A National Statistics publication for Scotland

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

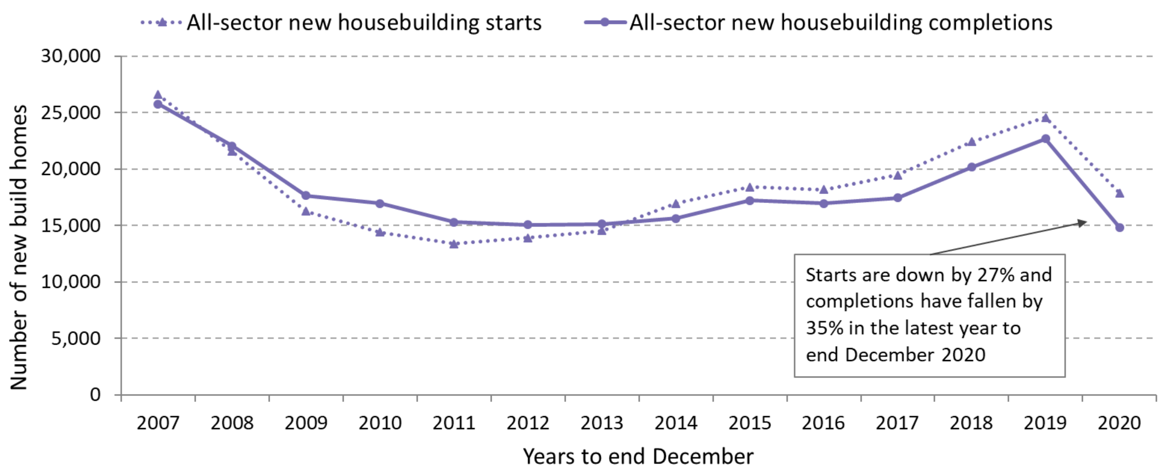
Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update: New Housebuilding and Affordable Housing Supply (published 7 December 2021)

This statistical publication provides information on the latest trends in:

- Quarterly all-sector and private-led new housebuilding starts and completions to end December 2020, and social sector new housebuilding starts and completions to end March 2021.
- UK House Price Index Official Statistics on new build sales transactions, as a measure of private-led new housebuilding activity in Scotland to end July 2021.
- Quarterly Affordable Housing Supply Programme approvals, starts and completions, by type, to end September 2021.
- The latest annual statistics on long-term empty properties and second homes as at September 2021.

The publication also presents annual rates of new housebuilding and affordable housing supply per head of population, including comparisons to other UK countries.

Chart 1: Annual all-sector new housebuilding starts and completions both decreased in the latest year to end December 2020, with activity levels affected COVID-19 lockdown measures from mid-March to late June 2020



Background information including Excel tables and explanatory notes on data sources and quality are available in the [Housing Statistics webpages](#).

Contents

1. Main points

Note that the latest private-led and all-sector new housebuilding figures contain some estimates for a small number of authorities. Further details are provided in Section 2.

- There were 14,834 all-sector new build homes completed in Scotland in the year to end December 2020, a decrease of 35% (7,839 homes) on the previous year, with activity levels affected by COVID-19 lockdown measures from mid-March to late June 2020. Decreases were seen across private-led completions (37% or 6,130 homes), housing association completions (32% or 1,389 homes) and local authority completions (20% or 320 homes).
- The number of new build homes started across all sectors also decreased in the year to end December 2020, with a total of 17,883 starts, a decrease of 27% (6,680 homes) on the previous year. Private-led starts dropped by 32% (5,596 homes), local authority starts dropped by 41% (860 homes) and housing association approvals dropped by 5% (224 homes).
- More up-to-date figures published as part of the UK House Price Index show that private new build sales transactions across the more recent months January to July 2021 have been broadly in line with monthly volumes seen in the pre-pandemic year 2019. The 11,346 transactions in the 12 months to end July 2021 is an increase of 18% (1,746 transactions) on the 9,600 transactions recorded in the previous year to end July 2020.
- Latest social sector new housebuilding figures to end March 2021 show that 1,513 social sector homes were completed in the quarter January to March 2021. This is an increase of 19% (246 homes) on the previous quarter October to December 2020, but a decrease of 22% (415 homes) on the 1,928 social sector completions in the previous year January to March 2020. This brings total completions for the 12

months to end March 2021 to 3,785, a decrease of 33% (1,887 homes) on the 5,672 social sector homes completed in the previous year, with activity levels affected by COVID-19 lockdown measures from mid-March to late June 2020.

- Affordable Housing Supply Programme statistics reflect the broader supply of affordable homes for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership, and include off the shelf purchases and rehabilitations as well as new builds.
- A total of 2,094 affordable homes were completed in the latest quarter July to September 2021, bringing the total number of affordable homes completed in the 12 months to end September 2021 to 8,792. This is an increase of 20% (1,464 homes) on the 7,328 affordable homes completed in the previous year, with increases in the number of completions for social rent (by 15% or 802 homes), affordable rent (by 46% or 377 homes) and affordable home ownership (by 29% or 285 homes).
- A total of 1,641 affordable homes were approved in July to September 2021, bringing the total number of homes approved in the 12 months to end September 2021 to 8,581, a decrease of 23% (2,626 homes) on the 11,207 homes approved in the previous year, with decreases in the number of approvals for social rent (by 28% or 2,545 homes), affordable rent (by 13% or 153 homes) but an increase affordable home ownership (by 7% or 72 homes).
- Over the same period, a total of 1,134 affordable homes were started in July to September 2021, bringing the total number of homes started in the 12 months to end September 2021 to 10,023. This is a decrease of 3% (351 homes) on the 10,374 homes started in the previous year, with decreases in the number of starts for social rent (by 8% or 631 homes) and affordable rent (by 5% or 77 homes), but an increase in the number of starts for affordable home ownership (by 40% or 357 homes).
- Separate annual statistics on long-term empty properties and second homes show that as at September 2021, the number of long-term empty properties has decreased by 8% (3,567 properties) from 47,333 in 2020 to 43,766 in 2021. This decrease follows on from the previous 16% (6,370 homes) annual increase in the number of long-term empty properties from 2019 to 2020, which was associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The number of second homes in the latest year (23,890) is at a broadly similar level to the previous year 2020 (24,466 homes), having decreased slightly by only 2% (576 dwellings).

2. Delays to new housebuilding statistics due to COVID-19, and estimates and revisions made for a small number of authorities

The Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update as at December would usually include an update on private-led and all-sector new house building starts and completions to end June, with more recent figures on social sector new builds to end September. However due to COVID-19 related delays in new build data provision last year, this publication includes figures on private-led and all-sector new house building starts and completions only up to end December 2020, with more recent figures on social sector new builds only up to end March 2021.

Given these delays in the reporting of new housebuilding trends, separate figures from the UK House Price Index on new build sales transactions are provided in Section 5 as an alternative measure of private-led new housebuilding activity in Scotland over the more recent period to end July 2021.

We are working with local authorities to address the current 6 month delay to the new housebuilding data reporting periods caused by COVID-19 related delays in new build data provision, with further details to follow as soon as these are available[1].

In addition to these delays in provision of data, the latest private-led and all-sector new housebuilding figures contain some estimates for a small number of authorities, and some revisions have been made to previously published figures. Further information on this is set out in the Notes Section (see Section 8).

3. All-sector new housebuilding

The new-housebuilding section of this document provides figures on the number of homes started, based on when the foundations are begun, and completed, which is based on when a building inspector deems the property complete.

Figures are presented for homes built on privately led sites (referred to throughout as private sector), local authority led sites (referred to as local authority sector) and housing association led sites (referred to as housing association sector). Social sector housebuilding is the combined total of local authority and housing association builds.

For the private sector the latest information available is for the quarter ending December 2020. Therefore headline findings for new housebuilding across all sectors are presented up to end December 2020, with other figures on social sector housebuilding presented up to end March 2021 where more recent data allows.

The figures have not been seasonally adjusted and so commentary tends to compare the latest 12 month period with the previous 12 month period, or the latest quarter with the same quarter in the previous year. Also note that some of the peaks in the number of starts in Quarter 1 (January to March) each year are generally due to greater numbers of housing association approvals being granted near the end of the financial year.

It should be noted that the amount of all-sector new housebuilding activity recorded in the quarters January to March 2020 and April to June 2020 will have been impacted by the introduction of measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) from mid-March to late June, in which non-essential construction activity stopped and home buyers were advised to delay moving to a new home where possible, after which there has been a phased re-start of supply activity.

Chart 1 (see page 1) shows that annual all-sector new build starts and completions (years to end December) have both shown a broadly decreasing direction of trend following the financial crisis in 2008, with starts falling up to 2011 and completions falling up to 2012, after which there have been increases over most years up to 2019. In the latest year to December 2020, starts and completions have decreased by 27% and 35% respectively, with activity levels being affected by the construction and housing market COVID-19 lockdown measures in place between mid March and late June 2020.

[1] To receive email alerts and updates on housing statistics publications and developments, you can sign up to the Scottish Government Scotstat Register at ScotStat Register: guidance - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Figures for the year to end December 2020

Levels of activity in the two quarters January to March and April to June 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 construction lockdown measures in place between mid-March and late June, with all sectors showing marked decreases in the total number of completions recorded for April to June 2020. Levels of activity recorded in the most recent quarter October to December show increases across all sectors following the decreases seen in the quarter April to June 2020 and the increases recorded in July to September 2020, although overall levels of starts and completions are lower than in the same quarter in the previous year (October to December 2019).

There were 5,177 all-sector completions in October to December 2020, 30% (1,208 homes) more than the 3,969 completions in the previous quarter July to September 2020, and 4,455 homes more than in April to June 2020 when lockdown measures were in place, but 16% (1,008 homes) fewer than the 6,185 homes completed in the same quarter in 2019.

The 3,910 private sector led completions in October to December 2020 is an increase of 30% (912 homes) on the previous quarter, and 3,222 on April to June 2020, but 17% (806 homes) fewer than the 4,716 completions recorded in the same quarter in 2019.

The 537 local authority homes completed in October to December 2020 is an increase of 27% (113 homes) compared with the previous quarter, 503 more homes than in April to June 2020, and 57% (196 homes) higher than the 341 completions seen in October to December 2019.

There were 730 housing association completions in October to December 2020, an increase of 33% (183 homes) on the previous quarter, and 730 more homes than in April to June 2020 (no completions recorded),but 35% (398 homes) fewer homes than the 1,128 completions recorded in the same quarter in 2019. (See Chart 2 below).

Chart 2: Levels of quarterly new housebuilding completions in the latest quarter October to December 2020 have increased in each sector compared to the previous two quarters (in which housebuilding activity was largely paused due to lockdown measures between mid-March and end June 2020)

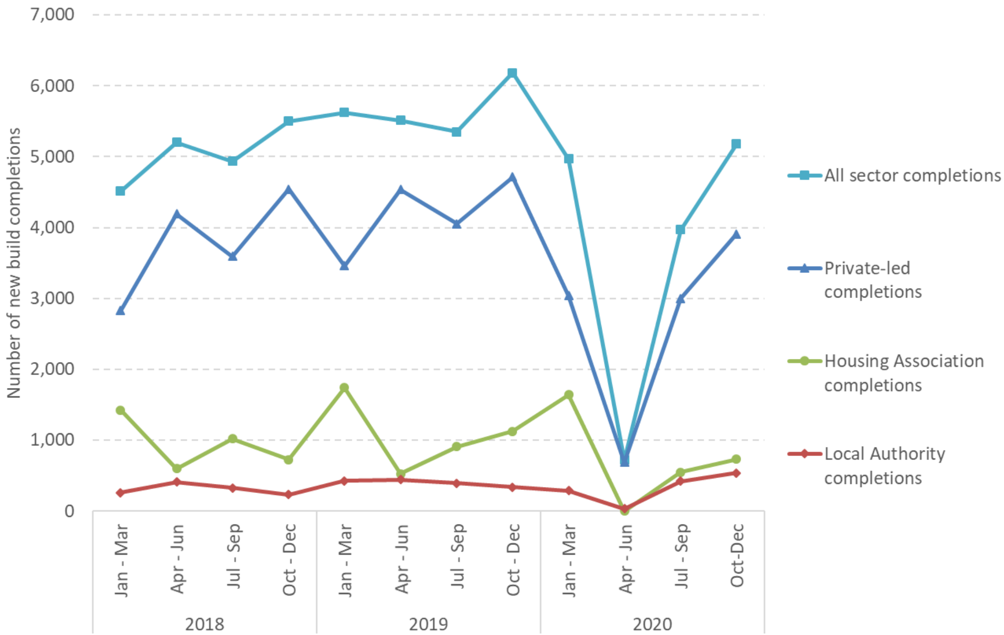


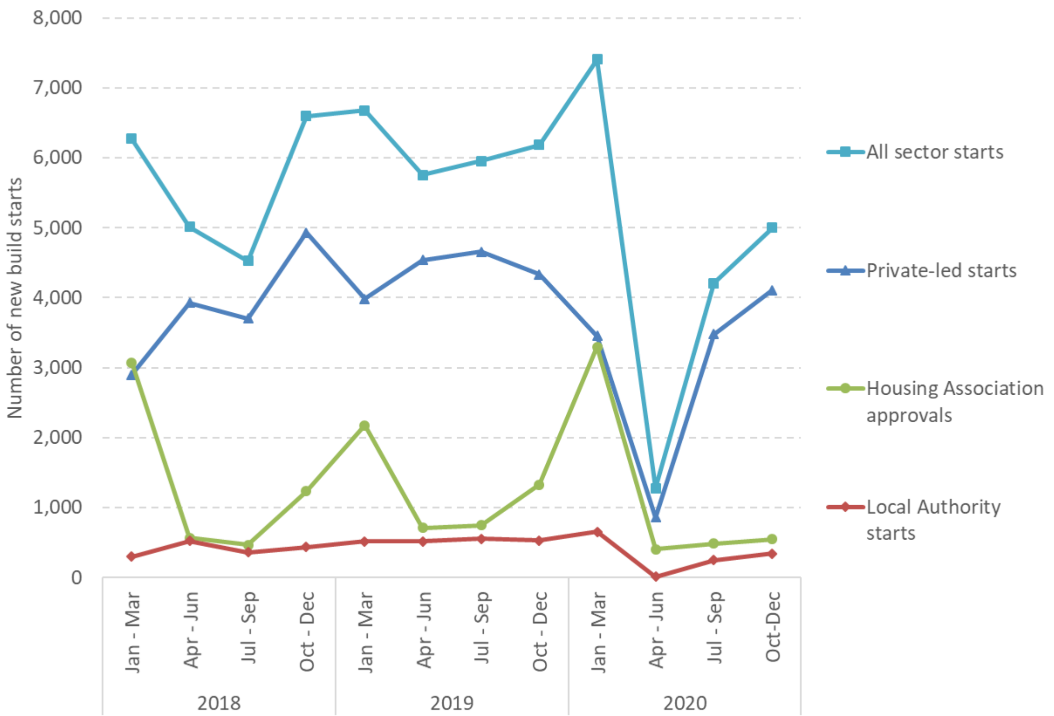
Chart 3 shows quarterly trends in all-sector starts, in which there were 4,996 all-sector homes started in October to December 2020, an increase of 19% (789 homes) compared to the 4,207 homes started in the previous quarter July to September, and 3,719 more than in April to June 2020 when lockdown measures were in place, but a decrease of 19% (1,186) homes compared with October to December 2019.

