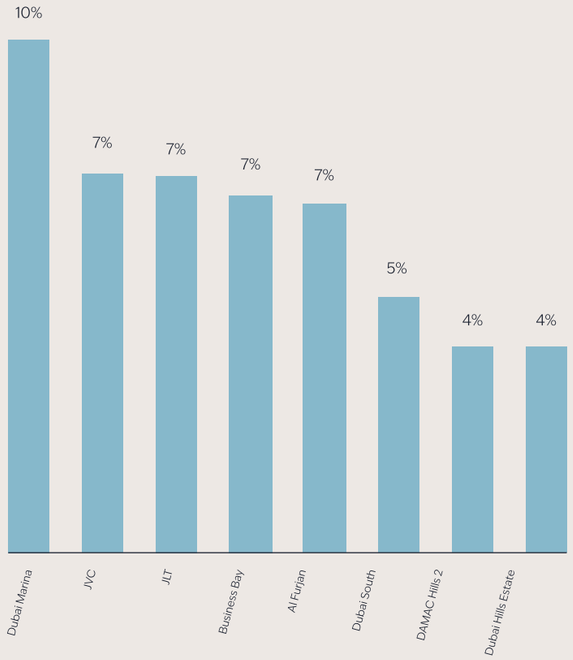
The finding is particularly notable among respondents who currently prefer a commute of less than fifteen minutes. Even within this group, 43% are open to living in one emirate and working in another, although a similar share, 42%, still say they prefer to live close to where they work. This suggests that improvements in transport connectivity could broaden the range of locations residents are willing to consider, even among those who currently place a high value on living close to work.

5.3 | Where demand is concentrated against where owners already hold

Dubai Marina leads current ownership at 10%, while Dubai South leads intended owner purchases at 14%

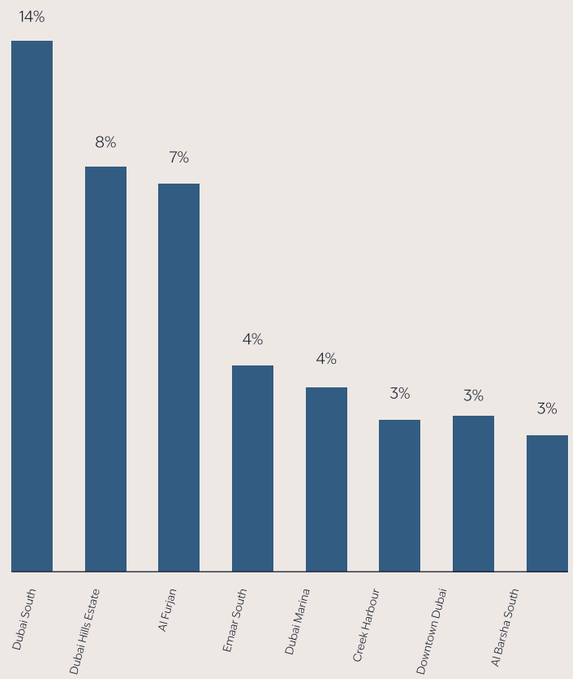
Three location measures in the 2026 survey capture where owners currently hold property, where owners considering another purchase intend to buy, and where tenants intending to buy are looking. Together, they show that future purchase interest is concentrated in a different mix of communities from current ownership. They describe three different populations, so the comparison is between what the sample holds now and what two separate groups say they want next, not a change of mind among the same people.

Where owners already own



% of all owners who own in each location (q34c and the q35 location series). "Other" 7% not shown.

Where they intend to buy next



% of owners considering a further purchase (q45b). "Other" 5% not shown.

Figure 5.3 Dubai Hills Estate ranks second among intended owner purchases at 8%, and Al Furjan third at 7%.

Tenant demand differs from both owner measures, with Al Furjan ranking first, followed by Dubai Hills Estate and Dubai South. The comparison points to a different geographic mix for future purchase interest from that represented in owners' current holdings.

Tenant purchase interest, 2026

Tenants intending to buy





q34c and the q35loo series, owners; q45b, owners considering another purchase; q27, tenants intending to buy. Purchase-intent questions were single choice from long location lists, so rankings are more informative than small differences in absolute percentages.

The interest in southern communities is not entirely new. Dubai South and Emaar South are already represented in the portfolios of 7% of owners. Dubai South and Dubai Hills also ranked among the more sought-after locations in the 2025 edition, suggesting their prominence in intended purchases has continued into 2026.

Dubai South leads intended owner purchases at 14% and accounts for 15.5% of Q2 sales

Dubai South is the clearest location where stated purchase interest and registered activity point in the same direction. The Dubai South cluster accounted for 15.5% of all residential unit sales registered in Dubai during the second quarter of 2026, compared with 6.3% in Jumeirah Village Circle, 4.3% in Business Bay and 1.7% in Dubai Marina.

Stated purchase intent against registered transactions

Location	Owners' next purchase	Tenants intending to buy	Share of Q2 2026 residential unit sales	Median sale price
Dubai South cluster	**14%**	**5%**	**15.5%**	**AED 850,000**
Jumeirah Village Circle	2%	3%	6.3%	AED 1,000,000
Business Bay	2%	2%	4.3%	AED 2,356,000
Al Furjan	7%	6%	2.1%	AED 1,039,000
Jumeirah Lake Towers	2%	2%	2.5%	AED 2,151,000
Dubai Marina	4%	3%	1.7%	AED 1,950,000
Dubai Hills Estate	8%	5%	1.0%	AED 2,059,000

Transaction data is calculated from Dubai Land Department registry records from 1 April to 30 June 2026, covering 33,064 residential unit sales. Where the registry records the same wider community under more than one name, relevant entries have been combined. Registry shares are percentages of all residential unit sales in Dubai during the quarter, not of the locations listed here. Survey figures measure stated purchase preference, while registry figures measure completed transactions across the wider market, so the two should be read as complementary indicators rather than directly comparable percentages.

The relationship is not uniform. Al Furjan and Dubai Hills Estate rank highly in stated purchase intent but account for smaller shares of Q2 transactions, at 2.1% and 1.0% respectively. Differences in available stock appear to be part of the picture. The Dubai South cluster recorded 5,134 residential unit sales during the quarter, 96% of them off-plan, compared with 78% across Dubai as a whole. Al Furjan recorded 682 sales and Dubai Hills Estate 321.

Al Furjan is already the fifth most commonly owned location in the sample, suggesting that interest is not purely aspirational. Its lower transaction share may also reflect a smaller volume of stock coming to market than in the launch-led communities further south. Price may be another factor in Dubai Hills Estate, where the median sale price of AED 2.06 million is around 2.4 times the AED 850,000 recorded in the Dubai South cluster.

