



Companies House

# Statistical release

## Companies Register Activities 2013 - 2014.

**Coverage:** All Corporate Bodies  
**Geographical areas:** UK, constituent countries  
**Next publication date:** Summer 2015

July 2014



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Companies House is an Executive Agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

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# 1. Introduction

This release provides information about the population of Corporate Bodies in the United Kingdom. A corporate body is a specific legal form of business that is registered at Companies House<sup>1</sup>. Corporate Bodies are registered at Companies House regardless of whether they go on to trade actively.

The release complements the monthly Incorporated companies release by providing more detailed annual statistics for all Corporate Body types held on the Register, whereas the monthly concentrates on those to which the Companies Act 2006 relates<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>. The release includes information on the population size and how the population has changed annually; and, provides information on filing of notices and documents; and, fines and penalties stipulated in the various legislation that apply to Corporate Bodies.

The statistics in this release include the total number of incorporated Companies, the number newly incorporated, the number of companies that were dissolved. The release focuses on the headline message for the UK, with more information contained in the supplementary tables that accompany the release.

Companies House is currently reviewing its statistics. The review has led to the changes to this release. Companies House would welcome any comments on the changes to the release.

## Key Points

- In the United Kingdom in the 12 months to 31 March 2014, there were 533,000 incorporations and 332,100 dissolutions of Companies; as a result, the number of companies on the Total Register —including those in the process of dissolution or liquidation (282,200) —reached 3,250,300.
- The composition of the Register, in terms of the types of Corporate Bodies has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. Since 2005, the top 3 corporate body types of Private Limited Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) and Limited Partnerships have remained unchanged, consistently accounting for over 98% of the Register.
- The age profile of Corporate Bodies on the Register is relatively young and stable, the average age of Companies - a subset of corporate bodies - has changed little since 2009, varying between 8 and 9 years old.
- On the 31 March 2014, there were 10,400 overseas Corporate Bodies on the Register with a physical presence in the UK, with USA the largest single country, accounting for 23% of overseas Corporate Bodies.

<sup>1</sup>See definitions section in background notes for a definition of Corporate Bodies

<sup>2</sup>See definitions section in background notes for a definition of Companies Act 2006 companies

<sup>3</sup>The size of the Effective Register; the numbers of dissolutions; the number of liquidations; and, those companies in the course of dissolution differ from those in Incorporated Companies in the UK, March 2014 due to the timing of the analysis. Analysis for the figures in this release are undertaken later in the year, allowing more information to be processed and added to the Register.

# TYPICAL company



directors

5.6m

There are 5.6 million current director appointments on the Register.



The average number of current director appointments per company is 2.



shareholders

2

The average number of shareholders per company is 2.

What does the average UK company registered at Companies House look like?



AVERAGE Age

8.6 yrs

is the average age of live companies on the Register

Average age of companies at the point of removal from the Register is

9.3 yrs



Accounts filed up-to-date

99.1%

of companies filed up to date.



PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANIES

account for over

96%

of the register

## Industrial Classification

The most common standard industrial classification (SIC) codes for companies are:

- 17.2%** Professional, scientific & technical activities
- 10.6%** Administration & support services activities
- 10.1%** Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles
- 10%** Information & communication
- 9.8%** Construction

