

Article

House building data, UK: April to June 2019

Quarterly and annual time series data on the building of new housing in the UK, its constituent countries and English regions, including starts and completions.

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To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Quality and methodology](#)
3. [Future plans](#)

1 . Introduction

This release provides data on newly-built dwellings in the UK, specifically on starts and completions. A dwelling is counted as “started” on the date work begins on laying the foundation, and as “completed” when it becomes ready for occupation or when a completion certificate is issued. This release was previously published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) until June 2019.

The statistics presented in this release do not cover all parts of total new housing supply. For example, they do not include conversions and changes of use. See the Limitations of the data section for further information.

Statistics in this release relate to the UK. They are created by aggregating previously published data from the four UK countries. Statistics about each individual country, and the English regions, are also included here. Individual country-level statistics are also available separately from the producers of each country’s statistics. Those individual country datasets include statistics for small geographical areas, which are not presented in this release.

To provide consistency with the UK figures that were previously published by MHCLG, we have produced quarterly and annual data (for both calendar and financial years).

2 . Quality and methodology

These statistics are based on administrative data sources. For each of the four UK countries, Table 1 presents information about the data sources on which they are based and about the frequency and time series for which data are available.

Table 1: Country-level data for permanent dwellings available for each UK country, by sector

	Frequency	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Sources		Local authority new build form returns;	Local authority building inspectors;	Local authority new build form returns;	District Council Building Control
		National House Building Council (NHBC); Approved inspector data returns	National House Building Council (NHBC)	Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme	
Starts, by sector ¹	Quarterly	Jan-Mar 1978 onwards	April-June 1974 onwards	Jan-Mar 1978 onwards	Jan-Mar 1978 onwards
	Quarterly (seasonally adjusted ²)	Jan-Mar 2000 onwards	Not available	Not available	Not available
	Financial Year	1969/70 onwards	1969/70 onwards	1969/70 onwards	1969/70 onwards
	Calendar Year	1946 onwards	Not published ³	Not published ³	Not published ³
Completions, by sector ¹	Quarterly	Jan-Mar 1978 onwards	April-June 1974 onwards	Jan-Mar 1978 onwards	Jan-Mar 1978 onwards
	Quarterly (seasonally adjusted ²)	Jan-Mar 2000 onwards	Not available	Not available	Not available
	Financial Year	1969/70 onwards	1969/70 onwards	1969/70 onwards	1969/70 onwards
	Calendar Year	1946 onwards	1946 onwards	1945 onwards ²	1949 onwards

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. "Sector" refers to new dwellings constructed by private enterprises housing associations or registered social landlords and local authorities. Other data providers may use the term "tenure". Statistics on starts for Wales are not available split by sector from the financial year ending 2012.
2. Seasonally adjusted quarterly data for England and completions by private and public sector from 1920 in calendar years for Scotland are not included in this release because the equivalent data are not available for the other countries.
3. Data for calendar year can be derived from aggregating quarterly data.
4. Data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland comes directly from the producers of the statistics in each country. These may differ from the discontinued tables formerly produced by MHCLG.

We will publish these statistics quarterly and these will reflect revisions made in the source data from each country. This ensures that statistics for the UK are consistent with latest statistics in each constituent country.

Uses and users

The datasets in this release give timely information relating to starts and completions of new dwellings in the UK. They are used to inform government housing policy and for housing market analysis and research. They are also used by forecasters and decision makers including at the Bank of England. The compilation of the UK data in this release also allows international comparisons of housing supply.

Limitations of the data

These statistics provide a timely indicator of housing supply, however, there are limitations of coverage and comparability. For England, more comprehensive (but less frequent) measures of [changes to the size of the dwelling stock](#) are published annually by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). These provide a fuller measure of new housing supply based on additional sources, including building control, site visits, council tax and planning databases.

In addition, there are limitations of comparability across the UK in these statistics. Each country produces its own statistics on house building, which are subject to revisions and have variations in sources and how the data are collected and processed, for example:

- a small amount of data for England are missing and therefore imputed
- data for Wales do not include private approved inspector data
- in England and Wales some housing association starts and completions can be misreported as private enterprise

3 . Future plans

We aim to provide users with a better understanding of new house building across the UK in subsequent releases, including what statistics are available and how the production and development plans differ across each of the four UK countries. These improvements will be considered alongside other potential improvements that are outlined in the [GSS guidance on housing and planning statistics](#).

If you have any feedback on the development of house building statistics, email better.info@ons.gov.uk.