Dubai Marina presents a different pattern. Only 19% of its Q2 sales were off-plan, the lowest share among the locations shown, meaning activity is predominantly concentrated in the resale market. Despite being the most commonly owned location in the sample, held by around one in ten owners, Dubai Marina accounted for 1.7% of Q2 residential unit sales. Its lower transaction share should therefore be read in the context of a market with far less off-plan activity than Dubai South, rather than as evidence of weak buyer interest on its own.

Interpretation. The survey establishes where respondents say they want to buy; it does not establish why they prefer those locations. Read alongside the wider findings on transport and community preferences, the results are consistent with residents considering a broader mix of locations, but they do not isolate supply, infrastructure, space or price as the cause.

5.4 | Bedroom demand against transacted supply

Buyers want three bedrooms, while studios reached 39% of Q2 2026 sales

Bedroom preferences show a different mix between what respondents currently own and what intending buyers want next. Three bedrooms is the most common configuration in both groups, but intending buyers show greater preference for three- and four-bedroom homes and less for one- and two-bedroom properties.

Bedroom count: what is owned against what is wanted

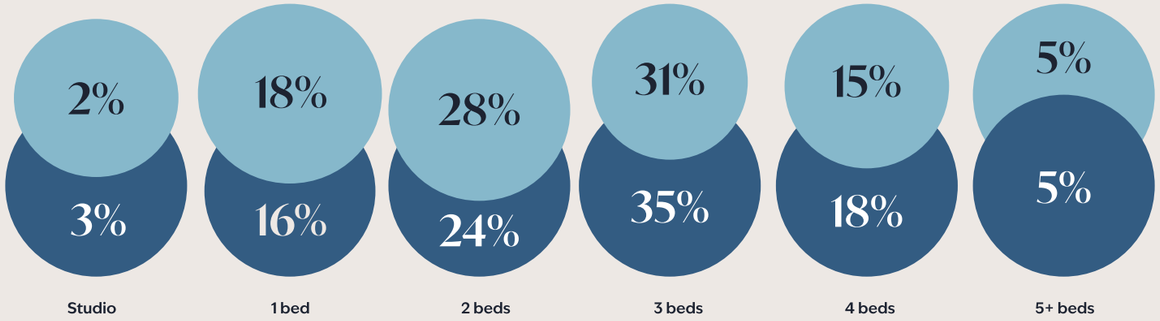


Figure 5.4 Intending buyers want more space: 23% want four bedrooms or more, against 20% of current holdings.

Three bedrooms is the most-wanted configuration among intending buyers at 35%, compared with 31% of current single-property owners. Preference for four bedrooms is also higher, at 18% compared with 15%, while the shares wanting one- and two-bedroom homes are lower. Overall, 23% of intending buyers want four bedrooms or more, up from 15% in 2025. The 2025 edition published the full distribution for the same question, and the movement is concentrated in one place: the share wanting three bedrooms is effectively unchanged at 34% in 2025 against 35% in 2026, while two bedrooms falls from 31% to 24% and one bedroom from 17% to 16%. The shift towards larger homes is therefore a move out of two-bedroom properties rather than a broad upsizing across every configuration. Among owners considering a further purchase, the same preference for larger homes is visible, with 22% looking for four bedrooms.

The wider respondent profile provides useful context. 80% of respondents are married and 59% live with a partner and children, suggesting household size may be relevant to the preference for larger homes.

Property type points in a similar direction. Among owners considering a further purchase, 42% are looking for an apartment, 33% a villa and 23% a townhouse. By comparison, 61% of single-property owners currently own an apartment. Intended purchases therefore show a greater preference for villas and townhouses than is represented in the current holdings of single-property owners.

q28, tenants intending to buy; q34b, single-property owners; q45c, owners considering a further purchase; q45a and q34a for property type. The property-type shares for owners considering a further purchase exclude 2% who selected another type. The two populations are different, so the comparison shows a difference between current holdings and stated intent rather than a change over time.

Transaction activity was concentrated in smaller units

The transaction mix during the survey period moved towards smaller configurations. Across Dubai residential unit sales, studios increased from 21.5% of residential unit sales in April 2026 to 39.4% in June 2026. Over the same period, one-bedroom homes fell from 42.3% to 34.7% and two-bedroom homes from 24.8% to 17.5%. Three-bedroom homes and above accounted for 6.7% of transactions in April and 4.5% in June.

This creates a clear contrast with stated buyer preferences, which are more heavily concentrated in three- and four-bedroom homes. The two measures are not directly comparable: the survey captures stated preferences among respondents intending to buy, while transaction data reflects purchases across the wider market. The comparison nevertheless shows that the homes respondents say they want next differ from the mix transacted during the survey period.

Transaction mix shifted towards smaller units

Figure 5.5 Studios rose from 21.5% of residential unit sales in April to 39.4% in June. Calculated from the Dubai Land Department transaction registry.

Calculated from 33,064 residential unit sales in the Dubai Land Department registry between 1 April and 30 June 2026. Between 4% and 4.7% of transactions each month carry no recorded bedroom count, shown as "other" in the chart above, so the four named shares sum to between 95% and 96% rather than 100%. The residue is broadly stable month to month and does not affect the direction of the movement.

Studios and one-bedroom homes together increased from 63.8% of residential unit sales in April to 74% in June, while the share of three-bedroom homes and above fell from 6.7% to 4.5%. Studios alone rose from 21.5% to 39.4% of transactions.

This contrasts with the survey finding that intending buyers show greater preference for three- and four-bedroom homes. The comparison does not mean that respondents who wanted larger homes ultimately bought smaller ones: the registry covers transactions across the entire market, while the survey captures stated preferences among a specific group of residents. It does, however, show that the mix of homes transacted during the survey period was weighted increasingly towards smaller units.

Median transaction value also fell over the quarter, from AED 1.52m in April 2026 to AED 1.08m in June 2026, while median price per square foot declined more modestly, from AED 1,860 to AED 1,710. This is consistent with a greater share of lower-value, smaller units being transacted, although the data does not establish affordability as the cause. Cost-of-living pressure and intended mortgage use provide relevant context, but they should not be used to infer why the wider market shifted towards smaller units.

The survey records what respondents say they want to buy, while the registry records completed transactions across the wider Dubai market. The comparison therefore shows a contrast between stated preference and the transaction mix, not a change of mind among the same buyers.

