

# More take step away from home ownership

by John Houseman

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**NEARLY one in five movers are considering getting off the property ladder in a bid to cash in on the value of their home before prices fall, figures showed today.**

Around 18 per cent of homeowners who are planning to move said they were thinking of going into rented accommodation in the hope they would be able to sell their home near the top of the market and buy another once prices have fallen, according to change of address website [iammoving.com](http://iammoving.com).

Most house price indexes have shown slight falls in the value of homes in the past few months as the market suffers from the combined impact of stretched affordability and mortgage lenders' tightening their

lending criteria. But, while most commentators expect house prices to end the year at around the same level they started it, some are predicting falls of up to 10 per cent in the coming two years.

The research also found a further 14 per cent of people planning to move are considering renting in a bid to free up some of the money they have tied up in their home in order to ease cashflow problems.

Simon Preston, chairman of [iammoving.com](http://iammoving.com), said the group decided to commission the research after seeing a switch among people moving from being homeowners to renting.

He said: "We could see that people were still moving but there was a shift towards renting. Our findings show that much of this is down to the problems in the housing market and the fact that people are struggling financially.

"You expect people to consider renting when the market is falling because there is a chance to make money, but 18 per cent is a high figure.

"The 14 per cent who indicated they might move to rented accommodation because they have money worries will find it hard to get back on to the ladder if they spend too much of their equity."

The survey of 1,100 people also found nine per cent of people were thinking of renting a home following a relationship break-up, while seven

property ladder because they were planning to move abroad and three per cent did not want the responsibility of owning a home any more.

Nicholas Leeming, director of website [propertyfinder.com](http://propertyfinder.com), warned that people hoping to cash in on house price falls by getting off the property ladder were playing a "dangerous game".

He said: "It's a dangerous game to speculate on the property market with your own home and is not for the faint-hearted.

"The average property has to fall around seven per cent in value before you even break even once you take all the costs of selling, moving and then buying again into account. Stamp duty is the biggest cost.

"For people in more expensive homes, the market has to fall further

still - nearer eight per cent. So you need the market to drop a very long way before this starts to look like an attractive prospect. And you have to consider how much the hassle and upheaval is worth to you."

He added that the rental market was very busy at the moment, and people who wanted