



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Housing supply: Indicators of new supply, England: October to December 2020

Technical Notes



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March 2021

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# National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value as set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). It is the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's statisticians' responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was first confirmed in December 2011 following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority. These statistics last underwent a compliance check against the Code of Practice for Statistics in June 2018.

The Office for Statistics Regulation confirmed the continued designation of these as National Statistics on 9 February 2019.

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-to-update-on-statistics-on-housing-in-england/>

The Office for Statistics Regulation commended the following improvements:

- Ongoing work to improve the quality of data used to produce New Build Dwellings; improving the presentation of the statistics; and including energy performance data within the quarterly publication to help provide users with additional insight and an indication of estimates presented in the forthcoming annual Net Additional Dwellings.
- Improvements to the coherence of your statistics by publishing guidance within each publication about how the range of housing statistics relate to each other, supported by an accessible one page guide.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/780706/HPAD\\_stats\\_guide\\_Feb\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780706/HPAD_stats_guide_Feb_2019.pdf)

- Improved supporting information about the strengths and limitations of the data sources used to produce each statistic, and publishing your assessment of the existing quality assurances of these sources taking into account the Authority's Quality Assurance for Administrative Data Regulatory standard.
- Continued collaborative working with statisticians in the Office for National Statistics and across the devolved administrations as part of the Cross-Government Housing

Statistics Working Group to deliver a range of wider improvements to housing and planning statistics.

## Data collection

### **Building control**

This release takes information from three data sources on building control:

- 'P2' quarterly house building returns submitted to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by local authority building control departments;
- monthly information from the National House-Building Council (NHBC) on the volume of building control inspections they undertake in each local authority area, and;
- quarterly data collection from other approved inspectors (AIs).

Data on starts and completions by individual building control organisations are not published.

Information about the following collections also included can be found at the given links:

### **Energy Performance Certificates**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/energy-performance-of-buildings-certificates>

### **Council tax stock of properties**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-tax-stock-of-properties-2020>

### **Net additions**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/net-supply-of-housing>

### **Affordable Housing Supply**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/affordable-housing-supply>

### **Glenigan residential unit planning permissions (within Planning Application statistics)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-applications-statistics>

# Data sources and data quality

## Things to note on this release

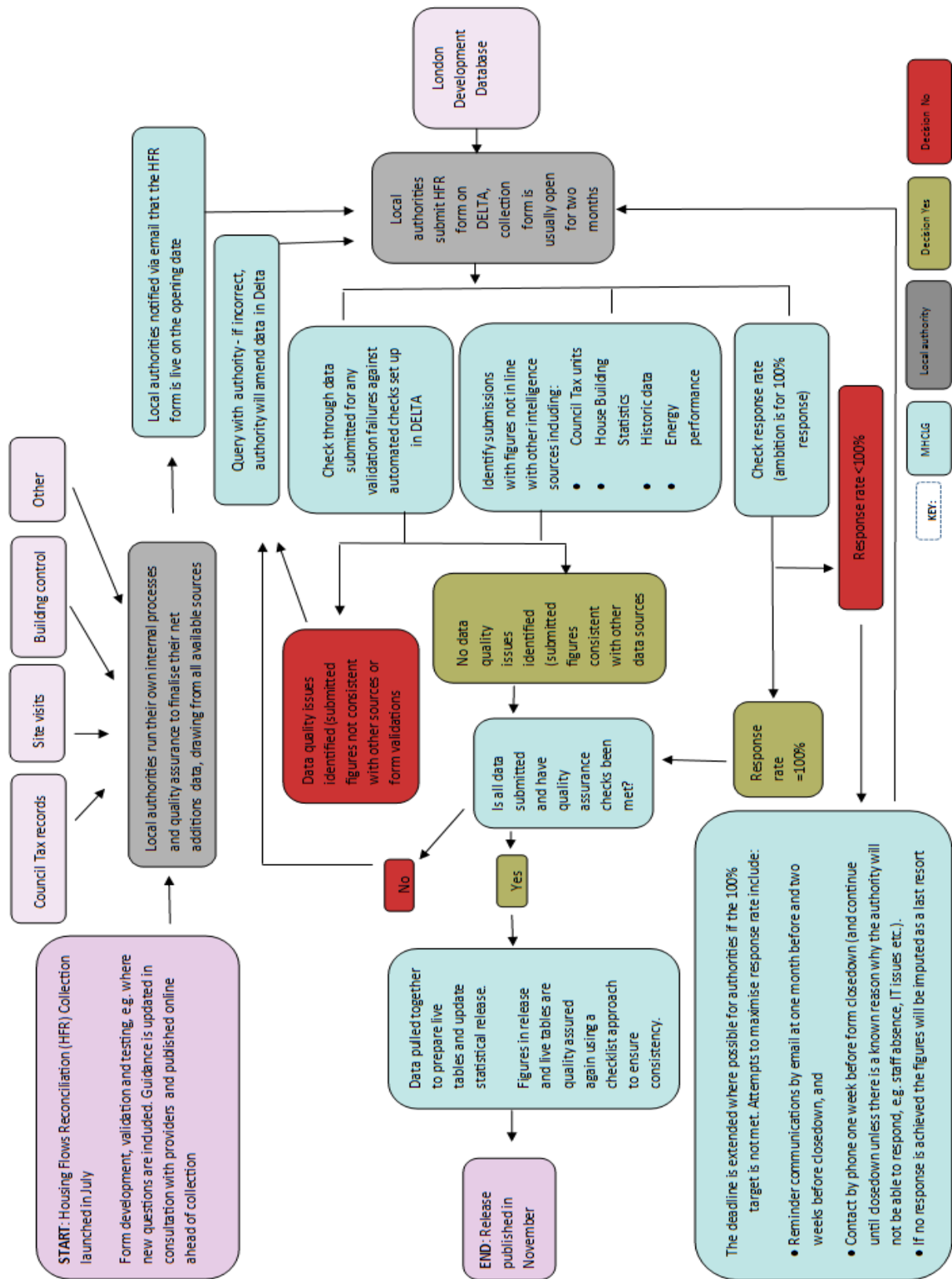
During the data collection period for this release, Reading submitted 702 completions under the Local Authority tenure for the December quarter 2020. In our quality assurance process, it was observed that this figure appeared to be erroneously high based on figures generally seen in this dataset – Local Authority tenure quarterly completions are rarely above 700 for all of England.