06

Market outlook and price expectations



Expectations for price growth have reversed across three editions, while respondents expecting a decline are also more likely to anticipate a larger movement. This section examines both the direction and scale of price expectations, alongside the wider market conditions in which respondents answered.

Key takeaways

- Price-growth expectations fell from 72% in 2024 to 32% in 2026 among all respondents. Among tenants, the comparable figure fell from 64% in 2025 to 30% in 2026.
- 53% now expect prices to fall, including 27% who expect a decline of more than 10%. Around 5% expect an increase of more than 10%.
- 40% describe the market as slightly overpriced, the largest single perception, while 22% describe it as investment-friendly and 22% as exciting and growing.
- 70% remain confident in Dubai's long-term economic and property prospects, including 32% who are very confident. A further 10% are cautious.
- 45% believe Dubai will rival the world's leading established property markets within five years, while a further 18% believe it already does.

6.1 | Expected direction and scale of price movement

53% expect prices to fall in the next 12 months, with 27% expecting a decline of more than 10%

32%

expect sale prices to rise in the next 12 months

72% in 2024

53%

expect sale prices to fall

27%

expect a fall of more than 10%

5% expect a rise above 10%

16%

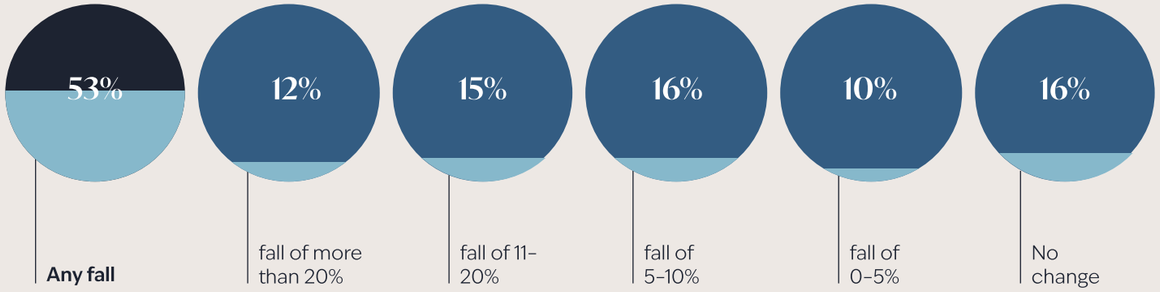
expect no change

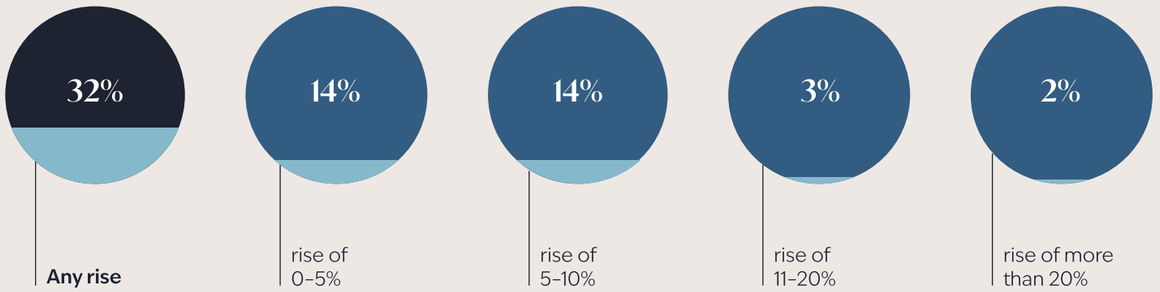
Price expectations have reversed across the three editions. In 2024, 72% of respondents expected sale prices to rise. In 2026, 53% expect prices to fall, 32% expect a rise and 16% expect no change.

Downside expectations are stronger not only in direction, but also in scale. 27% expect prices to fall by more than 10%, compared with around 5% who expect an increase of more than 10%. Among those expecting a decline, the most common band is a fall of 5–10%, selected by 16% of all respondents.

Expected movement in Dubai sale prices over the next 12 months, 2026

Expected movement





q51, base 1,714. Response bands are mutually exclusive. Grouped figures for "any fall" and "any rise" are calculated from the underlying response counts and rounded once, so they may differ slightly from the sum of the individually rounded bands.



Expected movement in Dubai sale prices over 12 months

All respondents, n = 1,714. A further 16% expect no change.

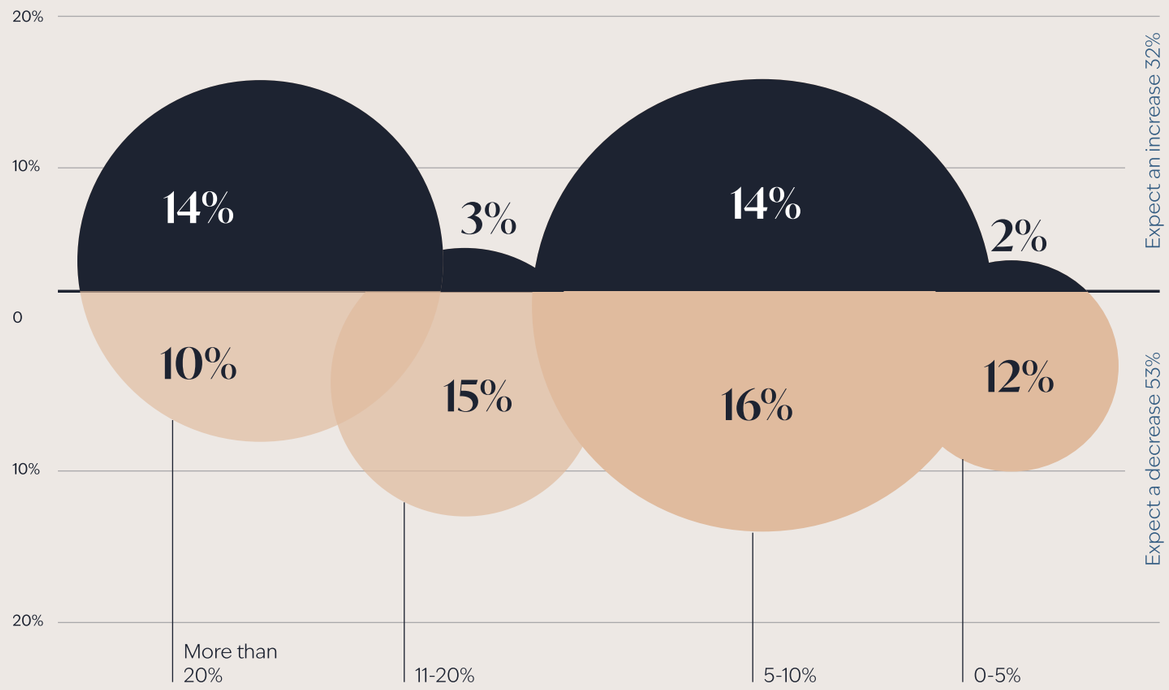


Figure 6.1 A fall of 5–10% is the single most common answer, chosen by 16% of respondents.

