

Local Authority Council Tax base England 2015

Local Government Finance

Statistical Release

20 November 2015

•	In England there were a total of 23.7 million dwellings in England
	as at 14 September 2015, an increase of 186 thousand (or 0.8%)
	over the figure for September 2014. Of this number 23.1 million
	dwellings were liable for council tax. This was an increase of 175
	thousand (or 0.8%) over September 2014.

- 15.0 million dwellings are liable to pay 100% council tax as they are not entitled to any exemptions or discounts.
- 8.1 million dwellings were subject to either a discount or to a premium on their council tax. Of these 7.7 million dwellings were entitled to a discount as a result of being occupied by single adults. This represents 33% of all dwellings.
- 531 thousand dwellings are exempt from paying council tax, an increase of 11 thousand (or 2.1%) compared with 2014. Exempt dwellings account for 2.2% of all dwellings.
- There were 449 thousand empty dwellings in September and of these 59 thousand dwellings were being charged a premium because the dwelling had been empty for 2 years or more.

There were 245 thousand dwellings recorded as second homes as at September 2015.

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Date of next publication:

Autumn 2016

Introduction

This release provides information relating to the stock of domestic dwellings in local authority areas in England and is based on the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) Valuation List as at 14 September 2015, along with comparisons with previous years. It gives summary totals at an England level of the number of dwellings, the number of dwellings that are exempt from council tax, and the number liable for council tax. For dwellings liable for council tax it also gives summary figures for the number receiving different types of council tax discounts and those paying a premium. Information at a local authority level is published in the associated tables.

The information is derived from Council Tax Base (CTB) and Council Tax Base (Supplementary) forms submitted by all 326 billing authorities in England to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The information contained in this release can be used to calculate a tax base for a local authority. A "tax base" is the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in a local authority area. To calculate the tax base for an area, the number of dwellings in each council tax band is adjusted to take account of any discounts, premiums or exemptions. The resulting figure for each band is then multiplied by its proportion relative to Band D (from 6/9 for Band A to 18/9 for Band H) and the total across all eight bands is calculated. The tax base is used to determine the level of council tax an authority charges each dwelling.

Uses made of the data

The data in this statistical release are used as part of a range of data to allocate resources to local authorities including the New Homes Bonus scheme. It will also be used by DCLG to calculate the value of a specific grant to fund the Family Annexe discount.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) uses the information within this release to help produce the forecasts in the Fiscal and Economic outlook.

External agencies use and publish detailed analyses of the CTB data to plot trends from year to year on all the key items of data, relevant to empty homes, contained within the main CTB and supplementary CTB tables. These analyses can be used

- to inform public debate and
- as a basis for benchmarking between local authorities.

The CTB data are also used extensively in Parliament and elsewhere in relation to the number of empty dwellings, second homes and dwellings with exemptions.

Comments and feedback from end users for further improvement or about your experiences with this product will be welcomed. Please send all views to ctb.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Symbols and conventions

... = not available

0 = zero or negligible

- = not relevant

|| = discontinuity

Rounding Where figures have been rounded, there may be a slight discrepancy between the total and the sum of constituent parts.

1. Chargeable dwellings, exemptions and discounts: 2006 to 2015

Table 1 provides figures for the total number of dwellings in England in September each year from 2006 to 2015, those that are liable for council tax i.e. chargeable dwellings, those that are exempt from council tax, those that receive discount on their council tax and those that are required to pay a premium on their council tax.

- There were 23.7 million dwellings in England as at 14 September 2015, an increase of 186 thousand (or 0.8%) over the figure for September 2014. Of this number 23.1 million dwellings were liable for council tax. This was an increase of 175 thousand (or 0.8%) over the figure for September 2014.
- 15.0 million dwellings are liable to pay 100% council tax as they are not entitled to any exemptions or discounts.
- 8.1 million dwellings were subject to either a discount or to a premium on their council tax. Of these 7.7 million dwellings were entitled to a discount as a result of being occupied by single adults
- 531 thousand dwellings are exempt from paying council tax, an increase of 11 thousand (or 2.1%) compared with 2014. Exempt dwellings account for 2.2% of all dwellings.

