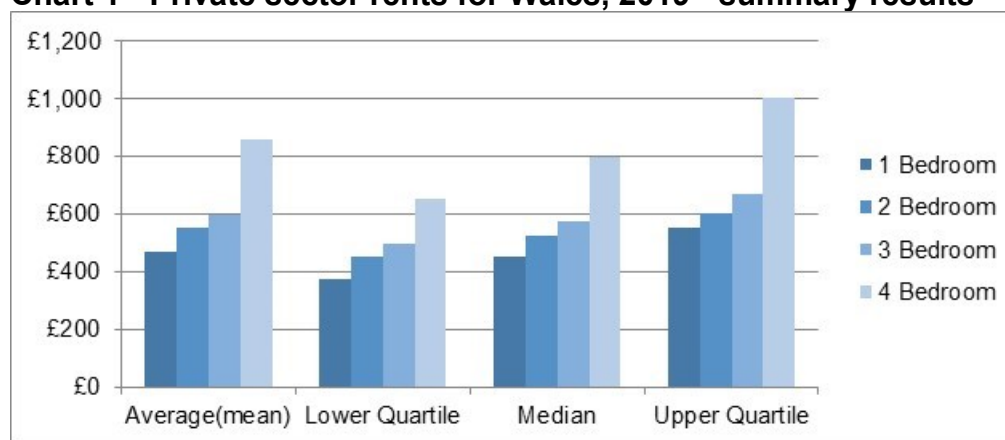


21 May 2020
SFR 48/2020

Private sector rents for Wales, 2019

This is the third of a series of annual releases providing statistics on the private rental market for Wales. The release presents the average (mean), median, lower quartile, and upper quartile monthly rents paid for a number of bedroom/room categories for each local authority in Wales for the 12 months to the end of December 2019. The figures published within this release, as well as information for earlier years, are also available via [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk).

Chart 1 - Private sector rents for Wales, 2019 - summary results



- Over the twelve months from 1 January to 31 December 2019 the lowest median private rental price recorded for properties across Wales was £348 per month for a non self-contained single room or bedsit. The highest median private rental price was £795 per month for larger four bedroom properties including houses, bungalows and flats ([Table 1](#)).
- During 2019, the majority of rents recorded were for 2 and 3 bedroom properties where the median rents were £525 and £575 respectively (Chart 1).
- At a local authority level, the lowest median rent recorded during 2019 was £260 per month for a non self-contained single room in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the highest median rent was £1,200 per month for a large four bedroom property in Cardiff ([Table 2](#)).

About this release

The information shown on rents paid in the private rented sector in Wales is based on information provided to us by individual private landlords and letting agents. The information covers transactional data only, where rent has been paid, and excludes cases where housing benefit was known to be in payment.

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Background

The Welsh Government collects rental information related to the private rental sector within Wales. This information is used primarily to set the level of Local Housing Allowance and determine level of Local Reference Rent for Housing Benefit. Summary information collected for these purposes is presented within this report for the 12 months to the end of December 2019. Please be aware that the statistics presented in this release are based on data which has not been adjusted to produce statistics representative of the private rental property market mix in Wales. Definitions of all terms used can be found in the [glossary](#), alongside the [key quality information](#) at the end of this release.

The information may be used by the Welsh Government and local authorities to assess average rent levels within the private rental market in Wales. Local authorities may also use the information in the process of developing their Local Housing Market Assessments.

Source of data

Rent Officers Wales is a part of the Housing Policy Division of the Welsh Government and is responsible for the registration of Fair Rents under the Rent Act 1977 and Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 and the administration of functions under the Housing Benefit Regulations (Local Housing Allowance and Local Reference Rent schemes) on behalf of the Department for Works and Pensions.

The Rent Officers value residential accommodation in the private rented sector in Wales and provide an independent and impartial valuation service of residential properties. The market rental evidence team of Rent Officers Wales is in regular contact with landlords and letting agents who provide them with the latest information to ensure all valuations are based on current open market rents.

The Rent Officer determinations are made using evidence of rents paid in the private rented sector. The information shown in this release is based on information provided to Rent Officers Wales by private landlords and letting agents across Wales on a voluntary basis but is monitored to try to ensure that the sample is as representative as possible of the market as a whole. The data include both new lettings as they are agreed and continuing lettings that run from year to year, with and without rental increases. Cases where housing benefit was known to be in payment are excluded, as are instances where it was not possible to confirm details of a letting.