The 4,110 private sector led starts is an increase of 18% (633 homes) compared with the previous quarter and an increase of 3,250 homes on April to June 2020, but a decrease of 5% (219 homes) compared with the same quarter in 2019.

The 342 local authority homes started in October to December 2020 is an increase of 39% (96 homes) compared to the previous quarter and 329 more homes than in April to June 2020, but a decrease of 35% (186 homes) on the same quarter in 2019.

The 544 housing association approvals in October to December 2020 is an increase of 12% (60 homes) on the 484 approvals seen in the previous quarter and an increase of 140 homes on the number of approvals in April to June 2020. However, the 544 approvals in October to December 2020 is a decrease of 59% (781 homes) compared with October to December 2019.

Chart 3: Levels of new housebuilding starts in October to December 2020 have increased in all sectors compared to the previous two quarters, however are lower than the same quarter in the previous year, October to December 2019



Over the 12 months to end December 2020, there were 14,834 all-sector new build homes completed, a drop of 35% (7,839) on the previous year. Over the same period there were 17,883 homes started, a drop of 27% (6,680) on the previous year.

Table 1 – All sector new housebuilding to end December 2020

All sector homes	Starts	Completions
Quarter Oct to Dec 2017	**4,412**	**4,136**
Quarter Oct to Dec 2018	**6,596**	**5,503**
Quarter Oct to Dec 2019	**6,182**	**6,185**
Quarter Oct to Dec 2020	**4,996**	**5,177**
Change from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020	-1,186	-1,008
Change from 2019 to 2020 (%)	-19%	-16%
Year to Dec 2017	**19,463**	**17,450**
Year to Dec 2018	**22,404**	**20,156**
Year to Dec 2019	**24,563**	**22,673**
Year to Dec 2020	**17,883**	**14,834**
Change from 2019 to 2020	-6,680	-7,839
Change from 2019 to 2020 (%)	-27%	-35%

Sub-national local authority figures for the year to end December 2020

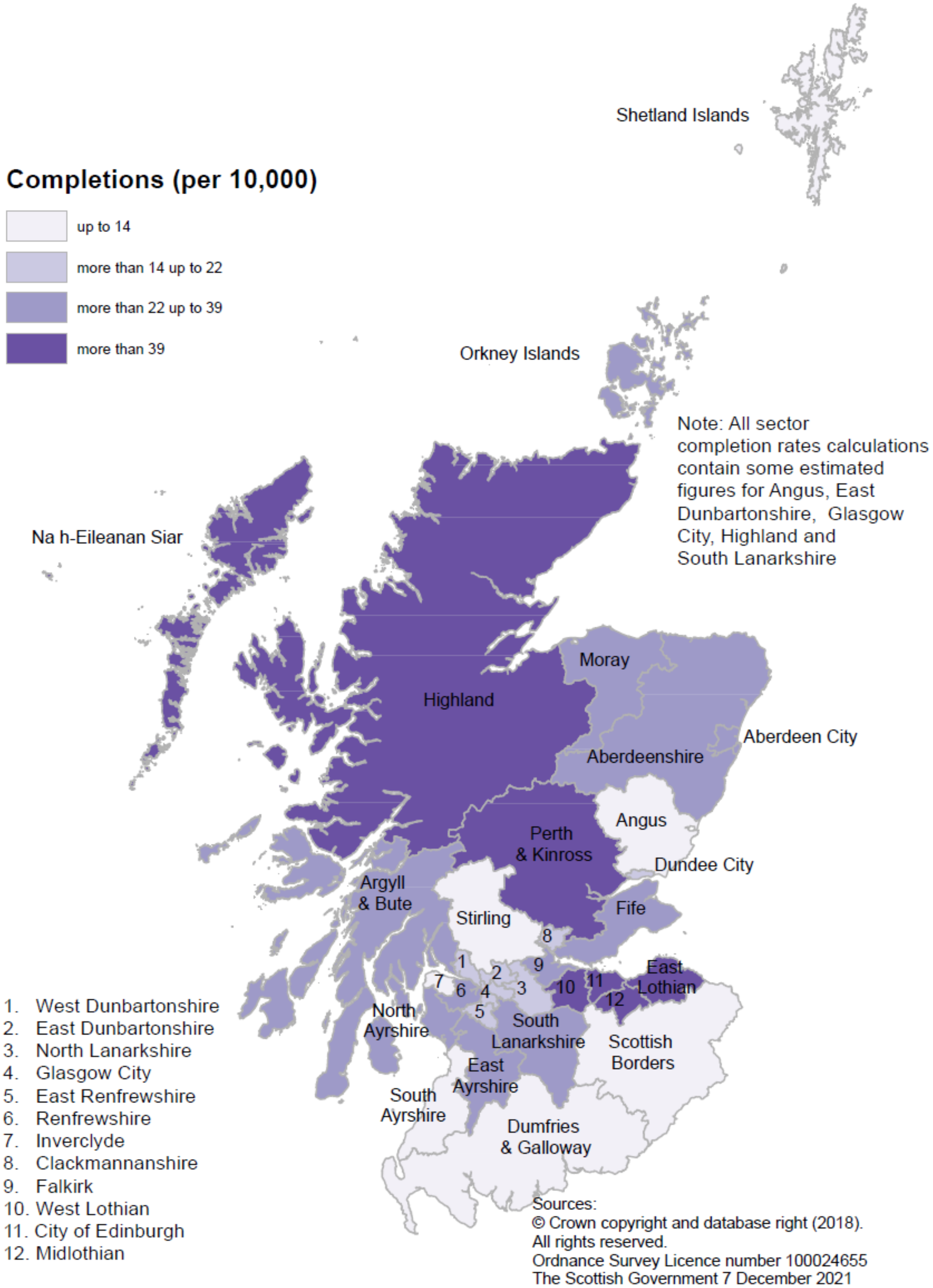
The information on new build housing in Scotland is collected and published at local authority level. Map A, below, shows new housebuilding in the year to end December 2020, as a rate per 10,000 population based on the latest mid-2020 population estimates.

It should be noted that the rates of all-sector new housebuilding activity recorded will have been impacted by the introduction measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) from mid-March to late June 2020.

In the year to end December, the highest new build rates were observed in East Lothian, Midlothian, Perth & Kinross, Na h-Eileanan Siar, West Lothian and Highland. The lowest rates were observed in Stirling, South Ayrshire, Shetland Islands, Dumfries & Galloway, Inverclyde, Scottish Borders and Angus.

Note that the all-sector completion rates calculations contain some estimated figures. Estimated figures have been used for private sector completions for East Dunbartonshire Council for the period January to December 2020 and Angus Council, Glasgow Council and South Lanarkshire Council for the period October to December 2020. Estimated figures have also been used for Highland Council local authority sector figures in October to December 2020.

Map A: New build housing - All Sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end December 2020



Comparison with the rest of the UK from 2007 to 2021

Each of the countries of the UK produces their own statistics on quarterly new build housing starts and completions by tenure, and all use broadly consistent definitions. The quarterly new build statistics for each of the countries of the UK are brought together in the UK House building update section of the ONS website.

In addition to this, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also produces an additional annual set of statistics for England on new build homes, as a component part of the 'Housing supply; net additional dwellings, England' set of statistics[2]. These statistics are collected on a different basis to the quarterly UK country statistics as local authorities can use a range of data sources to collate these figures, rather than solely using building control information. Latest figures on this for 2019/20 were published in November 2020, and the publication advised that the 'net additional dwellings' should be considered the primary and most comprehensive measure of housing supply in England.

MHCLG have advised that the quarterly new build statistical collection for England, whilst being a useful leading indicator of activity throughout the year, is not currently capturing all new build activity. This is largely due to difficulties in collecting accurate starts and completions data from independent building inspectors or where building control has been sourced out to strategic partnerships or the private sector. These data issues do not exist in the Scotland quarterly housing statistics, given that all of the 32 local authorities in Scotland directly manage building control and the associated provision of data to the Scottish Government on starts and completions.

As a result of this advice from MHCLG, the new build component figures of the 'net additional dwellings' statistics for England are included in the UK comparisons as an additional set of figures to consider when comparing between countries on a financial year basis.

Chart 4a presents trends in the rates of new house building per 10,000 population across each of the UK countries on a financial year basis (years to end March) to allow for comparisons with both the England financial year 'net additional dwelling' statistics and financial year rates derived from each of the quarterly UK series. This shows that whilst Scotland had a higher rate of completions per 10,000 head of population than England over the period 2006/07 to 2013/14, that Scotland and England have seen broadly similar rates of housebuilding each year across the period 2014/15 to 2019/20, when comparing the Scotland figures to the England net addition figures.

In the financial year 2019/20, the 40 homes built per 10,000 population in Scotland was similar to the rates seen in England (net additional dwellings figures) and Northern Ireland (both 39 homes per 10,000).

[2] Housing supply: net additional dwellings for England

Chart 4a: New housebuilding completions as a rate per 10,000 population (years to end March) - Scotland had a rate of 40 in the year to end March 2020, similar to the rates in Northern Ireland (39) and England ('net additional dwellings' figures) (39)

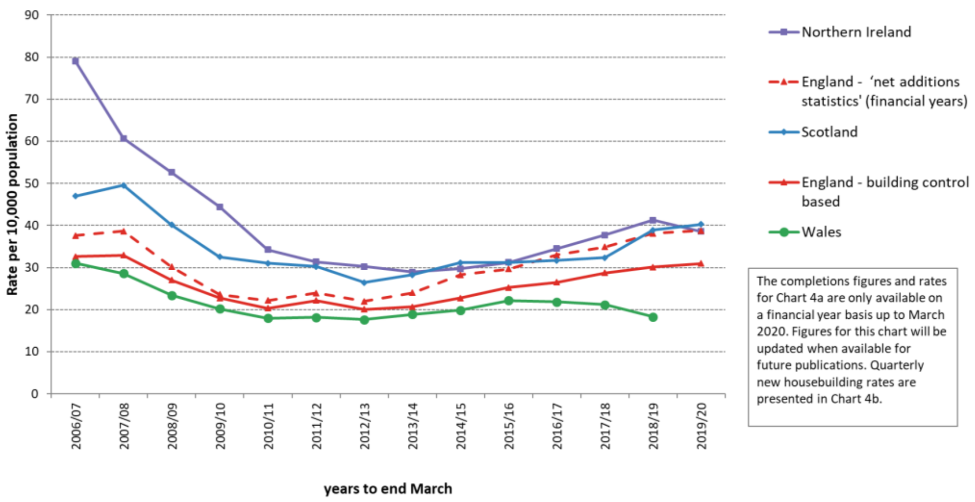


Chart 4b presents more recent trends in the rates of new housebuilding per 10,000 population across each of the UK countries on a quarterly basis, based on the latest published information available for each country[3].

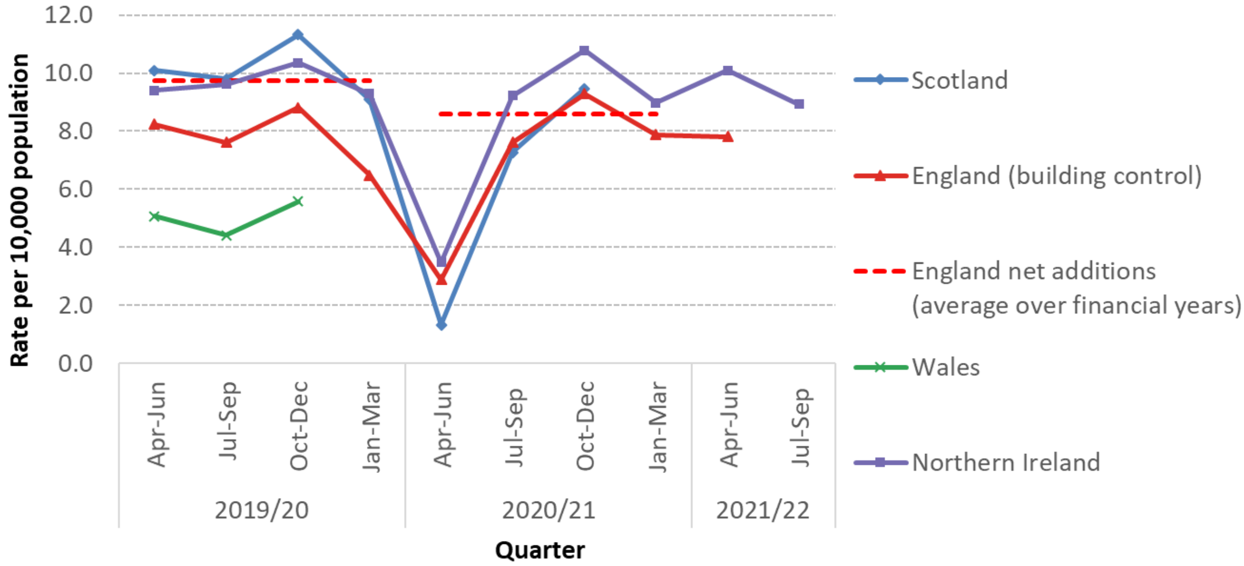
The England 'net additional dwelling' figure for the financial year 2019/20 is also included as an average across each of the quarters within this year, to help demonstrate the difference in the relative level between this figure and the separate quarterly England building control based figures.

