

Land and Property Titles by Country of Ownership

As at 31 December 2017
An Official Statistics publication

Land and Property Titles in Scotland by Country of Origin, as at 31 December 2017

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

This bulletin, developed by Registers of Scotland (RoS), presents statistics on the number of identifiable Land Register land and property titles in Scotland as at 31 December 2017 where the registered legal owner (or the tenant under a long term commercial lease, or at least one owner or tenant if there is more than one) has provided an address outside of Scotland at the time of registration of the transaction. This will include titles where the owner has remained located outside of Scotland after the title has been purchased, for example the purchase of land or property by a company or investor based outside of Scotland, but will also include titles where the owner has subsequently located to Scotland after completion of the transaction, for example where a purchaser from outside Scotland has moved into their residential property after the transaction has been completed.

Key points

As at 31 December 2017,

- 6.0% (104,975 titles) of all titles on the Land Register in Scotland had one or more registered owner/tenant with an address outside Scotland. The breakdown of these owner/tenant addresses is as follows:
 - 4.5% (79,112 titles) were in England,
 - 0.2% (2,662 titles) were in Wales,
 - 0.5% (8,172 titles) were in Northern Ireland, and
 - 0.9% (15,029 titles) were overseas.
- Of the 15,029 titles in the Land Register in Scotland with a registered owner/tenant with an overseas address:
 - 83.2% (12,501 titles) were registered to individuals,
 - 11.7% (1,763 titles) were registered to foreign companies,
 - 4.6% (691 titles) were registered to trustees, limited partnerships, miscellaneous bodies and corporations, and
 - 0.5% (74 titles) were registered with mixed ownership/tenancy.
- More than half (54.3%) of all titles owned or leased by companies from outwith the UK were accounted for by four countries¹: Jersey, British Virgin Islands, Isle of Man and Guernsey.
- Almost one in five titles owned or leased from outwith the UK (18.7% or 2,810 titles) are located within the Renfrewshire local authority area.

1. For the purposes of this bulletin, we have included overseas territories and Crown dependencies as countries.

It is important to note that the figures presented in this summary report do not cover all land and property in Scotland. They are based on information recorded in the Land Register, which currently accounts for over 64.4% of all titles in Scotland. The majority of the remainder of titles are held in the Sasines Register, a deeds-based register which is being replaced by the Land Register (planned for completion by 2024).

The accompanying dataset for registered titles with overseas company ownership/tenancy is available to users as part of the suite of RoS data products; see the [Overseas Company Report](#). This dataset only includes details of companies with an address that is overseas, and so does not include details of individuals, trustees, limited partnerships, other unincorporated bodies, mixed ownership/tenancy, or any unknowns.

For further information on the quality of these statistics and what is included, refer to [Annex 2](#).

Background

- Registers of Scotland (RoS) is the non-ministerial government department responsible for 19 public registers in Scotland, including the Land Register and the Sasines Register.
- RoS records the legal owner of all land and property types in Scotland, including residential and commercial properties, whether held by an individual, a company or any other legal entity, and regardless of whether that company has been registered in the UK or not.
- Since December 2014, where the legal owner is an overseas company, the register records the country or territory where the company was incorporated. This information may also have been recorded prior to that date if it was included in the application for registration, but this was on a voluntary basis.
- Information about individual registered titles can already be [accessed](#) by the public.