The data shown in this release are based on simple averages, such as medians and means, which are not strictly comparable over time, between geographies or between property types due to variations in the composition of the sample. Generally this release focuses on median rents as opposed to mean rents, this is to account for the distribution of the data being skewed.

The information gathered on local market rents is used to provide Local Authorities with Local Housing Allowance figures, however while these statistics are derived from the same data source as LHA rates and Local Reference Rents (LRR) they are based on different categories and geographies.

Average rents across Wales

Table 1 and [Chart 1](#) provide summary figures for the whole of Wales for each of the property categories, expressed as gross calendar monthly rents.

The private rented sector is far from evenly spread; it tends to be concentrated in the urban areas and scattered unevenly throughout rural areas - in many places it is non-existent. In the case for the room and studio categories specifically, the summary figures tend to show a bias towards the main university towns where this type of accommodation is more likely to be available for let.

The sample size and geographical distribution of data is not consistent and therefore the figures represent simple averages and are not comparable over time.

Table 1: Monthly rents recorded for January to December 2019 by property type, Wales (a) (b)

Property type (c)	Units of Accommodation (d)	Average (mean) Rent £s	Lower Quartile Rent £s	Median Rent £s	Upper Quartile Rent £s
Room	2092	357.24	303.33	348.00	391.09
Studio	357	401.76	320.00	390.00	480.00
1 Bedroom	5215	468.20	375.00	450.00	550.00
2 bedrooms	13507	548.64	450.00	525.00	600.00
3 bedrooms	11941	598.19	495.00	575.00	670.00
4 bedrooms	2238	855.64	650.00	795.00	1000.00

Source: Rent Officers Wales, Welsh Government

- (a) Figures derived from transactional data only (i.e. paid rent) - data with limited or no evidence of a transaction were excluded
- (b) Lettings where housing benefit was known to be in payment were excluded.
- (c) Property type definitions are provided in the glossary.
- (d) Units of accommodation for which rental data was provided.

Local authority level rents

Table 2 shows a summary of median monthly rents for individual local authorities.

As stated above the private rental market is not evenly spread across Wales so figures for some local authority areas are based on small samples. The sample size is also affected by the number of lettings where housing benefit is known to be in receipt and the level of response from landlords and agents. Therefore comparisons of rents should not be made between areas.

Table 2 - Median monthly rents recorded by property type and local authority area, January to December 2019 (a) (b) (c) (d)

	Room		1 Bedroom		2 Bedrooms		3 Bedrooms		4 Bedrooms	
	Units (e)	Median Rent £s	Units (e)	Median Rent £s	Units (e)	Median Rent £s	Units (e)	Median Rent £s	Units (e)	Median Rent £s
Isle of Anglesey	12	375.00	86	390.00	283	500.00	265	575.00	57	750.00
Gwynedd	412	390.00	214	400.03	678	487.50	512	580.00	96	675.00
Conwy	*	*	278	400.00	659	550.00	346	625.00	82	800.00
Denbighshire	72	335.51	221	395.00	633	525.00	362	600.00	76	785.00
Flintshire	70	431.17	136	450.00	510	560.00	457	650.00	71	875.00
Wrexham	106	387.83	222	450.00	982	525.00	474	600.00	96	795.00
Powys	21	281.67	324	325.00	605	425.00	609	525.00	152	642.50
Ceredigion	607	325.00	290	431.50	488	525.00	485	575.00	127	675.00
Pembrokeshire	24	325.00	268	375.00	669	485.00	633	565.00	145	695.00
Carmarthenshire	63	316.67	240	375.00	655	465.00	944	520.00	158	650.00
Swansea	264	340.00	594	525.00	1335	545.00	1013	575.00	160	850.00
Neath Port Talbot	*	*	186	395.00	740	450.00	1161	487.00	89	596.00
Bridgend	9	282.00	146	450.00	567	500.00	604	575.00	74	770.00
Vale of Glamorgan	*	*	224	475.00	588	625.00	512	697.50	125	1000.00
Cardiff	298	385.67	1143	595.00	1880	700.00	874	850.00	387	1200.00
Rhondda Cynon Taf	100	260.00	118	350.00	596	450.00	841	475.00	109	725.00
Merthyr Tydfil	*	*	50	397.50	141	425.00	191	475.00	20	675.00
Caerphilly	*	*	148	382.50	443	495.00	544	522.50	56	697.50
Blaenau Gwent	*	*	28	303.33	167	375.00	209	425.00	*	-
Torfaen	17	346.67	80	400.00	333	495.00	355	560.00	48	750.00
Monmouthshire	*	*	52	472.50	142	595.00	171	710.00	43	875.00
Newport	*	*	167	425.00	413	525.00	379	600.00	58	895.00
Wales	2092	348.00	5215	450.00	13507	525.00	11941	575.00	2238	795.00

Source: Rent Officers Wales, Welsh Government

(a) Figures derived from transactional data only (i.e. rent has been paid) - data with limited or no evidence of a transaction were excluded

(b) Lettings where housing benefit was known to be in payment were excluded.