Further information on exemptions can be found in **Section 4** below plus an additional table (**Table 5**) at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2015-in-england.

Table 1: Number of chargeable dwellings 2006-20	15 ^(a)										
Ţ Ţ										Tł	nousands
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012		2013	2014	2015
Total number of dwellings on valuation lists	22,177	22,388	22,596	22,766	22,899	23,036	23,178		23,312	23,466	23,652
Number of dwellings exempt from council tax	735	762	777	784	777	788	802	Ш	516	520	531
Number of demolished dwellings	4	3	3	2	2	2	2		2	2	2
Number of dwellings on valuation list liable for council $tax^{(b)}$	21,439	21,623	21,816	21,979	22,120	22,246	22,374	II	22,793	22,944	23,120
Of this											
Number of dwellings subject to a discount or a premium	8,070	8,106	8,177	8,243	8,304	8,303	8,293	II	8,161	8,111	8,085
of which:											
- second homes ^(c)	240	239	245	252	246	246	255		40	27	27
- empty homes subject to a discount ^(d)	209	188	185	174	156	126	98	II	135	121	107
- empty homes subject to a premium ^(d)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		56	56	59
- single person	7,432	7,485	7,544	7,604	7,674	7,703	7,706		7,698	7,669	7,653
- all residents disregarded for council tax purposes	32	32	32	33	33	33	33		33	34	34
- all but one resident disregarded for council tax purposes	156	162	170	181	195	196	201		199	203	205
Number of dwellings not subject to a discount or a premium	13,369	13,517	13,639	13,736	13,816	13,943	14,081	II	14,632	14,834	15,035
of which:											
- empty homes ^(d)	111	126	143	143	144	153	161	Ш	290	283	283
- second homes ^(c)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ш	215	224	219
- others	13,259	13,391	13,496	13,593	13,672	13,790	13,920	Ш	14,127	14,326	14,534

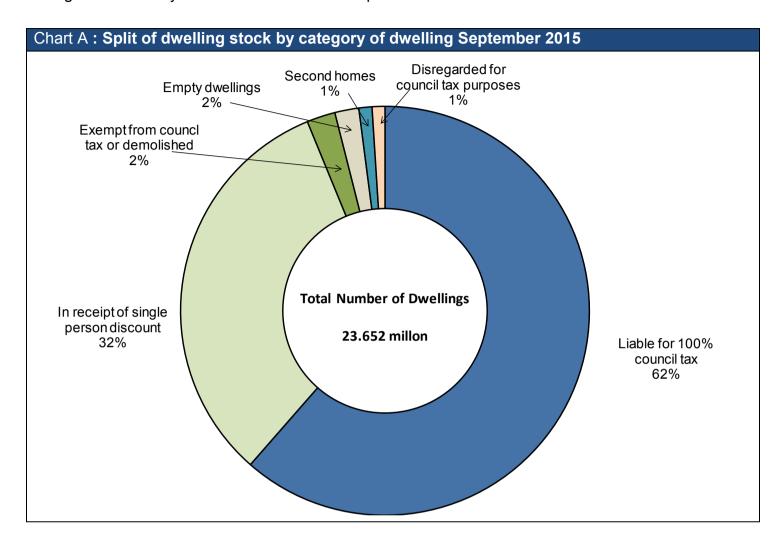
⁽a) Data taken as at the third Monday in September 2006 to 2008, and the second Monday in September from 2009 to date.

⁽b) Total dw ellings on valuation list less those exempt from council tax and demolished dw ellings

⁽c) Until 2012, at local authority discretion, second homes could be subject to a discount of between 10% and 50%. From 1 April 2013 this became between 0% and 50%.

⁽d) Long-term empty homes are those dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and, at local authority discretion, can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 100%. From 1 April 2013, if they have been empty for more than two years, they may be charged a premium of up to 50%.

Chart A below shows how the total stock of dwellings (23.652 million) is split between the various categories of liability for council tax as at 14 September 2015.