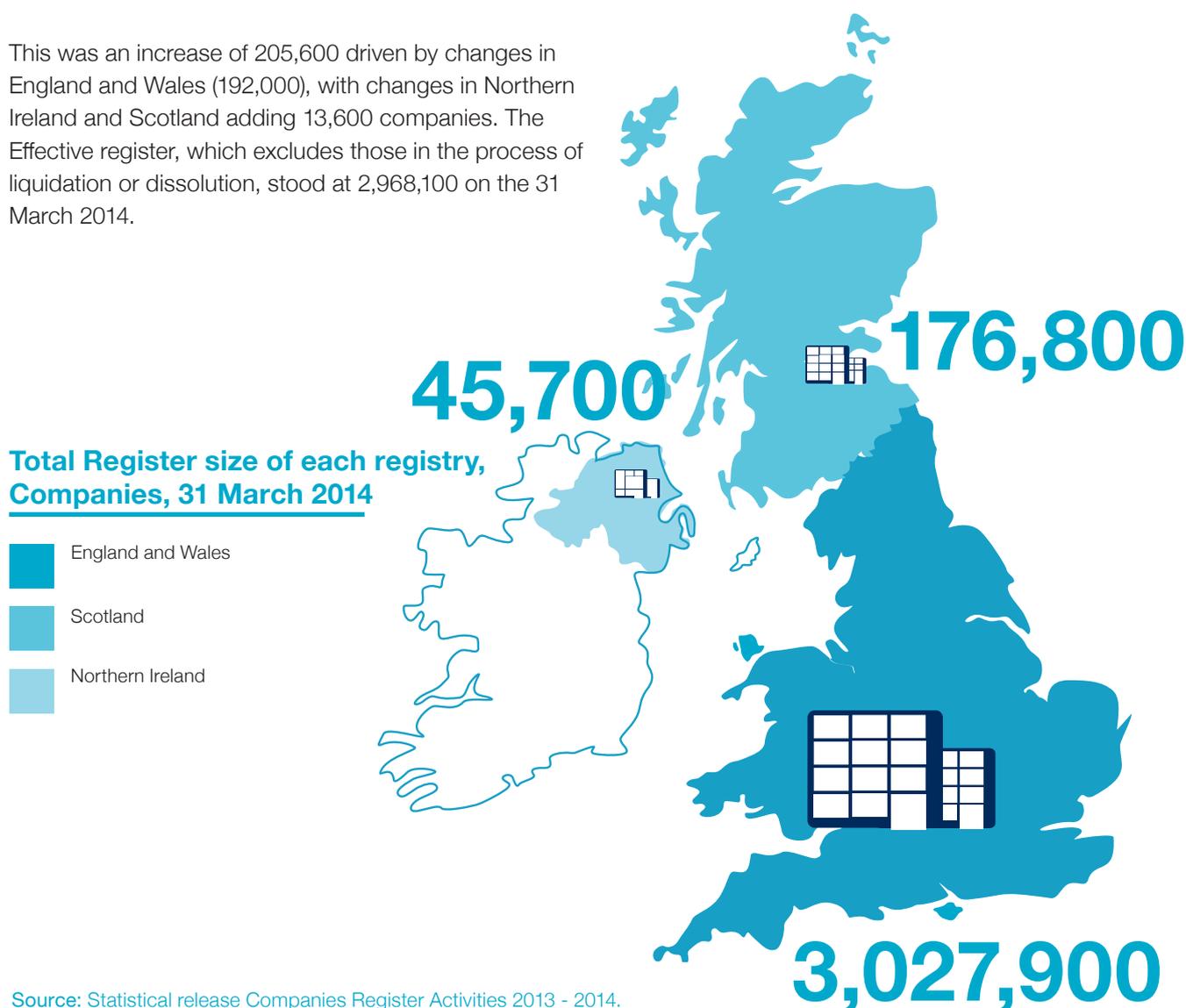
## the top 3

Corporate Body types of Private Limited Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships and Limited Partnerships accounting for over **98%** of the register

## 2. Incorporated companies

In the United Kingdom in the 12 months to 31 March 2014, there were 533,000 incorporations and 332,100 dissolutions of Companies; as a result, the number of companies on the Total Register –including those in the process of dissolution or liquidation (282,200) –reached 3,250,300<sup>1</sup>.

This was an increase of 205,600 driven by changes in England and Wales (192,000), with changes in Northern Ireland and Scotland adding 13,600 companies. The Effective register, which excludes those in the process of liquidation or dissolution, stood at 2,968,100 on the 31 March 2014.



Source: Statistical release Companies Register Activities 2013 - 2014.