(c) The average rents shown are simple averages (i.e. median rents) and are not comparable over time, between geographies or between property types.

(d) Property category definitions are provided in the glossary. Rental information for studios is not included within this table.

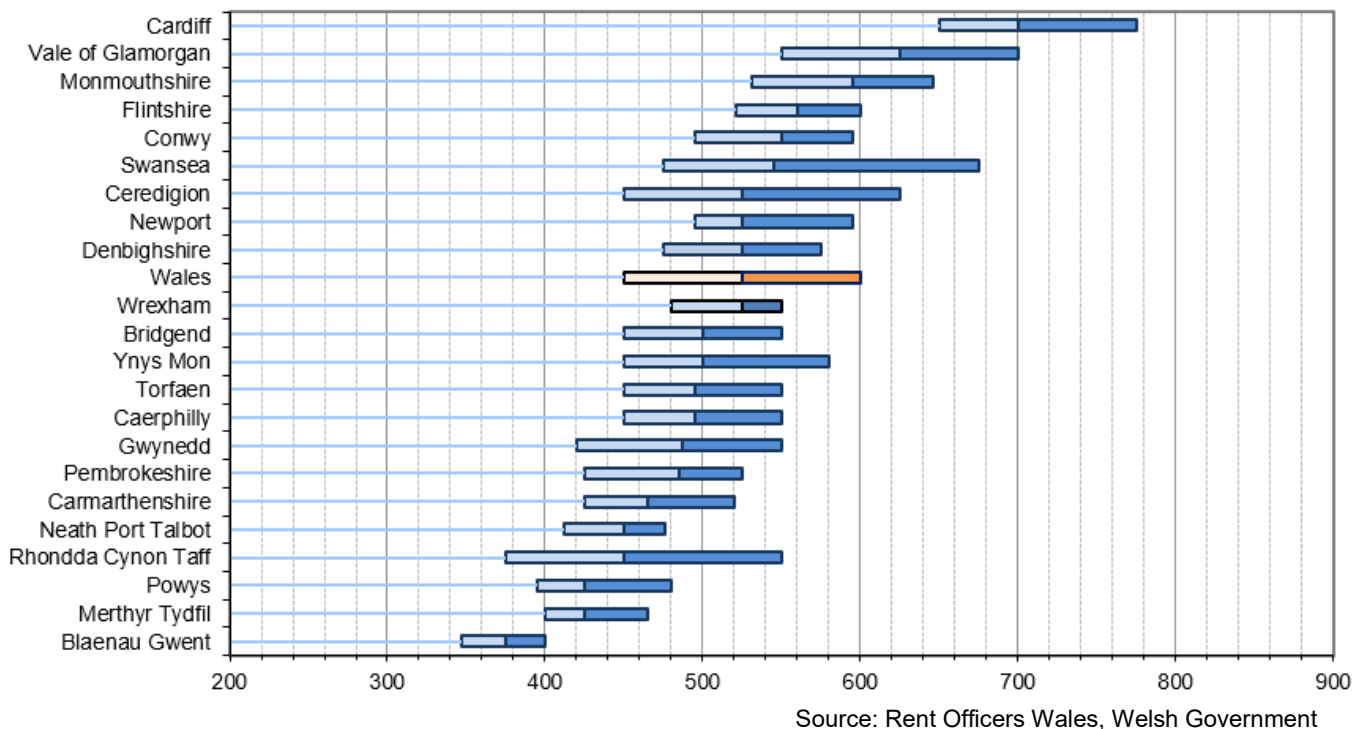
(e) Units of accommodation for which rental data was provided.

* Denotes figures that have been suppressed due to the figures being based on fewer than 10 units of accommodation.