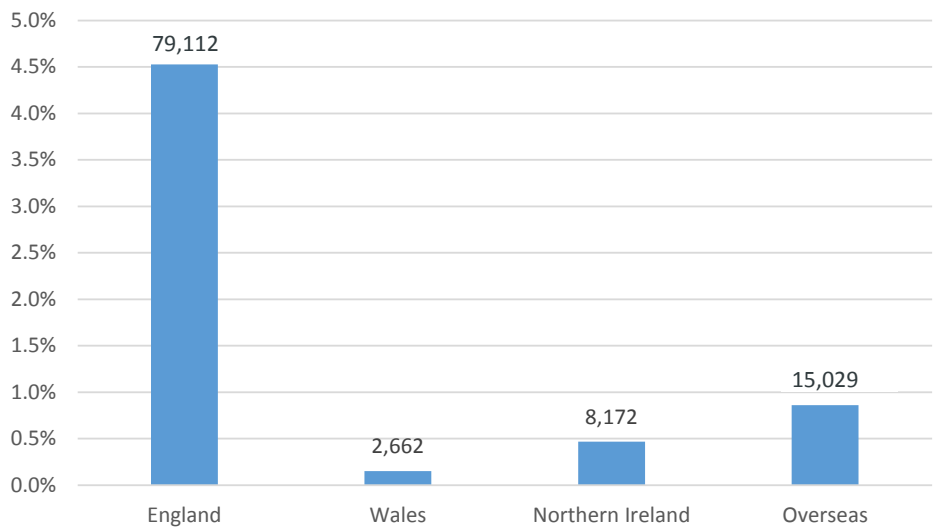
Main Findings

1. Location of origin

Of the 1.75 million titles registered on the Land Register as of 31st December 2017², 6.0% (104,975 titles) related to titles for which one or more of the registered owners (buyers or tenants) had an address outside Scotland.³ [Chart 1](#) shows the breakdown of these titles is as follows:

- 4.5% (79,112 titles) were in England,
- 0.2% (2,662 titles) were in Wales,
- 0.5% (8,172 titles) were in Northern Ireland, and
- 0.9 per cent (15,029 titles) were overseas.

Chart 1: *Percentage of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith Scotland, as at 31 December 2017*



[Table 1](#) details the countries in order by volume of Land Register titles split by owner/tenancy class.

The countries with the largest number of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK are dominated by individual ownership/tenancy, with nine of the top ten countries comprising around 90% or greater individual ownership/tenancy. However, only one quarter (26.3%) of Jersey’s overseas ownership/tenancy consists of individuals, as almost half (49.0%) are comprised of companies.

The countries with the largest number of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK by companies tend to be more dominated by company ownership/tenancy. Over 90% of the overseas ownership/tenancy by the British Virgin Islands and the Seychelles consists of companies. Eight of the top 10 countries for company ownership/tenancy comprised around 50% or more of their total number of titles by companies⁴, with the other two (USA and the Netherlands) being less than 15%. Indeed, the top four countries for company ownership/tenancy (Jersey, British Virgin Islands, Isle of Man and Guernsey) accounted for more than half (54.3%) of all titles owned or leased by companies from outwith the UK.

2. Only 1.52 million titles represent properties with an identifiable address, as the remainder of the registered titles are unaddressed due to their structure.
3. The accompanying data-set only includes details of companies with an address that is overseas, and so does not include details of registered owners (buyers or tenants) within the UK.
4. For the purposes of this bulletin, we have included overseas territories and Crown dependencies as countries.

Table 1: Volumes of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith the UK^{5,6}