Sales price expectations, 2024 and 2026



All respondents. 2024 also recorded 8% unsure, an option not offered in 2026.

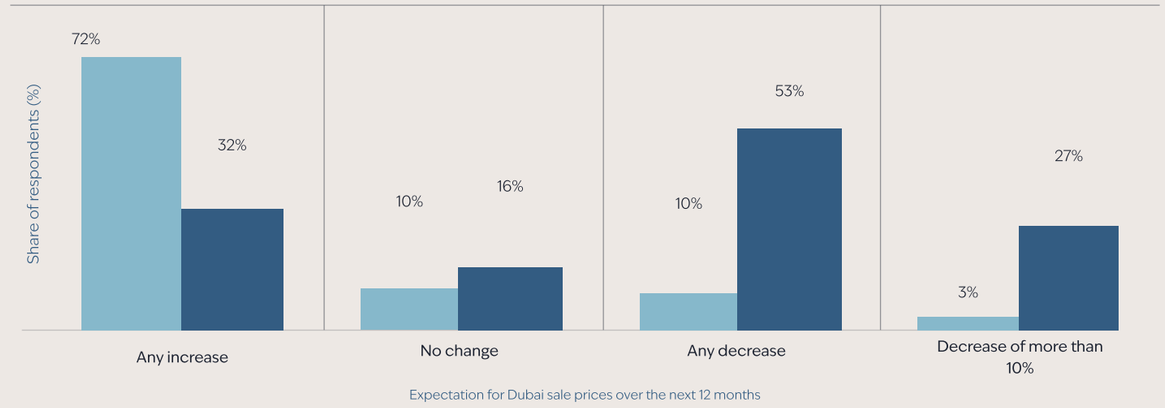


Figure 6.2 Expectations of a price rise fell from 72% in 2024 to 32% in 2026.

6.2 | Owner and tenant price expectations compared

A fall is the most common expectation among both tenants at 55% and owners at 47%

A rise is not the leading expectation for either group

Tenants Owners

Sale-price expectations by tenure, 2026. Among tenants, 64% expected a rise in 2025.

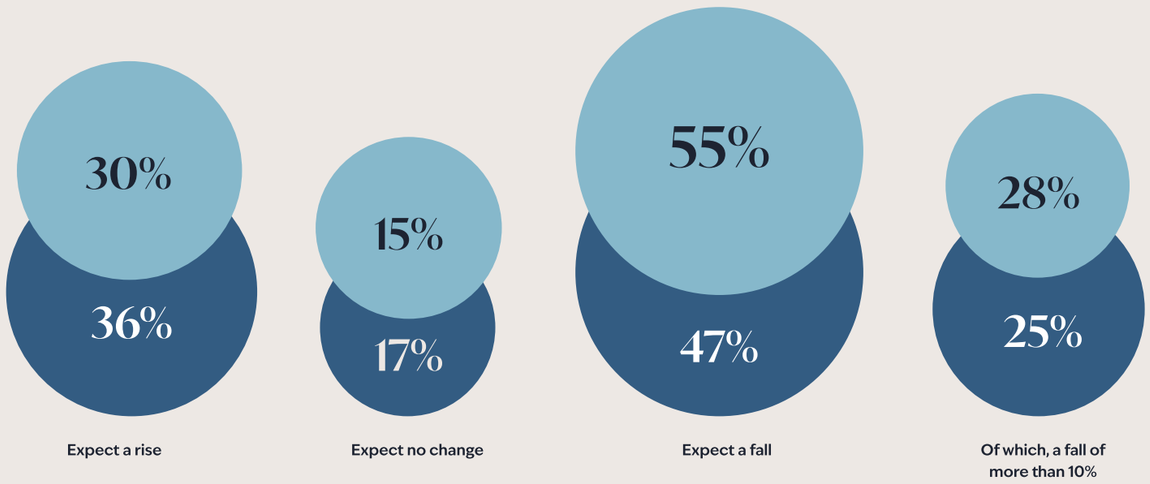


Figure 6.3 Expectations of no change are close too, at 15% of tenants and 17% of owners.

The more cautious outlook is visible across both tenure groups. Owners are slightly more optimistic, with 36% expecting a rise, but a fall is still the most common expectation at 47%. Among tenants, 55% expect prices to fall.

The scale of expected declines is also similar: 28% of tenants and 25% of owners expect prices to fall by more than 10%. While owners are somewhat more likely than tenants to expect growth, both groups show a clear tilt towards lower prices over the next 12 months.

q51, base 1,714, analysed by tenure.



6.3 | The conditions acting on the 2026 market

40% see the market as slightly overpriced as supply expands and regional uncertainty remains part of the backdrop

The survey establishes what residents think about the market, and will be influenced by a number of macro-economic and geopolitical factors. Several conditions were present during the first half of 2026 and provide useful context for interpreting the shift in price expectations.

Condition	What it is	Relevance to the 2026 outlook
Supply	The Dubai Land Department recorded 104 completed projects in the first half of 2026, delivering 24,537 residential units at an investment value of AED 111bn. Completed projects were up 38.7% on the first half of 2025.	A larger volume of completed stock increases the number of homes available to the market and provides context for more moderate price and rent expectations.
The base effect	After three consecutive years of growth, 40% of respondents describe the market as slightly overpriced, the largest single assessment.	Expectations for further growth are being formed from a higher starting point than in earlier editions.
Rental regulation	Dubai's rental index limits the increase a landlord may apply at renewal according to how the existing rent compares with the benchmark for that area and property type.	The framework limits some renewal increases and provides context for the sharp moderation in tenant rent expectations reported in Section 2.
Regional conditions	The first half of 2026 included a period of heightened regional uncertainty, which eased through the second quarter	This provides context for short-term caution, although the survey does not establish how much it influenced expectations for property prices.

Sources: Dubai Land Department completed-projects release, first half of 2026; Dubai Land Department rental index; survey q50, base 1,714. These conditions are presented as context. The survey does not establish which, if any, caused the change in respondents' expectations.

Policy continued to support access to ownership

Government measures also remained in place during this period. The Golden Visa route for property investors applies from a minimum property value of AED 2 million and provides a renewable ten-year residence, while the First-Time Home Buyer Programme gives eligible residents who do not already own freehold property in Dubai access to benefits including priority access to new launches, preferential off-plan pricing, improved mortgage terms and the ability to pay registration fees by card on properties valued below AED 5 million. Twenty-one developers and five banks participate.

