

Quality Report for Welsh Housing Statistics

What are these statistics?

These statistics refer to a suite of housing statistics. This covers statistical releases containing a comprehensive set of information on housing in Wales. The statistics cover:

- Statutory Homelessness
- New House Building
- Social Housing Sales
- Affordable Housing Provision
- Assistance for Housing Improvement
- Housing Demolitions and Hazards
- Social Housing Vacancies, Lettings and Arrears
- Social Housing Stock and Rents
- Welsh Housing Quality Standards
- Dwelling Stock Estimates

They cover historic and current data. The latest versions are held on our [theme page](#). More details about the specific topics are provided below.

Statutory Homelessness includes information on the number of households applying to local authorities in Wales for housing assistance under the homelessness legislation introduced in the Housing Wales Act 2014. This includes the number of households threatened with homelessness and the number of successful preventions. It also covers information on homeless households including those who were helped to secure accommodation that was likely to last for 6 months and those in priority need who accepted an offer of permanent accommodation. It also provides information on the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation and the types of temporary accommodation provided.

New House Building covers information on the number of new dwellings started, where building has commenced and those completed in Wales, based on the reports of local authority building inspectors and the National House Building Council (NHBC).

Social Housing Sales includes information on the number of Social Housing sales in Wales and their impact on dwelling stock. It covers the number of sales of local authority and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) dwellings.

Affordable Housing Provision covers information collected from local authorities, RSLs and National Park Authorities on all additional affordable housing units provided, whether through new build, purchase, acquisition, leasing or conversion of existing dwellings. This includes information on how the planning system has contributed to the delivery of these dwellings and estimates of the number planned for delivery over the following two years.

Assistance for Housing Improvements is help provided by local authorities to private owners and tenants for home improvement and repair under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. It also covers information on expenditure, mandatory disabled facilities grants (DFGs) and activity by type of assistance, tenure and recipient.

Housing Demolitions includes information collected from local authorities about the number of dwellings demolished within their area.

Housing Hazards and Licenses includes information on and the condition of residential dwellings (including houses of multiple occupation) as assessed under the under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and and how licensing is being implemented across Wales

Social Housing Vacancies, Lettings and Arrears presents information on the amount of housing units that were empty, the number of housing units rented to tenants and the number of social housing tenants who were in rent arrears.

Social Housing Stock and Rents covers information on the number of dwellings, bedsits and bed-spaces owned or partly owned by local authorities and registered social landlords.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) includes information on the progress made by social landlords (local authorities and registered social landlords) in achieving the WHQS for all their stock.

Dwelling Stock Estimates presents information by tenure and local authority. Estimates of the total number of dwellings are based on data from the population censuses updated annually to take account of new house building and demolitions.

Users and uses

The statistics have a number of uses, for example:

- advice to Ministers;
- to measure government targets and key performance indicators;
- to provide context and evidence for the Welsh Government's National Housing Strategy;
- unitary authority comparisons and benchmarking;
- to compare housing in Wales to other countries;
- to inform the debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond;
- to assist in housing research and analysis;
- housing revenue account subsidy and other housing finance calculations;
- local government finance standard spending assessment calculations;
- compendia publications by other organisations (e.g. Regional Trends produced by ONS, Welsh Housing Review by the Chartered Institute of Housing, and UK Housing Review).

We believe the key users of housing statistics are:

- Ministers;
- Assembly Members and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Local government unitary authorities (elected members and officials);
- National Park authorities;
- Registered social landlords;
- Welsh Local Government Association;
- Community Housing Cymru;
- Her Majesty's Treasury;
- The Office for National Statistics;
- Department for Communities and Local Government;

- Chartered Institute of Housing;
- Shelter Cymru;
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Other colleagues within the Welsh Government;
- Other government departments;
- Individual citizens and private companies.