<sup>1</sup>The size of the Effective Register; the numbers of dissolutions; the number of liquidations; and, those companies in the course of dissolution differ from those in Incorporated Companies in the UK, March 2014 due to the timing of the analysis. Analysis for the figures in this release are undertaken later in the year, allowing more information to be processed and added to the Register.

### 3. The growth in incorporated companies

Between 1979 and 2014, the Total and the Effective registers for Great Britain increased by over 2 million companies<sup>1</sup>.

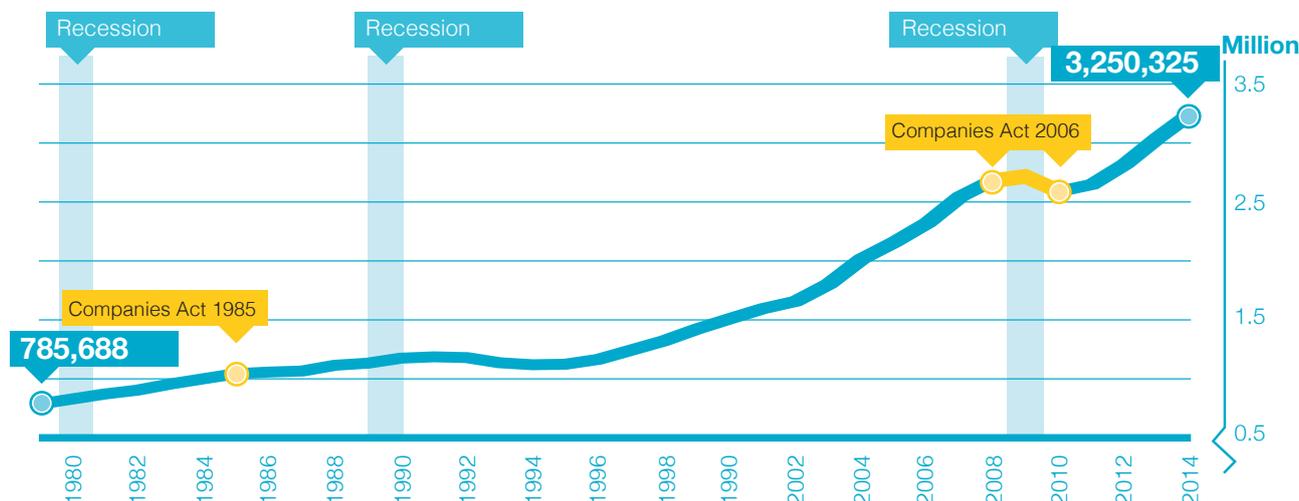
Over this time, the Total register has increased annually for 31 of the 35 years. Over the same period, the Effective register has increased annually for 29 of the last 35 years. The most recent decline in the Great Britain Effective register between 2008 and 2009 (157,700) and a year later for the Great Britain Total register (128,300).

Between 2009 and 2010 was a period of significant change for the Register:

- the Northern Ireland Register was included to create a UK Register;

- there was a change in the administrative system that forms the register;
- there was a purge to remove companies that had spent an extended period in the process of dissolution or liquidation.

These changes may have had an impact on the size of the Total and Effective Register



