

## **Increases in Dwellings: evidence from the UK Census.**

### **Regions in England and Wales**

**2011 to 2021**

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## **Key Findings**

- The largest regional increase in dwellings over the period 2011 to 2021 is in London.
- The total in London grew by 9.70%. Up from 3,387,255 in 2011 to 3,715,730 in 2021. (A growth of 328,475 dwellings.)
- Most of this growth of dwellings in London is *flats, maisonettes, or apartments*, (increasing by 311,883).
- The growth of dwellings is higher in the South and East as compared to the rest of England and Wales.
- There are increases of above 8% of dwellings in the East-Midlands (9.26%), South West (9.23%) East England (8.94%) and the South-East (8.70%)
- Outside of London, the biggest volume regional increase is in the South-East (322,167).
- The proportion of unoccupied dwellings grew in all regions between 2011 and 2021. This is likely to have been impacted by Covid-19 in 2021.
- Wales has the highest percentage of unoccupied dwellings. Unoccupied dwellings grew from 5.98% of the total in 2011 to 8.21% in 2021.
- This is followed in 2021 by London where unoccupied dwelling grew from 3.57% to 8.00%

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## Context

The UK census provides an opportunity to examine the overall impact of housing development in relation to regional and local geography.<sup>1</sup>

Census 2021 figures about dwellings were released by the Office for National Statistics on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and are available at the Census website.<sup>2</sup>

Comparable Census 2011 data is available from the NOMIS website data service.<sup>3</sup>

Regional data comparing 2021 with 2011 is displayed in tables 1 and 2.

## Data tables

Figures released in 2021 and 2011 are comparable for regions (table 1).<sup>4</sup> Similar comparisons can be made for local authorities, but not easily computed for all local electoral wards, due to changes in their geographical make up. For more information see: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England at: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/>

Table 2 shows the growth in unoccupied dwellings between 2011 and 2021.

Table 3 shows detail for London only. This is the region with the highest growth in dwellings. The expansion is unequal between accommodation types. There is a high growth in flats, maisonettes and apartments, and caravans, although the latter is from a low starting point. The number of semi-detached houses also expands. There is a slight decline in terraced housing.

## Related policy issues

Central government have been negotiating new build housing targets with local areas during the last decade. There is an expectation that population growth, and the need for improvements to existing housing supply, will continue to increase demand for housing developments.<sup>5</sup>

Population growth is caused by trends in migration and longevity.<sup>6</sup>

Regional economic and housing growth is unequal with faster growth in London, the South, and East.

A key debate is the extent to which central government should impose house building targets on local government. Local government and local communities want to keep the prevailing power to make local planning decisions.

Local housing developments need concurrent growth in public infrastructure and services.

The pace and scope of local development is an issue influencing local election debates, especially in areas experiencing more growth in dwellings.

**Table 1 Dwellings, numbers by region, as recorded in the UK Census 2011 & 2021 (England and Wales)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>change</i>	<i>percentage change</i>
London	3,387,255	3,715,732	328,475	9.70
East Midlands	1,973,828	2,156,645	182,817	9.26
South West	2,408,437	2,630,835	222,398	9.23
East	2,535,498	2,762,295	226,797	8.94
South East	3,704,173	4,026,340	322,167	8.70
West Midlands	2,380,917	2,551,096	170,178	7.15
North West	3,150,549	3,358,809	208,395	6.61
Yorkshire & Humber	2,324,385	2,477,946	153,560	6.61
Wales	1,385,521	1,467,190	81,669	5.89
North East	1,179,194	1,247,895	68,701	5.83
<i>Total</i>	<i>24,429,618</i>	<i>26,394,782</i>	<i>1,965,164</i>	<i>8.04</i>

Source: Office for National Statistics. Crown Copyright

**Table 2 Unoccupied dwellings, 2011 & 2021, numbers by region, and ranked as a percentage of all dwellings, as recorded in the UK Census 2021 (England and Wales)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>percentage 2011</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>percentage 2021</i>
Wales	82,845	5.98	120,450	8.21
London	121,082	3.57	297,095	8.00
South West	143,796	5.97	183,620	6.98
North West	140,861	4.47	206,440	6.15
Yorkshire & Humber	100,326	4.32	149,255	6.02
North East	49,259	4.18	72,325	5.80
East Midlands	78,224	3.96	120,010	5.56
South East	148,710	4.01	220,635	5.48
East	112,463	4.44	135,085	4.89
West Midlands	86,008	3.61	122,630	4.86
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,063,574</i>	<i>4.55</i>	<i>1,627,555</i>	<i>6.17</i>

Note: the numbers of all dwellings used in the percentage calculations are shown in table 1

**Table 3 Dwellings in London. Numbers by dwelling type, as recorded in the UK Census 2011 & 2021 (England and Wales)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>change</i>	<i>percentage change (row)</i>
Detached houses	211,232	217,020	5,788	2.74
Semi Detached	629,607	654,950	25,343	4.02
Terraced	776,821	759,820	-17,001	-2.19
Flats*	1,766,777	2,078,660	311,883	17.65
Caravans	2,818	5,280	2,462	87.37
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,387,255</i>	<i>3,715,730</i>	<i>328,475</i>	<i>9.70</i>

\*includes maisonettes and apartments

## Notes

1. For more detailed information **see:**  
Output and enumeration bases:  
residential address and population  
definitions for Census 2021 - Office for  
National Statistics at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/outputandenumerationbasesresidentialaddressandpopulationdefinitionsforcensus2021>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwellings-data-england-and-wales-census-2021>
3. [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census\\_2011](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2011)
4. Table 1. Percentages are calculated using 'All dwellings' as the denominator in 2021 data. 'And All categories - Household spaces' from the 2011 dwellings data.
5. Wilson, W. & Barton, C. (2022) *Tackling the under-supply of housing*. CBP-7671  
London: House of Commons Library.  
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7671/CBP-7671.pdf>
6. Overview of the UK population January 2021  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/january2021>

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## Sources and Copyright

Source: Office for National Statistics

All UK Census data is Crown Copyright and publicly available.

Census 2021 at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

Census 2011 at:  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>