These measures are designed to widen access to ownership. In the survey, 70% of respondents say government policies or initiatives influenced their property decisions.

Sources: Dubai Land Department Golden Visa and First-Time Home Buyer service pages; survey q59, base 1,714.

Taken together, the 2026 findings sit against a market with more completed supply, a higher starting point for prices, continued policy support for ownership and a period of regional uncertainty. These conditions provide context for the combination seen in the survey: more cautious price expectations alongside resilient longer-term commitment to Dubai. They should not, however, be read as a causal explanation for that shift.



6.4 | Overall perception of the market today

40% see the market as slightly overpriced, while 43% still describe it positively

40%
say the market is slightly overpriced
the largest single response

22%
say it is still investment-friendly

22%
say it is exciting and growing

17%
describe it as saturated or very risky
10% saturated, 7% very risky

Overall perception of the Dubai market today

All respondents, n = 1,714

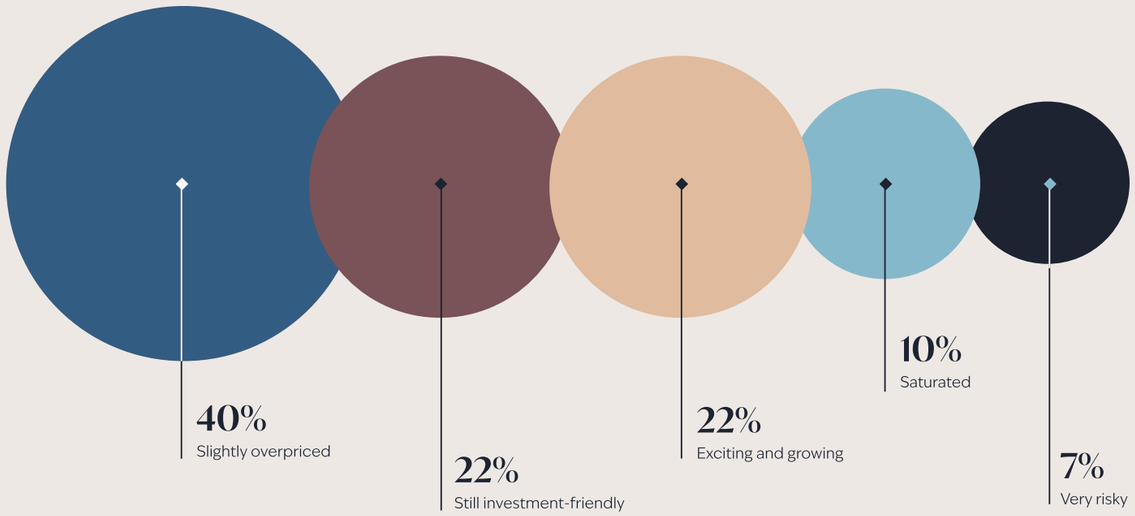


Figure 6.4 40% call the market slightly overpriced, while 43% choose one of the two positive descriptions.

Asked to describe the market today, 40% of respondents selected slightly overpriced, making it the largest single response. At the same time, 22% describe the market as still investment-friendly and 22% as exciting and growing, meaning 43% selected one of the two positive descriptions. A further 10% describe the market as saturated and 7% as very risky.

Expectation and assessment are different judgements: one is about where prices go next, the other about the market as it stands today.

q50, base 1,714, single choice.

6.5 | Confidence in Dubai's long-term prospects

70% are confident in Dubai's long-term prospects, against 10% who are cautious

70%
are confident in Dubai's long-term prospects
37% confident, 32% very confident

20%
are neutral

10%
are cautious or very cautious
8% cautious, 2% very cautious

Respondents were asked about their confidence in Dubai's long-term economic growth and real estate prospects. 70% are confident or very confident, 20% are neutral and 10% are cautious or very cautious.

The finding creates a clear distinction between the short- and long-term outlook. While 53% expect sale prices to fall over the next 12 months, 70% remain confident in Dubai's longer-term prospects. The two measures capture different judgements: respondents can expect a near-term correction in property prices while remaining positive about Dubai's longer-term economic and real estate outlook.

q57, base 1,714, single choice.

6.6 | Views on Dubai's position among global property markets

62% believe Dubai already rivals, or will rival, the world's leading property markets within five years

45%

believe Dubai will rival the top legacy markets within five years

18%

believe it already does

38%

say it is too early to tell

Taken together, the two positive answers account for 62% of respondents, who place Dubai either already among, or on course to join, the world's leading property markets. A further 38% say it is too early to tell.

Q52, base 1,714, single choice. Percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100%. The 2025 edition used different response options, so no direct year-on-year comparison is made.



07

Regional confidence, property decisions and policy



67% say confidence in Dubai held or improved following regional developments, while 70% say government policy influenced their property decisions.

Unlike most of the report, the questions in this section ask respondents directly whether specific factors influenced their confidence, behaviour or property decisions. Confidence and behaviour are reported separately because they did not move in the same way: respondents could remain confident in Dubai while still delaying or reassessing a property decision.

Key takeaways

- 67% say their confidence in Dubai either increased or was unaffected following recent regional developments. Confidence increased for 45%, while 23% reported no impact. By contrast, 33% became more cautious, including 6% who say they reconsidered their longer-term plans in the region.
- Property behaviour was more cautious than confidence alone suggests. 36% say regional developments had no influence on their property decisions, 25% slowed or paused a decision, 21% became more committed and 10% accelerated plans because Dubai felt safe or stable. A further 8% are reassessing their longer-term property plans in the region.
- Government policy is materially influencing property decisions. 70% say policies or initiatives influenced their decision, including 33% who describe policy as a primary reason for investing. A further 5% were unaware of the relevant initiatives.
- Interest in overseas property is substantial, but it does not amount to a wholesale move away from the UAE. 47% are considering or actively planning property investment abroad, while 25% say they intend to keep their investment in the UAE.