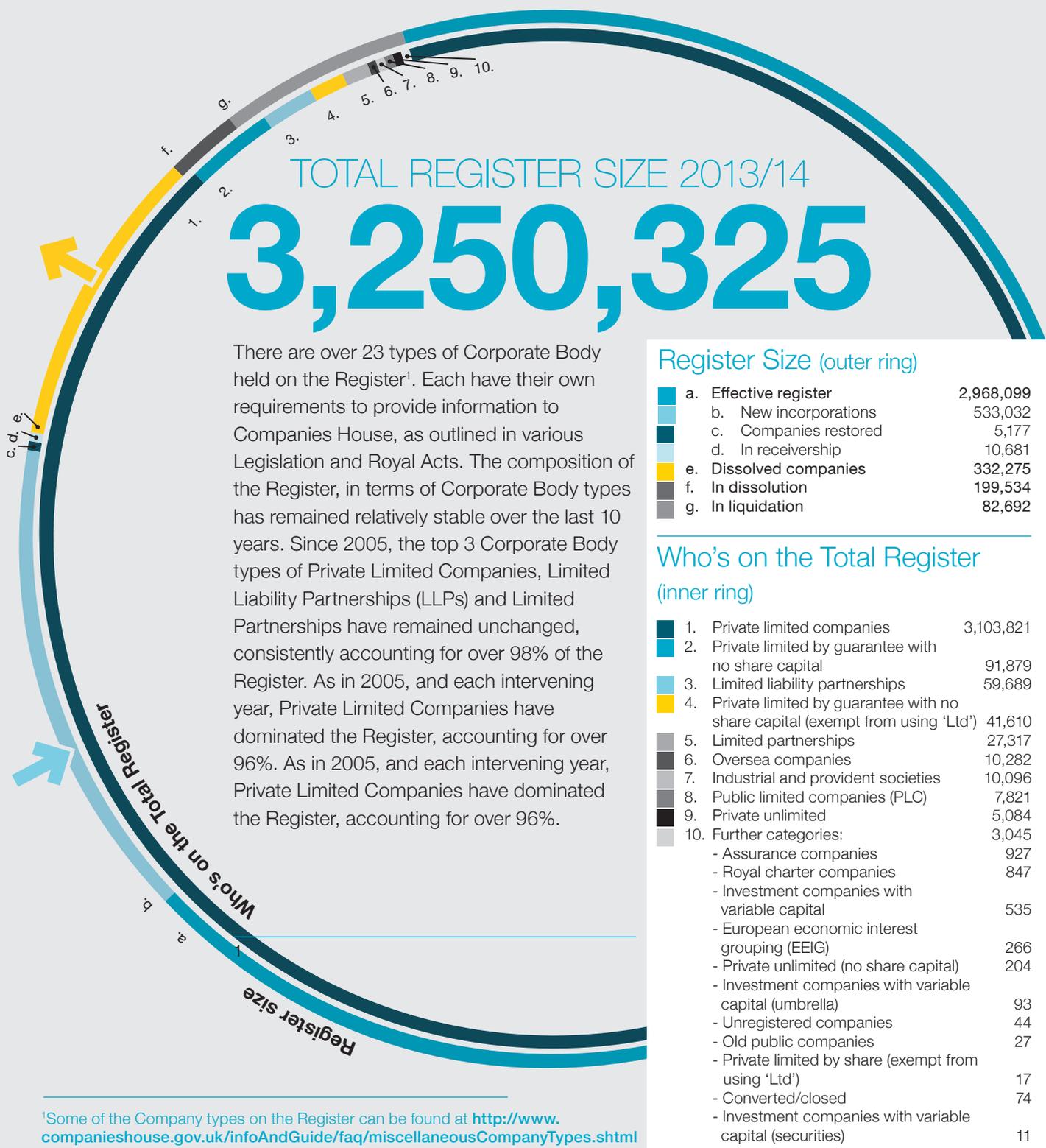
**Total Register Size 1979 - 2014, Companies, UK (Chart 1)**

Total Register numbers are a snapshot of the Register taken on: between 1979 to 1986 – 31/12. From 1987 – 31/3.  
 Source: Statistical release Companies Register Activities 2013 - 2014.

1. Statistics for 1979 are for Great Britain. In October 2009 the Northern Ireland Register merged with the Register for Great Britain to create a UK Register. UK figures are from 2009/10 onwards. In March 2009, the Total Register and Effective Register for Northern Ireland were 40,003 and 34,706 respectively. For Great Britain, as at 31 March 2010, the Total Register and Effective Register were 2,589,881 and 2,324,392 respectively.

