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GROWN-UP children who have fled the nest are being forced to move back in with their parents due to rising house prices and soaring debt.

An estimated 4.3 million single people aged between 25 and 50 across Britain have returned to the family home after being unable to afford to live alone, according to a new survey.

For many, heavy unsecured debt is the main obstacle to their independence.

The research, by dating firm Parship. com, found that just 42 per cent of single people in the UK lived by themselves, compared with an average of 56 per cent across Europe, rising to 81 per cent in Switzerland.

Single people in Scotland, where property prices remain among the most affordable in Britain, are most likely to live alone at 62 per cent, compared with only 43 per cent of people in London and the South East.

But the average age of a first time buyer in Scotland is the oldest anywhere in the country at 37.