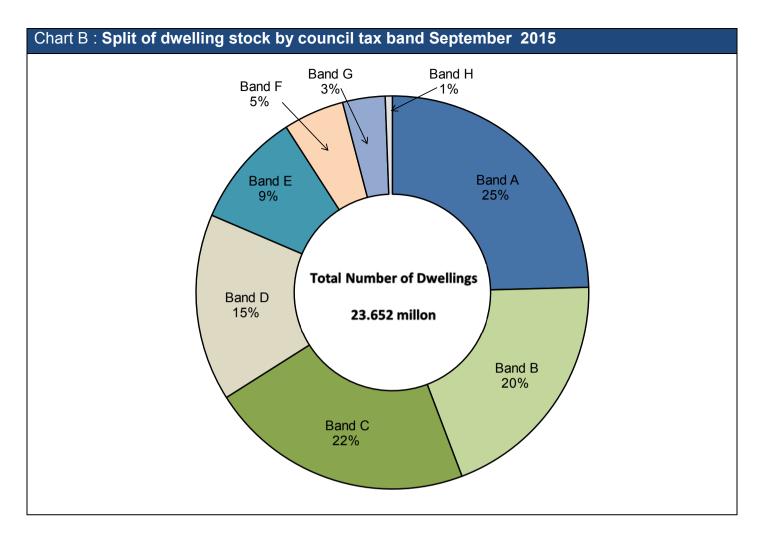


2. Chargeable dwellings, exemptions and discounts – by council tax band: September 2015

Table 2 provides figures for the number dwellings in England by council tax valuation band as at 14 September 2015. It shows those that are liable for council tax i.e. chargeable dwellings, those that are exempt from council tax, those that receive discount on their council tax and those that are required to pay a premium on their council tax.

- 25% of all dwellings are in Band A, and less than 1% are in Band H.
- Two thirds of all dwellings are in Bands A to C and only 9% are in the top three bands.

Chart B below represents the data in the first line of **Table 2** and shows the split of the total stock of dwellings by council tax band in England in September 2015 before any changes due to reliefs or discounts.



If the occupiers of a dwelling are granted disabled relief for council tax purposes, this reduces the council tax band of the dwelling by one band i.e. if the dwelling would normally be a band D dwelling, after disabled relief the council tax band would be band C. However if the dwelling is in band A, normally the lowest council tax band available, after disabled relief the band is said to be in council tax band A-. The ratio of council tax payable for a band A- dwelling in relation to band D is 5/9.

- Of the 7.7 million dwellings entitled to a single person discount as at 14 September 2015, 2.7 million were Band A dwellings, this is 49% of all dwellings liable for Band A council tax.
- In 2015, 121 thousand dwellings were reported as being granted disabled relief discount.

able 2: Dwellings, exemptions and discounts by valua	ation ban	d as at 1	14 Septe	ember 2	015					
									Т	housands
	Band A- ^(a)	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	TOTAL
Number of dwellings on valuation lists	0	5,814	4,648	5,155	3,642	2,242	1,185	828	138	23,652
Number of dw ellings exempt from council tax	0	183	112	105	66	35	16	11	3	531
Number of demolished dw ellings	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Number of dwellings on valuation list liable for council tax ^(b)	0	5,630	4,536	5,049	3,576	2,207	1,169	817	134	23,120
Number of dwellings moved down one band as a result of disabled relief ^(a)	13	18	25	23	17	10	9	5	0	121
Number of dwellings liable to council tax adjusted for disabled relief (c)	13	5,635	4,543	5,047	3,571	2,200	1,168	813	129	23,120
Of which										
Number of dwellings subject to a discount or a premium	4	2,866	1,819	1,641	933	468	211	126	16	8,08
of which										
- second homes ^(d)	0	9	5	5	3	2	1	1	0	2
- empty homes subject to a discount ^(e)	0	41	24	19	11	6	3	3	0	10
- empty homes subject to a premium $^{ heta}$	0	28	11	8	5	3	2	2	1	5
- single person	4	2,735	1,732	1,556	877	435	192	110	12	7,65
- all residents disregarded for council tax purposes	0	5	3	4	4	4	5	7	2	3
- all but one resident disregarded for council tax purposes	0	48	44	49	32	18	8	5	0	20:
Number of dwellings not subject to a discount or a premium	9	2,769	2,724	3,406	2,638	1,732	957	687	113	15,03
of which										
- empty homes ^(g)	0	112	56	48	30	17	9	7	2	28
- second homes ^(h)	0	44	36	41	35	25	16	16	6	21
- others	9	2,612	2,632	3,317	2,573	1.690	932	664	105	14,53

