



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

BACKGROUND, DOCUMENT

Social landlord housing stock and rents: quality report

This report covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our statistics.

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What are these statistics?

Social landlord housing stock and rent statistics provide summary information on the amount and type of stock owned or partly owned by all Welsh social landlords as at 31 March each year, including social housing and other types of housing. It also provides information on the average weekly rents for all self-contained social housing units as set at 1 April each year for the following financial year.

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

Background

Social housing stock

The majority of social housing units owned and rented from local authorities and RSLs are at social rents. Social rented housing is provided by local authorities and Welsh RSLs where rent levels are below market rents and are set within the framework of the Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard. They include self-contained general needs and self-contained sheltered housing units.

However, the term social housing also includes other social housing units not covered by the Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard. These include self-contained 'other supported' housing units and self-contained 'extra care' housing units where an additional level of support is provided as well as non-self-contained bedsits and hostel bed spaces.

'Other housing' stock owned or managed by social

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landlords

As well as social rented and other social housing stock, social landlords may also own or partly own and manage other types of housing. These include housing units let at intermediate rents (including Rent First) where rents are set above social rent but below market rent levels. They also include Shared Ownership-Wales (a part-buy, part-rent scheme for aspiring buyers who have some deposit but are unable to obtain the mortgage required to purchase outright) and Rent to Own – Wales (which is now closed to new applicants) where buyers pay market rents for new-build homes and have the option to purchase from the end of the second year. Also included is flexible tenure for the elderly schemes, housing units let at market rent levels, 'Home buy' and other investment housing.

Social housing rents

Information on average weekly social housing rents is collected for all social housing units (both self-contained and non-self-contained). However, this release only presents information on the average weekly rents charged for self-contained social housing units. Self-contained housing units cover accommodation which is occupied by a household with exclusive use of bath/shower and inside WC and some cooking facilities.

Rental information for all non-self-contained social housing units (including bedsits and hostel bed spaces) has been excluded from the analysis shown within this release but is available on StatsWales.

Rental information covering any non-social housing units owned and managed by Welsh social landlords is not collected by the Welsh Government.

The social housing rents shown in this release are the weighted average weekly

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rents set at 1 April each year by local authorities and RSLs to cover the following financial year. This excludes any rent allowances, service charges and any charges for amenities and water rates.

The Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard provides a framework within which each social landlord is responsible for setting the rents for their own housing units. The Rent Standard applies to all social landlords and sets a maximum threshold that each landlord cannot exceed. The Rent and Service Charge Standard was implemented by social landlords in April 2020.

The information shown in this release covers the average weekly rents charged for all self-contained social housing and not just the housing units covered by the Rent Standard.

Policy and operational context

Rents policy

The majority of social housing units owned and rented from local authorities (LAs) and registered social landlords (RSLs) are at social rents. Social rented housing is provided by local authorities and Welsh RSLs where rent levels are below market rents. The Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard provides a framework within which each social landlord is responsible for setting the rents for their own housing units. The Rent Standard applies to all social landlords and sets a maximum threshold that each landlord cannot exceed.

The [independent review of Affordable Housing Supply](#) carried out during 2018-19, recommended a five year rental agreement to provide stability for tenants and landlords. The Rent and Service Charge Standard was implemented by social landlords in April 2020. The five-year rental agreement will run from April 2020 to April 2025.

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The Rent Standard puts in place a maximum annual rent increase of CPI+1% based on the previous September's published CPI figure. This is the maximum overall increase any social landlord can set over their whole stock in any one year. Within the envelope, social landlords are responsible for setting their own rents and service charges. They have flexibility within their stock to freeze, reduce or increase their rents beyond CPI+1% (up to a maximum individual property rent increase of CPI+1% plus £2.00). However, their overall rental income from their housing stock cannot increase beyond CPI+1%.

The Rent Standard includes the provision that should CPI fall outside the range of 0% to 3%, the Welsh Ministers can review and determine the maximum rent increase for the following year.

Users and uses

Social housing stock

The information is used by the Welsh Government to establish and monitor the amount and type of social housing available at a local and national level and to assess this in relation to current and future housing need.

The stock data are also used by the Welsh Government for calculating dwelling stock estimates at a local authority and all Wales level. **For detailed methodology and quality information for dwelling stock estimates, please see the statistical first release.**

Local authorities use this information to develop their Local Housing Market Assessments; for benchmarking; for evidencing how housing demand is being met locally and for assessing future requirement and need in order to plan and allocate resources effectively.