To resolve this issue, in February 2021, MHCLG contacted Reading Local Authority Building Control team to investigate and provide clarification. This investigation was still pending at the time of the deadline for production, on the 15 March 2021. Therefore, the data was manually edited by MHCLG to assign these 702 completions to the Private Enterprise tenure, which is the default if the tenure is unknown (in accordance with the published guidance, page 9, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form> ) and typically comprises the majority of completions (78% in 2019-20). Users are advised that this figure and tenure are subject to further investigation and potential revision in future statistical releases.

A full outline of the statistical production process and quality assurance carried out is provided in the flow chart in Figure 1 below.

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Figure 1: Quality assurance flow diagram



## Data sources

Since 1946, the house building statistics have been based on the building control system as it has the advantage that it is the best source to identify the start of new build dwellings (specifically the commencement of construction in laying of foundations) and is the most timely measure of new build completion (as measured by the completion certificate).

The department has been undertaking an on-going programme of work which has (a) confirmed the accuracy and coverage of the annual housing supply and net additional dwellings estimate compared to other similar statistics; and (b) explored the coverage of the quarterly house-building release. The programme involved detailed discussions with a range of organisations and user consultation. The outcome of these user engagement sessions has generated a series of proposed actions to further improve the coverage of the department's quarterly new build statistics, resulting in the publication action plan to improve the measurement of new homes built, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan>

The department is part of a cross government working group, including devolved administrations and the Office of National Statistics, to improve the quality of housing and planning statistics. Details of this work are available via the Government Statistical Service website: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/working-with-users-2/housing-and-planning-statistics/>

There are several alternative sources of data on house building in England, including the building control system, the council tax system, the Land Registry, Energy Performance Certificates and site visits. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The methodology has been reviewed by the UK Statistics Authority in 2011 and the Office for Statistics Regulation in 2017.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has explored using other sources to produce estimates of quarterly house building. This included use of Land Registry data. However, this is a record of land and ownership, and therefore not all dwellings will be identifiable. Another source of information on quarterly house building completions is the



Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) statistics. These statistics are also produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and have now been included within this quarterly release to provide supplementary information on housing supply.

A summary of the sources used in this release are evaluated in Table 1.

**Table 1: MHCLG Housebuilding; new build dwellings: Quality of sources**

Source/ Type	Strengths	Weaknesses	Continuing Improvement	Why 'Fit for Purpose'
<b>Local Authority Building Control</b>  <b>Type</b> Quarterly statistical return from 314 local authorities. High response rate (91% in 2020 Q4). Imputation for missing returns	<p>Local authority building control provided data on new build starts and completions certificates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sourced from inspections on building sites undertaken by Local Authority Building Control Officers.</li> </ul> <p>Digital return completed by local authorities. It is a mandatory collection and on the single data list. Validated by Local Authority and MHCLG.</p> <p>Ways to ensure consistency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guidance notes updated annually. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form</a></li> <li>•On-line form has interactive validation that alerts users to invalid and implausible values</li> <li>•Validation check after data receipt</li> </ul>	<p>The statistics are highly dependent on the quality and coverage of the information provided by organisations that supply the underlying administrative data, collected as part of the building control inspection process.</p> <p>Emerging issues are local authority building control forming strategic building control partnerships and outsourcing.</p>	<p>Detailed in MHCLG action plan <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan</a></p> <p>Continuing communication with, local authorities, LABC (the representative organisation of Local Authority Building Control), the Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group and the Consultative Committee on Construction Industry Statistics.</p> <p>The department has set up a working group with the National House Building Council and have met with the Chief Executives of the Association for Consultant Approved Inspectors (ACAI) and LABC (the representative organisation of Local Authority Building Control).</p>	<p>'House building' -public scrutiny as leading indicator of housing supply. National Statistic</p> <p>Comprehensive QA and sense checks by Local Authority and MHCLG (e.g. Council Tax, Energy Performance Certificates)</p> <p><b>Risk</b> Error – low Impact- medium</p>
<b>National House Building Council</b>  <b>Type</b> Monthly electronic file transfer.  (100% coverage).	<p>National House Building Council building control provided data on new build starts and completions certificates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sourced from inspections on building sites undertaken by National House Building Control Officers.</li> </ul>	<p>The statistics are highly dependent on the quality and coverage of the information provided by organisations that supply the underlying administrative data, collected as part of the building control inspection process.</p>	<p>Detailed in MHCLG action plan <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan</a></p> <p>Continuing communication with MHCLG, local authorities, NHBC, the Building Control Performance</p>	<p>'House building' -public scrutiny as leading indicator of housing supply. National Statistic.</p> <p>Comprehensive QA and sense checks by NHBC, LABC and MHCLG. e.g. Council Tax, Energy Performance Certificates</p> <p>MHCLG regularly visit NHBC Headquarters (and vice versa) to keep up</p>