Data Processing Cycle

Data Collected

The information we collect is detailed on our [data collection pages](#). It includes:

- Affordable Housing;
- Demolitions;
- Homelessness;
- Housing Hazards and Licenses;
- Managing social housing (sales, stock, lettings, vacancies, rents, rent arrears);
- New house building;
- Private sector renewal (renewal area activity, private sector renewal activity, disabled facility grants);
- Social Housing Quality: WHQS.

Mode of Data Collection

Data are collected from local authorities, registered social landlords and national park authorities via Excel spreadsheets. These are downloaded from the Afon file transfer website which provides a secure method for users to submit data.

The spreadsheets allow respondents to validate some data before sending the spreadsheet to the Welsh Government. Respondents are also given an opportunity to include contextual information where large changes have occurred. This ensures that the data received by the Welsh Government is already of a high quality. Examples of validation checks within the forms include year-on-year changes, cross checks with other relevant data tables and checks to ensure data is logically consistent, for example the number of minority ethnic households is not greater than the total number of households.

Administrative Data Quality Assurance

Data are collected from local authorities via Excel spreadsheets. These are downloaded from the Afon file transfer website which provides a secure method for users to submit data.

The spreadsheets allow respondents to validate some data before sending to the Welsh Government. Respondents are also given an opportunity to include contextual information where large changes have occurred (e.g. data items changing by more than 10% compared to the previous year). This enables some data cleansing at source and minimises follow up queries.

Local authorities are notified of the data collection exercise timetable in advance. This allows adequate time for local authorities to collate their information, and to raise any issues

they may have. There is guidance in the spreadsheet, which assists users on completing the form.

Examples of validation checks within the forms include year-on-year changes, cross checks with other relevant data tables and checks to ensure data is logically consistent

Validation and Verification

Once we receive the data, it goes through further validation and verification checks, for example:

- common sense check for any missing/incorrect data without any explanation;
- arithmetic consistency checks;
- cross checks against the data for the previous year;
- cross checks with other relevant data collections;
- thorough tolerance checks;
- verification that data outside of tolerances are actually correct.

If there is a validation error, we contact the organisation and seek resolution. If we fail to get an answer within a reasonable timescale, we will use imputation to fix the error. We will then inform the organisation and explain to them how we have amended or imputed the data. The method of imputation and the affected data is highlighted in the 'quality information' section of the first release.

Publication

Once the data are validated they are sent to the analysis team where the release is compiled and the key points and commentary are drafted. The release is independently checked and a final sense check is carried out by the Housing Statistician prior to publication on the website. A 'quality information' section is included in each of our statistical outputs. This includes relevant information on areas such as methods, definitions, coverage, reliability, accuracy and geography. The quality information is designed to provide more detailed information on quality, accuracy and reliability than this quality report. It will usually highlight specific issues that are only relevant to the data in the statistical release.

Standards

The data that are collected adhere to recognised professional standards. However, further [guidelines](#) are also available on the interpretation of these standards to ensure consistency.

Disclosure and confidentiality

As most of the data relate to property information and not the tenants of social housing or individuals, there is only limited risk in publishing housing aggregates. The main exception to this is the homelessness return which focuses heavily on the applications, acceptances or temporary accommodation of families or individuals, while the possessions and evictions return also includes some information about different family types and the granting of eviction warrants. In these latter cases, although data are provided as aggregates, there is a risk that potentially sensitive information about individuals could be accidentally disclosed if the data are not appropriately handled due to presence of small numbers in some of the categories analysed.

To mitigate the risk of disclosure, homelessness data is rounded to the nearest five. Numbers less than five are replaced with an asterisk. The same procedures will be applied to potentially sensitive data in the possessions and evictions statistical release. A balance has

been struck between the need to protect individuals and the useful publication of data, but it is acknowledged that the suppression applied as outlined will have some effect on the user.

We regularly review disclosure risk and the disclosure procedures applied to ensure that we maintain the appropriate balance between confidentiality and the usefulness of the data.