The chart shows the clear impact of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on construction activity in the quarter April to June 2020, with the rates of new housebuilding per 10,000 population dropping compared to the same in quarter in the previous year by 87% in Scotland, 65% in England (building control based figures), and 63% in Northern Ireland, which may reflect stricter lockdown restrictions for Scottish housing building compared to England and Northern Ireland.

Following this, the rates of new housebuilding in each of these countries have subsequently increased back up to higher levels in the July to September and October to December 2020 quarters, although there have been slight decreases in England and Northern Ireland since then.

[3] The most recent quarterly figures for Northern Ireland and England have been sourced from [Land and Property Services (LPS) in Northern Ireland]() and the [MHCLG Live tables on housing supply.]()

Chart 4b: Quarterly new housebuilding rates per 10,000 population for Scotland, Northern Ireland and England (building control figures) dropped in the quarter April to June 2020, with completion rates likely to have been affected by COVID lockdown measures in place

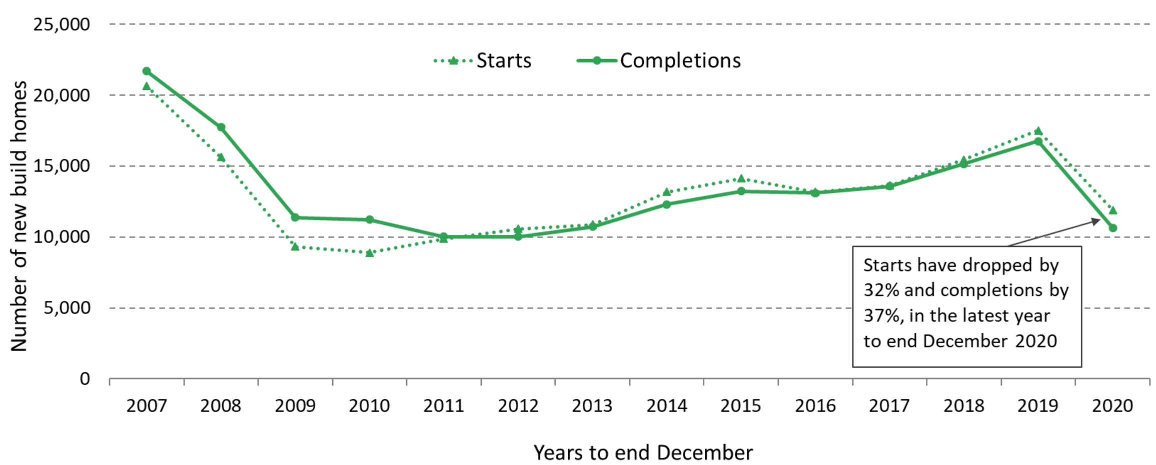


4. Private-led new housebuilding

The private sector is the biggest contributor to overall house building, accounting for almost three quarters (72%) of all homes completed in the 12 months to end December 2020.

Chart 5 shows the annual number of private sector led starts and completions from 2007 to 2020 (years to end December). This shows the impact of the recession in the second half of the last decade, with private sector led completions falling throughout 2008 due to the financial crisis. Following this, private led completions decreased more gradually until 2011, and have been broadly increasing in more recent years until dropping by 37% in the year to end December 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19 construction lockdown measures in place between mid-March and late June 2020.

Chart 5: Annual private sector led new build starts and completions both decreased in the latest year to end December 2020, with activity levels affected by the COVID-19 lockdown measures in place from mid-March to late June 2020



Figures for the year to end December 2020

Chart 6 below shows that between October and December 2020, 3,910 private sector led homes were completed, an increase of 30% (912 homes) on the previous quarter, and an increase of 3,222 homes on April to June 2020, during which housebuilding activity was largely paused due to lockdown measures, but 17% (806 homes) fewer than in the same quarter in the previous year, October to December 2019. This brings the total for the year to end December 2020 to 10,634 completions, a decrease of 37% (6,130 homes) on the 16,764 completions in the previous year.

There were 4,110 private sector led starts between October and December 2020, an increase of 18% (633 homes) on the previous quarter July to September 2020, and 3,250 more homes completed than in April to June 2020, but 5% (219 homes) fewer than in the same quarter in 2019. This brings the total for the year ending December 2020 to 11,901, a decrease of 32% (5,596 homes) on the 17,497 starts in the previous year.

Chart 6: Private sector led new housebuilding starts and completions in the quarter Oct-Dec 2020 have both increased compared to the previous two quarters, however levels are lower than in the same quarter in the previous year

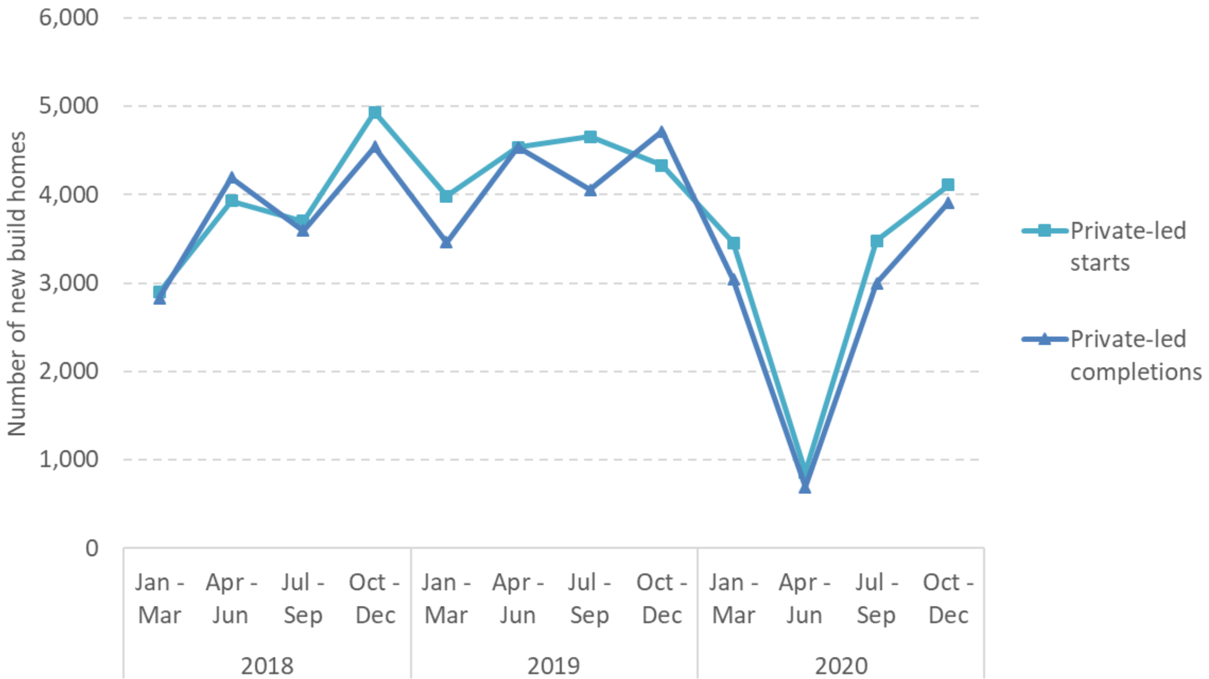


Table 2 – Private-led new housebuilding to end December 2020

Private sector homes	Starts	Completions
Quarter Oct to Dec 2017	**3,199**	**3,204**
Quarter Oct to Dec 2018	**4,929**	**4,542**
Quarter Oct to Dec 2019	**4,329**	**4,716**
Quarter Oct to Dec 2020	**4,110**	**3,910**
Change from Q4 2019 2019 to Q4 2020	-219	-806
Change from 2019 to 2020 (%)	-5%	-17%
Year to end Dec 2017	**13,618**	**13,570**
Year to end Dec 2018	**15,454**	**15,157**
Year to end Dec 2019	**17,497**	**16,784**
Year to end Dec 2020	**11,901**	**10,634**
Change from 2019 to 2020	-5,596	-6,150
Change from 2019 to 2020 (%)	-32%	-37%

In September 2013 the Scottish Government introduced the Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme which has aimed to support buyers purchasing a new build home and to stimulate the house building industry. Following this, the Help to Buy (Scotland) Affordable New Build and Help to Buy (Scotland) Smaller Developers schemes were launched on 21 January 2016. Since 5 February 2021, the Scottish Government has no longer been accepting applications to the main Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme. Applications however continue to be accepted for the Help to Buy (Scotland) Smaller Developer scheme, but this scheme will close at the end of the financial year 2021/22. Further information on the Help to Buy schemes, along with monitoring information setting out numbers of sales and the characteristics of buyers, is available on the Help to Buy web pages.

In December 2019, the Scottish Government also introduced the First Home Fund, a shared equity pilot scheme to provide first-time buyers with up to £25,000 to help them buy a property that meets their needs and is located in the area where they want to live, and which includes the purchase of new build properties as well as existing properties. The First Home Fund scheme closed to new applications on 8th April 2021. Further information on the First Home Fund is available on the First Home Fund web pages as well as a Quantitative Analysis of the First Home Fund Evaluation, a Qualitative Evaluation of the Scottish Government First Home Fund Shared Equity Scheme and a Summary of findings from the quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the First Home Fund.

Sub-national local authority figures for the year to end December 2020

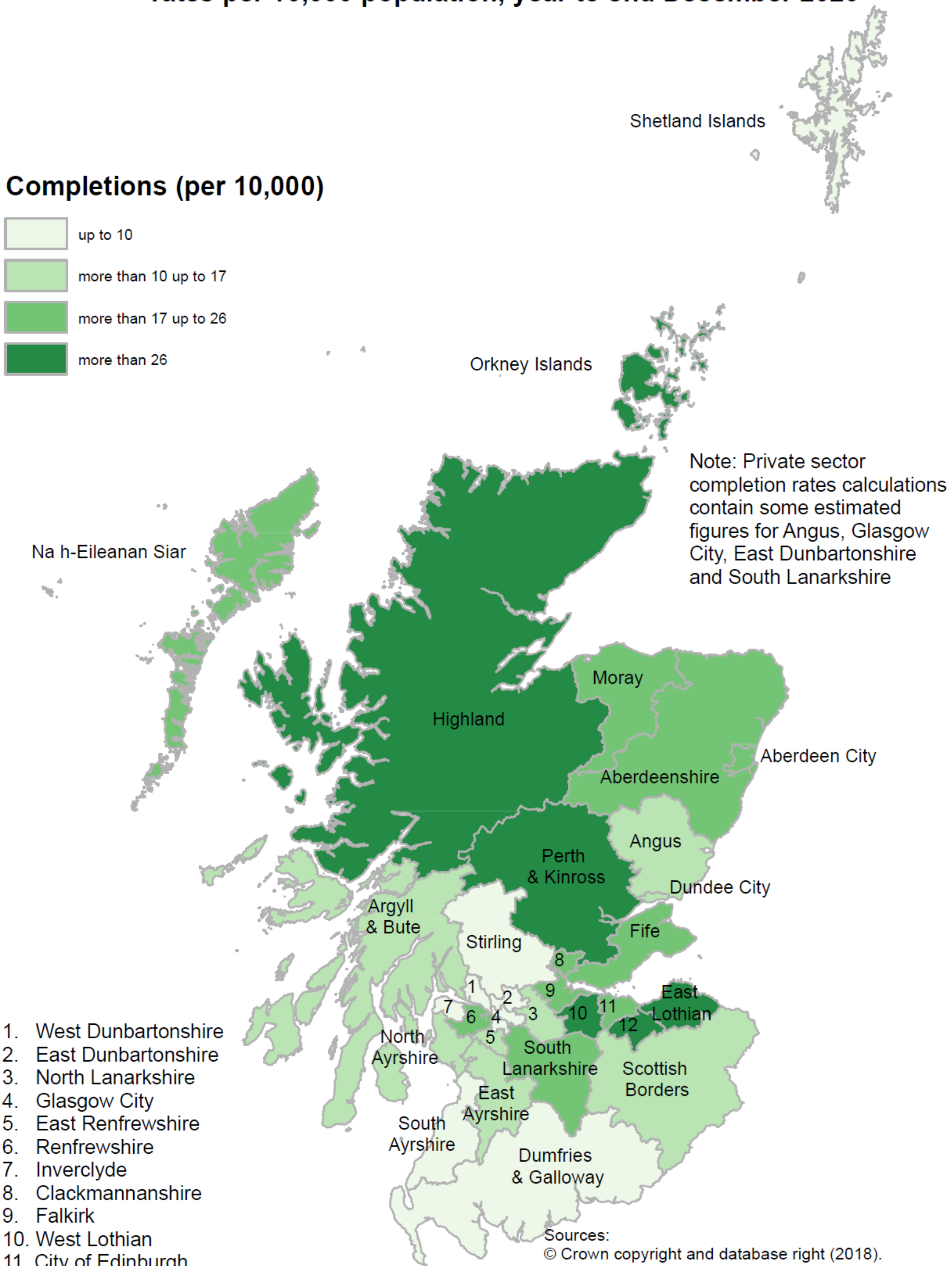
Map B shows the rates per 10,000 head of population (based on the latest mid-2020 population estimates) of private sector led new build completions in each local authority for the year to end December 2020.

It should be noted that the rate of private sector new housebuilding activity recorded will have been impacted by the introduction measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) from mid-March to late June 2020.

The highest completion rates in the year to end December 2020 have been in Midlothian, East Lothian, Perth & Kinross, West Lothian, Highland and Orkney Islands. The lowest rates meanwhile, have been in Glasgow City, Stirling, South Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway and Inverclyde.

Note that the private sector completion rates calculations contain some estimated figures. Estimated figures have been used for private sector completions for East Dunbartonshire Council for the period January to December 2020 and Angus Council, Glasgow Council and South Lanarkshire Council for the period October to December 2020.

Map B: New build housing - Private Sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end December 2020



1. West Dunbartonshire
2. East Dunbartonshire
3. North Lanarkshire
4. Glasgow City
5. East Renfrewshire
6. Renfrewshire
7. Inverclyde
8. Clackmannanshire
9. Falkirk
10. West Lothian
11. City of Edinburgh
12. Midlothian

Sources:

The Scottish Government 7 December 2021

5. UK House Price Index (HPI) new build sales transactions, as a measure of private-led housebuilding activity to end July 2021

This section sets out the latest quarterly and monthly trends in the number of new build sales transactions in Scotland to end July 2021, based on residential property transaction figures published as part of the UK House Price Index (HPI)[4].