<sup>1</sup>Companies are a form of Corporate Body to which the Companies Act 2006 relates

## 4. Types of company on the Register



<sup>1</sup>Some of the Company types on the Register can be found at <http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/infoAndGuide/faq/miscellaneousCompanyTypes.shtml>

## 5. Age of companies on the Register

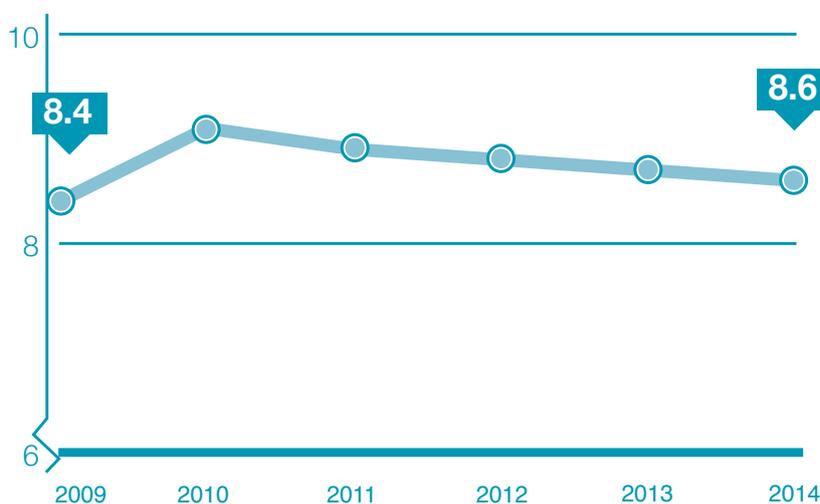
The age profile of Corporate Bodies is relatively young and stable, the average age of a Corporate Body has changed little since 2009, varying between 8 and 9 years old.

Between 2005 and 2014<sup>1</sup> just over 4 in 10 Corporate Bodies were aged between 1 and 4 years old. Almost seven in ten Corporate Bodies were aged between 1 and 9 years. Over the course of the recession the Register aged slightly, with the proportion of Corporate Bodies aged between 1 and 4 years old declining by 3 percentage points, from 47% in 2008 to 43% in 2011. The number of corporate bodies aged 10 to 24 has been

increasing since 2007, from 18% to 23% of the Register. Between 2005 and 2014 the proportion of the Register aged 25 or over has declined marginally, from around 8.8% to 8.2%.

The average age of companies in the UK, on the Total Register and the Effective Register in 2014, was 8.6 years and 8.5 years, respectively.

<sup>1</sup> Age information was taken at the 31 December between 2005 and 2013 and 13 July 2014.



