



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

BACKGROUND, DOCUMENT

# Social housing sales: quality report

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

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# Contents

**What are these statistics?**

**Background**

**Policy and operational context**

**Users and uses**

**Strengths and limitations of the data**

**Data source and coverage**

**Standards**

**Quality**

**Related statistics for other UK countries**

**Evaluation**

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# What are these statistics?

Social housing sales statistics provide summary information on the amount of housing sold by social landlords, covering both local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

## Background

The tenure distribution of current dwelling stock is influenced by the sales of social landlord housing stock through Right to Buy and other schemes. Sales of local authority and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) dwellings during the year will become private sector dwellings. The sales will therefore result in an increase in the number of private sector stock – other factors such as new build and conversions will also affect levels of private sector stock.

From March 2011 onwards, the **Housing (Wales) Measure 2011** enabled local housing authorities to apply to suspend the Right to Buy and related rights in areas of housing pressure for up to five years. The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes were suspended in seven authorities – the Isle of Anglesey, Powys, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Swansea. The application to suspend the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire may have influenced the number of statutory sales within these authorities in the period prior to suspension taking effect.

During 2015, **the Welsh Government consulted on proposals on the future of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes**. The consultation sought views on the following two proposals:

1. Changing existing legislation – which would reduce the maximum discount available to a tenant who applies to buy their home from their Council or

Housing Association landlord;

2. Developing new legislation – which, if passed by the National Assembly for Wales (now Senedd Cymru), would end the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.

On 14 July 2015, the maximum discount available in relation to Right to Buy and Right to Acquire properties was reduced from £16,000 to £8,000. The change was made by the **Housing (Right to Buy and Right to Acquire) (Limits on Discount) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2015 (UK legislation)**

**The Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill** was introduced in March 2017 and received Royal Assent as the **Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018 (UK legislation)** on 24 January 2018. The Act abolishes all variations of the Right to Buy, including the Preserved Right to Buy. To ensure tenants were aware the Right to Buy was ending, the Act required the Welsh Government to publish information, which social landlords had to provide to affected tenants, within two months of Royal Assent.

To encourage the development of new housing stock and protect recent investment, the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire ended for ‘new homes’ two months after Royal Assent on 24 March 2018. A ‘new home’ is one which has not been let as social housing during the six months before 24 March 2018. For existing social housing stock, final abolition took place on 26 January 2019.

Whilst we have no specific evidence of how tenants may have reacted to the legislation it is likely to have impacted on the number applying to make use of these schemes over the period prior to their final abolition in March 2018 (for new homes) and January 2019 (for existing stock) respectively.

Despite the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes ending in January 2019, a small number of statutory sales, via the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes, were completed in the years following this, as sales that were

approved to be extended for various reasons.

## Policy and operational context

The information on social housing sales is used by the Welsh Government, as well as local authorities, to monitor trends in social housing sales in the context of the overall level of Welsh housing stock. The information is used by the Welsh Government to monitor the effectiveness of policy and for future policy development. The information may also be used to monitor the effect of welfare reform and changes to housing benefit.

## Users and uses

This information is collected to assess the level of social landlord housing sales across Wales during the period. The data is used to help monitor trends in the overall level of Welsh housing stock. Data is also used by the Welsh Government and local authorities to help assess the level and type of housing supply across Wales and as an indication as to whether housing need is being met.

More generally the information is used for:

- monitoring housing trends
- policy development
- advice to cabinet secretaries and ministers
- informing debate in the Senedd Cymru 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 the [Housing statistics quality report](#).

## Strengths and limitations of the data

### Strengths

- The information is processed and published frequently and in an ordered manner to enable users to see the statistics when they are current and of greatest interest.
- Data is obtained directly from housing providers and undergoes rigorous quality assurance.
- Detailed statistics are provided via our [StatsWales website](#) at local authority level as well as by provider.

### Limitations

- Only includes sales that are fully complete. There will be units that are midway through completion when data is collected that will not be included until next year's release.

## Data source and coverage

Information is collected annually via Excel spreadsheets downloaded from the Objective Connect file transfer website, which provides a secure method for users to submit data. Copies of the [social housing sales](#) data collection forms are available.

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Further information on the data processing cycle can also be found in the [Housing statistics quality report](#) which is available on our website.

Data for 2023-24 were collected from all of the local authorities who retained stock at 31 March 2024 and all Welsh Registered Social Landlords at 31 March 2023, 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. All transfers covered 100% of the local authority housing stock. A list of the large-scale voluntary transfers of local authority stock and dates of transfer to registered social landlords are shown below.

**Table 1: Large scale voluntary transfer of local authority stock, by date of transfer**

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

Local authority	Date of transfer	Registered social landlord
Merthyr Tydfil	20 March 2009	Merthyr Valleys Homes
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

Description of Table 1: A table showing that the large scale voluntary transfer of local authority stock took place between September 2003 and March 2011.

## Standards

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as Accredited Official Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

Accredited Official 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 Accredited Official 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,

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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. Accredited Official Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

## **Administrative data quality assurance**

Data is 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 some data before sending 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 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 European Statistical System's six dimensions of quality, as listed in Principle 4 of 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.

More detailed quality information relating specifically to social housing vacancies, lettings and rent arrears, which is not included in the quality report, is given below.

## Accuracy

The closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value.

On receipt of the data collection forms, the data collection team carry out secondary validation and work closely with the different types of data providers to ensure information provided was accurate and on a consistent basis. Confirmation is also sought for large numbers of units reported. If there are any problems or unexpected changes in the data, the providers are contacted for confirmation or correction of the data. Copies of the data collection forms for **social housing sales** can be found on the website.

## 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 RSL or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information and resubmits this. Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes. In all of 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 figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to that next release.

Revised data is marked with an (r) in statistical releases, there are no revision in this year's social housing sales 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 housing sales 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 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](mailto:stats.housing@gov.wales).

A full set of social housing sales data, back to 1981-82 is available to download from our [StatsWales interactive website](#).

## Coherence

### Dwelling stock estimates

Estimates of the total dwelling stock are calculated by the Welsh Government and are based on data from the population censuses. The breakdown of

**dwelling stock estimates** by tenure is estimated from 2021 Census information and information from the Annual Population Survey, local authority returns and registered social landlord (RSL) returns.

## Related statistics

We publish a range of statistics on housing supply. These include **new house building**, **affordable housing provision** and **Help to Buy-Wales**.

## Related statistics for other UK countries

### England

England collects and published information annually on social landlord housing sales for local authorities and publishes some summary information on sales of Registered Provider stock (previously known as Registered Social Landlords or housing associations). This **latest information for 2022-23 is available on the GOV.UK website**.

### Scotland

Scotland collects information quarterly on all sales of local authority owned housing using two data collection returns which differ in terms of coverage.

The SALES1 summary return collects information on applications for and sales of local authority owned housing only. It covers all sales, not just sales to sitting tenants. The SALES3 case-based return collects information on sales to sitting tenants only. This includes right to buy sales, rent to mortgage sales and voluntary sales. The **published tables are available from the Scottish**

**Government website.**

**Further data on Housing Association Right to Buy transactions is published by the Scottish Housing Regulator.**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 ended the Right to Buy for all tenants. This took effect after a 2-year notice period which ended in August 2016. Further information is available from the **Scottish Government website**.

## **Northern Ireland**

**Information on sales to social housing tenants in Northern Ireland is available from the Department of Communities Northern Ireland.**

## **Evaluation**

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

Produced by Knowledge and Analytical Services, Welsh Government

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