

When it comes to adding valuable living space in Solihull, homeowners often face a tough choice: extend their home or move to a bigger property. Thanks to escalating house prices and high Stamp Duty fees, many are looking at smarter, more cost-effective ways to increase their usable space—starting with the cheapest extra space option they have: the humble garage conversion.

But with quotes ranging wildly from £8,500 to £20,000 for a typical 15 sqm garage conversion, the question is: are these figures realistic? And why is there such a huge price gap in Solihull? I've spent 12 years estimating and managing UK residential projects, so let's cut through the confusion with hard figures, reputable data sources, and practical tips based on local planning rules.

Solihull's Price Gap Is Driving "Extend, Not Move" Decisions

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Solihull's average house price is predicted to continue an upward trend well into 2026. The **ONS May 2026 local house price breakdowns** show that prices here are outperforming many areas in the West Midlands. As a result, many homeowners are squeezed: the cost of moving to a larger home—factoring in Stamp Duty, estate agent fees, and legal costs—often exceeds the cost of making your current home work harder for you.

In tangible terms:

- Moving costs (including Stamp Duty) can easily add 5-10% on top of the property price—in a market where the average Solihull house now commands around £300,000, that's £15,000 to £30,000 or more locked into fees and taxes with no extra living space gained.
- By contrast, a well-managed garage conversion—even at £15,000 to £20,000 maximum—adds usable living space and can increase the value of your home without the heavy upfront costs of moving.

This is why many Solihull residents turn to conversions rather than moving, especially when they want to stay put near good schools, transport links, and community amenities.

Understanding the 15 sqm Garage Conversion Cost Range

Checkatrade data, pulled from tradespeople across the UK, confirms that the typical cost for a garage conversion of about 15 square metres usually falls between **£8,500 and £20,000**. Here's what accounts for the wide range:

1. **Scope of works:** Basic garage conversions—think insulating walls, adding plasterboard, flooring and electrics—can run closer to £8,500 if you handle any internal decorating yourself.
2. **Quality and finishes:** If you are adding bathrooms, full heating upgrades, or bespoke storage, costs escalate quickly and can approach or exceed £20,000.
3. **Structural changes:** Extra costs come in if you remove garage doors and replace them with windows and walls, or need damp-proofing or flooring reinforcement.
4. **Local labour and materials costs:** Solihull tradespeople tend to charge a slight premium compared to the national average, mainly due to demand and local material prices.

It's worth noting that these quotes should include VAT and a contingency for unexpected works—something many quotes omit to their client's peril. If you don't see VAT explicitly stated, ask your contractor before you commit.

Is It Cheaper Than Extending?

Absolutely. By comparison, a single-storey rear extension averaging 20 to 30 sqm can set you back **£1,800 to £2,500 per square metre**, meaning a modest 25 sqm extension will cost around £45,000 to £62,500+—far more than even the top end of a quality garage conversion.

Two-storey extensions, often needed for extra bedrooms or larger living areas, can push well beyond £3,000 per square metre and introduce further planning hurdles and structural concerns, not to mention increased neighbour impact which can delay approvals.

Planning and Permitted Development in Solihull: Don't Forget the Paperwork

Another common oversight when budgeting a garage conversion is the assumption that planning permission is unnecessary. While many conversions fall under *permitted development rights*, Solihull residents should always perform due diligence:

- **Solihull Council pre-application enquiry:** This service can give you an early steer on whether your project needs formal planning permission or building regulation approval. It's a small investment that can save thousands by avoiding rejected plans or rework.
- **Planning application and permitted development checks:** Even if you don't formally apply, it's wise to consult Solihull's planning pages to confirm whether your garage conversion maintains the property's footprint and complies with permitted development rules. Conversions that include side extensions or increased roof heights may trigger planning applications.

Ignoring this step can lead to costly retrospective planning fees [Solihull property price trends](#) or enforcement notices that delay your project.





The True Cost: What People Forget to Budget For

From my experience in project management, homeowners frequently overlook these critical cost items:

- **Contingency buffer:** Always allocate at least 10-15% contingency. Site surprises like damp remediation or unexpected wiring can add unforeseen expenses.
- **Building Regulations fees:** These are separate from planning fees and vary depending on the complexity of your project.
- **Professional fees:** Structural engineers may be necessary if removing load-bearing walls. Architectural or design fees add to your upfront costs.
- **Utility upgrades:** If the garage isn't connected to heating or requires additional electrical work, factor this in.
- **Skip hire and site preparation:** Often overlooked, these are necessary for waste removal and site clearance.

What About Moving Costs?

Looking at the bigger picture, moving to a larger property in Solihull comes with major additional costs you gain no extra floor area from:

Cost type	Typical fee range	Notes
Stamp Duty	£15,000 - £30,000+	Based on house price circa £300,000 - £460,000
Estate agent fees	£6,000 - £9,000	Usually 1.5% to 3% of sale price
Legal and conveyancing fees	£1,000 - £1,500	Including searches
Removal costs	£500 - £1,500	Varies by volume and distance

When you add these up, the "hidden" cost of moving can more than double your budget for gaining additional living space. This is why checkatrade garage conversion figures and local wisdom strongly favour expanding rather than relocating.

Summary: Is £8,500 to £20,000 a Realistic Garage Conversion Budget in Solihull?

Yes, but with caveats:

- The lower end (£8,500) typically covers straightforward conversions with minimal finishes and some DIY.

- £15,000 to £20,000 is realistic for a fully finished, high-quality conversion suitable as a bedroom, office, or small living space.
- You must factor in VAT, contingency, and professional fees.
- Planning and building regulations must be checked through Solihull Council's pre-application enquiry or related tools.
- Compared to moving, garage conversions offer one of the cheapest ways to add usable space in Solihull's expensive property market.

If you're contemplating your next home upgrade, start by querying local contractors on Checkatrade and gather multiple quotes. For broader project pricing, services like MyJobQuote also offer transparent comparisons and customer feedback.

Whatever you decide, always sanity-check your project cost per square metre to avoid budget blowouts and disappointments.

Useful Resources

- Solihull Council Planning Portal
- ONS Housing and House Prices Data
- Checkatrade - Find Local Trusted Tradespeople
- MyJobQuote - Compare Local Quotes