Quality

Welsh housing statistics adhere to the Welsh Government's [Statistical Quality Management Strategy](#), and this is in line with the European Statistical System's six dimensions of quality, as listed in Principle 4 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The list below details the six dimensions and how we adhere to them.

Relevance

The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.

Housing statistics produced by the Welsh Government are used widely in measuring a number of targets and key performance indicators and in making policy decisions. Local government use the data to monitor and benchmark performance, to complete Local Development Plans and Local Housing Market Assessments and to make strategic decisions about housing development. Other uses of this data are outlined in the 'Users and Uses' section of this document.

The [Housing Information Group](#) is the main governance group of housing statistics produced by the Welsh Government. The group meets every three months and provides an opportunity for data providers and users to share their views on housing data requirements, including identifying new priorities and areas for improvement.

We regularly review our data collections and outputs to ensure that they are relevant, collect reliable data and meet user needs. We have consulted on a number of specific housing data collections and have undertaken a rationalisation exercise covering all housing statistics in order to better understand user requirements and priorities for the future. As part of this, Welsh Government policy colleagues, local authorities, registered social landlords and others provided information on how they use housing statistics.

The timing of outputs is discussed with internal users on an annual basis. Regular meetings with users allow us to discuss content, format and timing of outputs. We use networks such as the Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee, plus specific housing networks to reach other users.

We continue to maintain a live list of users and encourage [feedback](#) on all our outputs and data collections.

Accuracy

The closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value

Accuracy can be broken down into sampling and non-sampling error. Non-sampling error includes areas such as coverage error, non-response error, measurement error, processing error.

The housing data requested and provided by local authorities, registered social landlords and national parks are not required under legislation but we aim to achieve a 100% response

for all housing collections. Most collections achieve a 100% response rate, but where this does not happen we note this in the relevant statistical release. As the collections are not based on a survey methodology, there is no sampling error.

We aim to reduce non-sampling error through the provision of significant guidance about the data collections and the definitions that should be adhered to. We put the data through multiple validation checks to ensure that data is of good quality and fit for purpose. However due to time and resource constraints, we sometimes either record data as missing or we seek to impute the data. If we impute or change any data then we inform the data provider of this and give them a chance to comment or challenge this. This is a compromise to resolve validation issues and does not impact significantly on the usability of the data. The method of imputation and the affected data is highlighted in the 'quality information' section of the first release.

All our outputs include key quality information such as methods, definitions, coverage, reliability, accuracy and geography.

Revisions

The data shown in our quarterly and annual releases are final at the point of publication. Following publication revisions to the data can arise from events such as late returns from a local authority or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information and resubmits this. Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes. In both these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release. Significant revisions to the data will be addressed with a revised release and users informed in accordance with the Welsh Government's [Revisions, Errors and Postponements](#) arrangements. Where revisions are not deemed to be significant i.e. minor amendments, these will be reflected in the StatsWales tables and in the next version of this release. However minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to the publication of that next release.

Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication.

All outputs adhere to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics by pre-announcing the date of publication through our [Due Out Soon](#) web pages and the [Publication Hub](#). Furthermore, should the need arise to postpone an output, we would follow the Welsh Government's [Revisions, Errors and Postponements](#) arrangements.

The timetable for outputs is generally developed in line with user needs and aims to ensure that outputs are published as soon as the statistics are ready. The quarterly releases are generally published three months after the end of the reporting period. Annual releases are published between August and December which is between five and nine months from the end of the reference period.

Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.

Welsh housing statistics are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication. An RSS feed alerts registered users to this publication. Simultaneously the releases are also published on the National Statistics Publication Hub. All releases are available to download for free.

In our outputs, we aim to provide a balance of commentary, summary tables, charts and maps. The aim is to 'tell the story' in the output, without the output becoming overly long and complicated. We provide additional, detailed data on StatsWales or as Excel tables. The format we use is in line with our departmental guidance.

