



Cardiff is the capital and largest city in Wales and is a base for many of the country's political, cultural, sporting and commercial institutions. Once an ancient Roman settlement, Cardiff became the biggest supplier of steel and coal to the world through its docks and is now the home to the main centre for democracy and devolution in Wales – The Senedd.

## | Housing

The housing market in Cardiff is quite reasonable; Cardiff Bay is quite popular with professionals for its waterfront views and selections of bars and restaurants. A 2 bedroom flat here would set you back around £750 a month.

Other popular areas are Cathays (which is mostly populated by students due to its proximity to the University), Pen-y-lan and Pontcanna where where a 1-2 bed place costs £550-£650 per month.

If you want a bit more space then you could get a 2 bed house in the suburbs such as Pentwyn, St Mellons, Llandaff but you would then need to commute.

Culturally Cardiff has plenty to offer, particularly its 2 large theatres – The New Theatre and Wales Millennium Centre. Keep an eye out for travelling productions of West End shows, the tickets are usually pretty reasonable and the Millennium Centre is a gorgeous setting.

Leaving the city centre behind, the surrounding areas offer a huge range of activities including a walk in the picturesque Brecon Beacons, visiting the medieval village at Cosmeston, exploring one of the many castles or discovering the history of Wales in the Museum of Welsh Life in St Fagans.



Cardiff Castle



The Senedd

## | Things to do

St David's Centre is fantastic for shopping and caters for all budgets from Primark to Vivienne Westwood and everything in between. Cardiff is known as the "City of Arcades" due to the highest concentration of Victorian, Edwardian and contemporary indoor shopping arcades in any British city. These are definitely worth a visit if you're looking for quaint shops, antique bookshops, and quirky cafés.

## | Food and Drink

Cardiff is not short on eateries; whether you're after a chain restaurant or unique establishments – Your choices can vary from tea and cake in the Norwegian church where Roald Dahl was christened, to street food markets in the Depot. Large chain restaurants such as Slug and Lettuce and Five Guys are now open in the city centre.

Cardiff also hosts a couple of food festivals that are definitely worth a mention. In particular the International Food Festival where you can buy an ostrich burger and some Welsh whiskey! Not too much further afield is the Cheese festival in Caerphilly and Abergavenny has a regular farmers market.

If you want laid back cocktails with a view, Mermaid Quay with its bars and restaurants is the place to be. If you're looking for a bigger night out then head to St Mary's street. There are numerous bars and pubs scattered across Cardiff so don't limit yourself to the above – have fun exploring and reassure yourselves it's purely for research purposes...



the Wales network representative can be found on OneHR if you want to get more of an idea of the sort of social events they organise.

---

## | Transport

**Rail:** Cardiff Bay has its own train station, and it takes an hour from Cardiff to Bristol. You can travel to London Paddington from Cardiff in 2 and a half hours.

**Bus:** Transport links are great throughout the city with bus services running regularly. You can reach Cardiff bay via car, train or the Bay Car bus service - it's a bendy bus which is pretty novel and makes for a fun journey if you stand in the bend.



Wales Millennium Centre

**Car/Walking:** Cardiff is compact for a city and you can walk into the centre from most areas fairly easily. If you have a car, there is ample parking near the Welsh Government building and there are several multistorey car parks within the town centre.

**Cycling:** Cyclists are well looked after in Cardiff as there are plenty of cycle networks. More are under development and they are called “Enfys”, which is the Welsh word for rainbow.

---

## | Civil Service Community

There are a number of regional offices as well as key departments and administrations based in Cardiff. You could be working for Welsh Government, ONS, HRMC, DWP or possibly the Home Office. Welsh Government is nestled amongst university buildings in Cathays park.

The local Fast Stream group for Cardiff is the “Wales Fast Streamers”. The most recent contact details for

---

## | Useful Links

Contains lots of useful information on one-off events in Cardiff: <http://www.whatsoncardiff.co.uk/>

Use this to find suggestions on things to do during the weekend, days out etc and learn a bit about the history of Cardiff: <http://www.visitcardiff.com/>

Contains plenty of information about the various ways to travel around Cardiff: <http://www.keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk>

Things to do in Cardiff: <http://www.visitwales.com/explore/south-wales/cardiff>



# Newport

Newport is Wales' third largest city and sits on its South East coast. At one time Newport was Wales' largest coal-exporting port, but has more recently received global attention by hosting the NATO summit in 2014 and the Ryder Cup in 2010. A recent £100 million development has brought new shops and leisure facilities to Friar's Walk in the city centre.

In the city centre there're the usual restaurants and bars and a cinema and bowling alley feature in the Friar's Walk shopping centre.



**Friar's Walk Shopping Centre**

## | Housing

Renting or buying a house in Newport is generally cheaper than its surrounding cities of Cardiff and Bristol. A one bed property would on average be around £425 pcm, and a two bed £540 pcm. Living in the city centre will give you access to shops and train/bus links. There are a lot of new houses being built in the area with developments off the A48 Southern Distributor Road if you want to be a little further outside the centre.

A short drive out of the city and you'll have access to the glorious landscape of the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Wye Valley – an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The Dolman Theatre and Riverfront Theatre offer a varied range of productions and live shows.

## | Things to do

Newport is home to the Newport Gwent Dragons, one of four Welsh regional rugby teams. Sharing the same Rodney Parade stadium is Newport County FC.

Newport International Sports Village is just to the south of the city. It's home to the Wales National Velodrome, a regional pool and indoor tennis centre and a 3G astro turf pitch!