All Overseas			Companies				Individuals				Other Legal Entities			
Country	Count	% of Overseas total	Country	Count	% of Companies total	% of Overseas total	Country	Count	% of Individuals total	% of Overseas total	Country	Count	% of Other Legal Entities total	% of Overseas total
United States of America	1474	9.7%	Jersey	302	17.1%	2.0%	United States of America	1293	10.3%	8.5%	Jersey	143	18.6%	0.9%
Hong Kong	1049	6.9%	British Virgin Islands	287	16.3%	1.9%	Hong Kong	1006	8.0%	6.6%	United States of America	122	15.9%	0.8%
Ireland	925	6.1%	Isle of Man	214	12.1%	1.4%	United Arab Emirates	860	6.8%	5.7%	Guernsey	84	10.9%	0.6%
Australia	909	6.0%	Guernsey	154	8.7%	1.0%	Australia	826	6.5%	5.4%	Ireland	80	10.4%	0.5%
United Arab Emirates	896	5.9%	Luxembourg	114	6.5%	0.8%	Ireland	817	6.5%	5.4%	Australia	62	8.1%	0.4%
Singapore	684	4.5%	Gibraltar	84	4.8%	0.6%	Singapore	661	5.2%	4.4%	Cayman Islands	39	5.1%	0.3%
Jersey	616	4.1%	United States of America	59	3.3%	0.4%	France	527	4.2%	3.5%	Isle of Man	25	3.3%	0.2%
France	544	3.6%	Bahamas	52	2.9%	0.3%	Germany	439	3.5%	2.9%	Denmark	20	2.6%	0.1%
Canada	468	3.1%	Netherlands	52	2.9%	0.3%	Canada	437	3.5%	2.9%	Canada	19	2.5%	0.1%
Germany	458	3.0%	Seychelles	43	2.4%	0.3%	Japan	426	3.4%	2.8%	France	14	1.8%	0.1%
Japan	436	2.9%	Cayman Islands	37	2.1%	0.2%	Spain	414	3.3%	2.7%	Germany	13	1.7%	0.1%
Spain	423	2.8%	Hong Kong	33	1.9%	0.2%	Malaysia	346	2.7%	2.3%	New Zealand	13	1.7%	0.1%
Netherlands	378	2.5%	United Arab Emirates	32	1.8%	0.2%	Netherlands	316	2.5%	2.1%	Switzerland	12	1.6%	0.1%
Malaysia	346	2.3%	Ireland	28	1.6%	0.2%	Taiwan	290	2.3%	1.9%	Netherlands	10	1.3%	0.1%
Isle of Man	340	2.2%	Turks and Caicos Islands	27	1.5%	0.2%	Switzerland	266	2.1%	1.8%	Israel	8	1.0%	0.1%
Guernsey	320	2.1%	Australia	21	1.2%	0.1%	Belgium	201	1.6%	1.3%	South Africa	8	1.0%	0.1%
British Virgin Islands	299	2.0%	Singapore	19	1.1%	0.1%	China	200	1.6%	1.3%	Hong Kong	8	1.0%	0.1%
Taiwan	292	1.9%	Liberia	15	0.9%	0.1%	South Africa	199	1.6%	1.3%	Panama	7	0.9%	<0.1%
Switzerland	283	1.9%	Panama	15	0.9%	0.1%	New Zealand	177	1.4%	1.2%	British Virgin Islands	6	0.8%	<0.1%
Belgium	209	1.4%	Denmark	14	0.8%	0.1%	Jersey	162	1.3%	1.1%	Liechtenstein	5	0.7%	<0.1%
Other	3,811	25.1%	Other	161	9.1%	1.1%	Other	2,751	21.8%	18.1%	Other	71	9.2%	0.5%
Total	15,160	100%	Total	1,763	100%	11.6%	Total	12,614	100%	83.2%	Total	769	100%	5.1%

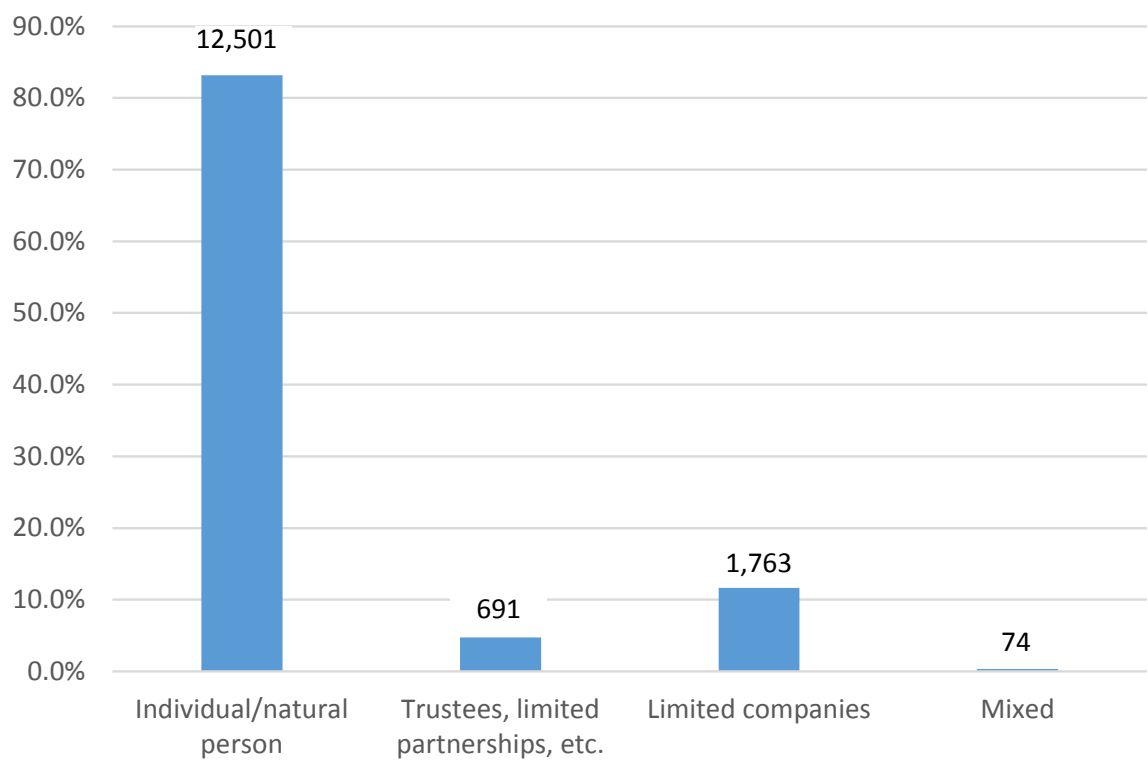
5. Other legal entities include partnerships, trusts and trustees, or mixed ownership/tenancy between companies, individuals and/or partnerships/trusts.