These figures may be helpful in providing an indication of recent levels of private led new housebuilding activity, particularly given the current delay in the publication of the Scottish Government new housebuilding private-led starts and completions figures.[5]

It should be noted that the HPI-based figures are not directly comparable to the Scottish Government time series on private-led new build starts and completion, due to some differences in how the two sets of figures are constructed. For example, the UK HPI new build sales transaction figures are based on the date of the completed sales transaction rather than the date of completion, and will also not include self-build dwellings or homes built privately for tenures other than private sales.

Further information on the quality of the HPI data for Scotland, which is sourced from Registers of Scotland, is available in the UK HPI Quality Assurance section of the UK House Price Index web page.

Table 3 and Chart 7a below illustrate how the UK HPI figures compare to previously published Scottish Government Private sector-led completion figures in each quarter from January to March 2019 onwards, and also provide the latest trends seen in the UK HPI new build sales transactions figures across the two more recent quarters to January to June 2021.

It can be seen across the period January to March 2019 to October to December 2020 (the latest available quarterly figures for Scottish Government Private led completions) that both data series follow broadly similar trends in respect of increases or decreases compared to the previous quarter. The Scottish Government figures are higher in most quarters, but this is likely to be explained by differences in how the figures are constructed, given that some self-build dwellings or dwellings built privately for tenures other than private sales will be included, whereas the HPI figures are based on private sale transactions only.

[4] The most recent figures are accessed through the UK House Price Index: data downloads September 2021.

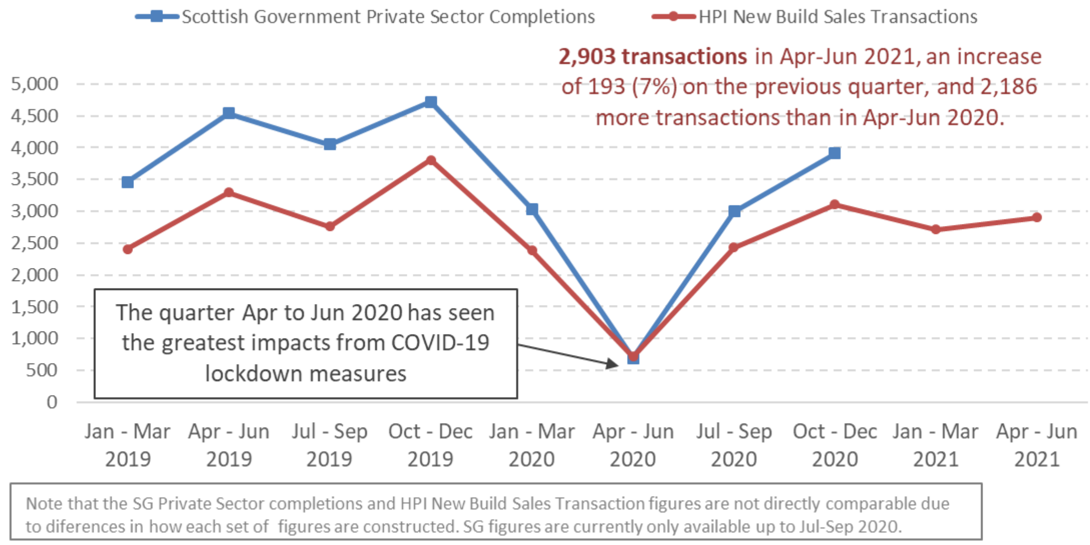
[5] The Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update as at December would usually include an update on all-sector new house building starts and completions to end June in the same year, with more recent figures on social sector new builds to end September. However due to the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of new housebuilding data by some local authorities to the usual timescales, this has slowed the timing of the data collection process over this period.

Table 3 – Scotland-level HPI New Build Sales Transactions Volume for Scotland and Scottish Government Private Sector-led new build completions

Quarter or year	HPI New Build Sales Transactions Volume	Scottish Government Private-led completions
Jan – Mar 2019	**2,407**	**3,460**
Apr – Jun 2019	**3,293**	**4,536**
Jul – Sep 2019	**2,759**	**4,052**
Oct – Dec 2019	**3,807**	**4,716**
Jan – Mar 2020	**2,385**	**3,038**
Apr – Jun 2020	**717**	**688**
Jul – Sep 2020	**2,428**	**2,998**
Oct – Dec 2020	**3,098**	**3,910**
Jan – Mar 2021	**2,710**	**Not available**
Apr - Jun 2021	**2,903**	**Not available**
Change from previous quarter	+193	
Change (%) from previous quarter	+7%	
Change from same quarter in previous year	+2,186	
Change (%) from same quarter in previous year	+305%	
12 months Jul 2019 - Jun 2020	**9,668**	**12,494**
12 months Jul 2020 - Jun 2021	**11,139**	**Not available**
Change from previous year	+1,471	
Change (%) from previous year	+15%	

Note there were 882 transactions recorded in the most recent month of July 2021, which brings the total 12 month figure to end July 2021 to be 11,346, an increase of 1,746 (18%) on the previous year to end July 2020. Sources: UK House Price Index: reports - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (September 2021 data downloads) and Scottish Government Private Sector-led new build completions

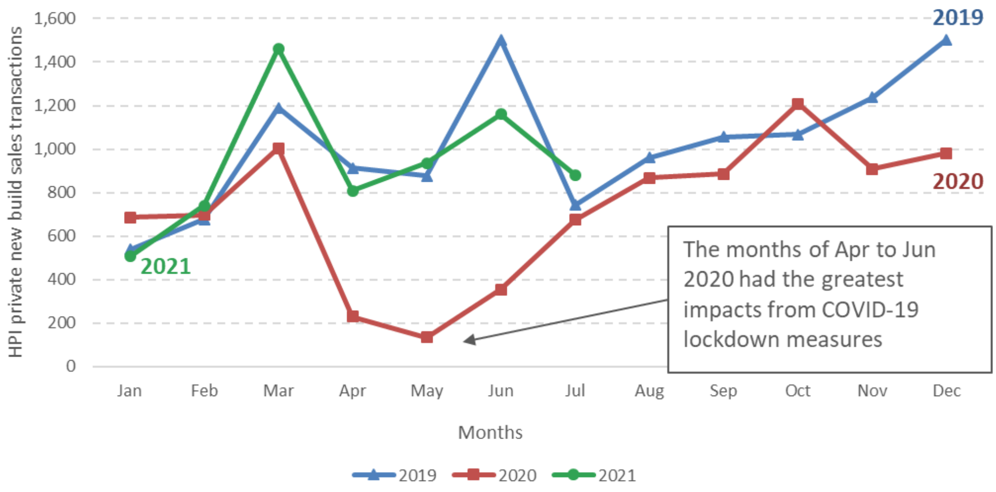
Chart 7a: Scottish Government Private Sector led new housebuilding completions and HPI new build sales transactions. Scotland: Jan - Mar 2019 to Apr - Jun 2021



The latest quarterly HPI figures show that there were 2,903 new build sales transactions in Scotland in the quarter April to June 2021, an increase of 193 (7%) on the 2,710 transactions seen in January to March 2021, and an increase of 2,186 transactions on the 717 transactions seen in April to June 2020, a quarter in which housebuilding activity was largely paused due to lockdown measures.

More recent HPI figures for the month of July 2021 show a total of 882 transactions for this month (see Chart 7b). This brings the total transactions in the year to end July 2021 to 11,346, an increase of 18% (1,746 transactions) on the 9,600 transactions recorded in the year to end July 2020.

Chart 7b: Monthly private new build sales transactions in Scotland across January to July 2021 have been broadly in line with the number of transactions seen in these months in the pre-pandemic year 2019



6. Social sector new housebuilding

Note in this section that housing association new build approvals are used as a proxy for housing association new build starts due to data quality considerations, which is an approach consistent with that taken in previous publications.

Social sector housing consists of local authority and housing association housing, and has accounted for 28% of all new build homes completed over the 12 months to the end of December 2020.

Social sector figures are collected a quarter ahead of those for the private sector, meaning that figures are available up to the end of March 2021. However to enable easier understanding of how each sector contributes to the all sector totals described previously, some figures are also presented to end December 2020.

Chart 8a shows the number of local authority and housing association homes started and completed each year up to end December 2020, whilst Chart 8b shows the same information but up to end March 2021 (the most recent information available). Charts 9 and 10 show quarterly figures for housing associations and local authorities, respectively.

Between 2008 and 2009 (years to end December) the number of housing association completions increased from 4,100 to just over 5,800, after which the number of homes completed dropped in each year until reaching nearly 2,400 in 2014. After fluctuating around this level for the three years after this, housing association completions increased to just over 4,300 in 2019, before decreasing to 2,900 in 2020 due to the introduction of measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) from mid-March to late June 2020.

The number of local authority homes built gradually increased from just 195 homes in 2008 up to just over 1,100 in 2012 (years to end December). Completions were then broadly flat until 2017 where they reached nearly 1,400 homes. Similar levels were seen in 2018, after which the number of local authority homes completed increased to 1,600 before decreasing in the latest year to end December 2020 to 1,300 completions.

Chart 8a: Latest annual social sector starts and completions figures to end December 2020 show a drop compared to the previous year, with activity levels affected by the COVID-19 lockdown measures in place from mid-March to late June 2020

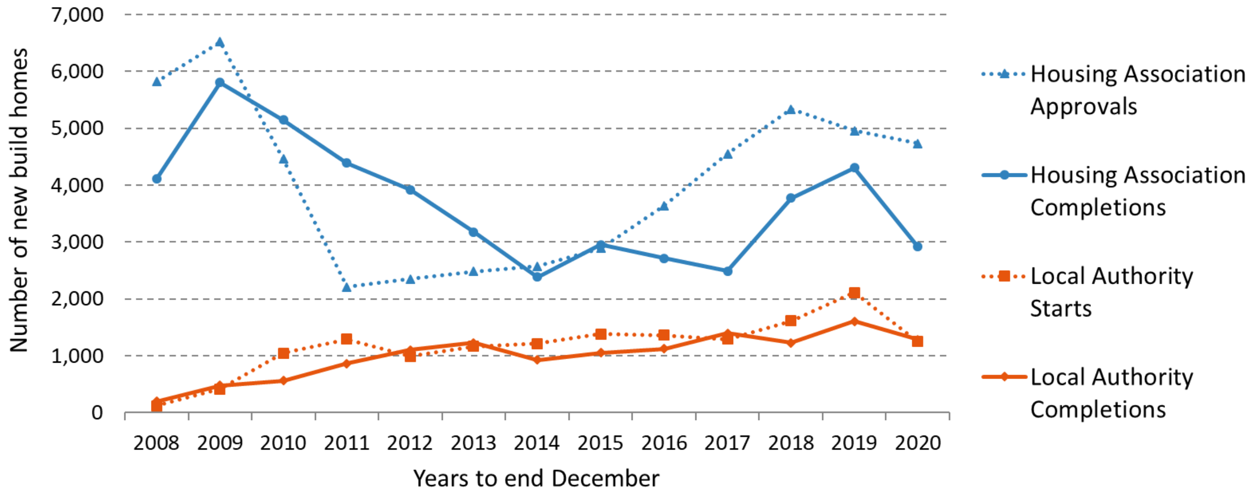


Chart 8b: Latest annual social sector starts and completions figures to end March 2021 show a drop compared to the previous year, with activity levels affected by the COVID-19 lockdown measures in place from mid-March to late June 2020

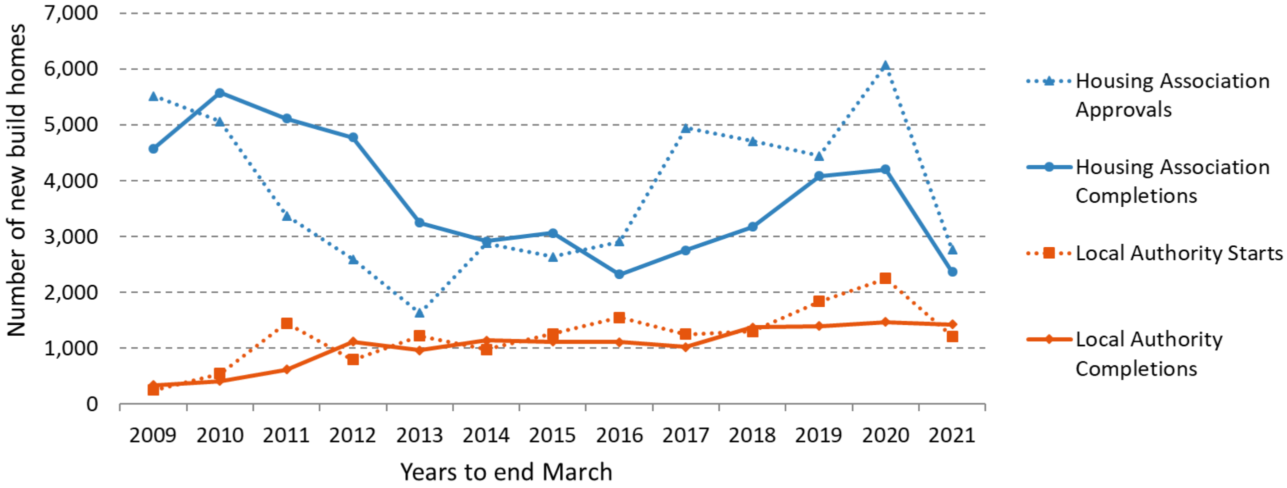


Chart 9: Housing association new housebuilding approvals and completions in the latest quarter Jan-Mar 2021 have increased compared to the quarter Oct-Dec 2020, but levels are below the same quarter in the previous year

