



Companies House

Statistical release

Companies Register Activities 2014/15

Coverage: All Corporate Bodies
Geographical areas: UK, constituent countries
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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 House¹. Corporate bodies are registered at Companies House regardless of whether they go on to trade actively.

This 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 release concentrates on those to which the Companies Act 2006 relates^{2, 3}. This release includes information on the population size and how the population has changed annually; 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, newly incorporated companies, and the number of companies that were dissolved. This release focuses on the headline message for the UK, with more information contained in the supplementary tables that accompany the release.

Key points

- In the United Kingdom in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, there were 585,741 incorporations and 369,526 dissolutions of companies. As a result, the number of companies on the Total Register—including those in the process of dissolution or liquidation (260,458)—reached 3,464,155.
- 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 99% of the corporate bodies on 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 2015, there were 10,572 overseas corporate bodies on the Register with a physical presence in the UK, with the USA the largest single country, accounting for 23.1% of overseas corporate bodies.

¹ See definitions section in background notes for a definition of corporate bodies.

² See definitions section in background notes for a definition of Companies Act 2006 companies.

³ 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 2015 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

5.9m

There are 5.9 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

8.4 yrs

is the average age of live companies on the Register

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

13.6 yrs



Industrial Classification

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

- 17.2%** Professional, scientific & technical activities
- 10.9%** Administration & support services activities
- 10%** Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles
- 10%** Information & communication
- 9.7%** Construction

Accounts filed up-to-date

99.1%

of companies filed up to date.



PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANIES

account for over

96%

of the register

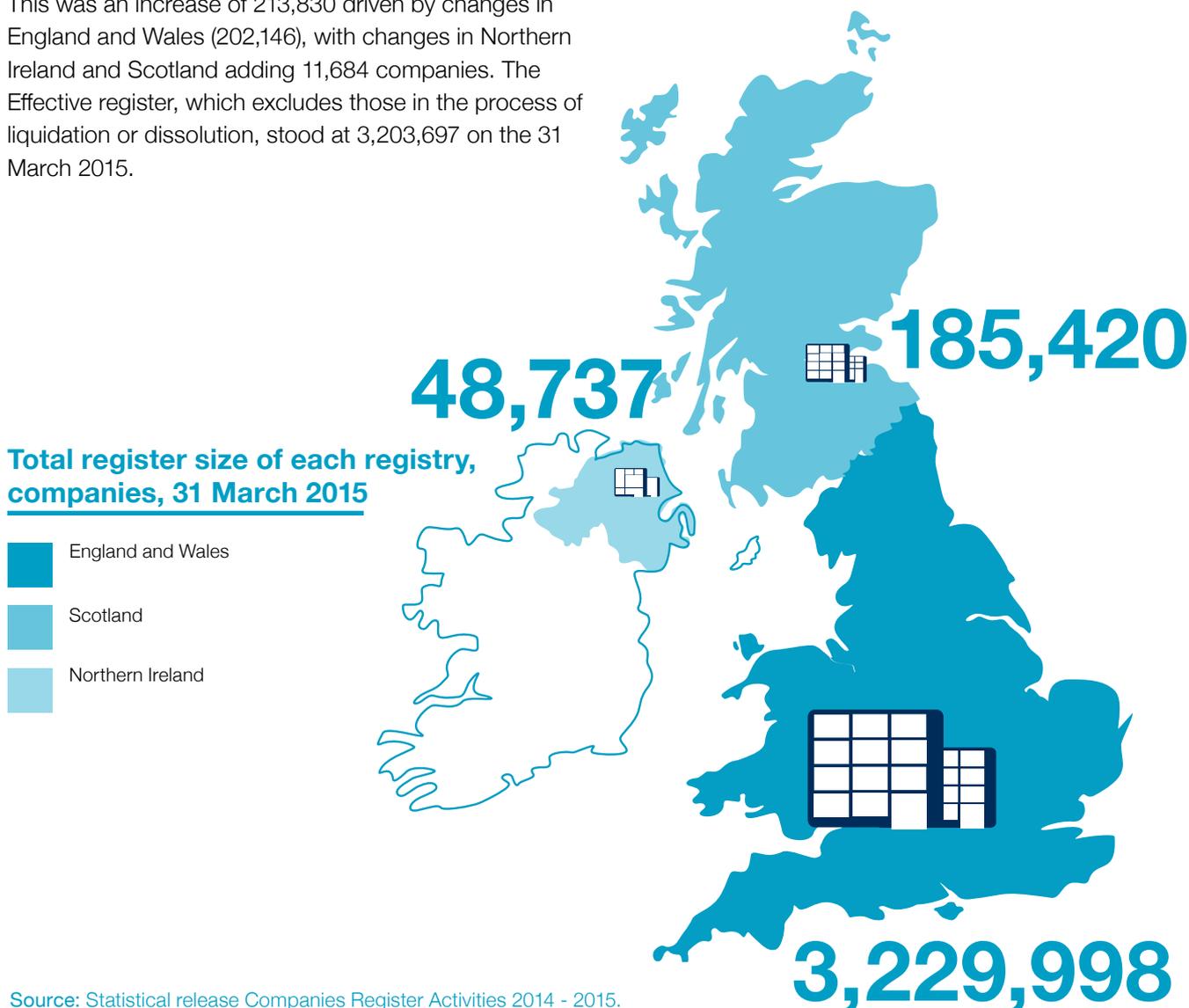
the top 3

Corporate Body types of Private Limited Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships and Limited Partnerships account for **99%** of the register

2. Incorporated companies

In the United Kingdom in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, there were 585,741 incorporations and 369,526 dissolutions of companies. As a result, the number of companies on the Total register—including those in the process of dissolution or liquidation (260,458)—reached 3,464,155¹.

This was an increase of 213,830 driven by changes in England and Wales (202,146), with changes in Northern Ireland and Scotland adding 11,684 companies. The Effective register, which excludes those in the process of liquidation or dissolution, stood at 3,203,697 on the 31 March 2015.



Source: Statistical release Companies Register Activities 2014 - 2015.

¹The 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 2015 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

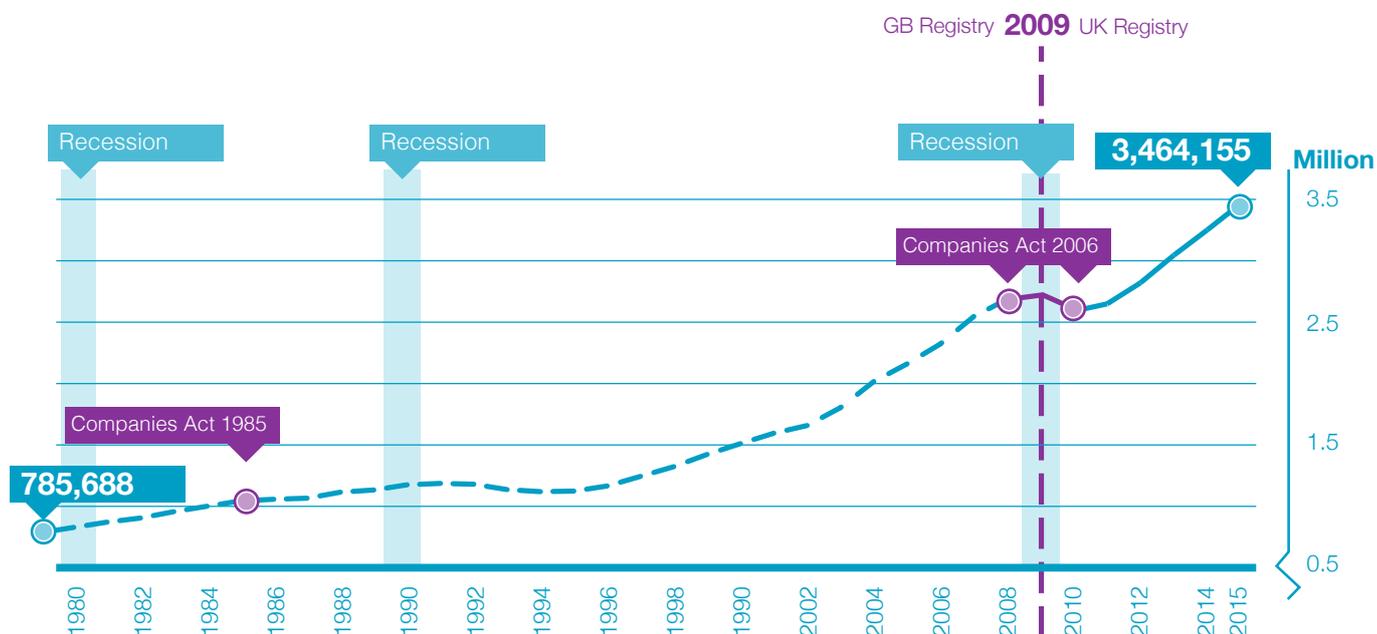
Between 1979 and 2015, the total and the Effective registers for the United Kingdom increased by over 2.7 million companies¹.