6. A count is made against each relevant country for any title with more than one owner/tenant from more than one overseas country. This results in the total count against countries (15,160) exceeding the number of unique titles (15,029). In line with this, the percentages shown in this table are based on the total count against countries (15,160).

2. Owner/tenancy classification

The majority of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK relate to individuals (83.2% or 12,501 titles), as shown in [Chart 2](#). It is not possible to determine whether the reasons for owning/leasing property or land in Scotland is due to the intention to immigrate, or for other purposes such as second/holiday homes, accommodation for family members studying/working in Scotland, or as investments.

Chart 2: *Percentage of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith the UK, by owner/tenancy class*



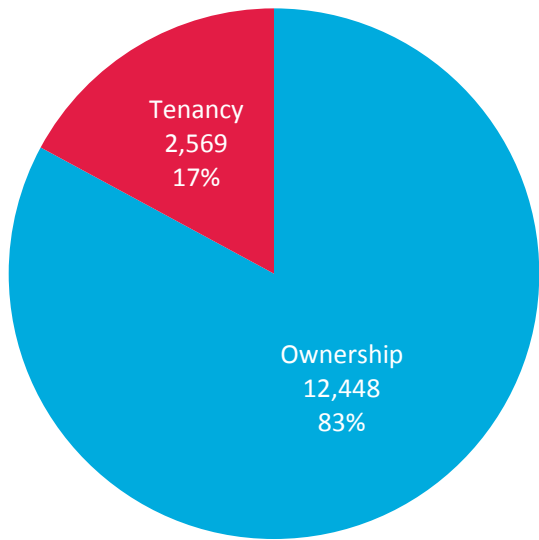
Limited companies are responsible for most of the other titles owned or leased from outwith the UK (11.6% or 1,763 titles). Trustees, limited partnerships, etc.⁷ account for 4.6% (691 titles) of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK, and 0.5% (74 titles) have ownership/tenancy shared between a combination of these categories.

7. Trustees, limited partnerships, etc. includes trusts and trustees, limited partnerships, miscellaneous bodies and corporations.

3. Interest in title

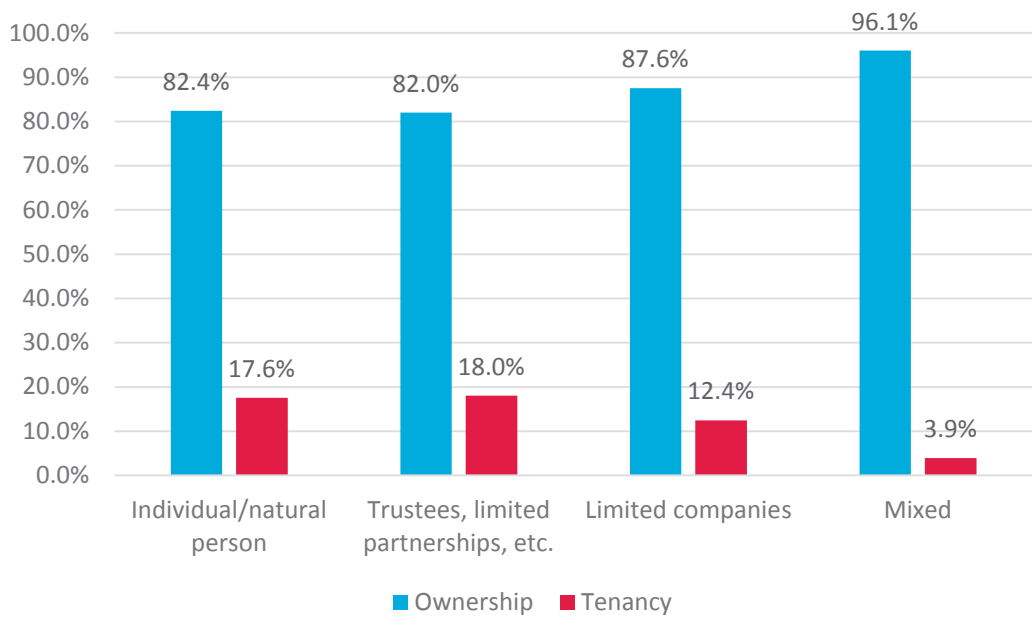
Ownership is by far the more predominant interest, accounting for 82.8% (12,448 titles) of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK. [Chart 3](#) shows that the remainder of these titles were leased, with tenancy relating to 17.1% (2,569 titles).⁸