**Average age of companies on the Total Register, 31 March 2009 - 2013 (Chart 2)**

■ UK Total Register size

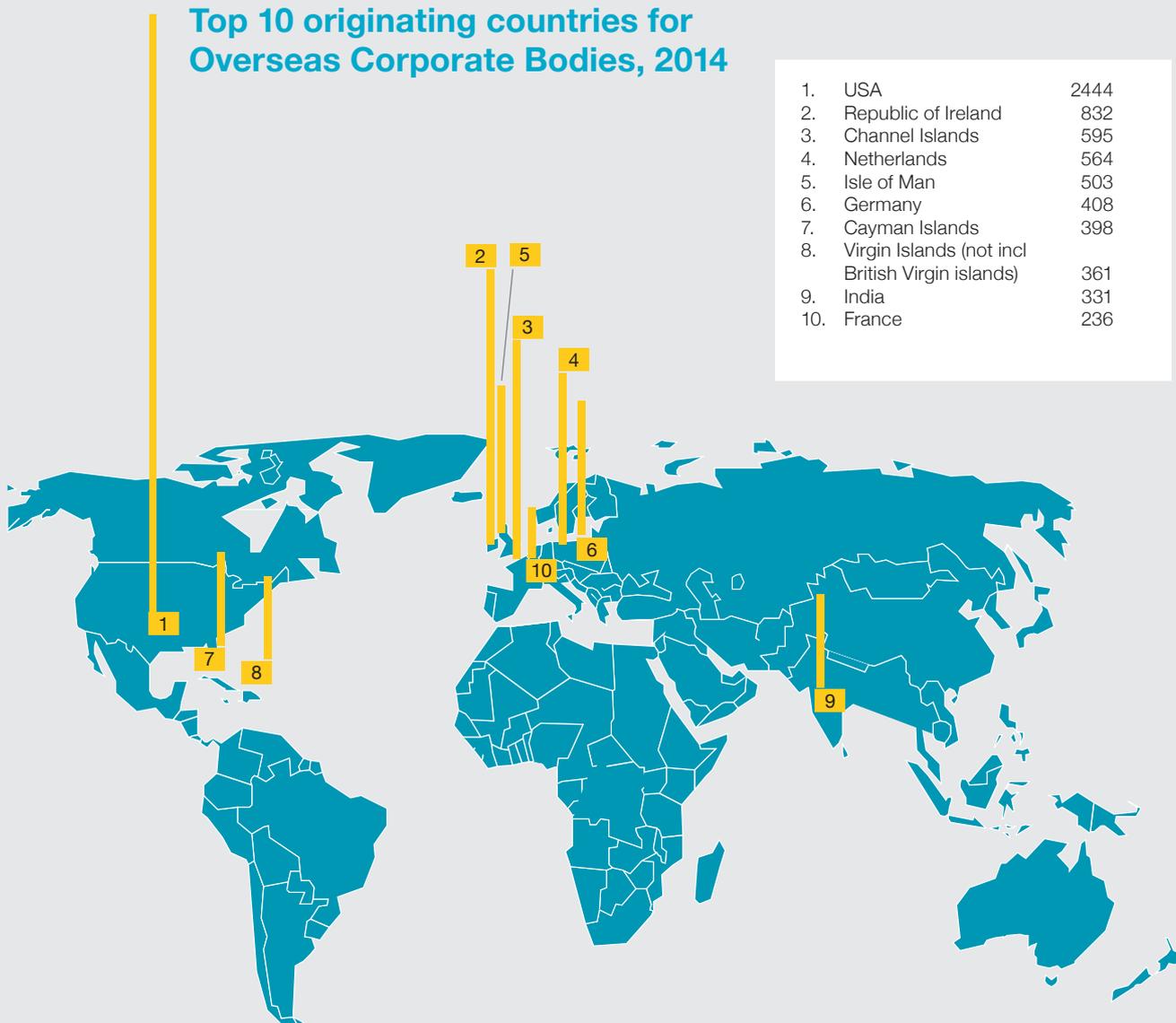
## 6. Overseas Corporate Bodies with a physical presence in the UK

On the 31 March 2014, there were 10,418 overseas Corporate bodies on the Total Register. Overseas Corporate bodies are incorporated outside of the UK and have a physical presence in the UK (such as a place of

business or branch) through which it carries on business. Corporate bodies incorporated in the USA accounted for 23% (2,444) of all overseas companies; the next highest, Republic of Ireland, accounted for just 8% (832).

### Top 10 originating countries for Overseas Corporate Bodies, 2014

1.	USA	2444
2.	Republic of Ireland	832
3.	Channel Islands	595
4.	Netherlands	564
5.	Isle of Man	503
6.	Germany	408
7.	Cayman Islands	398
8.	Virgin Islands (not incl British Virgin islands)	361
9.	India	331
10.	France	236



## 7. Other Companies House statistics

A range of other statistics are included in the tables that accompany this release, including, for example:

- Removals from the Register, including liquidations:
- Companies House's workload.
- Analysis of Companies House's income.
- Legal Proceedings.

## 8. Background notes

This section provides a range of information designed to provide the user with more information about the statistics.