Chart 2 and [Chart 3](#) reflect the range of rents recorded for each local authority area for 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom accommodation, using the lower quartile point (Q1) and upper quartile point (Q3). Although ranked by median rent, comparison across areas should not be made between areas due to differences in sample composition.

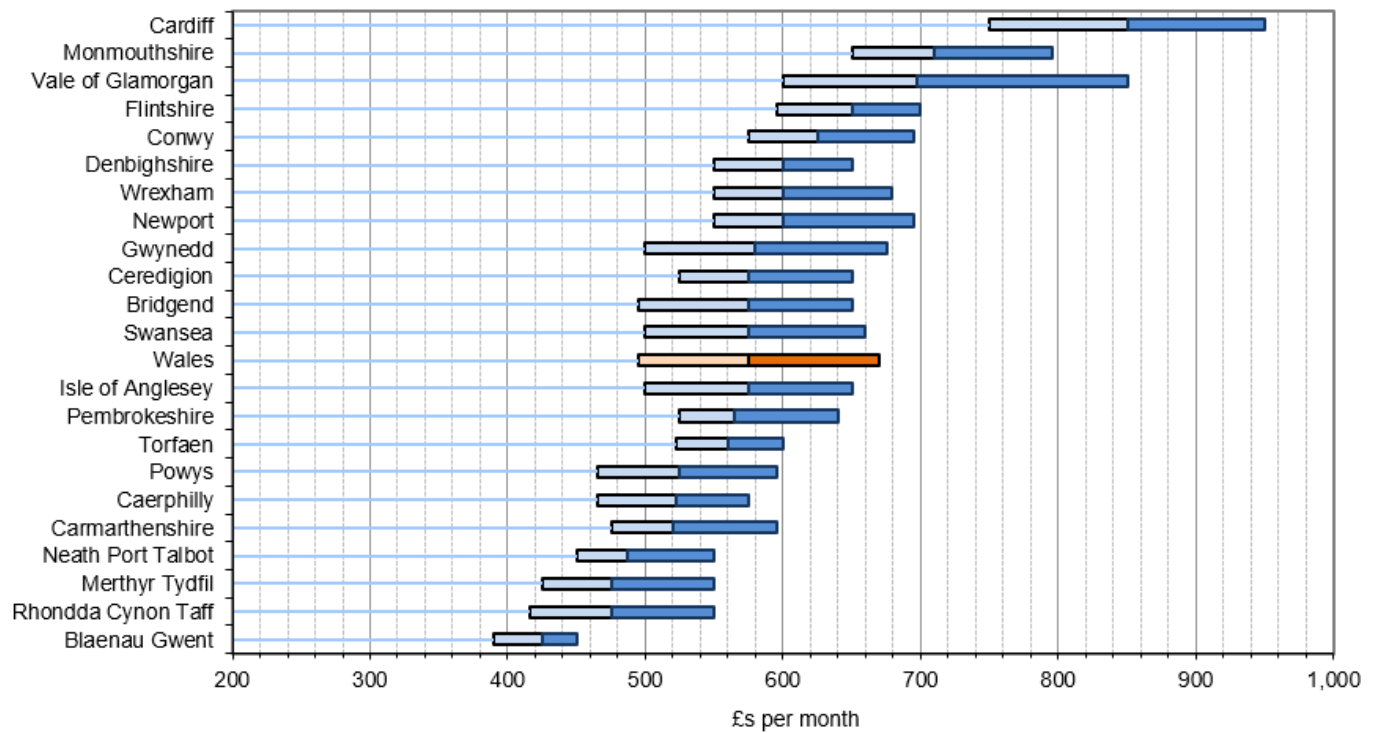
The spread of rents for any specific area may reflect sample size, but may also be affected by the urban/rural nature of an area, the source of the data – that is the balance between data provided by private landlords against that from letting agents, the ratio of repeat lettings against new lettings, and the extent of the housing benefit and student led markets.

Chart 2 - Range of monthly rents recorded for January to December 2019, for 2 bedroom properties across Wales (a) (b) (c)



- (a) The average rents shown are simple averages and are not comparable over time.
- (b) The range is shown as lower to upper quartile points (50 per cent of rents fall within this range).
- (c) Local authorities are ranked according to median monthly rent.

Chart 3 - Range of monthly rents recorded for January to December 2019, for 3 bedroom properties across Wales (a) (b) (c)



Source: Rent Officers Wales, Welsh Government

- (a) The average rents shown are simple averages and are not comparable over time.
- (b) The range is shown as lower to upper quartile points (50 per cent of rents fall within this range).
- (c) Local authorities are ranked according to median monthly rent.