Chart 3: Proportion of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith the UK, by interest



There is not much variation in this breakdown when interest in titles is examined by the type of owner/tenant. As shown by [Chart 4](#), ownership accounts for a slightly higher proportion of titles related to limited companies than the average (87.6%). Almost all titles related to the Mixed category⁹ (96.1%) are owned, with just 3.9% leased.¹⁰

Chart 4: Proportion of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith the UK, by owner/tenancy class and interest



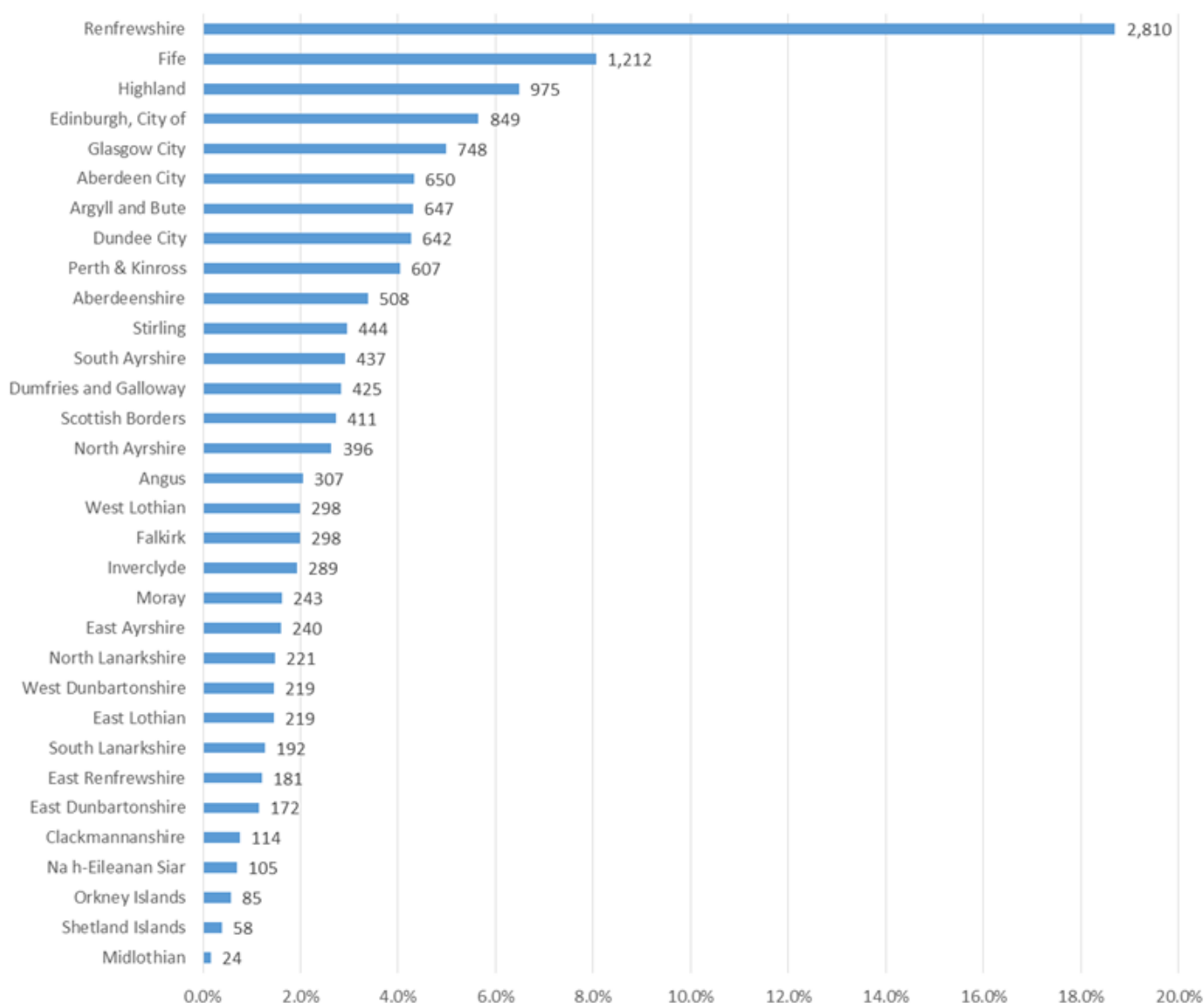
8. There were 12 titles that could not be classified.
9. The Mixed category consists of titles where ownership/tenancy is shared between a combination of the other categories.
10. Due to the method used to disaggregate the data, the total count of titles (15,132) used to calculate these proportions exceeds the number of unique titles (15,029). Due to titles that could not be classified, some percentages may not sum to 100%.