7.1 | Effect of regional developments on confidence

67% say confidence in Dubai held or improved following regional developments, while 6% are reconsidering their long-term plans in the region

67%

say their confidence held or improved

45% rose, 23% unchanged

45%

say recent regional developments raised their confidence

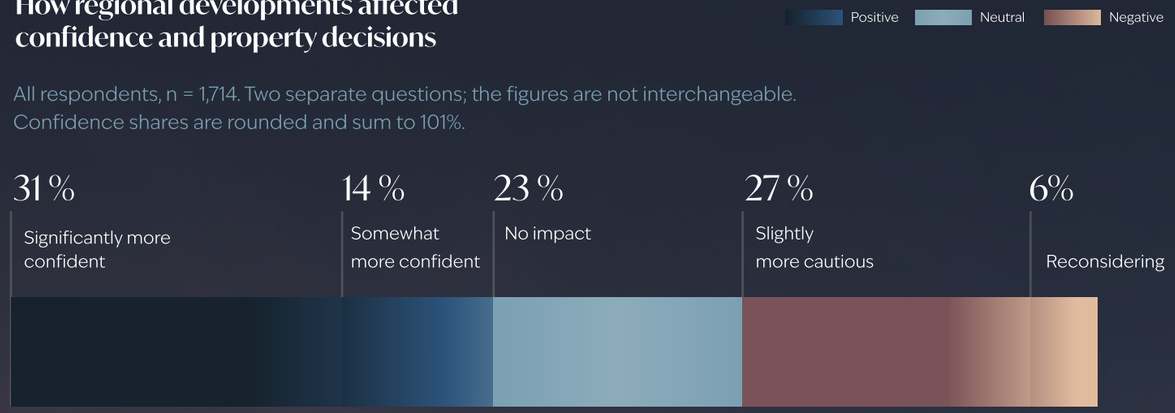
27%

became more cautious

6%

are reconsidering their long-term plans in the UAE

How regional developments affected confidence and property decisions



All respondents, n = 1,714. Two separate questions; the figures are not interchangeable. Confidence shares are rounded and sum to 101%.

Figure 7.1 Confidence moved further than behaviour: 45% became more confident, while 36% report no change at all to their property decisions.

The questionnaire referred throughout to "recent regional developments" and named no events, countries or parties. Respondents were asked directly how those developments affected their confidence in Dubai as a place to live and invest.

45% said their confidence increased, while 23% reported no impact. Taken together, 67% therefore came through the period with their confidence in Dubai either unchanged or stronger. By contrast, 27% became slightly more cautious and 6% said they were reconsidering their longer-term plans in the region.

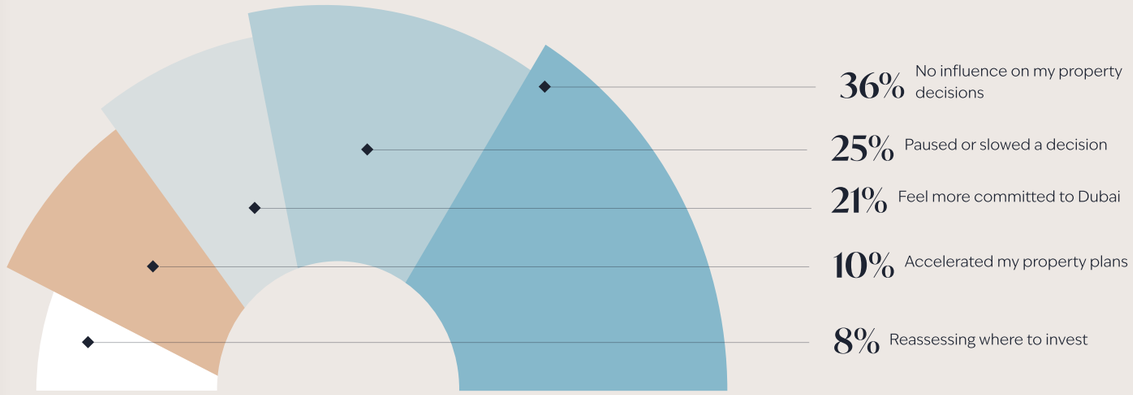
q55, base 1,714, single choice. The five response options are mutually exclusive and sum to 100%. The combined 67% is calculated from underlying response counts and rounded once, rather than by adding the rounded 45% and 23% figures.



7.2 | Effect of regional developments on property decisions

36% made no change to their property decisions, while 31% became more committed or accelerated plans and 33% slowed or reassessed

Effect on property decisions



Share of all respondents

q56, base 1,714, single choice.

Asked directly whether recent regional developments had influenced their property decisions, 36% said they had no influence, making this the largest single response. Among those whose behaviour did change, the movement was almost evenly divided. 31% report a more positive response, comprising 21% who feel more committed to Dubai and 10% who accelerated their property plans. By contrast, 33% either paused or slowed a decision at 25%, or are reassessing where to invest at 8%.

7.3 | Sentiment and property behaviour compared

45% became more confident in Dubai, but property decisions were almost evenly split: 31% positive, 33% cautious

Read together, the two questions show an important difference between confidence in Dubai and short-term property behaviour. 45% said regional developments increased their confidence in Dubai, while 33% became more cautious or reconsidered their longer-term plans.

Property decisions were more evenly divided: 31% reported a positive response and 33% a cautious one, while a further 36% said their property decisions were unaffected.

The distinction is important. Regional developments produced a stronger positive movement in confidence than in immediate property behaviour. Respondents could feel more confident about Dubai while still delaying a purchase or investment decision in the short term.

That pattern is consistent with the wider survey. Tenant purchase intent remains at 55%, intended stay has risen to 69%, and homeownership has reached 32%, even as respondents have become considerably more cautious about near-term property prices. The findings therefore point to a separation between short-term decision-making and longer-term commitment.

These questions are unusual within the survey because respondents were explicitly asked how recent regional developments affected their confidence and property decisions. They therefore capture respondents' own attribution of change, rather than an association inferred from separate measures. They still record what respondents say influenced them, rather than independently establishing the size of that effect.



7.4 | Influence of government policy and initiatives

70% say Dubai's policies influenced their decision to invest, including 33% who call them a primary reason

70% say policies or initiatives influenced their decision

37% somewhat,
33% very significantly

33% describe policy as a primary reason for investing

25% are neutral

5% were unaware of the relevant initiatives

How much have Dubai's policies influenced your decision to invest here?

All respondents, n = 1,714. 70% say policy influenced the decision.