<p>No Imputation.</p>	<p>Digital return is also sent to local authorities.</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding between MHCLG and NHBC covers the provision of data. It is a legal requirement for NHBC to send this data to MHCLG. NHC also send an extract to each LA.</p> <p>Validated by NHBC and MHCLG.</p> <p>Ways to ensure consistency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guidance notes updated annually.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•On-line form has interactive validation that alerts users to invalid and implausible values</li> <li>•Validation check after data receipt</li> </ul>		<p>Standards Advisory Group and the Consultative Committee on Construction Industry Statistics.</p> <p>The department has set up a working group with the National House Building Council and have met with the Chief Executives of the Association for Consultant Approved Inspectors (ACAI) and LABC (the representative organisation of Local Authority Building Control).</p>	<p>to date on new developments in NHBC data recording and QA processes.</p> <p><b>Risk</b> Error – very low Impact- high (as NHBC account for approximately half of the data used to produce the house building statistics)</p>
<p><b>Independent Approved Inspectors</b></p> <p><b>(approx. 80+)</b></p> <p><b>Type</b> Quarterly statistical return from 317 local authorities. High response rate (81% in 2020 Q4). Imputation for missing returns</p>	<p>Independent Approved Inspectors building control provided data on new build starts and completions certificates – sourced from inspections on building sites undertaken by Independent Approved Inspectors Control Officers.</p> <p>Digital return completed by local authorities. It is a <b>voluntary</b> collection. Validated</p>	<p>The statistics are highly dependent on the quality and coverage of the information provided by organisations that supply the underlying administrative data, collected as part of the building control inspection process. Return of data from approved inspectors is voluntary.</p>	<p>Detailed in MHCLG action plan <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-measurement-of-new-homes-built-action-plan</a></p> <p>Continuing communication with MHCLG, local authorities, the Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group and the Consultative Committee on Construction Industry Statistics.</p>	<p>‘House building’ –public scrutiny as leading indicator of housing supply. National Statistic Comprehensive QA and sense checks by Local Authority and MHCLG e.g. Council Tax, Energy Performance Certificates</p> <p><b>Risk</b> Error – low Impact- medium</p>

	<p>by Approved Inspector and MHCLG.</p> <p>Ways to ensure consistency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guidance notes updated annually. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/house-building-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-p2-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form</a></li> <li>•On-line form has interactive validation that alerts users to invalid and implausible values</li> <li>•Validation check after data receipt</li> </ul>	.	<p>The department has set up a working group with the National House Building Council and have met with the Chief Executives of the Association for Consultant Approved Inspectors (ACAI) and LABC (the representative organisation of Local Authority Building Control).</p>	
<p><b>Energy Performance Certificate Lodgements</b></p> <p><b>Type</b></p> <p>MHCLG publishes quarterly data on numbers of certificates issued for buildings which have been newly constructed, sold or let.</p>	<p>If works are carried out to create a new building(s), either by means of new build or by conversion of an existing building (for example, subdivision of an existing building into flats or change of use of an office), the builder or person responsible for the construction must obtain an EPC once construction has been completed, so coverage of new building completions is high. This will also apply if a building is converted into fewer or more units designed for separate occupation and there are changes to the heating, hot water provision or air conditioning/ventilation services.</p>	<p>The statistics are specifically collected for energy performance purposes and do not separate out new build from changes of use and conversions. There may be some instances of duplicate certificates entering the register. Previous data shows EPC figures are most likely to overestimate net additions but in recent years have been very close, although there are local variations, especially in London.</p>	<p>These are currently experimental statistics and will continue to be improved in future. For further details please consult the statistics.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/energy-performance-of-buildings-certificates">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/energy-performance-of-buildings-certificates</a></p>	<p>These statistics are provided as supplementary indicators on housing supply to support and QA the figures from the other 3 sources</p> <p>The statistics are subject to comprehensive QA and sense checks by Local Authority and MHCLG before publication</p> <p><b>Risk</b> Low – Provided as supplementary information only.</p>

## Assessment of data quality

In 2015 the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published a [regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data](#). To assess the quality of the data provided for this release the department has followed that standard. The standard is supported with an [Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit](#) which provides useful guidance on the practices that can be adopted to assure the quality of the data they utilise.

The House building: new build dwellings statistical release is produced by MHCLG based on data provided by Local Authorities, the National House Building Council (NHBC) and Independent Approved Inspectors. An assessment of the level of risk based on the Quality Assurance Toolkit is as follows:

<b>Risk/Profile Matrix Statistical Series</b>	<b>Administrative Source</b>	<b>Data Quality Concern</b>	<b>Public Interest</b>	<b>Matrix Classification</b>
Housing supply: Indicators of new supply	Building Control information held by Local authorities, the NHBC and Independent Approved Inspectors own individual data systems.	Low	High	Medium Risk [A2]

The publication of Housing Supply: Indicators of new supply can be considered as high profile, as there is significant mainstream media interest, with moderate economic and/or political sensitivity. These statistics show the latest timely information on trends in starts and completions of house building; however, they are not as robust as the annual Net additional dwellings measure of supply.

The data quality concern is considered as low given that the data are checked extensively by MHCLG statisticians and the NHBC before being published. There are issues around data coverage, with the more timely quarterly data undercounting housing delivery when compare to the annual supply figures. The department is working to improve upon the data coverage as part of the improvement action plan.

