

MEDIA RELEASE

Covid Has Fundamentally Changed How We View Our Homes, Says Leading Industry Intelligence Provider

- *Barbour ABI's Annual Home Improvement Report reveals planning applications in 2021 up 25% on pre-pandemic levels*
- *Optimism tempered by potential impact of cost-of-living crisis, economic uncertainty, political instability and inflation*

LONDON UK, June 8, 2022 – Leading construction industry intelligence provider, Barbour ABI, has revealed the extent to which the Covid pandemic has impacted the home improvement industry in its annual Home Improvement Report, launched today.

Anecdotal evidence that remote working had led to a surge in home improvement projects is borne out by the data, with domestic planning applications in 2021 jumping by more than 25% over pre-pandemic levels.

Barbour ABI's Chief Economist, Tom Hall, commented: "The pandemic saw a huge shift in ways of working for many people and this is reflected in the extraordinary growth in domestic planning applications in 2021. There were reports of unprecedented levels of house moves as many sought the space and tranquility of the country, but the data in our Home Improvement Report also reveals the extent to which many people chose to remain in, but enhance, their family homes. Loft conversions, extensions, garden buildings, home offices and even garden landscaping planning applications surged in 2021."

There was a significant surge across the country, but the North of England saw the largest rise in activity with levels of home improvement planning applications in the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East increasing by almost 30% over pre-pandemic levels. Overall, although London and the South East saw the lowest growth they still accounted for the largest volume of applications.

Anna Scothern, CEO of the NHIC (National Home Improvement Council), said: "This spectacular increase in the desire to invest in improving our homes is fantastic news for the industry and the many small, family run, local businesses that are the backbone of it. What the data shows is that the increase cannot be entirely accounted for by latent desire pent up during the pandemic and associated lockdown periods. This looks like a more fundamental shift in how we view our homes and how much we are prepared to invest in them."

While the pandemic may have had a positive impact on the UK's home improvement industry, the picture ahead is not entirely rosy.

Hall explained: "Although the pandemic led to demand for home improvements skyrocketing, supply was thrown into chaos. Covid restrictions only heightened the pressure created by the challenging trading environment caused by Brexit. There is a deep unease over the medium-term future of the industry. The cost-of-living crisis, inflation, economic

uncertainty and political instability are all beginning to bite, and it is anyone's guess at the moment how severe and lengthy these issues will be for the industry."

The full report is available via [this link](#)

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