4. Location of properties/land across Scotland

The geographic distribution throughout Scotland of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK is detailed in [Chart 5](#).¹¹ All four of the city-based local authorities (Aberdeen City, Dundee City, City of Edinburgh and Glasgow City) are included in the top eight areas by volume. Scotland's other cities, located within Highland, Perth & Kinross and Stirling local authority areas, are also represented in the top half of local authorities by volume.

Almost one in five titles (18.7% or 2,810 titles) are located within the Renfrewshire local authority area. It is not clear what the reasons are behind this, but a contributory factor may be the volume of ownership/tenancy of parking spaces near to Glasgow Airport. Midlothian shows the fewest titles owned or leased from outwith the UK of all local authority areas.

Chart 5: Volume of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith the UK, by local authority area



11. There were 3 titles that could not be classified.

[Table 2](#) shows the post code sectors across Scotland with the greatest volumes of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK. The top four post code sectors are all within Renfrewshire, and account for the vast majority (87.9%) of titles owned or leased from outwith the UK within that local authority area.

Table 2: *Top 10 Post Code Sectors by volume of Land Register titles with owner/tenant addresses outwith the UK*

Position	PostCode Sector	Volume of titles
1	PA3 1	906
2	PA3 3	668
3	PA1 2	613
4	PA3 2	283
5	KY16 9	183
6	EH3 9	96
7	KY16 8	86
8	DD1 5	80
9=	DD2 1	73
9=	FK8 1	73
9=	KY6 2	73

5. Annexes

Annex 1 - Data sources & definitions

Data Collection and Extraction

- 5.1. Registers of Scotland (RoS) is the non-ministerial government department responsible for compiling and maintaining nineteen public registers. These relate to land, property, and other legal documents. RoS' main registers are the General Register of Sasines and the Land Register of Scotland, which both record ownership and other interests related to land and property in Scotland. The Sasines Register, which comprises a chronological list of deeds, is gradually being replaced by the land register, which was introduced in 1981 and currently holds over 64.4% of titles in Scotland.¹² The land register is based on the Ordnance Survey map, and contains plans of registered properties.
- 5.2. RoS collects administrative data in the process of fulfilling the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland's (the Keeper) statutory duties to manage, control and maintain the various public registers under RoS' remit. A key purpose of this data collection is to populate the Land Register, documenting and protecting the legal rights of the owner/tenant/third parties. The data is submitted to RoS via standard land register application forms, deeds and accompanying plans (if required). It is used to maintain an open and public property register clearly showing the details for each title registered within and its corresponding spatial extent on the cadastral map. The information registered in the Land Register is, in most cases, covered by the Keeper's warranty, which means that the Keeper may be liable to pay compensation for any inaccuracies in the register that are subsequently rectified.
- 5.3. The data for this statistics report and for the Overseas Company Report dataset is extracted from registered titles in the Land Register. It does not include titles that were pending registration on the date of extraction¹³ or titles from the Sasines Register (Scottish ministers asked RoS to complete the Land Register by 2024). These land register titles include owners and tenants under long-term commercial leases.
- 5.4. The data then underwent a quality assurance process which is covered in more detail in [Annex 2](#).