Overall, the new build dwellings have been assessed as A2: Medium Risk. This is mainly driven by the high profile nature of the figures. Further details are also provided in the

following four paragraphs against each of the four areas outlined in the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) Toolkit.

## **Operational context and administrative data collection**

The three data sources for new build dwellings are the building control data from the NHBC, individual local authorities and independent Approved Inspectors.

Building regulations are minimum standards for design, construction and alterations to virtually every building. The regulations are developed by the UK government and approved by Parliament. The [Building Regulations 2010](#) cover the construction and extension of buildings and these regulations. Individuals or organisations can apply to any local authority building control department or Approved Inspector for building regulations approval.

Local authority building control teams in England help people comply with the building regulations by giving feedback on plans and providing site inspections. The local authority has a general duty to see that building work complies with the building regulations, unless it is under the control of an approved inspector. Individual local authorities then collate the data they collect as part of these building control inspections and provide it to MHCLG.

Approved inspectors are companies or individuals authorised under the Building Act 1984 to carry out building control work in England and Wales. The NHBC (National House-Building Council) are the largest organisation of approved inspectors and they provide their building control data directly to the department. Following regulatory changes in 2005 it became easier for other independent providers to operate in the private house building market for building control and they are able to submit data to the department.

## **Communication with data supply partners**

There are regular contacts with the various data suppliers for this release. Direct contact is maintained when the data is being provided either through the DELTA collection process for local authorities and approved inspectors, or directly when the data extract is provided from the NHBC.

Ongoing communication on the collection and any potential changes with suppliers is managed through a number of formats including the Central Local Information Partnership

(CLIP) Housing sub-group, the Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group (BCPSAG), Local Authority Building Control (LABC), the Association of Consultant Approved Inspectors (ACAI), the National House Building Council (NHBC), Homes England and the Consultative Committee on Construction Industry Statistics (CCCIS). Any changes or updates to the data collection and usage are communicated through these groups to ensure that the data collected is as accurate and consistent as possible and is of minimal burden to the providers.

Local authorities are required to provide the data to the department as part of the Single Data List governing data mandatory returns to central government. Data from the NHBC is provided as part of their 'Memorandum Of Understanding for provision of data' agreed with the department, data provide by approved inspectors is voluntary and the department works closely with them to encourage returning data as part of their processes.

### **QA principles, standards and checks by data suppliers**

Local authorities who carry out building control inspections will all have their own systems and process to collect the data. As there are 314 different local authorities, supplying data to the department directly or indirectly via a building control partnership, and there are also over 80 approved inspectors providing data, it is not practical to fully understand and monitor each individual provider's processes.

To mitigate this lack of direct oversight, the department ensures additional effort is put into the QA checks carried out when the data is received from these organisations. The department also continually reviews and updates guidance put out to these organisations each year, maintaining regular communication with the relevant representational bodies throughout.

The NHBC data is provided as a direct data extract, supplied by electronic file transfer. They employ 1,100 staff, including 280 building inspectors across the UK, who carry out and collect data on around one million inspections at key stages of home construction each year. As part of this work they centrally collate data from these inspections and quality assure it. The department has been to inspect and discuss NHBC collection methods on a regular basis and is assured that the data and processes are of good quality.

## **Producers' QA investigation and documentation**

Whilst providers are expected to carry out their own checks before the data is submitted for this publication, further quality assurance is carried once the data is received by the responsible statisticians for this publication. The DELTA data collection system is designed to pick up errors upon data entry and issue validation failures which prevent obviously incorrect values being submitted. Following the completion of all data submitted via DELTA further checks are carried out by the Department's statisticians. These checks are designed to pick up any figures which have passed through the validation criteria of DELTA but require further investigation. These potential errors are identified by comparing figures submitted with other published sources and historical trends. For the NHBC data submitted by electronic file transfer, after loading to our systems, the Department's statisticians provide a summary report back to the NHBC. NHBC then confirm that the data they have provided has been reported correctly.

The data is compiled together across the three sources and is and compared to the historical time series and across the other sources. Any issues spotted are queried are escalated to the providers if necessary to resolve.

The final data, bulletin and live tables are quality assured independently by another statistician in the production team. Further final checks are performed to the final end product (for example, to check figures, formatting and text). These checks use a clear checklist approach to ensure the figures are consistent across the release and live tables, with each check being systematically signed off when it has been completed. The final statistical release is quality assured independently by the Senior Statistician and the Deputy Director for Housing and Planning Analysis Division.

### **Additional data quality points:**

#### **District level data**

House building data are collected at local authority district level, but it is important to treat figures at this level with care. House building is unevenly distributed both geographically and over time and patterns of housing development can produce clusters of new homes which make the figures at a low geographic level volatile and difficult to interpret.