We aim to use Plain English in our outputs and all outputs adhere to the Welsh Government [accessibility policy](#). Furthermore, all our headlines are published in Welsh and English.

We regularly peer review our outputs.

We inform known key users of the publication of the statistics on the day of their release. We also use methods such as update papers to the Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee to ensure that a wide range of users are aware that they can access the most up to date statistics.

Further information regarding the statistics can be obtained by contacting the relevant staff detailed on the release or via stats.housing@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Comparability

The degree to which data can be agreed over both time and domain.

The majority of Welsh housing statistics are comparable from the start of the time series to the end. Where there have been time series which are not comparable from the start of the time series to the end this will be shown clearly in the outputs. For example, in July 2006, the fitness standard was replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This change in classification was reported in the next output and the break in the series explained in the statistical release.

Where data from other sources is revised which affects housing statistics, we publish a revised back series of data and provide information on the extent of the difference between previous and revised figures. This issue is particularly relevant for homelessness rates which are calculated from household estimates.

We consult on substantial changes to methods or classifications prior to implementation. We aim to minimise any disruption to the comparability of a time series when putting forward any changes. Where advance warning is known of future changes these will be pre-announced in accordance with Welsh Government arrangements.

Generally most of the housing data we collect and publish is comparable with England, and some is comparable with other UK countries. Details on comparability with other UK countries will be provided in the statistical releases. When developing new collections, we aim to achieve comparability through the use of similar definitions and guidance where appropriate. For example, this approach was taken with the additional affordable housing collection introduced in 2009 and we are currently using the English homelessness return and guidance as a basis for discussions on potential new homelessness data.

However, strategies, policies and approaches can differ between countries and this will affect the comparability of statistical outputs in some cases. Differences in legislation can also affect comparability. In both England and Wales the information collected and

published on homelessness covers decisions made by local authorities under Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act whilst in Scotland the homelessness information is based on Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Where standard definitions are not used we will highlight this and explain the reason why in the quality information section of our outputs.

The provision of clear guidance and definitions and the extensive validation carried out help to ensure that the data are consistent across domains, such as local authorities and registered social landlords.

Coherence

The degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but which refer to the same phenomenon, are similar.

For many of the statistics covered by this report, they are the only source of official data on that subject. The housing data are collected from different types of data provider including local authorities, registered social landlords, national parks and the NHBC but for each separate survey the same form, guidance and definitions are used for each data provider. This ensures consistency across the different types of data provider. As part of the review process for each data collection, the data providers are consulted on the guidance and definitions to ensure clarity and consistency and where appropriate training is provided.

Data collections are checked between forms to ensure coherence of the data received.

The data collected and published annually on affordable housing includes provision through new house building as well as the purchase, acquisition, leasing or conversion of existing dwellings. A sub-set of the affordable housing data will therefore be included in the new house building statistics, which are published separately. It is not currently possible to disaggregate the new build completions from the additional affordable housing total and we use the new build statistics as the source of completions data.

Response burden

All our data collections ask for information on the time taken to complete the data collection form. We use this information in our contribution to the annual Government Statistical Service report on respondent burden and in the Welsh Government's survey costs annual report.

We seek to reduce the amount of information we currently collect before accepting proposals for new data collections. This aims to avoid increasing the burden, and therefore the costs, on data providers.

Dissemination

We follow departmental guidance on checking, validating and analysing data. Quality assurance procedures are built into the process of compiling each output to ensure the data are of sufficient quality to justify publication. The high level messages are published on the first page of the relevant release and high level tables are included in the release. We provide additional, detailed data on our interactive website StatsWales, or as Excel tables published alongside the release. The format we use is in line with our departmental guidance.

Evaluation

We always welcome feedback on any of our statistics. Please contact us via stats.housing@wales.gsi.gov.uk



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<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

Produced by Statistical Directorate, Knowledge and Analytical Services, Welsh Government
Last updated: 07 April 2016