Key quality information

In addition to the information below, further information can be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#) which is available on our website.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Data source and coverage

Information on average rents paid in the private rental market in Wales is based on information provided to Rent Officers Wales on a regular basis from private landlords and letting agents on the properties they let. There has been no new data collection for this release. All data are captured during the course of Rent Officers’ statutory responsibilities to administer functions related to Housing Benefit.

The information shown in this release covers the twelve months to the end of December 2019. Data where there was evidence of a transaction (i.e. rent has been paid) were retained while those with limited or no evidence of a transaction were excluded. Cases where housing benefit was known to be in payment were also excluded.

All the lettings information is provided on a goodwill basis. These statistics would not be possible without the continued co-operation of landlords and letting agents.

Rent Officers aim to collect between 15 to 20 per cent (after excluding housing benefit and non-confirmed data items) of the private rental market as identified by the 2011 Census.

Symbols

The following symbols may have been used in this release:

- negligible (less than half the final digit shown)
- .
- ..
- not yet available
- * disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication
- p provisional
- r revised

Users and uses

This publication is being released as part of a general drive towards making Rent Officers Wales data more accessible. It is hoped that the data will be of benefit to a broad user group, including: officials involved in housing policy, practitioners in the sector, researchers, tenants and other individuals with an interest in the private rental sector.

The information is used by the Welsh Government and local authorities to assess levels of private rents paid across Wales and for other housing market analysis. Local authorities may also use this information to develop their Local Housing Market Assessments; for benchmarking; for evidencing how housing need and demand is being met locally; and for assessing future requirement and need in order to plan and allocate resources effectively.

More generally the information is used for:

- Monitoring housing trends;
- Policy development;
- Advice to Ministers;
- Informing debate in the Welsh Parliament and beyond; and
- Geographic profiling, comparisons and benchmarking.

Methodology

Rent Officers Wales, operating from within the Housing Policy division of the Welsh Government, is responsible for the registration of Fair Rents under the Rent Act 1977 and Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976, and the administration of functions under the Housing Benefit Regulations (Local Housing Allowance and Local Reference Rent schemes) on behalf of the Department for Works and Pensions.

The Rent Officer determinations are made using evidence of rents paid in the private rented sector. In order to meet this responsibility, landlords and letting agents provide Rent Officers Wales with data pertaining to the properties they let. This information is captured electronically in the Rent Officers Wales lettings information database. Checks are carried out at the point of entry to ensure that any Housing Benefit funded tenancies are identified.

Private rental data entered into the lettings information database were extracted from the system for the twelve months to the end of December 2019. Cases where there was evidence of a transaction (i.e. rent has been paid) were retained while those with limited or no evidence of a transaction were excluded. Cases where housing benefit was known to be in payment were also excluded.

The data were partitioned by local authority and by bedroom/room category (see the glossary) and statistics were calculated on the gross monthly rents for each of these sub-samples.

Data quality

Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political reference. The private rental market statistics are official statistics but are not currently classified as National Statistics.

Rent Officers aim to collect between 15 and 20 per cent of the private rental market across Wales as a whole, as identified by the 2011 Census. After excluding lettings known to be subject to housing benefit and those with incomplete information, the sample used to produce the figures for this release covers 17.45 per cent.

The coverage varies from local authority to local authority and between bedroom categories. There is also a difference from year to year.

Data collection is monitored against the private rental market identified by the 2011 Census in an attempt to ensure that the sample is as representative of the market as possible; however, the rental data that Rent Officers Wales collects is from voluntary sources and is dependent upon the goodwill of agents and landlords for its provision. Landlords who only let one or two properties are contacted once or twice a year to obtain details, whereas agents and those landlords that have large portfolios are contacted frequently for new additions or changes to their letting portfolio. Rent Officers also monitor websites and follow up contacts with agents to obtain details as properties are let or removed from the sites.

