

Article

# House building data, UK: January to March 2023

Time series data on starts and completions of new build dwellings in the UK and local authorities, on a quarterly and annual basis

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## Notice

### 30 January 2024

This article series is being discontinued. The quarterly data will continue to be published on the [House building data, UK dataset](#) page for 30 January 2024 and all future releases. For more information, see our [House building data, UK Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

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# 1 . Overview of house building data

This release provides data on newly built dwellings in the UK. Where possible, data are presented separately for dwellings started and completed, and split by sector (private enterprise, housing associations or local authorities).

Individual country-level statistics are available separately from the producers of each country's statistics (see [Section 4: Related links](#)). The UK data are created by aggregating previously published data from the four UK countries. This release provides the most up-to-date data available for each geographical area and time period at the time of publishing. Data for individual countries may cover more recent time periods.

The UK-level dataset contains three sets of tables, with estimates available for different periods:

- quarters - ending with the period of Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2023
- financial years - up to financial year ending 2023
- calendar years - up to 2022

Unfortunately, coronavirus (COVID-19) affected quarterly data collection in Wales in 2020 and 2021. Financial and calendar year figures are available for this period for Wales and therefore the UK, but quarterly figures are not available for April to June 2020 until January to March 2022.

The latest house building statistics show that between January and March 2023 there were 45,050 dwellings completed in the UK. By country, the following number of dwellings were completed:

- 37,350 in England
- 1,050 in Wales
- 5,420 in Scotland
- 1,230 in Northern Ireland

Financial year data for the year ending March 2023 show that there were 210,320 dwellings completed in the UK. By country, the following number of dwellings were completed:

- 174,600 in England
- 5,790 in Wales
- 23,510 in Scotland
- 6,420 in Northern Ireland

In addition to country level data, we have compiled local authority level house building starts and completions, by financial year. Stakeholder feedback has pointed to a need for these data, and we intend to update them regularly. We welcome further views and feedback, for example by email at [better.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:better.info@ons.gov.uk).

The statistics presented in this release do not cover all house building in England. Additional data sources are used to produce the annual Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) [Housing supply: net additional dwellings](#) series, which captures additional house building alongside other ways dwellings are created such as conversion.

DLUHC's [Net Additional Dwellings](#) series, and the Scottish government's [Supply of new housing series](#), provide estimates of all new housing supply, which include conversions, demolitions and changes of use which are therefore more complete when looking at the provision of new homes.

However the sources used in this publication are:

- available earlier
- available for quarters, financial years and calendar years
- broadly comparable across the UK, providing a measure of activity of house building

See Limitations of the data in [Section 3: Data sources and quality](#) for further information.

## 2 . House building data

[House building, UK: permanent dwellings started and completed by country](#)

Dataset | Released 7 September 2023

Time series data on starts and completions of new build dwellings in the UK, on a quarterly and annual basis, split by housing sector, where available.

[House building, UK: permanent dwellings started and completed by local authority](#)

Dataset | Released 8 November 2022

Time series data on starts and completions of new build dwellings in local authorities across the UK, on an annual basis.

## 3 . Data sources and quality

A dwelling is counted as "started" on the date work begins on the laying of the foundation. It is counted as "completed" when it becomes ready for occupation or when a completion certificate is issued.

These statistics are based on administrative data sources. Information about the data sources, and the earliest time periods that data are available from each of the four UK countries, is available as follows.

### Data sources by country

- [England - Housing supply: indicators of new supply statistics: Live Table 213](#), local authority new build form returns; National House Building Council (NHBC) data; approved inspector data returns
- [Wales - New house building statistics](#): local authority building inspectors; NHBC data
- [Scotland - Housing statistics quarterly update: new housebuilding and affordable housing supply](#): local authority new build form returns; Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- [Northern Ireland - New dwelling statistics](#): District Council Building Control

### Earliest time periods available (starts and completions, and by sector, unless stated)

"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.