### **From start to completion**

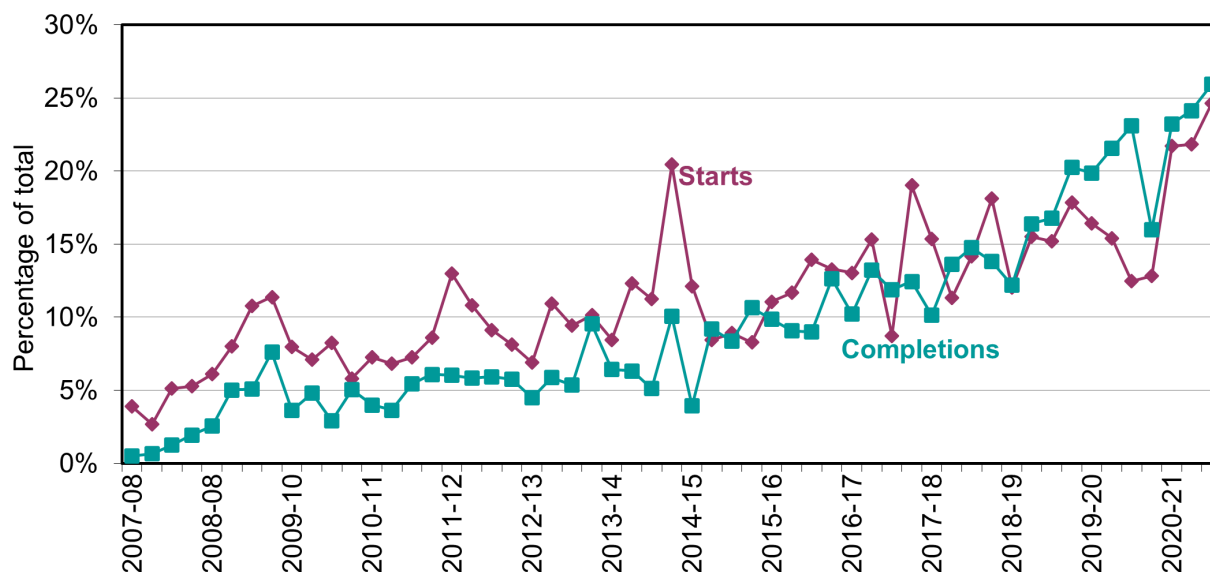
A wide range of factors can influence the length of time it takes for a new home to be constructed from start to completion. This period can vary from just a few months to several years. There are some circumstances in which starts might exceed completions. Information gathered from data providers indicates that the most common of these is where a new dwelling is started but never completed because the developer is no longer able or willing to complete the development.

### **Independent approved inspector's data**

In the March quarter 2012 release the house building data was revised to include data from independent approved building control inspectors. This affected all quarters from the September quarter 2007.

The inclusion of the approved inspectors was an improvement to the coverage of these statistics in response to the recent growth of this sector of the market but not a fundamental change to the methodology. Figure 2 shows that the percentages of all starts and completions reported by approved inspectors have increased since 2007, with both showing particular increases during the early period.

**Figure 2: Approved inspector reported starts and completions as a proportion of total starts and completions**



For more detail about the inclusion of data from independent approved inspectors, see pages 11-14 of the House Building statistical release for the March quarter of 2012.

More recently, we have continued to improve coverage of the release by increasing the number of approved inspectors providing regular data have worked with individual data providers to increase clarity and consistency of recording across the sector.

## Tenure

Figures on new build dwelling starts and completions are from records kept for building control purposes. The building control figures will reflect the tenure of the developer building the dwelling rather than the intended final tenure. This may lead to an understatement of housing association and local authority starts and completions recorded in these tables, and a corresponding overstatement of private enterprise figures. This problem is more likely to affect starts than completions.

Estimates of intended final tenure using Affordable Housing Supply (AHS) statistics are included from the March 2020 release for this reason. This series begins 2006/07 as this is when the new build component of net additions is first published. The below equation is used to give the Private Enterprise tenure:

*Private Enterprise = Total new build - Housing associations - Local authorities*

With the total coming from net additions and the housing association and local authority totals coming from AHS. These figures give a more accurate estimate of final tenure.

In addition to this, also included from March 2020 is a chart showing the proportion of affordable housing delivery under Section 106 agreements as this has been steadily increasing since 2015/16.

There are two other sources of official statistics on affordable housing supply which should be considered as an alternative by users specifically interested in the affordable sector. Please refer to the “Related statistics” section of this publication for further information.

## **Index**

From the June 2020 quarter, a quarterly index of the building control data is included due to user requests in response to the [consultation on improvements to quarterly housing supply statistics](#). Representing the building control data as an index emphasises its use as a measure of quarterly trends rather than focussing on the reported level of starts and completions.

## **Imputation**

The process to impute for a missing P2 local authority return works by picking up all data recorded in completed returns for that local authority over the previous five years and comparing it to data for other similar local authorities for the same periods. It then looks at the data provided for the current period by those other local authorities and imputes a figure for the missing local authority return which matches the proportion found in the comparison of data for the previous five years.

Imputation for other approved inspectors is performed using post stratification. Stratification is on the basis of the most recent previous total of starts and completions reported. Once approved inspectors have been stratified non-response weights are calculated and these weights applied to all responding approved inspectors for the quarter. Where insufficient recent data exist to sensibly include a response or non-response in the stratification (for example where there are no recent data) or where the status of the approved inspector is

unclear for that period (for instance it is not certain that they were operating in the that period or are a duplicate entry) the approved inspector is not included in the post stratification process. This may result in a small level of under coverage but ensures that only genuine non-response is weighted for and minimises the risk of overestimating the numbers of starts and completions inspected by approved inspectors.

Non-response weighting for approved inspectors is used only at an England level. In this release, starts data from three independent approved inspectors for quarters 2016 Q3 to 2018 Q1 inclusive, two independent approved inspectors for 2018 Q2, one independent approved inspector for 2018 Q3, and one independent approved inspector for 2018 Q4 to 2020 Q2 were not included in the estimates. To enable further data quality assurance estimates were imputed instead.

## Definitions

The definitions used in this publication can be found in the 'Housing statistics and English Housing survey' glossary published by MHCLG and that can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-statistics-and-england-housing-survey-glossary>

### **Dwelling**

A home or dwelling in these statistics is defined in line with the Census definition, which defines a dwelling as a self-contained unit of accommodation. Self-containment is where all the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet) in a household's accommodation are behind a single door which only that household can use. Non self-contained household spaces at the same address should be counted together as a single dwelling. Therefore a dwelling can consist of one self-contained household space or two or more non-self-contained household spaces at the same address.