**Riverside Theatre**



**Newport Foot Bridge**

## | Food and drink

Friar's Walk offers a good selection of restaurants and bars. If you want to pick up some local produce, Newport Market which dates back 150 years is open from Monday to Saturday and the Newport Food Festival takes place in October each year.





## | Transport Links

Newport is approximately 14 miles west of Cardiff and 30 miles east of Bristol. Many Fast Streamers working in Newport live in Cardiff and travel by car or bus. The M4 provides a direct road link with the ONS and IPO which are both based a couple of minutes from J28.

There are direct trains to Newport from Cardiff and Bristol. Trains from London Paddington take around 2 hours. The ONS/IPO offices are approximately 3-4 miles from the train station, but there is a direct bus.



**Newport Transporter Bridge**

## | Civil Service Community

The Office for National Statistics and the Intellectual Property Office are based on the same site near to Tredegar Park. The Charity Commission also has a small office in the same building. More widely Welsh Government, HMRC, NOMS, DWP and MoJ have offices in South Wales.



**ONS/UKSA Reception**

The Wales Fast Stream organise regular socials in Cardiff and Newport and the first Wales Fast Stream Conference was held in 2016.

---

## | Useful Links

General information about living in Newport:

<http://www.newport.gov.uk/>

Sport and recreation guide:

<http://newportlive.co.uk/>

Places to visit in Newport:

<http://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Leisure-Tourism/Attractions/Attractions.aspx>



# Swansea

The second largest city in Wales is situated on the coast. Historically known for its copper industry and being the birth place of the writer Dylan Thomas. It is now probably more widely known for its premier ship football team and being home to one of the UK's best beaches!

## Housing

Housing is cheap in South Wales and most of the estate agents are on Walters's road, a short walk from the town centre. On the Fast Stream salary you will not be stuck for choice. Flat shares are available and there is also an abundance of single occupancy accommodation. For a one bed flat in the city centre, Copper Quarter or Uplands (a lively student area with bars and cafes) you can expect to pay around £475-500 and moving just outside of the city centre will get you a two bed house for the same price.

If you are without a car then places such as St Thomas, Hafod, Plasmarl, Landore and Brynhyfrd are very popular places to live with the latter four being within walking distance of the stadium if you're a football fan! They are also within a 10- 15minute bus ride or if you are feeling energetic, 30-40 minute walk from the city centre.



Three Cliffs Bay

## Things to do

One of the best parts of Swansea has to be its coast line and you will find some of the prettiest fishing villages. In 2014, Rhossilli Bay was voted the best beach in Britain, the third best in Europe and ninth best beach in the world! Oxwich Bay has also

previously been voted the best beach in Britain. Needless to say, water sports are very popular here and a new club recently opened up on Swansea beach front.



Swansea City Centre

Looking further afield, Oakwood Park, the largest theme park in Wales is worth visiting and you could walk along the Welsh Coastal Path – all 870 miles, or climb Mount Snowdon the highest peak in Wales.

## Food and Drink

Food wise, Swansea isn't short of good restaurants. Popular options include, Cafe Toucan and the Grape and Olive, both are located in SA1, with fantastic views of the water. Slightly more pricey is the lovely Hanson at the Chelsea Cafe or Bouchon de Rossi. And you have to try the legendary breakfast at the Uplands Diner - perfect for after those heavy nights!

Of course it is also imperative that you try the local Welsh delicacies of Cawl ("cow-al" a lamb broth), welsh cakes, cockles, and Lavabread (seaweed!!). Swansea market is the perfect place to buy locally sourced produce and specialities.

Swansea has a small but thriving nightlife with a predominance of bars and clubs on Wind Street (pronounced as in "winding a clock" but often referred to as "Wine Street"! ) with a small alternative scene and a popular burlesque night at the Grand Theatre. The Uplands area is also thriving with small bars, clubs and cafes. Uplands is the perfect place to grab a bite to eat and a few cocktails.



## | Transport

**Rail:** Swansea is well appointed with many local train routes. Train journeys to other parts of the country, take similar time as travelling by car.

**Bus:** There is a good bus network in Swansea. The Number 35 bus route will take you from Swansea city centre to Morriston (about a 20-25 minute bus journey) where DVLA is based.



Swansea Marina

**Car:** Swansea has a surprising amount of motorway exits, so travelling to other parts of the country is easy. Cardiff is approximately 50 minutes drive away, Bristol, 1.5 hours and London, 3 -3.5 hours. Swansea is well served by local transport but if you are located further out west a car is useful due to the landscape.

**Cycling/Walking:** The City & County of Swansea Council have teamed up with Neath Port Talbot Council to encourage cycling by retain a Swansea Bay Cycle Routes and tube map. This is designed to help commuters travel to work by bike rather than using the car.

As it is more than affordable to live in or near the city centre, you may also decide to walk to work.

---

## | Civil Service Community

A variety of small government offices are based in Swansea but the largest is the DVLA (Longview Road, Morriston, Swansea, SA6 7JL).

The local Fast Stream group for Swansea is "Wales Fast Streamers". The most recent contact details for the Wales network representative can be found on OneHR if you want to get more of an idea of the sort of social events they organise.

---

## | Useful Links

Contains lots of useful information on one-off events in Swansea: <http://www.visitswanseabay.com/>

All the information you need on getting around Swansea on public transport:  
[http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/south\\_west\\_wales/](http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/south_west_wales/)

Information regarding cycling in Swansea:  
<http://www.cycleswanseabay.org.uk>