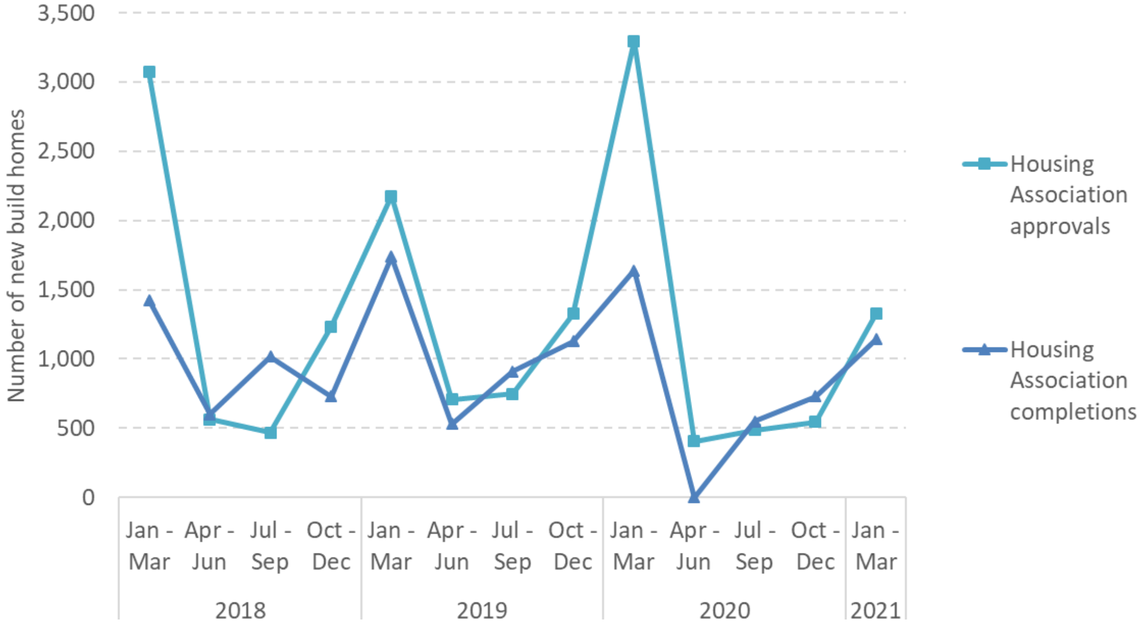
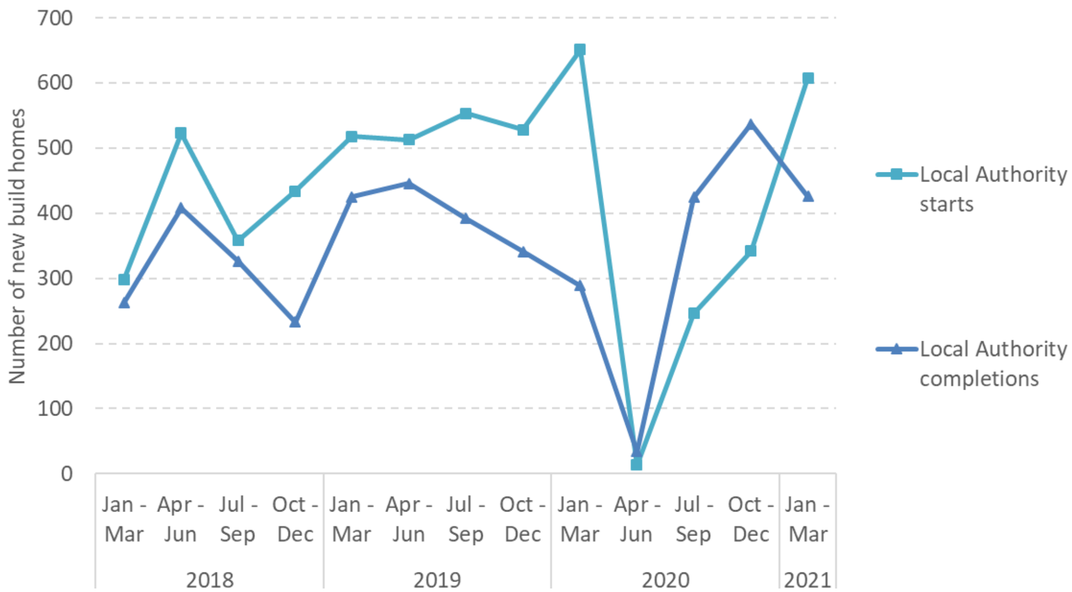


Chart 10: In the latest quarter Jan-Mar 2021 local authority new housebuilding starts have increased but completions have decreased when compared to the previous quarter Oct-Dec 2020



Figures for the year to end December 2020

There were 1,267 social sector completions between October and December 2020; a decrease of 14% (202 homes) on the same quarter in 2019. This brings the total for the year to end December 2020 to 4,200, a decrease of 29% (1,709 homes) on the 5,909 social sector completions in the previous year.

Meanwhile, 886 social sector homes were started between October and December 2020; a decrease of 52% (967 homes) on the same quarter in 2019. This brings the total for the year to end December 2020 to 5,982, which is a 15% decrease (1,084 homes) on the 7,066 social sector starts in the previous year.

Table 4 – Social sector new housebuilding to end December 2020

Social sector homes	Total Social starts	Total Social completions	Local authority starts	Local authority completions	Housing association approvals	Housing association completions
Oct to Dec-17	**1,213**	**932**	**503**	**388**	**710**	**544**
Oct to Dec-18	**1,667**	**961**	**434**	**233**	**1,233**	**728**
Oct to Dec-19	**1,853**	**1,469**	**528**	**341**	**1,325**	**1,128**
Oct to Dec-20	**886**	**1,267**	**342**	**537**	**544**	**730**
Change	-967	-202	-186	+196	-781	-398
Change (%)	-52%	-14%	-35%	+57%	-59%	-35%
Year to Dec-17	**5,845**	**3,880**	**1,291**	**1,393**	**4,554**	**2,487**
Year to Dec-18	**6,950**	**4,999**	**1,613**	**1,229**	**5,337**	**3,770**
Year to Dec-19	**7,066**	**5,909**	**2,112**	**1,604**	**4,954**	**4,305**
Year to Dec-20	**5,982**	**4,200**	**1,252**	**1,284**	**4,730**	**2,916**
Change	-1,084	-1,709	-860	-320	-224	-1,389
Change (%)	-15%	-29%	-41%	-20%	-5%	-32%

Sub-national local authority figures for the year to end December 2020

Maps C and D show the rates of housing association and local authority new build completions in each local authority for the year to end December 2020 per 10,000 of the population (based on the latest mid-2020 population estimates). The housing stock of 6 local authorities (Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Na h-Eileanan Siar and Scottish Borders) has been transferred to housing associations and so these areas do not build new local authority houses.

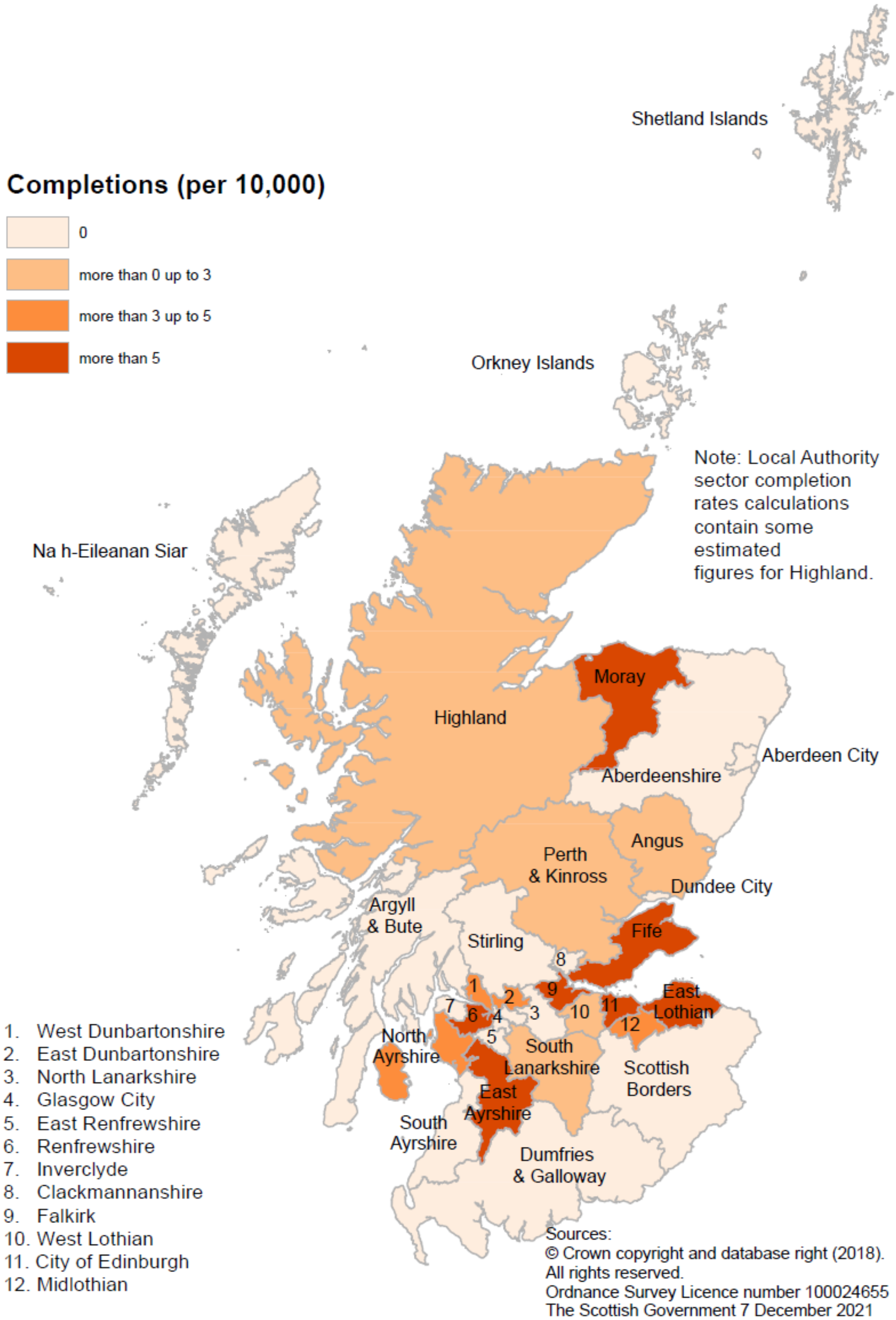
It should be noted that the rates of social sector new housebuilding activity recorded will have been impacted by the introduction measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) from mid-March to late June, which will have impacted on the year to end December totals and new housebuilding rates.

Note that the social sector completion rates calculations contain some estimated figures. Estimated figures have been used for Highland Council local authority sector figures in October to December 2020.

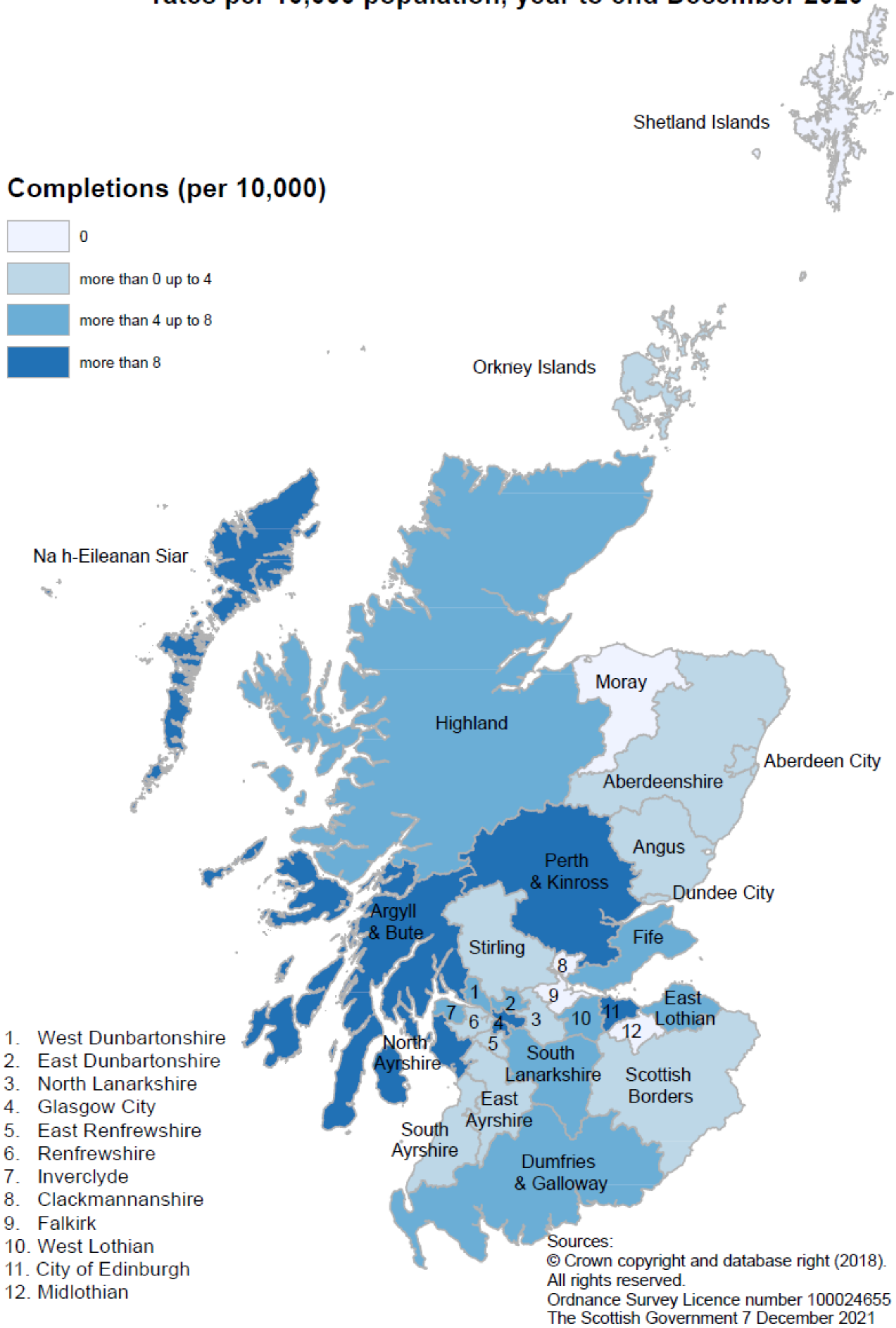
In the year to end December 2020 local authority new build rates were highest in Moray, Renfrewshire, East Lothian, East Ayrshire, Fife and Falkirk. As well as the 6 stock transfer authorities mentioned above, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, East Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, South Ayrshire and Stirling built no new local authority homes in the year ending December 2020.

Meanwhile rates of housing association new build completions were highest in Na h-Eileanan Siar, Glasgow, North Ayrshire, Perth & Kinross and Edinburgh whilst the lowest rates of housing association new build completions were in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Midlothian, Moray and Shetland.