### Data by country, quarterly

- Wales: April to June 1974 until January to March 2020; April to June 2022 onwards
- England, Scotland and Northern Ireland: January to March 1978 onwards

## **Data by country, by financial year**

- England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: year ending March 1970 onwards

## **Data by country, by calendar year**

- England: 1946 for completions, 1978 for starts
- Wales: 1946 for completions, 1974 for starts
- Scotland: 1946 for completions, 1980 for starts
- Northern Ireland: 1949 for completions, 1978 for starts

## **Data by local authority, by financial year (earlier time periods are available from the original sources)**

- England, Wales and Scotland: financial year ending March 2010 onwards
- Northern Ireland: financial year ending March 2015 onwards

## **Revisions**

Each publication of these UK statistics will reflect the revisions made in the source data from each country. This ensures that statistics for the UK are consistent with the latest statistics, at time of publication, 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

Each country produces its own statistics on house building, that are subject to revisions and have variations in sources and how the data are collected and processed.

For example, Scotland's data contain imputed estimates for a small number of local authorities. A small amount of data for England are missing and therefore imputed.

[England's housing supply figures](#) do not include data sources that become available later on, which typically cover smaller developments. These reports capture additional new builds to those reported in the sources used in this release, based on building inspector reports.

Figures on new build dwelling starts and completions for England are from records kept for building control purposes. The house building figures reflect the sector of the developer building the dwelling, rather than the intended final sector. This may lead to an undercount of housing association and local authority starts and completions recorded in these tables, and a corresponding overcount of private enterprise figures. This problem is more likely to affect starts than completions.

[Wales's new house building data](#) are based on the reports of local authority building inspectors and the NHBC, a private approved inspector; it does not include information from other private approved inspectors.

It is sometimes difficult for building control officers and the NHBC to identify the intended final tenure of the property (the basis for the tenure information). This may lead to an under-count of social sector new house building and an over-count for the private sector in Wales. Within the social sector, it may also lead to an under-count of local authority new house building and an over-count for the housing association sector. Therefore, the sector data should be treated with caution.

In [Scotland's housing statistics](#), it is not possible to directly identify housing association starts. Therefore, housing association new build approvals are used as a proxy for housing association new build starts.

[Northern Ireland's new dwelling data](#) count of the number of starts and completions inspections conducted by building control officers in each council area. The date of a new dwelling start is the date that the first building control inspection takes place, rather than when the foundations are laid.

These statistics provide a timely leading 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 in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' [Housing supply: net additional dwellings series](#). These provide a fuller measure of new housing supply based on annual returns from local authorities and the Greater London Authority.

The Housing supply: net additional dwellings series also provides a more complete measure of housebuilding. The difference varies from an additional 4% above the estimates in this release (in 2009 to 2010) to 27% (in 2018 to 2019). However the figures in this release are available earlier, and are broadly comparable across the UK.

Similarly for Scotland, the annual [Supply of New Housing series](#) provides data on refurbished and converted dwellings alongside new builds, for financial years.

## 4 . Related links

### [Housing supply: indicators of new supply statistics](#)

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities publication | Updated quarterly

This collection brings together all documents relating to housing supply: indicators of new supply statistics.

### [New house building](#)

Welsh Government publication | Updated quarterly

Information on the number of new dwellings started and completed.

### [New house building](#)

Scottish Government publication | Updated quarterly

Statistics that include affordable housing, new housing supply, rents in the private sector, local authority housing, and social housing.

### [New dwelling statistics](#)

Department of Finance (Northern Ireland) publication | Updated quarterly

Land and Property Services (LPS) receives information from Building Control in each council in Northern Ireland (NI). This information contains the number of recorded new dwellings (houses and apartments) started and completed.

### [Housing supply: net additional dwellings](#)

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities publication | Updated annually

This collection brings together all documents on housing supply: net additional dwellings (formerly known as "net supply of housing").

### [UK housing and planning statistics interactive database](#)

Government Statistical Service (GSS)

Search facility that provides access to browse all housing and planning statistics produced by UK public bodies and the devolved administrations of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

### [Tackling the under-supply of housing in England](#)

House of Commons Library

Report on house-building levels and policies in 2023, with accompanying spreadsheet adding additional historical estimates of house-building to the data in this series.

## 5 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 7 September 2023, ONS website, article, [House building data, UK: January to March 2023](#)