⁽a) Dw ellings subject to disabled relief are charged council tax at the rate of one band lower than that on the valuation list. Council tax for a Band A- dw elling is charged at 5/9 of the council tax of a Band D dw elling.

⁽b) Total dw ellings on valuation list less those exempt from council tax and demolished dw ellings

⁽c) Calculated by subtracting the number of dwellings moved down from this band as a result of disabled relief from the number of dwellings on the valuation list liable to council tax and adding the number of dwellings moved into this band as a result of disabled relief.

⁽d) At local authority discretion, second homes can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 50%. This category does not include those who received a 0% discount (see below).

⁽e) Empty homes are those dw ellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and, at local authority discretion, can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 100% or, if they have been empty for more than two years, may be charged a premium of up to 50%. This category only includes those receive a discount of greater than 0%,

⁽f) Empty homes are those dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and if they have been empty for more than two years, may be charged a premium of up to 50%.

⁽g) Empty homes are those dw ellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished and, at local authority discretion, can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 100%. This category only includes those not subject to a discount.

⁽h) At local authority discretion, second homes can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 50%. This category only include those who received a 0% discount

3. Empty and second homes

Empty homes

Since 1 April 2013, local authorities in England have had the choice to apply council tax discounts of between 0% and 100% for empty dwellings or between 0% and 50% for second homes. In addition authorities are allowed to charge a premium on top of the normal council tax payable of up to 50% for dwellings that have been empty for more than two years. Because of these fundamental changes in the way empty dwellings and second homes have been handled it is not accurate to make comparisons of the numbers of empty and second homes before and after April 2013.

As a result of the changes authorities are reporting there is a tendency for tax payers not to register with them when a property becomes empty because, as they were continuing to pay 100% council tax, it does not make any difference to them. Similarly, there is also no financial incentive on the dwelling owners to report when a dwelling becomes reoccupied.

Table 3 provides figures for the total number of dwellings in England classed as empty since 2013 with details of the levels of discounts and premiums applied.

- The total number of empty dwellings in September was 449 thousand a fall of 12 thousand or 2.6% on the previous year.
- 52 thousand empty dwellings received a 100% discount
- Of the 59 thousand empty dwellings liable to pay a premium, almost all the dwellings (99%) were liable for a premium of 50%.

Authorities report that they are carrying out exercises to ensure they have identified all occupied properties – the result of these exercises are often to revise the number of empty dwellings or second homes between years and this may be reflected in the data in this release.

In addition to reducing, or removing completely, the discount allowed for empty dwellings, authorities are now allowed to charge an Empty Homes Premium of up to 50% of the council tax payable. In 2015, 262 authorities reported they were charging the premium on some of their empty dwellings.

	2013	2014	2014
Number of dwellings classed as empty not subject to a discount	289,525	283,484	282,758
Number of dwellings classed as empty subject to a discount	134,743	120,915	107,485
of which:			
- 5% discount	943	738	658
- 10% discount	6,165	4,300	5,272
- 20% discount	1,181	1,160	334
- 25% discount	28,710	25,999	25,817
- 30% discount	74	12	15
- 37.5% discount	77	76	C
- 40% discount	1,230	1,289	1,219
- 50% discount	26,131	22,230	20,091
- 75% discount	3,769	2,878	2,237
- 100% discount	66,462	62,233	51,842
Number of dwellings classed as empty subject to a premium	56,055	56,482	58,75
of which:			
- 10% premium	47	295	123
- 25% premium	428	443	444
- 50% premium	55,580	55,744	58,187

(a) Empty homes are those dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. At local authority discretion, empty homes can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 100%. If they have been empty for more than two years they may be charged a premium of up to 50%.