Over this time, the Total register has increased annually for 31 of the 36 years. Over the same period, the effective register has increased annually for 30 of the last 36 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 - 2015, 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 2014 - 2015.

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. Figures 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.

¹ Companies are a form of corporate body to which the Companies Act 2006 relates

4. Types of company on the Register

TOTAL REGISTER SIZE 2014/15

3,581,803

There are over 23 types of corporate body held on the register¹. Each have their own requirements to provide information to Companies House, as outlined in various legislation and royal acts. The composition of the register, in terms of corporate body types 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 99% of the Register. As in 2005, and each intervening year, Private Limited Companies have dominated the Register, accounting for over 96%.

Register size²

a. Effective register	3,203,697
b. New incorporations	585,741
c. Companies restored	5,502
d. In receivership	9,683
e. Dissolved companies	369,526
f. In dissolution	179,831
g. In liquidation	80,627

Who's on the total register

1. Private limited companies	3,313,430
2. Private limited by guarantee with no share capital	96,182
3. Limited liability partnerships	59,996
4. Private limited by guarantee with no share capital (exempt from using 'Ltd')	42,150
5. Limited partnerships	33,060
6. Oversea companies	11,159
7. Industrial and provident societies	10,133
8. Public limited companies (PLC)	7,532
9. Private unlimited	4,931
10. Further categories:	3,230
- Assurance companies	929
- Royal charter companies	850
- Investment companies with variable capital	545
- European economic interest grouping (EEIG)	279
- Private unlimited (no share capital)	231
- Registered Society	135
- Investment companies with variable capital (umbrella)	87
- European Public Limited-Liability Company (SE)	43
- Unregistered Company	43
- Old Public Company	28
- Private Limited by Shares/ (Section 30 Exemption)	18
- Converted/Closed	17
- Other Company Type	14
- Investment Company with Variable Capital (Securities)	11

¹ For more information on the company types on the register can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/companies-house-guidance-for-limited-companies-partnerships-and-other-company-types>

Register Size figures are a snapshot as at 31 March 2015. Due to scheduling differences this may not reconcile with figures in the statistical tables.

² Register size figures refer to private, public and private unlimited companies.