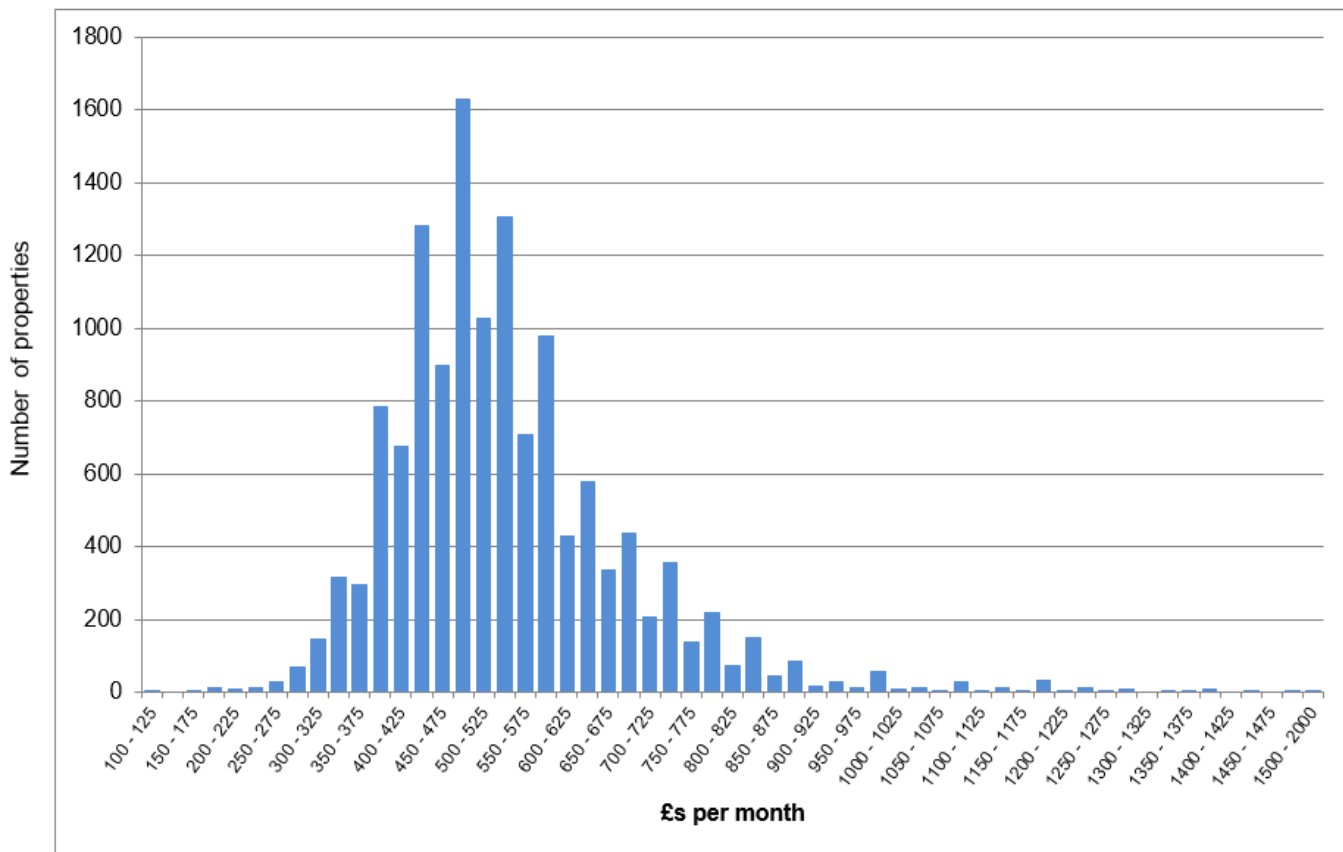
The data include both continuing lettings that run from year to year, with and without rental increases and also new lettings as they are agreed.

The percentage of accommodation units that were included in the dataset for this release that also appeared in the 2018 dataset was 63.48%.

Accuracy

The distribution of private rents for each local authority and bedroom/room category in Wales tends to exhibit a strong positive skew (i.e. a small number of very large monthly rents and large numbers of smaller rents ([Chart 4](#))). The skewed nature of these data combined with the small sample counts available for many of the categories presented, means that the statistics included in this release should be considered as indicative only and do not represent accurate measures of the population.

Chart 4 - Typical rental distribution as shown by two bedroom properties across Wales, January to December 2019



In particular, care should be taken when drawing comparisons between the statistics reported in this release and those for different time periods due to variations in the composition of the sample over time. Whilst many of the properties are tracked from year to year, the nature of the letting market is that properties move in and out of the market. Additionally tenants move in and out of receipt of housing benefit or local housing allowance. The resulting averages are simple averages and are not comparable over time.