Second homes

As mentioned above, since 1 April 2013 local authorities in England have had the choice to apply council tax discounts of between 0% and 50% for second homes.

Table 4 provides figures for the total number of dwellings in England classed as second homes since 2013 with details of the levels of discount applied.

- There were 245 thousand dwellings recorded as second homes as at September 2015 which is a decrease of 6 thousand (or 2.5%) on September 2014.
- Of the 245 thousand second homes, 219 thousand were not subject to a discount this is a decrease of 6 thousand (or 2.5%) on 2014.

	2013	2014	2015
Number of second homes not subject to a discount	215,426	224,241	218,519
Number of second homes subject to a discount ^(b)	39,555	27,277	26,805
of which:			
- 1% - 9% discount	11,991	11,991	11,798
- 10% discount	16,178	6,197	6,054
- 11% - 19% discount	1,098	-	-
- 20% - 29% discount	2,452	2,308	2,039
- 30% - 39% discount	140	141	141
- 40% - 49% discount	1	-	-
- 50% discount	7,695	6,640	6,773

⁽a) At local authority discretion, second homes can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 50%.

4. Exemptions from council tax

Line 2 in **Tables 1 & 2** above show the total number of dwellings that are exempt from council tax. **Table** 5 provides details of these exemptions from council tax split by class of exemption, for 2006 to 2015, along with the details of the each class of exemption as a percentage of the total number of exemptions for 2015. The table also contains definitions of the council tax exemption classes. This is available on line at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2015-in-england

5. Definitions

A list of terms relating to local government finance is given in the glossary of *Local Government Finance Statistics England*. This is accessible at. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-finance-statistics-england. The most relevant terms for this release are explained below.

Band D council tax - The council tax payable on a Band D dwelling occupied as a main residence by two adults, before any changes due to discounts, premiums, exemptions or council tax benefit. This definition is widely regarded as a benchmark when comparing council tax levels in different areas or over time.

Billing authorities - The 326 authorities that are empowered to set and collect council taxes on behalf of themselves and other local authorities in their area.

Chargeable dwellings - Domestic dwellings in an area for which council tax is payable. It excludes

⁽b) In 2013 authorities were asked to report the discount awarded to second homes in ranges. Since 2014 they have been asked to specify the exact discount awarded and those in the 1-9% discount range have been awarded 5% discount, those in the 20-29% range, 25% and those in the 30-39% range, 30%.

dwellings on the valuation list which are exempt from paying council tax. Each chargeable dwelling is counted as one dwelling, whether or not a full council tax bill is payable for it.

Council tax - This is a local charge (or charges) set by the billing authority in order to collect revenue to meet the cost of their services. It may also include the precepts issued by the precepting authorities. It replaced the community charge on 1 April 1993 and is calculated based on the council tax band assigned to the dwelling.

Council tax band - There are eight council tax bands, A to H. Each domestic dwelling is assigned a council tax band by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). Council tax bands are based on the value of the dwelling as at 1 April 1991. Any dwelling built after this date is given a notional 1991 value for council tax purposes.

Demolished dwellings (and dwellings outside the area of the authority) – These are dwellings shown on the Valuation List which, when the CTB form is completed, have been demolished or which were outside the area of the authority on 14 September 2015.

Disabled council tax relief - If the occupiers of a dwelling are granted disabled relief for council tax purposes, this reduces the council tax band of the dwelling by one band i.e. if the dwelling would normally be a Band D dwelling, after disabled relief the council tax band would be Band C. However if the dwelling is in Band A, normally the lowest council tax band available, after disabled relief the band is said to be in council tax Band A-. The ratio of council tax payable for a band A- dwelling in relation to Band D is 5/9

Discounts on council tax - Available so not every dwelling on the valuation list is liable to pay full council tax, which is partly based on the dwelling and partly based on the occupants of the dwelling. The full council tax bill assumes that there are two adults living in a dwelling but if, for example, only one adult lives in a dwelling (as their main home), the council tax bill is reduced by a quarter (25%).