### Definitions

#### Corporate Body types

Companies Act 2006 companies include: Public Limited; Private Limited; Private Limited By Guarantee/ No Share Capital; Private Limited by Guarantee/No Share Capital (exempt); Private Limited (s.30); Private Unlimited; Private Unlimited/ No Share Capital Companies.

Corporate Bodies include Companies Act 2006 companies, plus: Old Public Companies; Converted/ Closed; Limited Liability Partnerships; Limited Partnerships; Overseas, European; European Economic Interest Groupings; Newspaper Libel and Registration Act 1881; Principal establishment in GB, European Public Limited Liability Companies (Societas Europaea); Industrial & Provident Societies; Incorporated by Royal Charter; Investment Companies with Variable Capital; Investment Companies with Variable Capital (Securities); Investment Companies with Variable Capital (Warrant); Investment Companies with Variable Capital (Umbrella); Unregistered Companies; Not Used; Other Types of Companies. For the purpose of Companies Act 2006 and related legislation, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not regarded as integral parts of the UK company register.

#### Incorporated companies

All companies to which the Companies Act 2006 relates, which are registered at Companies House.

#### Dissolved companies

All companies to which the Companies Act 2006 relates, which are registered at Companies House.

#### Total Register

All companies to which the Companies Act 2006 relates, which are registered at Companies House regardless of trading status. It includes all companies required to file documents to Companies House. It excludes dissolved companies, but includes: companies in the process of receivership; dormant companies; and actively trading companies.

#### Effective Register

All companies to which the Companies Act 2006 relates, which are registered at Companies House regardless of trading status.

### Reviewing Companies House statistics

Companies House is currently reviewing its statistics. We would welcome any feedback you may have. Please contact Gary Wainman at: [statistics@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@companieshouse.gov.uk).

### Release timetable

Statistics for the 12 months to the 31 March 2015 will be published in Summer 2015.

### Revisions to these statistics

Revisions to these statistics will be mainly due to changes in methodologies and source data. The statistics are derived from administrative data. Changes to the underlying methods will cause revisions. These include changes in statistical methods, definitions, classifications and geographic coverage.

Although Companies House has robust procedures in place to minimise errors in the methods used to create these statistics, errors may occasionally occur. If errors are found after the publication, their impact will be

assessed. If these changes are significant, a corrigendum will be issued as soon as practicable, while minor corrections will be included in the next planned release. Any misleading or erroneous figures will be corrected, a footnote added to indicate that the figures have been corrected. The nature and reason for the correction will be explained.

Revisions in this release: *No revisions.*

Planned revisions: *No planned revisions.*

## Accessibility

The publication is available through the [Companies House statistics website](#)<sup>1</sup>.

## Publication schedule and timeliness

These statistics are published on a monthly basis. Statistics are published within a month of the end of the period being reported on; this is the earliest publication date which allows the compilation of the statistical release ready for publication.

## Coverage

This release provides information on the size and change of the company population and the changes that have occurred within the month. The release includes statistics for the United Kingdom, England & Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. A company is a specific legal form of business that is registered at Companies House. The statistics do not include information on sole proprietorship, partnerships and charities.

## Use and users

Companies House statistics are used extensively by government, the public, public bodies and businesses. For example, they are used by:

- government in understanding the likely impact of policy changes and monitoring the impact of economic changes on companies;
- businesses in understanding their market share and planning marketing strategies;
- by banks in developing an understanding of their customer base;
- by foreign firms in making UK location decisions;
- by academics to inform research into businesses at local and national level; and,
- by a range of public bodies in decision making and in evaluating business-related policies.

## Quality

These statistics are taken from the Companies House Register. Companies House has strict quality and audit procedures around making amendments, additions and removals to the Register. The compilation of these statistics has been quality assured.

These statistics are not seasonally adjusted and should be interpreted with this in mind. To remove seasonal effects, we recommend that users make comparisons with the same period twelve months ago.