Map C: New build housing - Local Authority Sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end December 2020



Map D: New build housing - Housing Association Sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end December 2020



Latest figures to end March 2021

A total of 1,513 social sector homes were completed between January to March 2021, a decrease of 22% (415 homes) on the 1,928 completions in the same quarter in 2020. This brings the total completions for the 12 months to end March 2021 to 3,785, a decrease of 33% (1,887 homes) on the 5,672 social sector homes completed in the previous year.

Meanwhile, 1,935 social sector homes were started between January and March 2021. This is a decrease of 51% (2,014 homes) compared to the same quarter in the previous year. This brings the total for the 12 months to end March 2021 to 3,968, a decrease of 52% (4,353 homes) on the 8,321 social sector homes started in the same period in 2020.

Table 5 – Social sector new housebuilding to end March 2021

Social sector homes	Total Social starts	Total Social completions	Local authority starts	Local authority completions	Housing association approvals	Housing association completions
Jan to Mar-18	**3,371**	**1,686**	**298**	**262**	**3,073**	**1,424**
Jan to Mar-19	**2,694**	**2,165**	**518**	**425**	**2,176**	**1,740**
Jan to Mar-20	**3,949**	**1,928**	**651**	**289**	**3,298**	**1,639**
Jan to Mar-21	**1,935**	**1,513**	**608**	**426**	**1,327**	**1,087**
Change	-2,014	-415	-43	+137	-1,971	-552
Change (%)	-51%	-22%	-7%	+47%	-60%	-34%
Year to Mar-18	**6,012**	**4,540**	**1,302**	**1,370**	**4,710**	**3,170**
Year to Mar-19	**6,273**	**5,478**	**1,833**	**1,392**	**4,440**	**4,086**
Year to Mar-20	**8,321**	**5,672**	**2,245**	**1,468**	**6,076**	**4,204**
Year to Mar-21	**3,968**	**3,785**	**1,444**	**1,421**	**2,759**	**2,364**
Change	-4,353	-1,887	-801	-47	-3,317	-1,838
Change (%)	-52%	-33%	-36%	-3%	-55%	-44%

7. Affordable housing supply

Affordable Housing Supply Programme statistics reflect the broader supply of affordable homes (i.e. for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership) and include off the shelf purchases and rehabilitations as well as new builds. Statistics are available up to the end of September 2021.

Quarterly affordable housing supply statistics are used to inform progress against Scottish Government affordable housing delivery targets, including to deliver the remaining 50,000 target homes as quickly as it is safe to do so over the year 2021/22, along with the longer term ambition to deliver 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, of which at least 70% will be for social rent and 10% will be in remote, rural and island communities. The statistics reflect the number of affordable homes delivered that have received some form of government support through loans, grant or guarantees.

Approvals, starts and completions are all measured for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. Approval is the point at which funding is granted. Starts are recorded when an on-site presence is established to progress site work. Completion measures when the units are delivered and ready for occupation.

Social Rent includes Housing Association Rent, Council House Rent as well as Home Owner Support Fund Rent.

Affordable Rent includes Mid-Market Rent (MMR), National Housing Trust (NHT) Rent as well as other programmes such as the Empty Homes Loan Fund (EHLF) and Rural Homes for Rent (RHfR).

Affordable Home Ownership includes Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE), New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE), Shared Ownership (LCHO) as well as other programmes such as Home Owner Support Fund Shared Equity.

Latest figures to end September 2021:

COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on construction and housing market activity from mid-March 2020 to late June 2020 have lowered the total amount of activity recorded for the two quarters from January to March 2020 and April to June 2020 compared to what would otherwise have been the case.

Following this, there was a phased re-start of supply activity, in which the construction sector moved into Phase 4 of the Restart Plan in mid July 2020. This allowed for sites to work up to a steady state operation using physical distancing, barriers, or controlled close working with PPE, but in some cases may result in fewer workforce staff on site to ensure safe working and physical distancing. In addition to this, some work on new approvals may have been affected over this period by the furloughing of some social landlord and construction sector staff.

Table 6 below shows that in the latest quarter July to September 2021, 1,641 homes were approved, 1,134 homes were started, and 2,094 homes were completed. The levels of approvals and completions are higher than in the same period in the previous year, with approvals being 59% (608 homes) higher and completions being 78% (917 homes) higher than in July to September 2020. The 1,134 starts in July to September 2021 is 49% (1,075 homes) fewer than in July to September 2020.

Over the latest year to end September 2021, the number of homes approved and started in the year to September 2021 fell by 23% (2,626 homes) to 8,581 approvals and 3% (351 homes) to 10,023 starts, compared with the year to end September 2020. Completions have increased by 20% (1,464 homes) in the year to end September 2021 compared to the previous year.

Table 6 – Affordable Housing Supply to September 2021

Affordable housing supply homes	Approvals	Starts	Completions
Quarter Jul to Sep 2015	**1,260**	**1,612**	**1,809**
Quarter Jul to Sep 2016	**2,016**	**1,995**	**1,668**
Quarter Jul to Sep 2017	**1,998**	**2,048**	**1,692**
Quarter Jul to Sep 2018	**1,641**	**2,159**	**2,213**
Quarter Jul to Sep 2019	**2,202**	**2,650**	**2,087**
Quarter Jul to Sep 2020	**1,033**	**2,209**	**1,177**
Quarter Jul to Sep 2021	**1,641**	**1,134**	**2,094**
Change over latest year	+608	-1,075	+917
Change (%) over latest year	+59%	-49%	+78%
Year to Sept 2015	**6,536**	**6,082**	**7,108**
Year to Sept 2016	**8,982**	**8,646**	**6,959**
Year to Sept 2017	**10,656**	**9,992**	**7,345**
Year to Sept 2018	**11,575**	**10,727**	**8,981**
Year to Sept 2019	**11,401**	**11,006**	**9,157**
Year to Sept 2020	**11,207**	**10,374**	**7,328**
Year to Sept 2021	**8,581**	**10,023**	**8,792**
Change over latest year	-2,626	-351	+1464
Change (%) over latest year	-23%	-3%	+20%

Charts 11a to 11c below present quarterly trends in the number of approvals, starts and completions from January 2018 up to end September 2021.

Chart 11a: 1,641 affordable homes were approved in Jul-Sept 2021, 608 (59%) more than in the same quarter in the previous year, but below the level seen 2019, and at a similar level to 2018

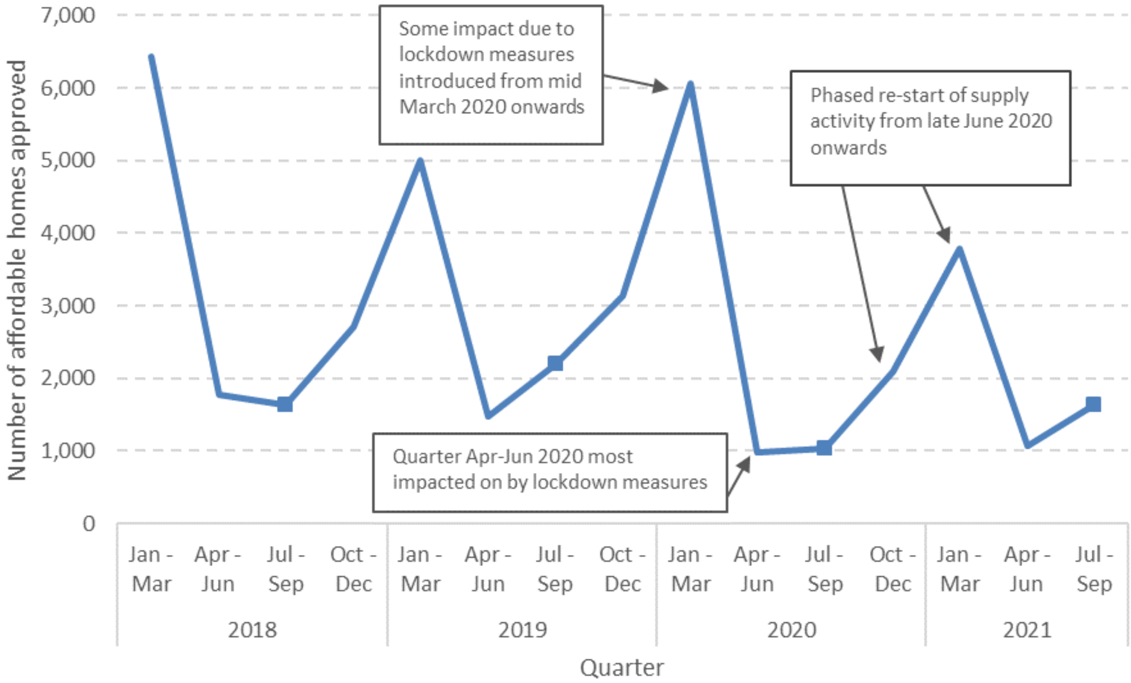


Chart 11b: The 1,134 affordable homes started in Jul-Sept 2021 is 49% (1,075 homes) fewer than in the same quarter in 2020, and below equivalent Jul-Sep levels in 2018 and 2019

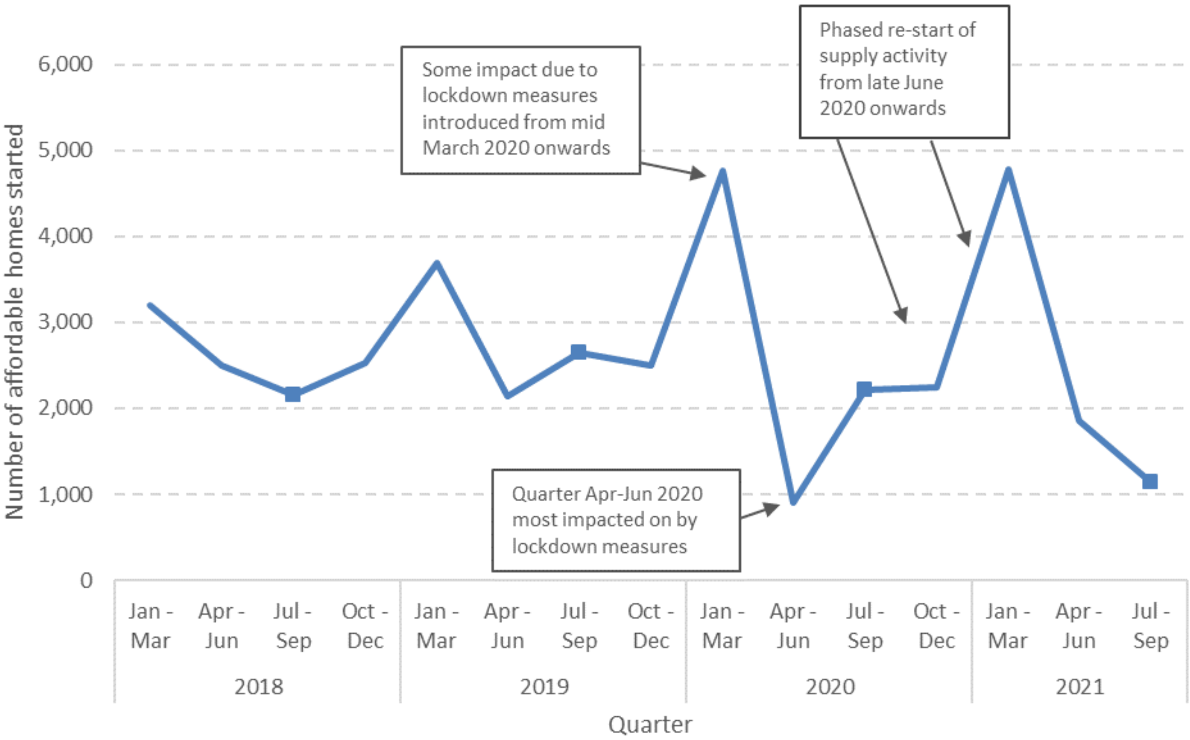


Chart 11c: There were 2,094 affordable homes completed in Jul-Sep 2021, 78% (917 homes) more than the 1,177 completions in the same quarter in the previous year, and similar to the level seen in 2019 but slightly lower than the 2,213 affordable homes completed in 2018