5. Age of companies on the register

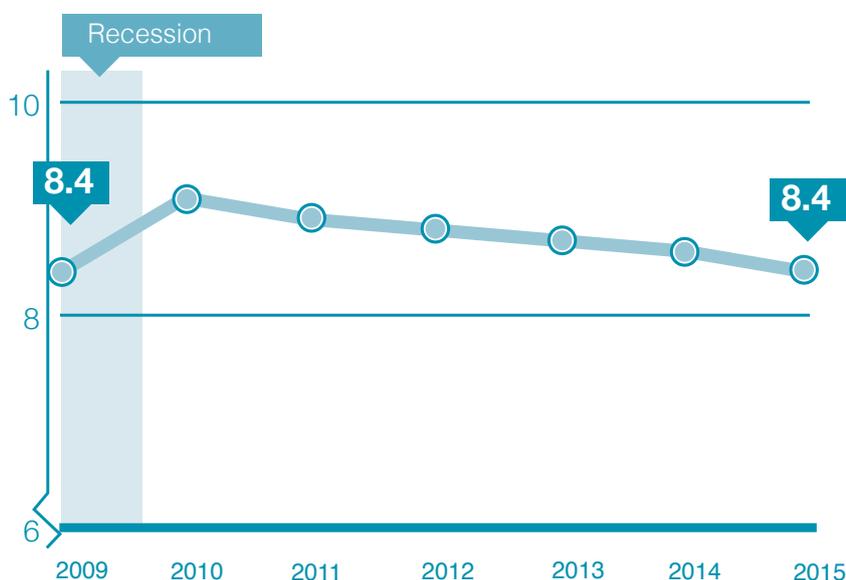
The age profile of corporate bodies is relatively young and stable, the average age of a corporate body has changed little since 2009, varying between 8 and 9 years old.

Between 2005 and 2015¹ just over 3 in 10 corporate bodies were aged between 1 and 4 years old. Almost half of 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. In 2015, more than 20% of companies on the Register are aged 9 years and over.

The average age of companies in the UK, on the total register and the effective register in 2015, was 8.4 years.

¹ Age information was taken at the 31 December between 2005 and 2013 and 13 July 2014. The 2015 figures were taken at 31 March 2015.



Average age of companies on the total register, 31 March 2009 - 2015 (Chart 2)