Data Definitions

- 5.5. The following definitions clarify the content of the data:
- **Overseas:** any country not within the UK, as well as UK overseas territories and the Crown dependencies of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands;
 - **Company:** a limited company / incorporated legal body;
 - **Other legal entities:** includes trusts and trustees, limited partnerships, miscellaneous bodies, corporations and mixed ownership/tenancy between companies, individuals and/or partnerships/trusts;
 - **Trustees, limited partnerships, etc:** includes trusts and trustees, limited partnerships, miscellaneous bodies and corporations;
 - **Individuals:** a natural person / individual human being.

12. Land Register coverage as of December 2017 – over 64.4% of titles and over 30.9% of land mass.

13. In this case 31 December 2017.

Annex 2 - Quality assurance

- 5.6. The data used to produce this report is extracted from the Land Register, which is created from the information provided within applications for registration. The risk of inaccurate data being submitted, and of inaccuracies being created by errors in the land registration process, is inherent but is mitigated by the following: checks done by solicitors; pre-application checks and reports provided by RoS prior to solicitors submitting applications; RoS registration officers conducting registration checks; the RoS Quality Team undertaking quality checks; and the RoS Land & Property Data Team undertaking quality assurance on the data.
- 5.7. Both the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012– which superseded the Land Registration Act (Scotland) 1979 on 8 December 2014 - and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 impose statutory duties on the Keeper which govern the role RoS holds within the Scottish legal and economic framework. One of the most significant changes in approach to land registration made following the implementation of the Land Registration etc. (Scotland) Act 2012 was to put the main responsibility of the accuracy of data submitted to RoS within the remit of the submitting agent (usually the solicitor acting on behalf of the purchaser) rather than the Keeper. This provides increased reliability on the quality of data we can extract from the documents submitted for registration in the Land Register since these agents have a greater responsibility to ensure the integrity of the register.
- 5.8. A full current ownership extraction of data was taken from the Land Register based on the “country” field in the purchasers’/tenants’ address. A substantial quality assurance exercise allowed all titles registered in the Land Register as of 31st December 2017 to be allocated to one of five location categories¹⁴ (Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, overseas) based on the address held for the grantee (owner or tenant at the time of purchase). This quality assurance exercise allowed for the identification of over 15,000 unique titles¹⁵ in which the grantee had an overseas address at the time of purchase.
- The Scotland category (which comprises over 1.6 million titles, around 94% of the Land Register) is in essence what was left over from this quality assurance exercise. The titles within this category have not been quality assured for this release to the same extent as for the other categories due to the volumes of titles involved. Due to technical and legal issues, some titles within the Scotland category may have a grantee whose address at the time of registration was outwith the UK, but these have not been identified as such. For example, titles registered in favour of companies before December 2014 when the country of incorporation was only provided on a voluntary basis.
- 5.9. Rules were also applied to standardise the naming conventions within the overseas data. This was required primarily because of the different versions of country names provided by submitting agents within their applications for registration and because of spelling errors. In order to rectify this, country names were standardised to UN naming conventions, and rules were created around other common variations. For example, references to Dubai or Abu Dhabi in the country field were changed to United Arab Emirates, and references to the “Channel Islands” were changed to the individual island name.

14. Due to the existence of town names in more than one UK country, e.g. the name Bangor appears in both Wales and Northern Ireland, there may be a small number of wrongly classified towns where additional information has not been provided in the application.

15. Each unique title is allocated to one location category only. Where title is shared by more than one owner/tenant, those with an overseas element are allocated to the overseas category; and where there is no overseas element, the title is allocated to Scotland, England, Wales or Northern Ireland in that order according to which countries are represented in the owners’/tenants’ addresses, e.g. if Scotland is not represented, but England and Wales are then it will be allocated to England, etc.