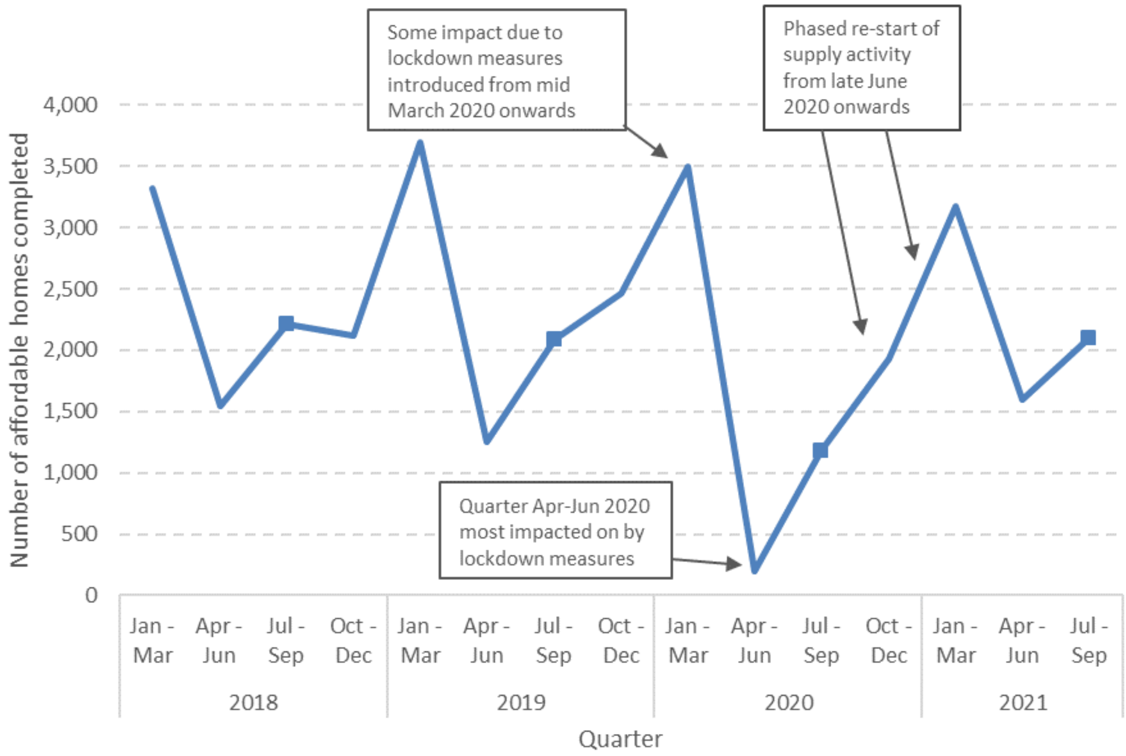
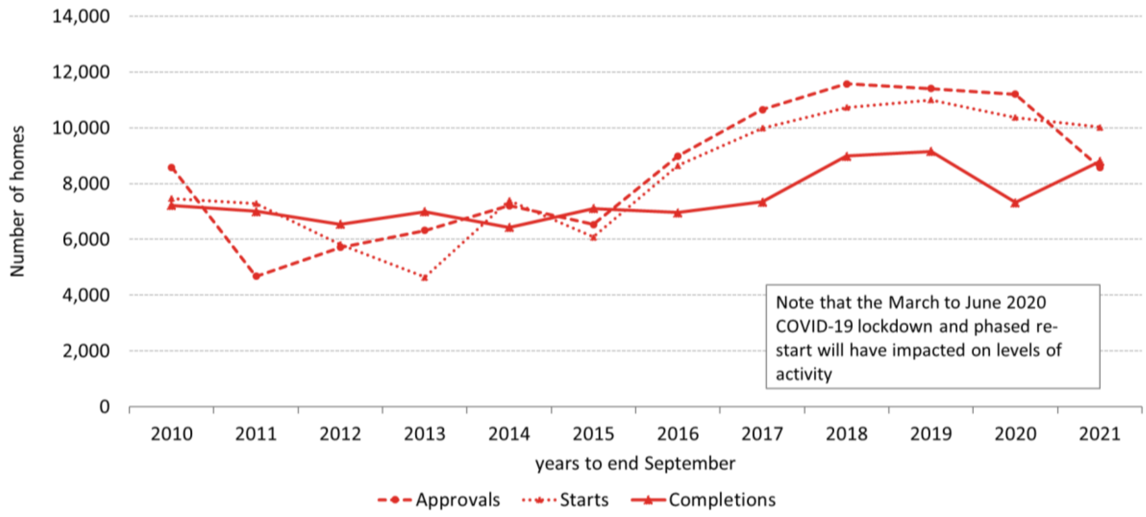


Chart 12 below shows that the numbers of affordable homes approved and started have decreased on an annual basis over the latest year to end September 2021 but the number of completions has increased in the same time period. In the year to end September 2021, 8,581 affordable homes were approved, a decrease of 2,626 homes (23%) on the previous year, and 10,023 homes were started, a decrease of 351 homes (3%), whilst 8,792 homes were completed, an increase of 1,464 homes (20%).

Chart 12: Levels of affordable homes approved and started in the year to end September 2021 have both decreased on the previous year, whereas the number of affordable homes completed has increased



Charts 13 to 15 below present information on trends in affordable housing supply by type. Chart 13 shows that total affordable housing supply programme approvals decreased by 23% between 2020 and 2021 (years to end September). In the latest year 2021, social rent approvals accounted for 75% of all approvals, with affordable rent and affordable home ownership making up 12% and 13%, respectively, of the remaining total.

In the year to end September 2021, there were 6,408 homes approved for social rent, a decrease of 28% (2,545 homes) on the same period in 2020. There were 1,055 approvals for affordable rent, a decrease of 13% (153 homes), and 1,118 homes were approved for affordable home ownership, an increase of 7% (72 homes).

Chart 13: In the latest year to end September 2021, there have been decreases in the number of Affordable Housing Supply approvals for social rent (by 28% or 2,545 homes), affordable rent (by 13% or 153 homes) but an increase in affordable home ownership (by 7% or 72 homes), compared to the same period in 2020

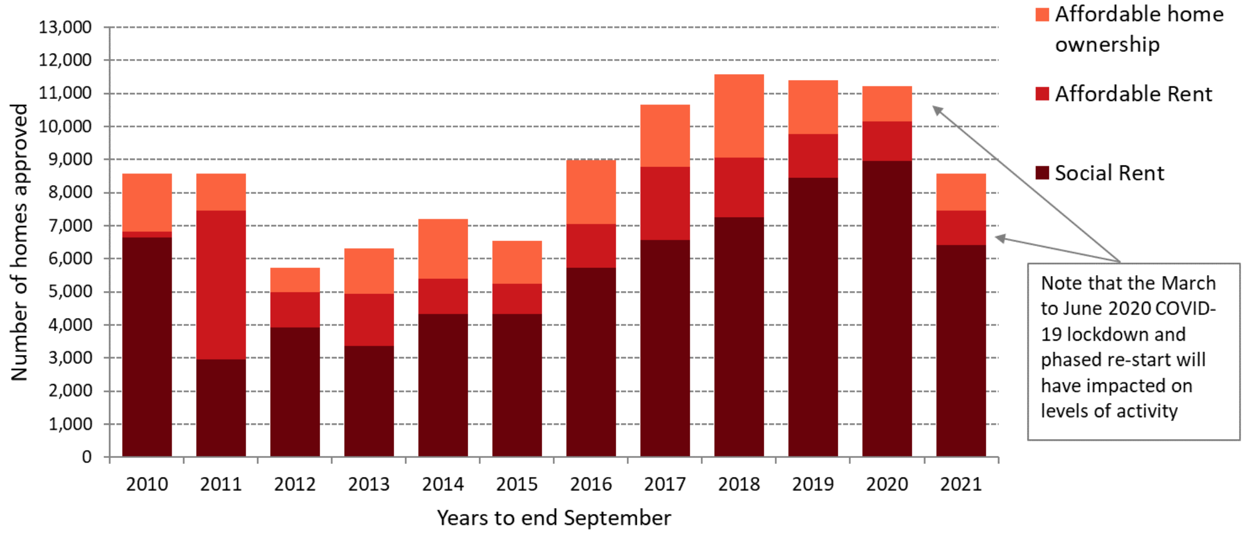


Chart 14 illustrates that total affordable housing supply programme starts decreased by 3% between 2020 and 2021 (years to end September). In the latest year, social rent starts accounted for 73% of all starts, with affordable rent and affordable home ownership making up 15% and 12% of the total, respectively.

In the year to end September 2021, there were 7,308 starts for social rent, a decrease of 8% (631 homes) on the previous year. There were 1,470 homes started for affordable rent, a drop of 5% (77 homes), and 1,245 homes were started for affordable home ownership, an increase of 40% (357 homes).

Chart 14: In the latest year to end September 2021, there have been decreases in the number of Affordable Housing Supply starts for social rent (by 8% or 631 homes) and affordable rent (by 5% or 77 homes), but an increase in the number of starts for affordable home ownership (by 40% or 357 homes), compared to the same period in 2020

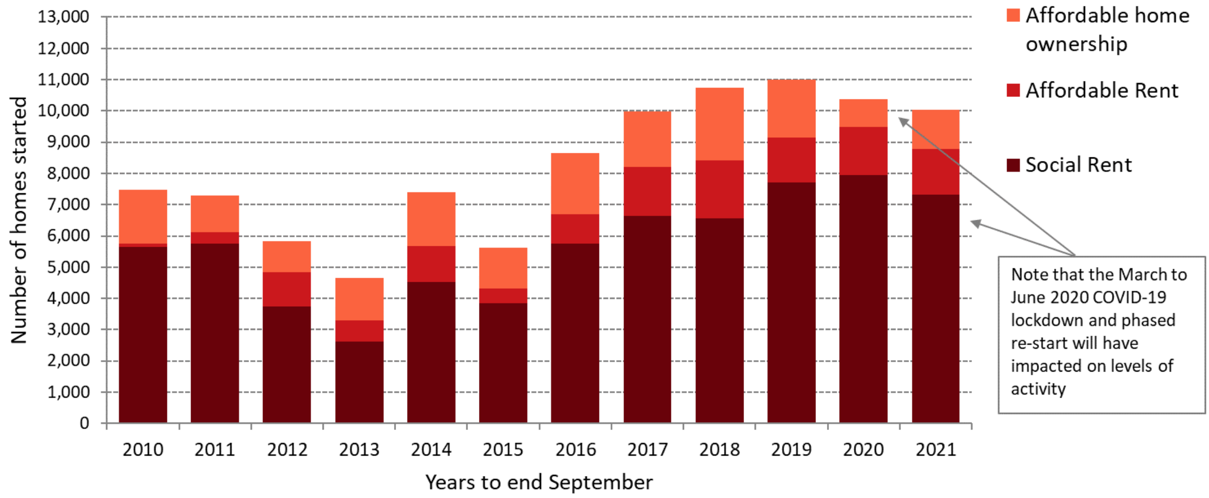
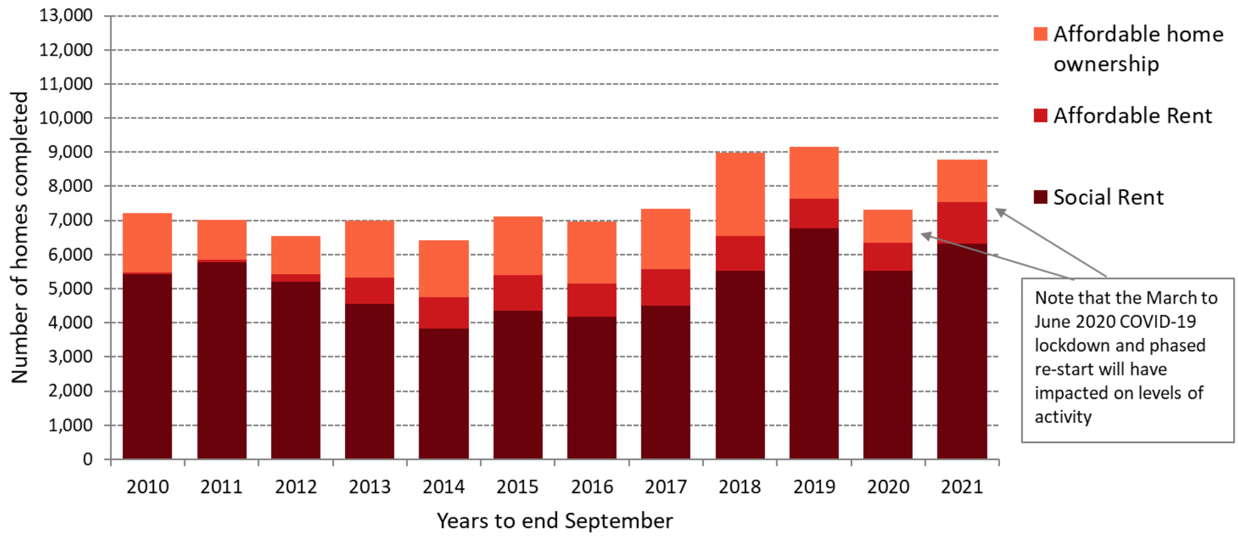


Chart 15 shows that total affordable housing supply programme completions increased by 20% between 2020 and 2021 (years to end September). In the latest year, social rent completions accounted for 72% of all completions, with affordable rent and affordable home ownership making up 14% and 14% of the total.

In the year to end September 2021, there were 6,329 homes completed for social rent, an increase of 15% (802 homes) on the previous year. There were 1,199 affordable rent homes completed, an increase of 46% (377 homes), and 1,264 homes completed for affordable home ownership, an increase of 29% (285 homes) on the previous year.

Chart 15: In the latest year to end September 2021, there have been increases in the number of Affordable Housing Supply completions for social rent (by 15% or 802 homes), affordable rent (by 46% or 377 homes) and affordable home ownership (by 29% or 285 homes), compared to the same period in 2020



Comparison with the rest of the UK from 2007/08 to 2020/21

This section compares how the level of affordable housing supply per head of population varies between Scotland and other UK countries, to help meet user demand for cross country analysis.

Each of the countries of the UK produces their own statistics on affordable housing supply[6]. Whilst there are some differences in the detail of affordable housing definitions and products used by each country, some comparisons can be made on how affordable housing supply varies per head of population.

Chart 16 below illustrates how the figures per 10,000 population have varied across the 2007/08 to 2020/21 period for Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Between 2007/08 and 2019/20, the latest year in which there are figures available across all UK countries, the annual average supply of affordable housing per head of population in Scotland has been 13.8 homes per 10,000 population, higher than England (9.7 homes per 10,000 population), Wales (7.7 homes per 10,000 population), and Northern Ireland (13.0 homes per 10,000 population – average across the years 2010/11 to 2019/20). Scotland has had annual rates above all other UK countries in most years since 2007/08, except for during 2012/13 to 2014/15, in which the rates for Northern Ireland were higher.

The 6,477 affordable homes completed in Scotland in the financial year 2020/21 equates to a rate of 11.8 homes delivered per 10,000 population. This is above the rate of 9.2 in England. Affordable housing supply figures for 2020/21 for Wales and Northern Ireland are not yet available, however these will be added to Chart 16 in future publications.

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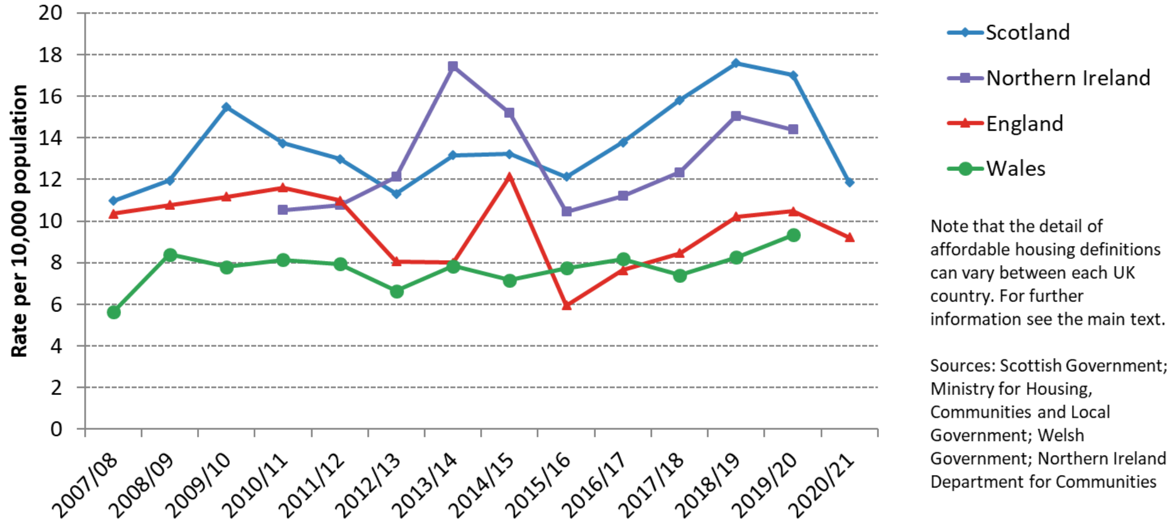
[6] Affordable Housing Supply figures for England, Affordable Housing Supply figures for Wales, Affordable Housing Supply figures for Northern Ireland

Chart 16: Total Affordable Housing Supply Completions as a rate per 10,000 population - Scotland has had annual rates above all other UK countries in each year from 2007/8 to 2019/20, except during 2012/13 to 2014/15



Note that the detail of affordable housing definitions can vary between each UK country. For further information see the main text.