Disregarded for council tax purposes - In addition to discounts there are 20 categories of "Disregards" that can be applied to adults living in a dwelling. Where all but one of the residents are "disregarded for council tax purposes" the discount is 25%; where all residents are disregarded the discount is 50%. These categories range from persons being in detention, students (including student nurses) and apprentices to people associated with visiting armed forces or diplomats.

Empty Homes Premium - A premium of up to 50% of the council tax, that billing authorities can charge on homes that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or more.

Exemption from council tax - There are 21 classes of exemption from council tax which range from a dwelling which is only occupied by persons under the age of 18 to a number of types of vacant dwellings including unoccupied clergy dwellings and dwellings left empty by deceased persons. A full list of the exemption classes that can be applied can be found in on **Table 5** mentioned in section 4 above.

Family Annexe discount - Any annexe self-contained within a dwelling where the resident is a family member of the residents of the main dwelling receives a 50% discount on their council tax bill, which is known as the Family Annexe discount. DCLG provide local authorities a grant specifically for the purpose of funding this discount.

New Homes Bonus - Introduced in the summer of 2010 and payable from April 2011 it is a cash payment to local authorities in recognition of their success in providing new dwellings and also bringing empty dwellings back into use.

Tax base - This is the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in a local authority area. To calculate the tax base for an area, the number of dwellings in each council tax band is adjusted to take account of any discounts, premiums and exemptions. The resulting figure for each band is then multiplied by its proportion relative to Band D (from 6/9 for Band A to 18/9 for Band H) and the total across all eight bands is calculated. An authority's tax base is taken into account when it calculates its council tax.

6. Technical Notes

Survey design for collecting CTB & CTB (Supplementary) data for September 2015

During October 2015, all 326 billing authorities in England were asked to complete the CTB & CTB (Supplementary) form to show the number of dwellings in their area by council tax band. They were also required to show the number exempt from council tax (by the total and by type of exemption), the number that were entitled to discounts by type of discount and the number that were required to pay a premium.

Data quality

This statistical release contains Official Statistics and as such has been produced to the high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. Official Statistics products undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer demands.

The information in this release is based on data returned to the Department for Communities and Local Government by billing authorities in England on Council Tax Base (CTB) and Council Tax Base (Supplementary) forms. The data collected are used in calculating each local authority's entitlement to New Homes Bonus. The data will also be used by DCLG to calculate the value of a specific grant to fund the Family Annexe discount.

Only data for authorities that have completed a valid form are used in the computation of national figures for the statistical release. As we received valid data from all authorities in England there has not been a need to use a grossing methodology

Figures are subjected to rigorous pre-defined validation tests both within the form itself, while the form is being completed by the authority and also by DCLG as the data are received and stored.

Finally, the release document, once prepared, is also subject to intensive peer review before being cleared as fit for the purposes of publication.

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics and the Department for Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy). There are two types of revisions that the policy covers:

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

At time of publication there are no scheduled revisions for this series. However, if in the light of further analysis and checking of the data, we may need to produce a revised statistical release early in 2016.

Background notes

This Statistical Release can be found at the following web address: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/council-taxbase-statistics

Timings of future releases are regularly placed on the gov.uk website, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements.

For a fuller picture of recent trends in local government finance, readers are directed to *Local Government Finance Statistics England* which is available electronically from the Department for Communities and Local Government website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-finance-statistics-england

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

Devolved administration statistics

Both the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government also collect details of the number of chargeable dwellings. Their information can be found at the following websites:

Scotland:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Local-Government-Finance/DatasetsCouncilTax

Wales:

In English:

http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/council-tax-dwellings-data-collection/?lang=en

In Welsh:

http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/council-tax-dwellings-data-collection/?lang=cy

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Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website: www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/browse-by-theme/index.html

Information about statistics at DCLG is available via the Department's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics

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November 2015

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ISBN: 978-1-4098-4729-8