

A guide to the compilation of the Registers of Scotland statistics

Scope and purpose

The information for each quarter aims to cover all sales of residential properties, registered with Registers of Scotland in the period; where the selling price of the property lies between £20,000 and £1,000,000. The data is comprehensive, capturing all changes of ownership, including cash sales. Right to buy sales of council houses to sitting tenants are **included**. The analysis also aims to **exclude** sales of blocks of properties.

Administrative procedures/ background information

The house price data in the tables comes from information supplied to Registers of Scotland with new applications to register a house sale. The analysis aims to provide a summary, for each quarter, giving the total volume, total value and average price of sales of residential properties, taken from information supplied at the time when a change in title is registered.

Concepts and definitions

Registration

Registration occurs when a transfer of title takes place, regardless of the amount of money involved. As part of the registration process an applicant's agent (usually a solicitor) records the 'Consideration' for which the title has been reassigned. It is possible for the consideration to be nil or below the true market value of the title. In such a case the applicant's agent (or solicitor) notes the basis of the consideration and also provides a value. Below market price transactions such as these are **excluded** from the analysis.

Periods covered

Figures for each quarter relate to registrations in the quarter rather than sales in the period. The registration date is the date at which the title to the property is transferred and is generally within a few weeks of the date of sale.

Coverage

Information supplied to the Land Register for each registration distinguishes transfer of title by land type. Land type distinguishes residential properties from those for commercial properties, land and other types.

The tables relate solely to registration of title to **residential properties** and exclude properties with values of less than £20k and over £1m.

- Registrations with a value of over £1m are excluded to ensure that a single large value sale does not distort the average and also to ensure that sales of a block of properties are excluded.
- Sales of a block of properties, identified from the existence of multiple addresses in a title, are also excluded.
- Registrations with a value of less than £20k are excluded from the calculation to ensure that, as far as practical, transfers of part of the title to a residential property are excluded from the analysis. Transfer of part of a title may happen when one of the joint owners of a shared property buys out the share of the other owner.

Analysis by region

From April 2008, the quarterly analysis is based on the local authority area in which the property is located. Prior to this, from the end of quarter 2 of 2004, the analysis was by seven broad regional areas across the country, and prior to that was based on the registration district in which the property was registered. Properties are allocated to local authority area through use of a grid reference applied to an automated Geographical Information System. As a result of incomplete, or wrong, grid references, a small number of properties cannot be allocated to a local authority area. The analysis identifies these separately.

Data quality

Data validation/ records excluded from the analysis

Prior to producing the summary tables, a validation check is carried out on the database of registrations and the following records are excluded:-

- Registrations in which the Consideration is less than the Value. This ensures that the analysis excludes transfers of title which are not true sales.
- The Land Type Field is compared manually with the address data with the aim of ensuring correct classification of residential properties.

Data management

The spreadsheet based analysis systems used to produce the summary tables are designed and managed using procedures recommended to RoS following an independent audit of a pilot system. Key features, designed to ensure orderly and consistent outputs, are:-

- Archiving of base analysis data set for each set of tables showing full details of records included and excluded from the analysis.
- Detailed documentation of processes of data editing.
- Validated, automated spreadsheet based processes for producing summary tables from edited base data.
- Inbuilt consistency checks in spreadsheet summaries.