Ancillary dwellings (e.g. 'granny annexes') are included provided they are self-contained, pay separate council tax from the main residence, do not share access with the main residence (e.g. a shared hallway) and there are no conditional restrictions on occupancy.

Communal establishments, i.e. establishments providing managed residential accommodation, are not counted in overall housing supply. These cover university and college student, hospital staff accommodation, hostels/homes, hotels/holiday complexes, defence establishments (not married quarters) and prisons. However, purpose-built

(separate) homes (e.g. self-contained flats clustered into units with 4 to 6 bedrooms for students) are included, with each self-contained unit counted as a dwelling.

Non-permanent (or 'temporary') dwellings are included if they are the occupant's main residence and council tax is payable on them as a main residence. These include caravans, mobile homes, converted railway carriages and houseboats. Permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches should also be counted if they are, or likely to become, the occupants' main residence.

### **New build dwelling start**

A dwelling is counted as started on the date work begins on the laying of the foundation, including 'slabbing' for houses that require it, but not including site preparation. Thus when foundation work commences on a pair of semi-detached houses two houses are counted as started, and when work begins on a block of flats all the dwellings in that block are counted as started. The starts of houses in building schemes are usually phased over a period of weeks or even, in very large schemes, months.

### **New build dwelling completion**

In principle, a dwelling is regarded as complete when it becomes ready for occupation or when a completion certificate is issued whether it is in fact occupied or not. In practice, the reporting of some completions may be delayed and some completions may be missed if no completion certificate was requested by the developer or owner, although this is unusual.

### **New build dwelling tenure**

For the purposes of the building control statistics, the term tenure (or tenure of developer) refers to the nature of the organisation responsible for the development of a new housing start or completion. It does not necessarily describe the terms of occupancy for the dwelling on completion. For example, some housing associations develop homes for sale on the open market. Such homes would be reported in the Housing Association tenure of these statistics, but would ultimately most likely be owned and occupied in the private sector. The term final tenure

### **Housing association**

"Housing associations (HAs)" has been used as the generic name for all social landlords not covered by local authorities (see below). In previous editions HAs were referred to as

Registered Social Landlords (RSL), and the technical term (private) Registered Provider (PRP) of social housing is also sometimes used. The more all-encompassing description of 'housing associations' is now seen as more helpful to users of these statistics.

## Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-mhclg-revisions-policy>.

It covers two types of revisions that the policy covers, as follow:

### Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

### Scheduled Revisions

In order to maximise the response rate from local authorities and enable late information to be included, each quarterly P2 return can be updated at any time up to two years after the initial publication of the figures for that quarter. Every quarter, as well as releasing figures for the latest quarter, we revise the previous quarter to incorporate any data that came in shortly after the previous data collection period. This captures most late local authority data, but in order to incorporate the remainder a longer revision is carried out once a year, in the June quarter statistical release. Therefore, until each quarterly return is permanently closed, figures for that quarter remain provisional. Provisional figures are labelled in the tables with a "P" and revised figures are labelled with an "R".

The starts data provided by NHBC, which are monthly, can also be subject to some changes after their initial inclusion, and to address this, the NHBC starts data for the previous two quarters are also revised in each release. In particular, the information on the tenure can

often change when a start gets closer to completion and this tends to result in a net shift in starts from the private enterprise tenure to the housing association tenure.

In addition, where figures are seasonally adjusted, the adjustment factors for the whole series back to 2000 are recalculated annually, usually in the June quarter. This will result in small changes to seasonally adjusted figures across the whole period. These changes are not labelled with an “R”. Seasonal adjustment is implemented using the software X13-ARIMA-SEATS.

Other revisions to historic data (all data older than that currently due for scheduled revision) should only be made where there is a substantial revision, such as a change in methodology or definition. Where there are small changes that do not substantially change historic data, internal updates are maintained.

## Revisions in this release

As scheduled, starts and completions data provided by local authorities, the National House-Building Council and other approved inspectors have been revised in this release back to the June quarter 2020. As a result, a net change of 9 starts have been removed during the period. This includes 541 starts removed from the private enterprise tenure and 532 starts added to the housing association tenure. The revisions have also resulted in a decrease of 437 completions in the period. This includes 382 completions removed from the private enterprise tenure and 55 completions removed from the housing association tenure.

## Other information

### Uses of the data

The house building statistical series on starts and completions are a key part of the evidence base which informs the development and evaluation of housing policy by central and local government. They are also used as evidence for other housing market analysts, forecasters and decision makers, for example at the Bank of England and in the construction and

banking industries. The statistics are also used for market research by a wide range of other businesses. They are used by the media in reports on the housing market, and by academics both in the UK and abroad.

## Related Statistics

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is part of a cross-government working group, including devolved administrations and the Office of National Statistics, working to improve the trustworthiness quality and value of housing and planning statistics across the UK. This working group has published action plan to make the planned improvements on house building statistics clear and transparent to users.

Details of this work and how you can provide feedback are available via the Government Statistical Service website: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/working-with-users-2/housing-and-planning-statistics/>

House building and related statistics are detailed in Table 2. Further information can be found in the separate statistical release for each source which can be found at the links below.