In order to mitigate the effects of the problems stated above and to avoid disclosure of personal information, a judgement has been made to suppress statistics derived from samples containing fewer than 10 records. Where this occurs the suppressed figures are replaced with an asterisk (*).

Dissemination

The figures published within this release are also available on StatsWales. These are provided within an interactive Excel spreadsheet, partitioned at local authority level and across bedroom categories. In addition figures for 2010-2018 are also available.

Revisions

This release contains the final data for calendar year 2019. Revisions can arise from events such as late returns from a landlord or letting agent 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 these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release.

Where changes are not deemed to be significant, minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to that next release.

Revised data is marked with an (r) in the statistical release

We follow our [statistical revisions policy](#).

Comparability

The statistics reported in this release are for January to December 2019 and cannot be compared with those for different time periods due to the variations in the composition of the sample over time.

Comparisons should also not be made between areas and between property types.

The composition of the sample is reliant upon the data provided by landlords and letting agents. It therefore varies both over time and geographically. The figures produced may be affected by the urban/rural nature of an area, the nature of the housing stock, the source of the data – that is the balance between data provided by private landlords against that from letting agents, the ratio of repeat lettings against new lettings, and the extent of the housing benefit and student led markets.

Coherence with other statistics

The information shown in this release should not be confused with Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates published on DirectGov. While these statistics are derived from the same data source as LHA rates and Local Reference Rents (LRR) they are based on different categories and geographies.

In most cases the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) does not match the geography of the Local Authority (LA) area.

Related statistics

Index of private housing rental prices

The Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP) is a quarterly experimental price index published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which measures the change in price of renting residential property from private landlords. The index is published as a series of price indices covering Great Britain, its constituent countries and the English regions. IPHRP measures the change in price tenant's face when renting residential property from private landlords, thereby allowing a comparison between the prices tenants are charged in the current month as opposed to the same month in the previous year. The index does not measure the change in newly advertised rental prices only, but reflects price changes for all private rental properties.

The IPHRP is constructed using administrative data. That is, the index makes use of data that is already collected for other purposes in order to estimate rental prices. The sources of private rental prices are Valuation Office Agency (VOA), Scottish Government (SG) and Welsh Government (WG). All three organisations deploy rental officers to collect the price paid for privately rented properties. The sources of expenditure weights are Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Scottish Government, Welsh Government and VOA. DCLG produces estimates of the private rental dwelling stock for England and its regions. Scottish Government and Welsh Government produce estimates of private rental dwelling stock for Scotland and Wales

Further information and the latest index for March 2020 are available from the [ONS website](#).

House Price Index

The ONS House Price Index (HPI) is a monthly release that publishes figures for mix-adjusted average house prices and house price indices for the UK and its component countries and regions. The index is calculated using mortgage financed transactions that are collected via the Regulated Mortgage Survey by the Council of Mortgage Lenders. These cover the majority of mortgage lenders in the UK.

The HPI statistical bulletin provides comprehensive information on the change in house prices on a monthly and annual basis. It also includes analysis by country, region, type of buyer (first-time buyers and former owner-occupiers) and type of dwelling (new dwelling or pre-owned dwelling). Further information and the latest information for February 2020 is available from the [ONS website](#).

Local housing allowance

Each year Rent Officers Wales calculates the Local Housing Allowance Rates based on rent levels in each area of Wales. These rates help Local Authorities decide how much they will pay in Housing Allowance for each type of property. This information is published in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) tables. The information within these tables acts as a guide only. It is not a guaranteed indicator of how much Local Housing Allowance (LHA) claimants will receive.

The tables show the method used to produce the Local Housing Allowance rates in accordance with statute.

Further information and the latest [LHA rates for 2020](#) are available from the Welsh Government website.

Dwelling stock estimates

Estimates of the total number of dwellings are based on data from the population censuses. Estimates from the censuses are updated annually to take account of new house building and demolitions. The breakdown of dwelling stock estimates by tenure is estimated from 2011 Census information, information from the Annual Population Survey, local authority returns and registered social landlord (RSL) returns. The latest [dwelling stock estimates for Wales](#) can be found on the Welsh Government website.

We publish a range of [statistics on the housing market](#) which you may find useful. These include the, affordable housing provision and social housing stock.

Related Statistics for Other UK countries

England

Statistics on the private rental market for England are published by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The methodology used is similar to that in Wales. The data published covers rents paid in the private rented sector in England based on information pertaining to the properties they let provided by, landlords and letting agents to VOA Rent Officers. The VOA release presents the mean (average), median, lower quartile, and upper quartile gross monthly rent paid (ignoring any adjustment for services not eligible for housing benefit), for a number of bedroom/room categories for each Local Authority (LA) in England for a 12 month period. Further information and the latest release are available from the [GOV.UK website](#).

