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Holding company formations hit a record in 2026, while new buy-to-let companies fall

An analysis of Companies House data on every UK company on the register at 1 November 2026, comparing companies formed in January to October of each year since 2019.

20,738
holding companies formed Jan to Oct 2026, more than in the whole of 2025 (19,917)

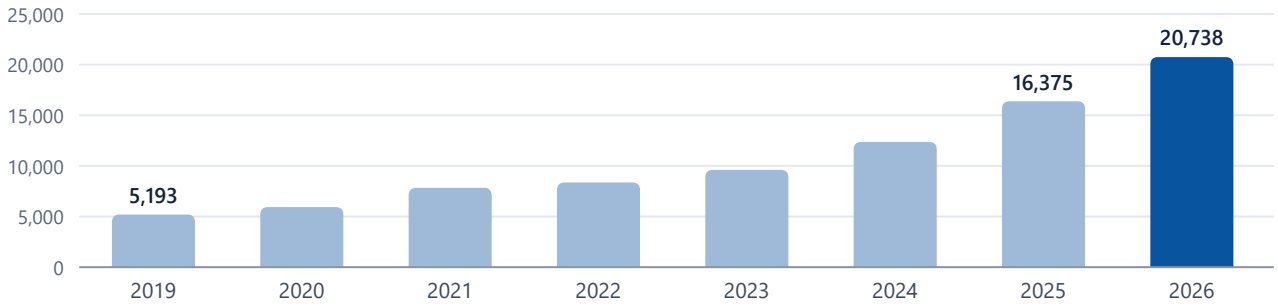
+27%
holding company formations compared with Jan to Oct 2025, and four times the 2019 level

−23%
fall in new property letting companies in October 2026 compared with October 2025

Key findings

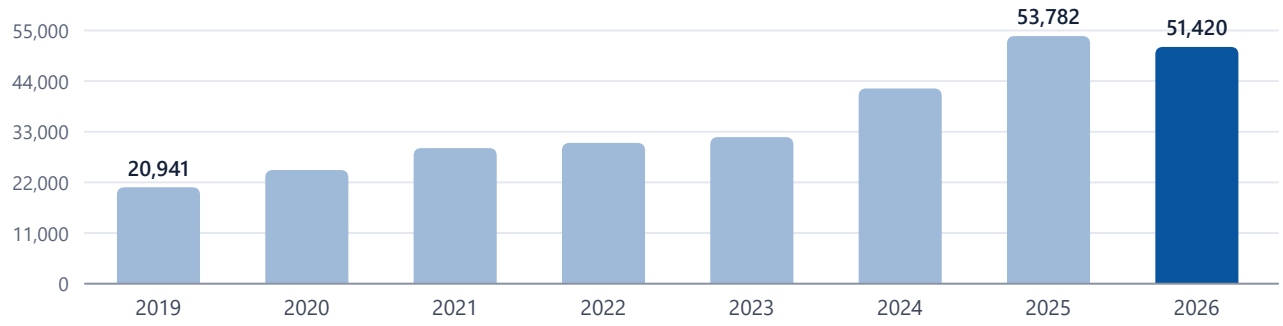
- **A record year for holding companies.** 20,738 holding companies (SIC 64209) were formed in the first ten months of 2026, up 27% on the same period of 2025 and already more than in the whole of 2025. The four busiest months on record have all fallen in the last nine months, led by March 2026 (2,541).
- **Far faster than company formations overall.** All new company formations rose 11% over the same period, so holding companies are growing at more than twice the overall rate.
- **New buy-to-let companies have dipped for the first time in years.** 51,420 property letting companies (SIC 68209) were formed in January to October 2026, down 4% on 2025, after rising every year since 2019. October 2026 was 23% lower than October 2025.
- **Property trading companies fell further.** Companies buying and selling their own property (SIC 68100) fell 10%, from 38,502 to 34,503.

Holding companies formed, January to October



SIC 64209 (activities of other holding companies). Companies still on the register at 1 November 2026.

Property letting companies formed, January to October



SIC 68209 (other letting and operating of own or leased real estate). Companies still on the register at 1 November 2026.

What is driving the change

The data shows what is happening, not why, but the timing fits the tax changes owners and landlords have faced:

- **Business owners are restructuring before the rules tighten.** The Business Asset Disposal Relief lifetime limit falls from £1 million to £500,000 from 6 April 2027, inheritance tax relief for business and agricultural property has been restricted since April 2026, and a new main purpose test applies to share exchanges and demergers from 26 November 2025. A holding company is the usual starting point for a sale, a demerger, protecting cash from trading risk or passing a business to the next generation.
- **Landlords are pausing on incorporation.** Property income will be taxed at 24%, 44% and 49% from April 2027. Many landlords are waiting to see how the new rates, mortgage costs and the incorporation rules affect them before setting up a new company, and October's fall came in the run-up to the Budget on 28 October.

The figures

Companies formed, January to October	Holding companies	Property letting companies
2019	5,193	20,941
2020	5,930	24,684
2021	7,832	29,441
2022	8,359	30,578
2023	9,605	31,834
2024	12,362	42,396
2025	16,375	53,782
2026	20,738	51,420

Method

Source: Companies House free company data product (BasicCompanyData), snapshot dated 1 November 2026, covering about 5.7 million companies on the register. Companies are counted by incorporation date and by the SIC codes they declared. A company with several codes is counted once in each relevant category. The snapshot contains companies on the register at that date, so companies already dissolved are not included. This reduces the earlier years more than the recent ones, which is why the main comparisons are between 2025 and 2026. Figures are for January to October of each year so that every year is compared like for like. Free to use with credit to ASWATAX and a link to this report.

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