**Table 2: House building; new build dwellings and related statistics**

Source	Included	Excluded	Where does the data come from	Other useful information
<b>MHCLG House building; new build dwellings</b>	Quarterly estimates of new build starts and completions	Communal accommodation, e.g. university, student or hostel  New build dwellings without a completion certificate.	Building control officers at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National House Building Council</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Approved Inspectors</li> </ul>	<b>This is a 'leading indicator' of house building, available soon after quarter end.</b>
MHCLG House building; new build dwellings ( <i><u>Housing Association and Local Authority tenures combined</u></i> )	<i>Quarterly estimates of new build housing for social rent</i>	<i>Most affordable ownership supply (will be included under private enterprise) and acquisitions</i>	Building control officers at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National House Building Council</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Approved Inspectors</li> </ul>	Although the HA and LA tenures of the house building statistics attempt to measure the entire new build component of affordable housing supply, including social rent, shared ownership and other affordable housing products, in practice much new build shared ownership housing and some new build social rent housing may be mis-recorded within the 'private enterprise' tenure of the house building statistics. This means that the house building statistics underestimate the total new build supply of affordable housing in the LA and HA tenure categories. Users requiring the best annual estimate for new build affordable housing should refer to the "New build and acquisitions" section of the affordable housing supply statistical release. Despite this, the tenure split reported in the house building statistics continues to have practical uses as they provide more frequent and timely estimates of starts as well as completions, and are available back to 1946.
<b>MHCLG Housing supply: net additional dwellings</b>	Total housing supply that comprises new build, conversions, change of use, other gains/losses and demolitions.	Communal accommodation not included in main figures; provided separately	Annual statistical return from local authorities and Greater London Authority.  The new build figures from the annual return provide a more complete count than the building control based quarterly statistics. Local authorities have longer to complete the annual return and to	Provides an accurate assessment of annual change in housing stock.  <b>'Net additional dwellings' is the primary and most comprehensive measure of housing supply.</b>

			reconcile various sources including building control, council tax records and site visits The new build component of the net additions statistics is generally larger than the corresponding annual total from the quarterly new build series.	
<b>MHCLG Energy Performance Certificates</b>	<p>Domestic Energy Performance Certificate Lodgements</p> <p>These relate to new domestic properties and transactions of existing dwellings. New domestic properties' can be identified separately.</p>	<p>Existing Properties which for which no EPC has been lodged.</p> <p>(An EPC is only required when a property is constructed, sold or let).</p>	<p>Domestic energy assessors.</p> <p>They lodge certificates on the 'Domestic energy performance certificate register'.</p>	<p>The EPC definition of 'new domestic properties' includes new build and conversions. It is broader than 'House Building (new build dwellings)' and is closer to 'Housing Supply (net additional dwellings).'</p>
<b>VOA Council Tax valuation lists</b>	<p>Dwellings and communal accommodation.</p> <p>(The Valuation Office Agency's definition of a dwelling differs from that used in the census. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's net additional dwelling statistics and dwelling stock estimates statistics use the census definition that does not include communal dwellings although these are included in the council tax list).</p>	<p>Dwellings on the Business Rating List (eg a self-catering property)</p>	<p>The Valuation Office Agency compiles and maintains lists of all domestic properties in England and Wales to support the collection of council tax. These lists are continually updated to reflect new dwellings and losses.</p>	<p>The Valuation Office Agency also manages lists of 'non-domestic rating' properties in England and Wales to support the collection of business rates. These lists are also continually updated to reflect the creation and loss properties. Properties move between the two lists (for example, a 'non-domestic rated' self-catering property may change to a Council Tax valuation list dwelling, and vice versa).</p>

<b>MHCLG New Homes Bonus</b>	<p>Dwellings and communal accommodation.</p> <p>As the New Homes Bonus is based on council tax data, which is derived from the Valuation Office Agency's valuation list, it is collected using the same, broader definition of a dwelling as used by the Valuation Office Agency (see 'Council tax valuation lists' above).</p>	Dwellings on the Business Rating List (eg a self-catering property)	<p>The council taxbase data return is made by local authorities to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in November giving details of their council tax base at September. Therefore the period over which the change in taxbase is measured for the New Homes Bonus (the year to September) is different from the period over which the Housing supply; net additional dwellings is measured (the year to April).</p> <p>The New Homes Bonus allocates grants to local authorities according to the number of new homes delivered and empty homes brought back into use in their area. The growth in their council taxbase is used as a proxy measure for the number of new homes delivered because this provides information about council tax bands which are required as part of the calculation of New Homes Bonus allocations. The number of long-term empty homes in each area is also collected as part of the council tax system.</p>	<p>The combination of timing and definitional differences means that it is not possible to reconcile fully the New Homes Bonus numbers to the net additional dwelling estimates. The different sources will inevitably give different figures, though trends over time are likely to be similar. In addition, the New Homes Bonus headline allocations figures also include a component for empty homes brought back in to use.</p> <p>Users of housing supply statistics should note that the New Homes Bonus figures are a by-product of the data used to administer the council tax system and are not primarily designed as a measure of housing supply.</p>
<b>MHCLG Dwelling Stock Estimates</b>	Dwellings	Communal accommodation, e.g. university, student or hostel	These estimates are based on the latest census count incremented annually with the net additional dwelling statistics from this release.	The dwelling stock estimates also provide a split by tenure that takes account of the net increases in supply and also changes between tenure such as Right to Buy sales.
<b>MHCLG Affordable starts and completions (Homes England/GLA)</b>	6-monthly estimates of starts and completions funded by the Homes England and GLA.	Does not split out partial grant s106 affordable housing	Estimates from the Homes England and GLA.	Provides information on delivery for Homes England and GLA programmes only.  Time series from 2009/10.
<b>MHCLG Affordable Housing Supply (all)</b>	Annual estimates of overall affordable housing completion	Does not split out partial grant s106 affordable housing	Annual Affordable Housing Statistics which use Homes England, GLA and LA data (on delivery not reported via Homes England/GLA).	Provides a full account of supply for each financial year.  New affordable homes are defined as additional housing units (or bed spaces) provided to specified eligible households

				<p>whose needs are not met by the market and can be categorised into social rent, intermediate rent and low cost home ownership. Total additional affordable supply includes both new build supply and acquisitions of existing private sector homes.</p> <p>Time series from 1991/92.</p>
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## **Housing supply: net additional dwellings**

The *Housing supply; net additional dwellings* statistics can be found at the following link.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/series/net-supply-of-housing>

## **Council tax valuation lists**

The Valuations Office Agency statistics can be found at the following link.