Scotland

In Scotland the Rent Officers also use market evidence provided by letting agents and landlords to set local housing allowances and to determine fair rents. There are two types of market evidence used. Transactional evidence comes from the rent actually paid by a tenant for a home of a particular size in a particular area. Non-transactional evidence, such as adverts in the local press, on shop windows and public bulletin boards can act as an indicator of local expectations. Further information is available from the [Scottish Government website](#).

The information is used in the ONS Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP).

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland Rent Officers are funded by the Department for Social Development (DSDNI) and their function is to determine and set an appropriate rent for a tenancy which is found to be unfit and/or which is a protected/statutory tenancy.

The ONS Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP) does not include any information for Northern Ireland due to the very limited sample of private rental prices available.

Information on average weekly rents in the private sector in Northern Ireland is also shown in the DSDNI annual publication '[Northern Ireland Housing Statistics](#)'. The information is based on data from the 'Family Resources Survey'.

Glossary

The most relevant terms for this release are explained below.

Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA)

A Broad Rental Market Area for Local Housing Allowance purposes is an area within which a person (or in the context of Local Reference Rents, a tenant of the dwelling) could reasonably be expected to live having regard to facilities and services, taking account of the distance of travel to and from those facilities and services. The BRMA contains residential premises of a variety of types to ensure representativeness of the rents that a landlord might reasonably be expected to obtain in that area.

Lettings Information Database

The database that holds lettings information collected as part of Rent Officers Wales responsibility to administer the rent officer functions related to Housing Benefit (Local Housing Allowance and Local Reference Rents) on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) system provides a way of working out Housing Benefit (HB) for people who rent from a private landlord. Local authorities use LHA rates based on the size of household and the area in which a person lives to work out the amount of rent which can be met with HB.

Local Reference Rents (LRR)

The Local Reference Rent is the mid-point between what in the Rent Officer's opinion are the highest and lowest non-exceptional rents in a given Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA).

Lower quartile (Q1)

When a series of values are arranged by order of magnitude the lower quartile (or 25th percentile) is the value below which 25 per cent of the values lie.

Mean

A measure of central tendency often referred to as the average. Given a series of values the arithmetic mean is calculated by summing all these values together and dividing by the count of these values.

Median

When a series of numbers are arranged by order of magnitude the median represents the middle value. Where there is an even number of values the median is the mean of the two values closest to value in the centre of that distribution.

Property categories

Definitions of the bedroom/room categories used are provided below:

- Room – non self-contained single room with shared facilities. Includes bedsits, single rooms in a house or flat shared with other tenants, and single rooms rented from a resident landlord.
- Studio – self-contained single roomed property with own kitchen and bath/shower/WC facilities.
- One bedroom – self-contained properties with one bedroom including houses, bungalows, flats and maisonettes.
- Two bedrooms – self-contained properties with two bedrooms including houses, bungalows, flats and maisonettes.
- Three bedrooms – self-contained properties with three bedrooms including houses, bungalows, flats and maisonettes.
- Four bedrooms – self-contained properties with four bedrooms including houses, bungalows, flats and maisonettes.

Rent Officer (RO)

A statutory officer responsible for ensuring that the lettings information collected is representative of the full range of market rents for similar properties on which a rent determination is made and to record the information that they have used on the Rent Officers Wales lettings information database.

Self-contained

Where all the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet) in a household's accommodation are behind a single door which only that household can use.

Units of Accommodation

The number of separate lettings included within the dataset, either a room with shared facilities, or complete self contained property as defined above (cf 'Property categories'). Where let as a joint tenancy the 'unit of accommodation' was the complete dwelling. Where rooms were let on a single basis the 'unit of accommodation' was classed as a 'room with shared facilities'.

Upper quartile (Q3)

When a series of values are arranged by order of magnitude the upper quartile (or 75th percentile) is the value above which 25 per cent of the values lie.

Further information

Further information is available from the statistics web site:

<https://gov.wales/private-sector-rents>

The full data sets for 2010 onwards are available on [StatsWales](#).

Next update

Annual release April 2021

We actively encourage feedback from our users. If you have any comments or you require any further information, please contact us as follows:

Queries regarding the data

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