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1. [www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/statisticsAndSurveys.shtml](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/statisticsAndSurveys.shtml)

## Coherence

This section provides brief information on how these statistics relate to selected business statistics. More detailed information can be found in '[Guide to the Business Population and Demographics statistics publications](#)'<sup>1</sup>, which explores the similarities and differences between business statistics. It focuses on the differences between estimates of the business population and includes a range of related statistics.

### Company incorporations and business creation.

There is a range of official data sources available to monitor business creation, but each has a slightly different coverage. Taken together, they provide a good overall picture of the trend in business creation activity. Individually, each source will be suitable for different specific purposes. Sources include:

- [Business Demography](#)<sup>2</sup>, which provides information for businesses registering for VAT or PAYE. An annual release that provides information on Business 'births' defined as new registrations for VAT or PAYE. Business Demography does not capture the smallest, non-employed business start-ups which do not register for VAT or PAYE.
- Companies House Incorporations – new company registrations, including those not actively trading. Incorporations are one source of statistics on business creation. They provide information on newly formed companies that are added to the Companies House Register. Incorporated companies can go on to trade actively, but some will be dormant companies that do not trade actively. Companies

House Incorporations do not capture business start-ups of other business types such as those starting up as an unincorporated sole proprietorship or partnership.

### Business population

There are a number of official statistics that provide information on the size of the business population. Each source will be suitable for different specific purposes. Sources include:

- [Business Population Estimates](#)<sup>3</sup> provide the only estimate of the total UK business population. It includes information on incorporated companies and unincorporated sole proprietorships and partnerships.
- [UK Business](#)<sup>4</sup> provides more detail on the business population that has registered for VAT or PAYE.
- Companies House provides information on the total number of incorporated companies that are filing documents to Companies House. Two figures are provided: the 'Total' Register which includes companies that are trading, dormant and in the process of liquidation or dissolution; and, the 'Effective' Register which includes those trading and dormant, but excludes those companies in the process of liquidation or dissolution, but includes companies in receivership.

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1. [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/business-and-energy/business-population/guide-to-the-business-population-and-demographics-statistics-publications--download.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/business-and-energy/business-population/guide-to-the-business-population-and-demographics-statistics-publications--download.pdf)

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/insolvency-service-official-statistics>

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3. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-population-estimates](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-population-estimates)

4. [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcn%3A77-21554](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcn%3A77-21554)

### **Company insolvency and company dissolutions**

Company insolvency proceedings are formal measures taken when a company becomes insolvent<sup>1</sup>. The [Insolvency Service](#)<sup>2</sup> reports the most complete picture on Insolvency statistics, including company liquidations and individual insolvencies, as it has policy responsibility for all forms of corporate insolvency in England and Wales. Compulsory liquidations published in this release differ from those published by the Insolvency Service. The Insolvency Service's compulsory liquidations' statistics are sourced from their administrative systems. All other forms of company insolvency published by the Insolvency Service are on the same basis as those published by Companies House.

There are many different types of company insolvencies including compulsory liquidations and creditors' voluntary liquidations (both of which are procedures resulting in the final winding-up of a company); and receiverships, administrations and company voluntary arrangements (which are aimed at company rescue and/or restructuring). Another form of company liquidation, members' voluntary liquidation, is not included in the Insolvency Service's statistics, as it does not involve insolvency.

Dissolution is the act of removing an incorporated company from the Companies House Register. There are many ways in which a [company can be dissolved](#); these include the final outcome of the insolvency procedures<sup>3</sup>. Once a company has been dissolved, it is removed from the Companies House Register and can only be restored under certain circumstances.

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1. More on the Company Insolvency and liquidations can be found on Companies House's website: [www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/gbhtml/gpo8](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/gbhtml/gpo8)  
2. [www.insolvencydirect.bis.gov.uk/otherinformation/statistics/201402/index](http://www.insolvencydirect.bis.gov.uk/otherinformation/statistics/201402/index)

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3. More on Company Dissolutions can be found on Companies House's website [www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/gbhtml/gp4.shtml](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/gbhtml/gp4.shtml)

# [www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)

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