Sources: Scottish Government; Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government; Welsh Government; Northern Ireland Department for Communities

Note that the statistics for England and Wales both include developer-funded Section 106 supply, although for England it is thought that some will be missed as local authorities are not aware of it all. Northern Ireland does not currently have an equivalent mechanism. Data for Scotland include Section 75 units receiving some form of government funding. Data are not available to estimate the number of affordable homes delivered without central government funding in Scotland, but it is thought that the numbers of these homes may be relatively low based on current estimates of the number of funded Affordable and Section 75 homes being delivered.

In addition to the differences in total affordable supply between each country, there are also some differences in the use of different affordable housing products within the mix of overall affordable housing in each country. For example, in England in recent years there has been a greater use of affordable / intermediate rent compared to social rent. Therefore when looking over the four years to 2020/21, in England there have been on average 5.1 affordable / intermediate rent homes completed per 10,000 head of population and 1.1 social rented homes completed 10,000 per-head of population. This compares to a rate of 1.8 for affordable rent homes and a rate of 10.8 for social rented homes in Scotland.

8. Long-Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

Councils classify some properties in their area as long-term empty, unoccupied, or second homes for the purposes of calculating council tax liabilities. These statuses impact on the council tax through exemptions for unoccupied properties, discounts for second homes and some long term empty properties, or a levy for some long term empty properties. As a result information on the numbers of such properties is sourced from council tax statistics. It is collected annually from local authorities and is available for:

- **Unoccupied Exemptions:** generally properties which are empty and unfurnished for less than 6 months and exempt from paying council tax[7].

- **Long Term Empty Properties:** properties which have been empty for more than 6 months and are liable for council tax.

- **Second Homes:** homes which are furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in a 12 month period but not as someone's main residence.

Trends over time within each of these categories should be interpreted with some caution, given that increases and decreases can be caused in part by reclassification exercises which local authorities carry out from time to time, or issues with management information systems, rather than being real changes in the numbers of properties.

Empty properties are of particular interest as they can help increase the supply of occupied housing in Scotland when brought back into use.

There are several factors that can impact on the number of long term empty properties and second homes that are counted through the council tax statistics including changes to council tax liability policy and management information systems.

Regarding policy changes, from 1st April 2013, local authorities gained the discretionary power to remove the council tax discount associated with long term empty properties or to set a council tax increase of up to 100% on certain properties which have been empty for 12 months or more. Prior to April 2017, second homes were entitled to a council tax discount of between 10% and 50%, and as of April 2017, local authorities were also given the option to remove the council tax discount on second homes. For 2021-22, 25 out of the 32 local authorities have removed the council tax discount on second homes, 6 will retain the 10% discount and in one local authority from 1 October 2019 a second home discount of 10% will only apply for a period of 12 months from the date the property was last occupied as a sole or main residence, following the 12 month period the discount will be removed.

Management information systems can also have an impact on how properties are recorded. In addition, there have also been some improvements in the data held by some local authorities leading to the reclassification of a number of properties between the long term empty and second home categories. These changes should be kept in mind when comparing the numbers in recent years.

In addition, there may have been some impact of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on the levels of empty homes in 2020 due to COVID-lockdown restrictions between mid-March and late June 2020.

The latest figures, for September 2021, show that there were 23,890 second homes, 45,801 unoccupied exemptions which have generally been empty and unfurnished for less than 6 months, and 43,766 long term empty properties that had been empty for more than 6 months. Of those that had been empty for more than 6 months, just under two-thirds (27,854 or 64%) had been empty for over 12 months, and of those 20,067 had a council

[7] Further details can be found here: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00423608.pdf

tax discount below 10% or a council tax increase applied under the new powers described above.

Chart 17: Long term empty properties have decreased by 8% and second homes have decreased by 2% in the latest year, but unoccupied exemptions have increased by 4%

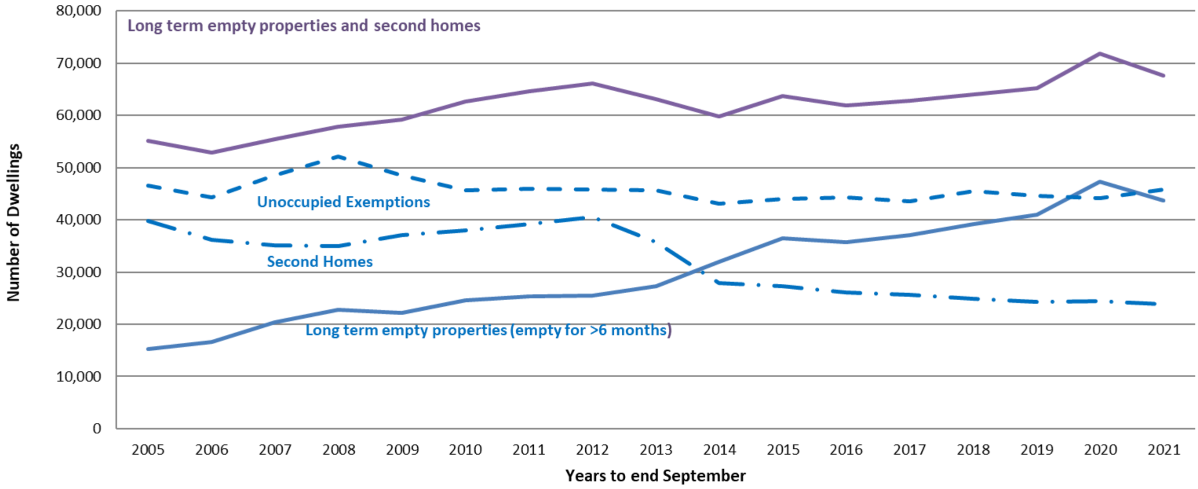


Chart 17 above shows that, since 2005, the number of long term empty properties has generally been on the rise, having more than doubled over this period. Some of the rises in 2013 to 2015 will be due to the reclassification of some properties in the light of the new powers described above. There has been a slight decrease between 2008 and 2009 and 2015 and 2016, but an increase since then until 2020. The increase in the number of empty properties in 2020 was likely to be associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, which directly affected both the property rental and sales markets, with the movement restrictions in place also having a range of other impacts. In the latest year at September 2021, the number of long term empty properties decreased by 8% (3,567 properties) to 43,766, although the number of properties remains 7% (2,803 homes) above the 2019 pre-Covid position.

The number of second homes has remained more stable over the time series, with increases seen for 35,036 second homes in 2008 to 40,599 in 2012. This was followed by reductions in the number of second homes in 2013 to 2016 to 26,140 which are also likely to be at least partly due to reclassification. The number of second homes (23,890) is 2% (576 homes) lower in 2021 than in 2020 and after remaining at broadly similar levels in 2019 and 2020.

The number of unoccupied exemptions has remained relatively steady each year since 2005 with the exception of a slight increase in 2008, with levels of unoccupied exemptions being at 46,530 in 2005 and 44,143 in 2020. However, in the latest year at September 2021, the number of unoccupied exemptions has increased on the previous year by 4% (1,658 homes) to reach 45,801 homes.

After a decrease between 2005 and 2006 the total number of long term empty properties and second homes increased from 52,823 in 2006 to 66,053 in 2012 (13,230 dwellings or 24%). It has since fallen to 59,763 in 2014 before increasing to 65,277 in 2019 (with a slight peak of 63,736 in 2015). In the latest year, the total number of long term empty properties and second homes has decreased by 6% to 67,656 in 2021 compared to the 71,799 homes in 2020.

9. Notes

This document should be read along with the explanatory notes on data sources and quality can be found in the [Housing Statistics webpages].

Starts and completions

The statistics break down new build construction activity into private-led and social sector starts and completions, with the social sector further broken down between local authority and housing association activity.

The figures are sourced from local authority administrative systems and the Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Programme (HARP) system. Private sector construction activity includes not only homes built for private sale but also some homes which are used in the affordable housing sector and self-build activity by local builders.

New build information is provided for starts (when the foundations are begun) and completions (when a building inspector deems the property complete).

In general, the number of starts will be a strong indicator of the likely trend in completions over the longer term, but there may well be differences over the short and medium term depending on factors such as the housing market, economic climate, access to finance, and speed of construction.

A wide range of factors can influence the length of time it takes for a new private dwelling to be constructed, including the type of property (house, flat etc.), and the overall size of the site. Depending on the size of the site, the average time from start to completion of the entire site can range from anywhere between around 1.5 years to 2.75 years. Individual homes, or blocks of homes, might be completed in shorter timescales if parts of the site are completed in advance of the rest.

Comparing over time

This document generally compares the latest quarter's figures with those for the equivalent quarter in previous years, or it compares the latest 12 month period with the previous one.

Estimates and revisions

East Dunbartonshire Council have been unable so far to provide private-led new build data for the four quarters 2020 Q1 to 2020 Q4, and so these figures have been estimated. Glasgow City Council have been unable so far to provide private-led new build starts data for the five quarters from 2019 Q4 to 2020 Q4, as well as completions figures for 2020 Q4, so these figures have also been estimated. However we are working with Glasgow to obtain these figures and aim to replace these estimates with actual figures in future publications.

In addition, estimates have been made for private-led new build starts and completions figures for Angus Council for the most recent quarter 2020 Q4 due to a delay in provision of this data, as well as 2020 Q3 for South Ayrshire. Data has now been received from South Ayrshire for 2020 Q4, but requires some work with the local authority to fully quality assure these figures.

Previous estimated starts and completions for Angus (for 2020 Q2 and 2020 Q3) and East Ayshire (2020 Q3) have now been replaced with returned values.

As with previous publications, the estimates of private-led new build activity are each based on an average of the preceding four quarters, with an adjustment made to account for the lower levels of construction activity seen in particular quarters due to the impact of COVID-19, which is based on the aggregate trends from the local authorities who have provided data across the COVID-19 period.

An additional estimate has been made for local authority new housebuilding starts and completions for Highland for 2020 Q4 and 2020 Q1 due to a delay in the return. As with previous estimates for local authority new housebuilding figures, this estimate is based on separate starts and completions figures taken from the Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Programme (HARP) system.

A number of additional historic corrections provided by local authorities have also been made, for example where more up-to-date data for activity related to previous quarters has come to light, with further details on these changes available in the Excel tables.

Further details of these revisions, along with the impact on national totals, are detailed in Tables R1a to R7b in the Supporting Charts and Tables Excel document.

For this quarterly publication, the range of new build revisions made cover a total of 11 quarters for starts and 11 quarters for completions, across the period between 2014 Q2 and 2020 Q3. The largest impacts at a local authority level have been due to a number of private sector led historic revisions to starts figures provided by East Ayrshire Council for 2020 Q3 which has increased starts by 63 homes (170.3%). In addition, as a result of the replacement of estimated private-led figures with actual figures for Angus Council, this has increased private-led starts by 10 starts (111.1%) and decreased private-led completions by 2 completions (33.3%) in 2020 Q2, with an increase of 20 starts (54.1%) and a decrease of 8 completions (27.6%) in 2020 Q3 for Angus Council. In addition, historic revisons provided by Argyll & Bute Council have increased private-led starts in 2017 Q4 and 2018 Q1 by 2 completions (18.2%) and 4 completions (33.3%) respectively.

At the local authority level, the largest impact seen for for local authority sector homes was in 2020 Q4, where South Lanarkshire provided a series of historic revisions to this quarter, increasing the number of local authority homes started by 45 homes (86.5%). In addition, historic revisions were made to the housing association completions for East Dunbartonshire in 2020 Q4, which increased the number of completions by 11 homes (44.0%).

The most notable impacts on national level private-led figures are for the quarter 2020 Q3, in which total private-led starts are up by 83 starts (2.4%) and private-led completions are down by 8 completions (0.3%), mostly due to the replacement of estimated figures with actual figures for Angus, but also due to the historic revisions providd by East Ayrshire for 2020 Q3. The effect on all-sector starts and completions has been a 2% increase and 0.2% decrease respectively. In addition, the 45 home increase in local authority starts provided by South Lanarkshire for 2020 Q4 has increased national level local authority led starts by 15.2%, and the historic revisions to East Dunbartonshire housing association completions in 2020 Q4 has increased the national level housing association completions by 11 homes (1.5%).

For this quarterly publication affordable housing supply figures for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 have been revised to reflect minor updates to the number of units approved, started and completed in these years. Further details can be found in Tables R5a to R7b in the Supporting Charts and Tables.

Housing Statistics across the UK

Information on housing statistics developments across the UK is available on the Government Statistical Service (GSS) webpages.

This includes material such as:

- The Cross-Government Housing, Homelessness and Planning Statistics Steering Group helps set the strategic direction for UK collaboration to improve the overall picture of housing statistics, including representatives from the devolved administrations.
- A GSS housing and planning statistics interactive tool, which contain a searchable database of all housing and planning statistics produced by UK public bodies and devolved administrations, along with a summary of the UK housing topic landscape.
- Topic reports on cross-UK areas such as on Affordable Housing Statistics.
- A report on the definitions, terminology and feasibility of harmonisation of affordable housing statistics across the UK.

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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 Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:
Lyndsey Middleton,
Communities Analysis Division,
Telephone: 0131 244 7229,
e-mail: housingstatistics@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:
Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442,
e-mail: statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact housingstatistics@gov.scot for further information.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot.

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest through the ScotStat register.
Details of forthcoming publications can be found on the Scottish Government statistics and research pages.

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