

---

**Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead**

Jennifer Henderson  
The Keeper of the Registers of Scotland  
(by email)

31 May 2022

Dear Jennifer

**Statistics on land and property titles by country of origin for Scotland**

We recently completed our compliance check against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) of your statistics on [Land and property titles by country of origin](#). These are important official statistics providing insight into the location of owners of properties across Scotland at the time of purchase, a topic which has received some public interest lately. These statistics have the potential to add even further value to the public debate on overseas ownership of properties as they continue to be developed.

We found a range of positive features that demonstrate the trustworthiness, quality, and value of these statistics:

- The statistics are very well presented – the main findings are presented succinctly with a good use of tables, charts, and maps to illustrate the figures. The bulletin is transparent in explaining to users what can and cannot be concluded from the data which helps to support interpretation of the statistics and information about the methodology in the bulletin is detailed and informative.
- The team has strong links with statisticians at Scottish Government, being able to draw on support and guidance from them, and these statistics are peer reviewed by housing statisticians at Scottish Government.
- Developments to the statistics are driven by user need, for example introducing new experimental analysis on property titles with UK owner addresses outside of Scotland into the December 2021 data release. The team told us there are plans to build external engagement back up following the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the ongoing engagement through existing user engagement streams such as [ScotStat](#) and Twitter. Using a variety of channels enables you to communicate with a wider range of users about your future development plans and allows them to feed in their views as you work to help answer their key questions. The team maintains a balance between user interest for new analyses and RoS's cost recovery model for wider Land Register data.
- Enhancements to accessibility are being implemented such as publishing the bulletin in [html](#).
- Your team told us that it is assisting Companies House with the development of a [UK-wide Register of Overseas Entities](#) that is being introduced by the UK government. The work that your team already does on assuring the quality of the

data on property transactions and having the systems readily in place to produce country of origin statistics means that it is already well placed to deliver robust data. Your work could also serve as an example to statistics producers across the other UK countries who do not currently produce similar Country of Origin statistics. We welcome that the team is also considering what benefits could be realised from developing the register when thinking about further developments to the County of Origin output.

- We welcome that the team are seeking to collaborate with ONS and add further public value beyond the confines of these statistics by seeing if they can share and match data through the use of unique property reference numbers.

Communicating your assurance of quality to users demonstrates transparency and can aid users in their appropriate interpretation. The quality assurance documentation provided in the report relates to the UK House Price Index. While this documentation is very good, and the same data source is used in this instance, more context should be provided in a proportionate way for the country of origin data, something which your team has told us it is happy to do. It may be helpful to include relevant information such as the extra quality assurance of the new experimental analysis, and that quality assurance happens on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Thank you for engaging effectively with us during the review. Our Housing, Planning and Local Services domain lead will continue to engage with your team on progress in the coming months. 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 Alastair McAlpine, Chief Statistician at Scottish Government, and Anne MacDonald, lead statistician at Registers of Scotland.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont  
Assessment Programme Lead