
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Mike Shone
Specialist – Monitoring and Reporting
Homes England
(by email)

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Dear Mike

Homes England Housing Statistics

We recently completed our compliance check of Homes England's [Housing Statistics](#) against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Both Homes England and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) use the data to measure progress towards commitments made to ensure more homes are built in the areas of greatest need to improve affordability, and to monitor the delivery of affordable homes as part of their published Business Plans. The data collected by Homes England also form part of DLUHC's own [Affordable Housing Supply in England](#) statistics and [Help to Buy](#) statistics.

Your team told us that new metrics are going to be developed within Homes England to monitor the UK Government's progress against its objectives set out in its [Levelling Up white paper](#). To help with your widening remit and to ensure any new metrics are able to measure outcomes from the UK Government's priorities in this area accurately, we consider it would be valuable for you to strengthen your links with DLUHC in terms of drawing on statistical support from the Head of Profession for statistics. By utilising the wider resources across the Government Statistical Service (GSS) through the [GSS cross-government Housing and Planning working group](#), which consists of housing and planning statisticians from across all four countries of the UK, your team could draw on any user engagement activities from the GSS group. By widening your engagement and being more proactive with users, your team could gain useful feedback to help you realise the public value as you develop these new metrics.

Our review and follow-up discussions with the team found a range of positive features that demonstrate the trustworthiness, quality, and value of the statistics.

- The statistical release is presented impartially, and the team has oversight and final sign-off of the separate [press statement](#) that accompanies the release. We welcome the team's plans to review the list of those with [pre-release access](#) to the statistics as it is longer than we would broadly expect, and the trustworthiness of government statistics can be brought into question when pre-release access is too wide.
- The 'Key Results' summary draws users' attention to the main messages in a clear and insightful way and useful context is provided throughout around the changes in house building activity due to covid. The 'Definitions' section helps users understand the key concepts around housing starts and completions, the funding schemes used and the different types of affordable housing. Useful information is provided on the

related statistics that the Homes England data feed into: Affordable Housing Supply in England statistics and Help to Buy statistics produced by DLUHC.

- The statistical release is published in an accessible html format, and we welcome the plans the team shared with us regarding further improvements to the accessibility of the statistical outputs for a wider range of users including innovative plans to use PowerBi to create interactive dashboards for the statistics.
- While not part of the statistical release itself we welcome the transparency shown by Homes England through publishing its [report](#) on the funding it allocates. We think it would provide helpful context to users if a link to this was included on the Homes England housing statistics home page or linked from within the statistical release.

We also identified ways in which the trustworthiness, quality, and value of the statistics could be enhanced further.

- The team told us of its approach to quality assurance such as matching housing tenure and completions within the data system, a compliance audit of the schemes, and that DLUHC housing colleagues assure the quality of Homes England's housing statistics publication before release. However, none of this information is published to assure users of the quality of the statistics and to ensure the appropriate interpretation of the statistics by users. As a matter of high priority, the team should communicate its quality assurance approach in an accessible way. To do this, the team should publish information about aspects of quality, for example limitations of data sources, quality assurance checks carried out by data suppliers, and the team's assessment of data quality against our [quality assurance of administrative data \(QAAD\) matrix](#). Our administrative data quality assurance [guidance](#) provides a helpful framework for structuring information and my team is also able to provide any help and guidance in this area.
- The team should consider how any uncertainty in the statistics might be more clearly communicated to users as the latest data are provisional and subject to revision. We found that while the information provided in the release on the size of revisions is helpful, users may not always refer to the revisions chapter in the release and so may not appreciate that figures are subject to a degree of revision.
- Further insight and context should be added by enhancing the narrative and analysis provided for users who wish to explore the topic further. Through user engagement you should be able to understand they key questions around housing affordability that users are looking to answer. For example, by including links to the other UK countries Housing statistics and explaining the extent of comparability and coherence between them users will be able to understand the affordable housing landscape across the whole of the UK.

Thank you for your positive engagement during this review. We will continue to engage with your team as you make improvements to maintain the National Statistics designation. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter further. I am copying this letter to Sandra Tudor, Head of Profession for Statistics at DLUHC, and Richard Field, head of housing and planning statistics at DLUHC.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont
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