<http://www.voa.gov.uk/corporate/Publications/statistics.html>

## **New Homes Bonus**

The final New Homes Bonus allocations for 2019 to 2020 were published on 29 January 2019. Details can be found at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-homes-bonus-final-allocations-2019-to-2020>

## **Dwelling stock estimates**

The *Dwelling Stock Estimates* can be found at the following link.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/series/dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

## **Affordable housing**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Affordable Housing Supply* statistics can be found at the following link.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-for-housing-communities-and-local-government/series/affordable-housing-supply>

The Homes England (formerly the Homes and Communities Agency) Housing Statistics can be found at the following link.

<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/statistics>

## Devolved administration statistics

House building statistics for the devolved administrations of the UK were included alongside the England statistics in the tables that accompany the previous statistical release. These data are collected and published separately by the devolved administrations, and although figures were correct at the time of the previous publication they may be superseded before the next England house building release. **Please note, however that since September 2019, devolved administration statistics will not be published alongside the England statistics. The Office for National Statistics now publish the devolved administration statistics on housebuilding.** Latest data and details on data sources and methods can be found at the following links:

UK (house building statistics)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/ukhousebuildingdata/octobertodecember2019>

Scotland (house building statistics)

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewBuild>

Wales (house building statistics)

<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Housing/New-House-Building>

Northern Ireland (housing statistics)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/new-dwelling-statistics>

## Comparability between the countries of the UK

Each of the countries of the UK produces its own statistics on House Building. In this section the consistency of the data sources is discussed.

England and the devolved administrations use broadly consistent definitions for starts and completions in collecting house building data. Previously, all four countries have collected starts and completions data split into the three tenure types of private enterprise, housing association and local authority. From the September quarter 2011 onwards, this tenure split is no longer available for Welsh starts figures.

In England and Wales some housing association starts and completions can be misreported as private enterprise starts because it is sometimes difficult for data providers to identify whether a dwelling is being built for a housing association or for a private developer (see above). This is not thought to be a problem in Scotland where data on housing association house building are collected directly from housing association administrations rather than building inspection teams. It is because of this issue that statistics for house building starts in Wales no longer include a breakdown by tenure.

Northern Ireland data prior to 2005 is sourced from the Department of Communities, which use different definitions and adjust their data. Further information can be viewed on the Department for Communities website at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/review-new-dwelling-starts-and-completions>

While a very small proportion of the data for England are imputed for missing responses (see above), a full response is generally collected in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland so imputation is seldom necessary.

Currently approved inspectors data is included in the statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland. Approved inspector data is not used in the current Welsh house building data. However, an investigation is currently underway to determine the level of approved inspector activity in Wales with a view to including approved inspectors if it is found to be appropriate.

## User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries"

contact given in the "Enquiries" section below.

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

## Notes

1. The starts and completions reported in this publication are for new house building in England and exclude new dwellings created through conversions and the change of use of existing buildings.
2. Figures in the accompanying tables are presented rounded to the nearest 10 dwellings.
3. The charts give seasonally adjusted quarterly house building trends and give annual trends by showing a rolling 12-month total. The private enterprise and housing association England series are seasonally adjusted.
4. Accompanying Tables 1a and 1b gives seasonally adjusted quarterly England figures. All figures for other UK countries, in the discontinued tables, are shown on an unadjusted basis only.
5. The tables and charts accompanying this release are shown above in the 'Accompanying tables' section and are provided in Microsoft Excel format.
6. Details of officials and ministers who receive pre-release access to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government quarterly House Building release up to 24 hours before release can be found at:  
<http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>
7. MHCLG are improving how data providers send statistical and grant data to us by providing a new online system called DELTA. The first full statistical data collection went live on the new system in July 2017 and we are working to move other collections over as part of a phased approach. We are not changing the types of data we collect, only the method in which we ask data providers to submit it. The benefits of the new data collection system include; one system for data submission (replacing varied and disparate contact points across our organisation) and better task



management and communication through automated notifications. The system will bring greater visibility of the forms that are due to be completed and sight of submitted data. The aim of these changes is to bring a much better user experience for data providers. This release was one of the first to move over to the new system from the previous Interform system. We have needed more time to process the data using the new systems as a result of this. We hope to continue to improve these processes but we ask users of this release to bear with us while we undergo this significant transition.

8. The **next quarterly release** will be published in July 2021 and will cover house building up to the March quarter 2021.

## Enquiries

### **Media enquiries:**

0303 444 1209

Email: [newsdesk@communities.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@communities.gov.uk)

### **Public enquiries and Responsible Statistician:**

Simon Gillespie

Email: [housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk](mailto:housing.statistics@communities.gov.uk)

Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>

Information about statistics at MHCLG is available via the Ministry's website:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics)