

House prices to keep going up in 2016

THE only way is up for house prices in 2016, according to property experts.

Economists are tipping property values to lift by between 3% to 6% generally across the UK next year, while some regional city hotspots could see stronger price growth.

The continued shortage of homes for buyers to choose from, coupled with strong demand for properties on the back of schemes such as Help to Buy, will keep pushing property values in an upwards direction next year, experts believe.

A looming three percentage point stamp duty hike for buy-to-let investors could help get housing market activity off to an early start in 2016, as people rush to beat the deadline.

Office for National Statistics figures show that average house prices have already hit a new record high of £287,000 across the UK in October. By 2025, the average property price in London could be £931,000.



Gareth Bale at The Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales, Cardiff, where he visited four-year-old patient Cian Case, front. With Cian are his sister Bethany, six, mum Lorraine, brother Dylan, nine, and dad Richard

BALE MAKES SURPRISE VISIT TO CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL

FOR little Cian Case, Christmas was always going to be different than for the majority of other four-year-old boys.

Unlike most children, brave Cian is spending the festive break at Cardiff's University of Wales hospital as he battles against the cancerous spinal and brain tumours he was diagnosed with earlier this month.

It is only the beginning of a long journey for the Case family, with Cian facing up to eight months of intensive chemotherapy and radiotherapy to ease his symptoms and hopefully beat the disease that threatens his life.

Cian is in constant pain and has undergone surgery to remove the majority of a tumour that was only found to be growing on his spine after he went to the doctor complaining of stomach pains barely a month ago. He has also been told "seeds" of the cancer have impregnated his brain.

The surgery resulted in Cian losing all feeling below his waist, with doctors pessimistic over his long-term mobility despite the fact he has gained some sensation.

It is a grim predicament, but Cian's family have done everything in their power to make sure this Christmas is still one filled with

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magic. And they were helped on their way by a surprise visit from a global football star that left sports-mad Cian and the family stunned on Christmas Eve.

Gareth Bale, along with his partner Emma Rhys-Jones, shocked staff and patients when they arrived on Christmas Eve afternoon to dish out gifts to Cian and some of the other children.

Cian's dad Richard said: "Most of the VIP visits to the ward over Christmas were pre-planned and we were aware of who would be arriving at any given point, but Gareth turning up on Christmas Eve was a total shock.

"I was in my scruffs as we were just preparing to bath Cian ready to get him into his new PJs and the arrival of Santa.

"If I had known of Gareth's visit I would have at least been wearing my Wales shirt, which I'd only changed a half hour earlier.

"There was no media accompanying him, so you could tell it was a gesture that he wanted to perform rather than feeling obliged to.

"Gareth was genuinely interest-

ed in Cian and his condition and gave him a Spiderman present for Christmas.

"He was also happy to pose for a photo with the family, which his lovely girlfriend volunteered to take."

Following Bale's visit, Cian's family, consisting of mum Lorraine, Richard, sister Bethany and brother Dylan, were all allowed to stay in Cian's hospital room on Christmas Eve night so they could all wake up together on Christmas morning.

Richard continued: "Although you would never choose to spend Christmas at hospital, the nurses on Rainbow Ward did everything to make it as special as possible.

"Cian didn't have the strength to open all his presents on Christmas Day, but hopefully he will feel a bit better soon to enjoy the rest."

Cian's parents are writing a blog in his name to promote awareness of his condition. You can follow his story at www.ciansstory.uk.

Cian was just one of a number of children Bale spent time with during his visit at about 4.30pm on Thursday.

Lucy Griffiths, whose son Jayden was at the Children's Hospital for Wales with breathing difficulties, said: "It made our Christmas."

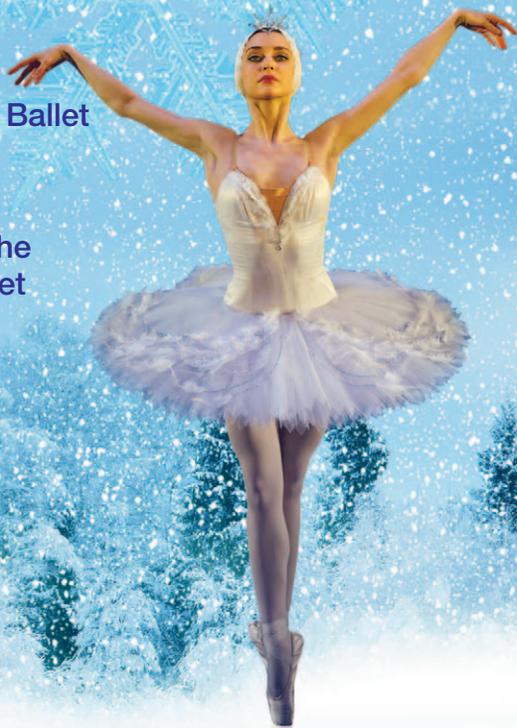
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