- 5.10. Further quality assurance has also been conducted on the overseas data to classify each type of owner into the following six categories:
- Limited companies,
 - Trustees / other unincorporated bodies,
 - Individuals,
 - Individuals & trustees,
 - Individuals and limited companies, and
 - Unknowns (i.e. where it is not clear whether an organisation is a limited company from the information provided).
- 5.11. A set of rules has been developed to ensure that future quality assurance will be less onerous. In addition, parallel developments within RoS registration systems, such as country-name drop-down lists, will support data quality going forward.
- 5.12. There can be more than one purchaser/tenant registered to a title, and so it is possible that, for the overseas location category, there could be more than one unique country identified per title. As a result, the sum of individual countries listed may exceed the number of titles.
- 5.13. Further information on the quality assurance processes in place for RoS data is available in the [Quality Assurance of Administrative Data document](#), as published for the UK House Price Index. The Scotland data for the UK HPI is also extracted from the Land Register.
- 5.14. Statisticians in the Scottish Government have provided advice in relation to the content of this report and in relation to the processes to be followed in producing statistics from house price registration data.

Annex 3 - Data comparisons

- 5.15. According to the [Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, Scotland, July 2016 to June 2017](#) statistics published by the National Records of Scotland, it was estimated that 6.7% of the usually resident population of Scotland (355,000 people) had non-British nationality. This compares to 9.5% of the usually resident population of the UK as a whole (6.15 million people) who had non-British nationality ([Population by country of birth and nationality](#)).

In contrast, this statistical report shows that only 0.9% of land and property titles registered on the Land Register as of 31st December 2017 had one or more registered owners (buyers or tenants) whose address was outside of the UK.

- 5.16. According to the [Total Migration to or from Scotland](#) statistics published by the National Records of Scotland, approximately 31,700 more people migrated into Scotland than migrated out (Net Total Migration) in 2015-16, which continues the trend as this has been positive every year since 1999-2000. This included a net gain of around 22,900 people from overseas and a net gain of around 8,800 people from the rest of the UK.

The latest estimate of Scotland's population (on 30 June 2016) is 5,404,700 – the highest ever and an increase of 31,700 people (0.6%) since 30 June 2015. The rise in Scotland's population in the last ten years should be seen in the context of the relative stability of the population over the last 60 years. The population last reached a peak of 5.24 million in 1974 before falling to 5.06 million in mid-2000 and then rising to a new high in mid-2016 of 5.40 million. ([Mid-2016 population estimates Scotland](#)).

This provides useful background information to assist in interpretation of this bulletin's ownership/tenancy data (and accompanying data-set for registered titles with overseas company ownership/tenancy). It is not possible to provide comparisons over time from this initial snapshot of data to provide a parallel to the trends shown by these migration statistics, but this will become possible following subsequent releases as the time series develops.

- 5.17. According to the [Businesses in Scotland 2017](#) statistics published by the Scottish Government, as at March 2017, private sector enterprises (registered for VAT and/or PAYE) with their ultimate base outside Scotland represented 2.9% of enterprises, accounting for 34.4% of employment and 53.3% of turnover. Breaking this down, 17.9% of Scottish private sector employment was in enterprises with ultimate ownership in the rest of the UK with 16.5% of employment in enterprises with ultimate ownership overseas (outside the UK). Between 2016 and 2017, the number of foreign-owned enterprises in Scotland increased from 2,305 to 2,350, and yet the foreign-owned share of turnover dropped from 34.1% to 32.6% between 2016 and 2017 – reflecting the slowdown in the oil and gas sector with foreign-owned turnover falling significantly in the 'Mining & Quarrying' and 'Manufacturing' sectors.

This report provides comparable figures, with 1,763 titles in Scotland owned or leased by limited companies from outwith the UK, and a further 691 titles owned or leased by trustees, limited partnerships, etc.

Annex 4 - Future considerations

- 5.18. There is already a planned schedule of improvements to the data underlying this information as part of RoS' overall data improvement activities. In addition, customer feedback on data enhancements and additions will be reflected in future reports. Any feedback can be provided to RoS via our Land & Property Data Team (contact details below).
- 5.19. Further editions of this statistical report will be published at six monthly intervals, to coincide with the updates provided to the underlying data-set.

RoS provides a wide range of land and property data services, including statistical reports and publications. Further information about these services is available at <https://www.ros.gov.uk/property-data/data-services>

You can contact our Land & Property Data team on 0131 659 6111 or by email at data@ros.gov.uk