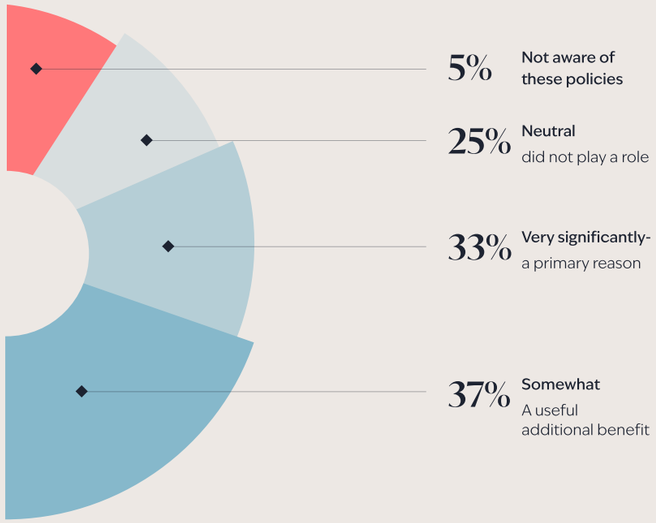


Figure 7.2 25% say policy played no role in the decision, and 5% were unaware of the initiatives.

Respondents were asked directly how much Dubai's policies and initiatives influenced their decision to invest. 33% said they influenced the decision very significantly and were a primary reason, while a further 37% described them as a useful additional benefit. Combined, 70% say policy played at least some role in their decision.

A further 25% say policy did not play a role, while only 5% were unaware of the relevant initiatives. Read alongside the ownership-access measures outlined earlier in the report, the finding shows that these policies are not simply visible to respondents: one in three identify them as a primary factor in their investment decision.

q59, base 1,714, single choice.

7.5 | Interest in property investment abroad

47% are considering property abroad, but 61% of them also plan to buy in Dubai

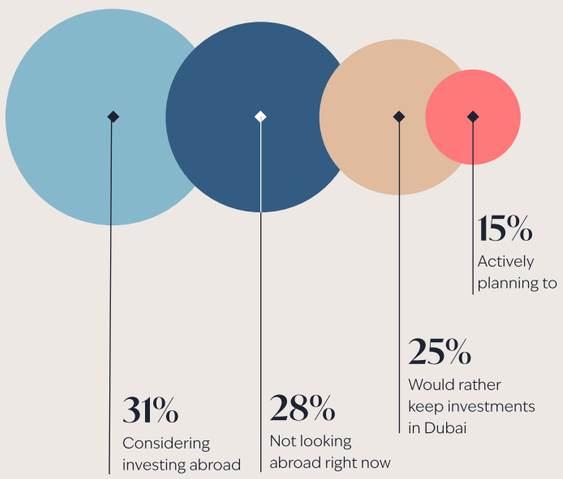
31%
are considering property investment abroad

15%
are actively planning an overseas purchase

28%
are not currently looking abroad

25%
would rather keep their property investment in Dubai

Would you invest in property abroad?



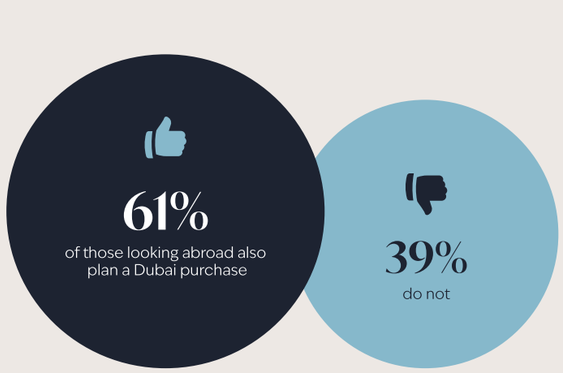


Figure 7.3 25% would rather keep their property investment in Dubai, and 28% are not currently looking abroad.

47% of respondents are either considering or actively planning a property investment outside Dubai within the next one to three years. A further 28% are not currently looking abroad, while 25% would rather keep their property investment in Dubai.

Overseas interest does not necessarily mean respondents are turning away from Dubai. Among respondents considering or actively planning an overseas purchase, 61% also intend to buy property in Dubai. The remaining 39% do not. For most of those looking abroad, the data therefore points to adding an overseas investment alongside Dubai rather than replacing it.

Nationality again shows a marked difference. 60% of British respondents are considering or planning a property purchase abroad, compared with 39% of Indian respondents and 47% across the full sample.



08

Technology and the property search



Residents are already using AI in a property search, and the people using it most are also the most likely to check what it tells them. This section covers which tools residents use, how far they trust them, and what they expect technology to change.

Key takeaways

- AI is already part of the property search for many residents, but human verification remains important. 41% have used a general AI assistant during a property search, while 46% have used no AI or digital tool. Among respondents who have used a tool, 52% say AI is helpful but still cross-check it with a human expert, while only 4% say they do not trust it.
- General tools are used far more than property-specific ones. 41% have used a general AI assistant during a search, against 12% who used a website chatbot, 12% virtual tours or AI staging and 9% an automated valuation model.
- Distrust of AI sits almost entirely with those who have never used it. 39% of non-users do not trust it for property decisions, against 4% of those who have used a tool.

8.1 | Use of AI and digital tools in a property search

46% used no digital tool in their search, and 41% used a general AI assistant

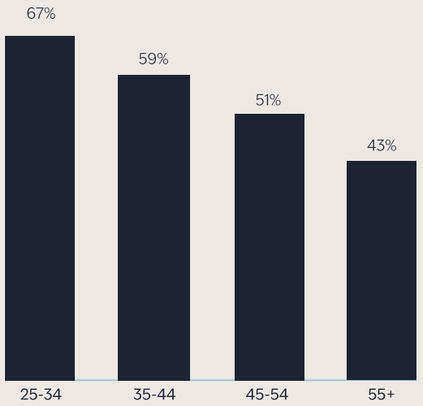
54% have used at least one AI or digital tool in a property search

41% have used a general AI assistant

12% have used a chatbot on a property website

9% have used an automated valuation model

Used any tool, by age



Tools used during property search

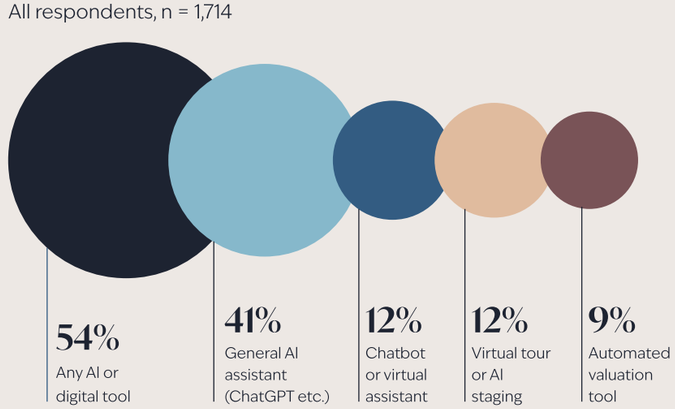


Figure 8.1 41% have used a general AI assistant in a property search, against 12% who used a chatbot built for property.

46% of respondents have used no AI or digital tool during a property search, and 54% have used at least one. The most-used by a wide margin is the general AI assistant, at 41%. Tools built specifically for property are used far less: website chatbots by 12%, virtual tours or AI staging by 12% and automated valuation models by 9%. The gap between the two is the finding. Where residents use AI for property, they are mostly using a general-purpose assistant rather than anything the industry has built for them. Use also falls steadily with age: 67% of respondents aged 25–34 have used at least one tool, against 59% of those aged 35–44, 51% of those aged 45–54 and 43% of those aged 55 and over.

q62, base 1,714, multi-select. Every respondent answered. Respondents could select more than one tool, so shares do not sum to 100%; "none" was an exclusive option and no respondent combined it with a tool.

8.2 | How useful residents find AI

Among those who have used AI, 52% verify it with a human expert and only 4% distrust it

52%
of AI users find it helpful but still cross-check with a human expert

15%
of AI users rely on it heavily
without cross-checking

4%
of AI users do not trust it for property decisions

39%
of those who have never used a tool do not trust it

Distrust of AI sits almost entirely with those who have never used it

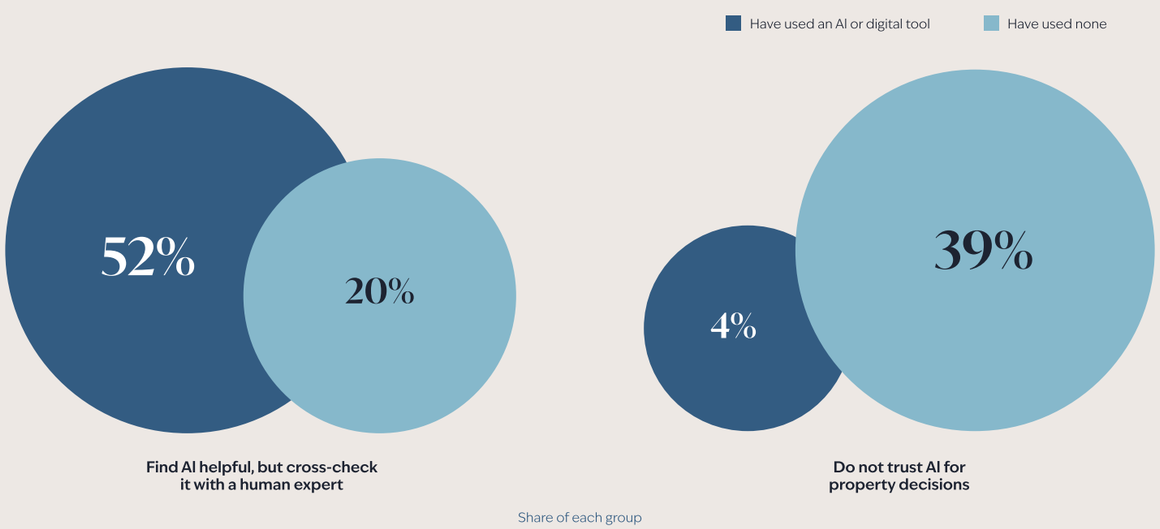


Figure 8.2 Distrust of AI sits with non-users: 39% of those who have never used a tool, against 4% of those who have.

Among those who answered, 37% describe AI as helpful but still cross-check with human experts, 25% find it occasionally useful, 20% do not trust it for property decisions, 9% rely on it heavily and 8% do not find it helpful. That overall figure mixes two very different groups, because the question was put to respondents who had never used a tool as well as to those who had. Separating them is what makes the finding legible.

Conclusion

Market expectations have softened, but long-term commitment remains

- Expectations have shifted significantly. In 2024, 72% expected sale prices to rise; in 2026, just 32% do, while 53% now expect prices to fall. Rent expectations have moved in the same direction, with the share expecting increases falling from 77% in 2024 to 34% in 2026.
- Tenant purchase intent remains at 55%, unchanged from 2025, while homeownership has risen from 23% in 2024 to 32% in 2026. At the same time, 69% now say they intend to remain in Dubai for ten years or more.
- **What this means:**
  expectations around short-term market performance have moderated, but this has not translated into weaker long-term commitment to Dubai.
- **The key takeaway:**
  Residents are separating their view of the market from their view of Dubai. Expectations around prices and rents have changed, but many still intend to buy, own and remain in the city.

Regional developments affected decisions more than confidence

This year's survey provides the first direct reading of how heightened regional uncertainty influenced residents.

- 45% say regional developments increased their confidence in Dubai, while 23% report no impact. Property decisions were more mixed: 25% paused or slowed a decision, compared with 21% who became more committed and 10% who accelerated their plans.
- **What this means:**
  regional developments appear to have influenced the timing of some property decisions more than residents' longer-term confidence in Dubai.
- **The key takeaway:**
  Confidence remained stronger than short-term property activity. The next question is whether decisions delayed in 2026 return to the market later.

Cost of living is the clearest pressure point

The strongest source of pressure identified in the survey is the cost of living.

- Long-term intent is highest among residents who feel Dubai's quality of life justifies its cost, with 79% intending to remain for ten years or more. Even among respondents who have seriously considered leaving, however, 61% still intend to stay for at least a decade.

- **What this means:**
  cost pressures are affecting how residents experience life in Dubai more than whether they see a long-term future here.

- **The key takeaway:**
  The challenge is maintaining the value residents feel they receive from living in Dubai as costs rise.

Buyers are looking for more space

The survey also points to a shift in the type of homes future buyers want.

- Three-bedroom homes are now the most popular choice among intending buyers at 35%, while 23% want four bedrooms or more, up from 15% in 2025. Townhouse preference has also increased.

- **What this means:**
  demand is increasingly centred on space, functionality and liveability.

- Residents are equally clear about what they value within communities: green space ranks first, followed by build quality and parking, ahead of smart-home technology and sustainability features.

- **The key takeaway:**
  Future supply will need to respond not only to how many homes Dubai needs, but to the type of homes residents increasingly want.

What to watch in 2027

The next edition will show whether:

- expectations for prices and rents begin to stabilise.
- property decisions that were paused or slowed translate into future activity.
- demand for larger homes and more space continues to grow.
- rising homeownership continues its upward trajectory.
- long-term commitment to Dubai remains strong as residents' priorities continue to evolve.

The question for 2027

Will changing market expectations begin to influence the long-term decisions residents are making about where and how they live?

For now, the findings show a clear distinction between the two. Fewer respondents expect further property price and rent increases than three years ago, while purchase intent and intended stay remain resilient and homeownership among respondents has risen.



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