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Social housing rents

The information is used by the Welsh Government to gauge the average weekly rents charged by local authorities and registered social landlords by housing type across Welsh authorities and to look at trends over time.

The information is used by LAs and RSLs for showing compliance with the current rents policy as outlined above and for informing internal processes and procedures. Local authorities use this information to develop their Local Housing Market Assessments; for benchmarking and for planning and allocating resources effectively.

Generally, the information is used for:

- monitoring housing trends
- policy development
- advice to ministers
- informing debate in the Senedd Cymru for Wales and beyond
- geographic profiling, comparisons and benchmarking.

There are a variety of users of these statistics including national and local government, researchers, academics and students. For further information on the users and uses please refer to the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#).

Data source and coverage

Copies of the current [social housing stock and rents data collection forms](#) are available.

Further information on the data processing cycle can also be found in the

Housing Statistics Quality Report which is available on our website.

Stock data as at 31 March 2023 and rents data for the 2023-24 financial year (as set at 1 April 2023) were collected from all the Local Authorities and all Welsh Registered Social Landlords, including Abbeyfield societies, Almshouse Charities and Co-ownership societies.

The proportion of social housing stock managed by registered social landlords will have been influenced by the large-scale voluntary transfers of local authority stock as shown below. All transfers covered 100% of the local authority housing stock.

Table 1: Local authority stock transferred to registered social landlords

Local authority	Date of transfer	Registered social landlord
Bridgend	12 September 2003	Valleys to Coast
Rhondda Cynon Taf	10 December 2007	RCT Homes
Monmouthshire	17 January 2008	Monmouthshire Housing
Torfaen	01 April 2008	Bron Afon Community Housing
Conwy	29 September 2008	Cartrefi Conwy
Newport	09 March 2009	Newport City Homes
Merthyr Tydfil	20 March 2009	Merthyr Valleys Homes

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Local authority	Date of transfer	Registered social landlord
Ceredigion	30 November 2009	Tai Ceredigion
Gwynedd	12 April 2010	Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd
Blaenau Gwent	26 July 2010	Tai Calon Community Housing
Neath Port Talbot	05 March 2011	NPT Homes

The stock data in this release includes all stock owned, whether Welsh Government funded or otherwise. It only includes units in which the RSL has an equity stake (except in relation to Homebuy Option). The data excludes all non-residential properties. It also excludes any housing units leased to temporarily house the homeless and any housing units that are managed as a social lettings agency.

All RSLs registered in England who operate in Wales were also contacted to obtain information on the level and location of stock owned or partly owned in Wales. This figure has not, however, been included in the total social housing stock shown in this release which covers Welsh social landlords only.

The release includes the actual average weekly rents charged by local authorities and RSLs for the most recent financial year. For the purposes of this collection, they exclude any rent allowances, service charges and charges for amenities and water rates. However, some local authorities are not able to disaggregate this information and may have included some service charges within their rent figures.

The information on average rents shown in this release covers the average

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weekly rents charged for all self-contained social housing and not just the housing units covered by the Welsh Government's Rent and Service Charge Standard.

National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**. National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

These statistics last underwent a **full assessment against the Code of Practice** in 2011.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Included additional information about the different types of social landlord housing and the terminology used.
- Changed the layout of the release to allow users to more easily differentiate between the different types of stock owned or partly owned and managed by social landlords - housing at social rents, other social housing and non social housing units.
- Enhanced trustworthiness by reviewing and reducing the number of officials with pre-release access

Administrative data quality assurance

This release has been scored against the UK Statistics Authority Administrative Data Quality Assurance matrix. The matrix is the UK Statistics Authority regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data. The Standard recognises the increasing role that administrative data is playing in the production of official statistics and clarifies what producers of official statistics should do to assure themselves of the quality of these data. The toolkit that supports it provides helpful guidance to statistical producers about the practices they can adopt to assure the quality of the data they receive, and sets out the standards for assessing statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The matrix assesses the release against the following criteria:

- operational context and administrative data collection
- communication with data supply partners
- quality assurance principles, standards and checks applied by data suppliers
- producer's quality assurance investigations and documentation.

The release has been scored as 'A2:Enhanced assurance' against each of the above categories and work is on-going to produce a fuller description of the assurances required. Further information is available on the [UK Statistics](#)

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Authority website.

Data are collected from local authorities and registered social landlords 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 the data before submitting 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 and registered social landlords are notified of the data collection exercise timetable in advance. This allows adequate time for local authorities and registered social landlords 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.

Quality

Welsh housing statistics adhere to the Welsh Government's **Statistical Quality Management Strategy**, and this is in line with the Quality pillar and principles in the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

Further detail on how these are adhered to can be found in the **Housing Statistics Quality Report**, which covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our housing statistics. The report covers various topics including definitions, coverage, timeliness, relevance and comparability.

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More detailed quality information relating specifically to social housing stock and rents, which is not included in the quality report, is given below.

Accuracy

On receipt of the [data collection forms](#), the data collection team carried out secondary validation and worked closely with the different providers to ensure information provided was accurate and on a consistent basis. We check that the data is consistent with the number of new build units and sales reported during the past year and resolve any queries with landlords. Next, we compare the data provided by local authorities and registered social landlords with their previous year's data. Where these figures are not consistent, we work with the data providers to ensure the final data recorded is consistent.

Comparability

Prior to the 2011-12 collection, information on social landlord housing sales was collected on a quarterly basis. The quarterly figures have been aggregated to create annual totals that are comparable with data for 2011-12 onwards.

Following a consultation on proposed changes to the Social Landlord Housing Sales data collection, from 2013-14 onwards the collection consisted of one form for both RSLs and local authorities. Changes were also made to the data items collected, in line with the consultation proposals. Information was requested separately covering the sale of social and non-social dwellings. These changes are reflected in the release.

Revisions

Revisions can arise from events such as late returns from a local authority or

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RSL, or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information and resubmits this.

Due to the large number of data providers, size and complexity of the data collection, revisions are fairly common. During the local authority validation process, prompts within the data collection form can lead to the discovery of errors in previous data submissions. Once corrected, these are shown as revisions in the latest publication.

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 i.e., minor changes, these will be updated in the following year's statistical release. However, minor amendments to the stock 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 the [Welsh Government's statistical revisions policy](#).

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.

Social landlord housing stock and rent statistics for Wales are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication.

We aim to inform known key users of the publication of the statistics when they

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are published. An e-mail is circulated to the [Housing Information Group](#).

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.

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

A full set of data on social housing stock and rents by type including information by individual local authority and individual RSL back to 2002-03 is available to download from our [StatsWales interactive website](#).

Coherence

Annual estimates of the total number of dwellings by tenure are calculated by the Welsh Government and are based on data from the population censuses and data collected from local authorities and registered social landlords. [For detailed methodology and quality information for dwelling stock estimates, please see the latest statistical first release.](#)

The total local authority and registered social landlord dwelling stock estimates published in the annual dwelling stock estimates release will differ from the figures shown in this release which presents the number of housing units (dwellings, bedsits and bedspaces). The totals in the dwelling stock estimates release assume 3 bed spaces of a non-self-contained unit is equivalent to 1 dwelling. The totals in the dwelling stock estimates also exclude intermediate and other tenures not at social rents as these dwellings appear in the owner-occupied, privately rented and other tenures category. Information on the number of non self-contained units for intermediate and other tenures is not available and the same calculation cannot therefore be applied.

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The **mid 2020 household estimates** were used within this release to calculate the rate of social housing units per 100 households.

Related statistics for other UK countries

England

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) collect information on local authority housing stock and average local authority rents in England. The information is collected annually from the Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) return. Latest published data are for the year ending 31 March 2022.

Information on registered social landlord/private registered providers was collected via the Homes and Communities Agency's Statistical Data Return (SDR) between 2012 and 2019 when responsibility for the SDR moved to the Regulator of Social Housing. The **Statistical Data Return (Regulator of Social Housing)** is an annual online survey completed by all private registered providers of social housing in England and captures a wide variety of information from each PRP about all housing they own. The return also collects information on the cost of renting private registered provider (PRP) (housing association) housing. **The latest published data for 2021 to 2022 are available on the GOV.UK website.**

Scotland

The Scottish Government collect information on local authority housing stock via its Housing Statistics Annual Return.

The Scottish Housing Regulator each year produces Performance tables based

on information collected in the Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR), and financial tables based on information input by RSLs from their audited accounts. **Latest figures for social sector stock (local authorities and housing associations) are available on the Scottish Government website.**

The latest published data available for Scotland covering the average weekly rents for both local authority and RSL housing units is published on the Scottish Government website. LA data comes from the Housing Revenue Account returns by local authorities to the Scottish Government. The RSL data comes from the Scottish Housing Regulator Registered Social Landlord Annual Performance and Statistical Return

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, **the Department for Social Development produces an annual publication which brings together housing statistics** collected by the Department including statistics on social housing.

Evaluation

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

Produced by Knowledge and Analytical Services, Welsh Government

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