■ UK total register size

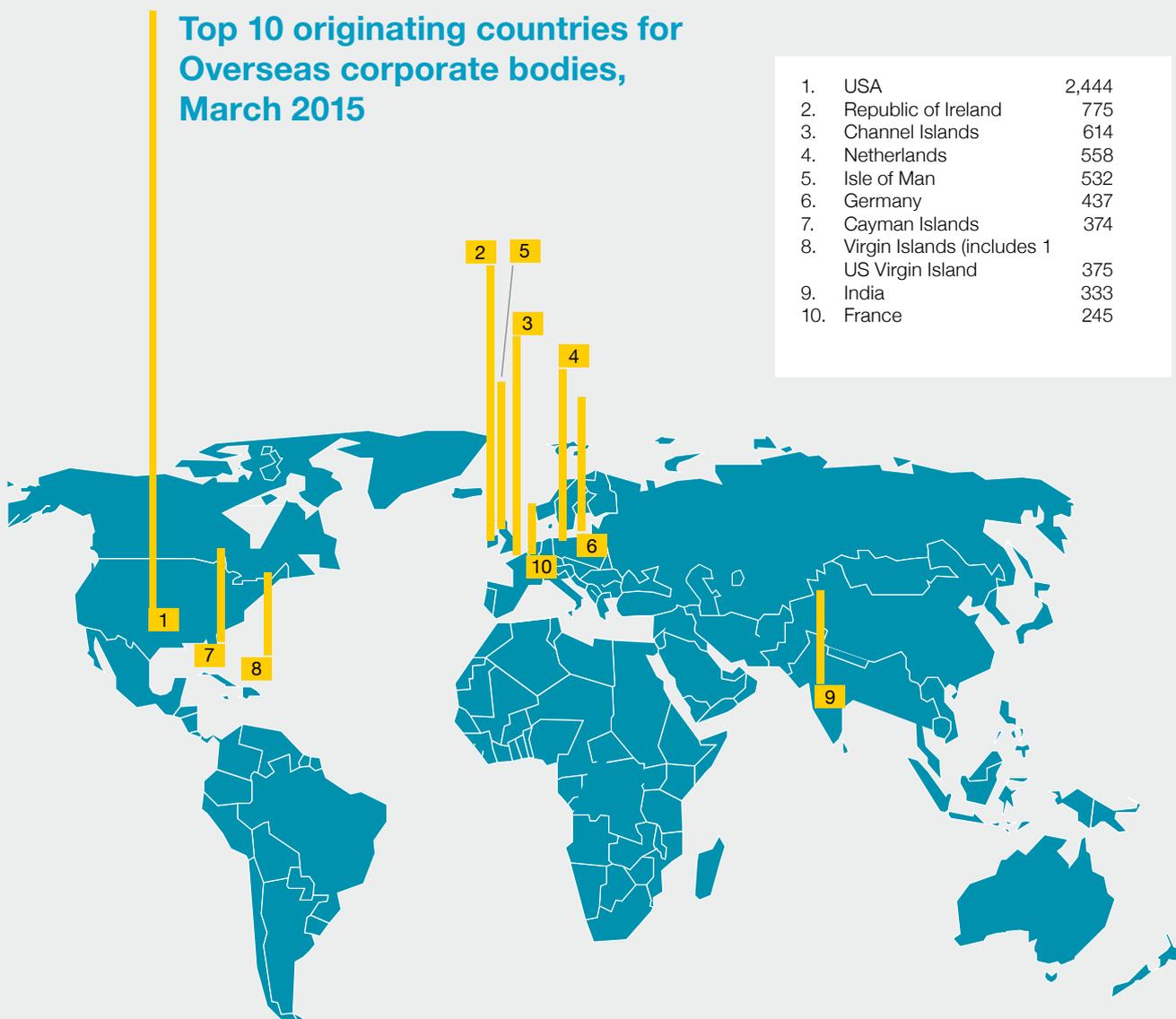
6. Overseas corporate bodies with a physical presence in the UK

On the 31 March 2015, there were 10,572 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 23.1% (2,444) of all overseas companies; the next highest, Republic of Ireland, accounted for just 7.3% (775). Overseas Companies remain stable. Slightly increasing by 83 companies between 2010-11 to 2014-15, from 10,489 to 10,572 respectively.

Top 10 originating countries for Overseas corporate bodies, March 2015

1.	USA	2,444
2.	Republic of Ireland	775
3.	Channel Islands	614
4.	Netherlands	558
5.	Isle of Man	532
6.	Germany	437
7.	Cayman Islands	374
8.	Virgin Islands (includes 1 US Virgin Island)	375
9.	India	333
10.	France	245



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.

Release timetable

Statistics for the 12 months to the 31 March 2016 will be published in Summer 2016

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 possible, while minor corrections will be included in the next planned release.

Any misleading or incorrect figures will be amended and, 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](#)¹.

Publication schedule and timeliness

These statistics are published on an annual basis. Statistics are published the summer following the end of the period being reported. This is the earliest publication date that 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
- 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.

¹. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house/about/statistics>

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](#)'¹, 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](#)², 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](#)³ provide the only estimate of the total UK business population. It includes information on incorporated companies and unincorporated sole proprietorships and partnerships.
- [UK Business](#)⁴ 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.

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

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

3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-population-estimates>

4. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcm%3A77-21554>

Company insolvency and company dissolutions

Company insolvency proceedings are formal measures taken when a company becomes insolvent.¹ The [Insolvency Service](#)² 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); 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.¹ 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/liquidation-and-insolvency>
 2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/insolvency-statistics-april-to-june-2015>
 3. More on Company Dissolutions can be found on Companies House's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/company-strike-off-dissolution-and-restoration>

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