

# Press release: Firstsource Solutions unveil £1 million investment in Belfast

Indian-owned global business process management (BPM) firm, Firstsource Solutions, yesterday (Monday 15 April) announced a further £1m investment into its Northern Irish operations.

The company will expand its presence in the region, unveiling a new hub in the city centre, following a £1 million investment and refurbishment of 'Olive Tree House', Fountain Street.

The new 600-seat call centre will be home to 150 existing staff and has the potential to create up to 450 new local jobs, to service new business wins, expanding on the 1800 people the business employs in Northern Ireland. Olive Tree House will provide customer support for Sky customers in the Republic of Ireland.

The business was supported by the Department for International Trade during its investment, providing them with market intelligence, as well as supporting their engagement with local councils and on property site visits.

The business's expansion follows a period of continued growth for the company, and forms part of the business's wider ambition to win new business in the region and strengthen their existing client base.

**Graham Stuart MP, Minister for Investment said:**

I'm delighted a global business like Firstsource continues to see the UK as their destination of choice in Europe. Their new investment will help support jobs and drive growth at home and abroad, as their business goes from strength to strength.

This investment signals a strong vote of confidence in the Northern Irish economy and my department will continue to work hard to ensure the benefits of global investment are felt in every part of the country, and the UK maintains its position as the top destination for FDI in Europe.

The announcement presents another success story for the region, which attracted 28 FDI projects, between 2017-18 creating 1,622 new jobs.

**Sean Canning, Chief Operational Officer, Customer Management, Firstsource**

## **Solutions said:**

Northern Ireland has always been a key part of our business strategy. Belfast was the first UK centre to open outside the company's Mumbai headquarters in 2006.

This significant investment will enable us to support and upskill local talent, offer career progression, win new business and continue to support existing clients with world class customer management.

Belfast is a vibrant city and has grown considerably since Firstsource began operating here. The recent City Deal, which will deliver £350 million of government funding to the region will play a key role in harnessing further investment, create employability, upskill and grow the local economy. Undoubtedly this vision of growth is encouraging global companies to continue to invest here.

Firstsource is one of the UK's top 10 contact centre providers and works across the Banking, Financial Services & Insurance, Telecommunications & Media, Utilities and Healthcare sectors.

The business is one of Northern Ireland's largest private employers with close to 2,000 staff operating across Belfast and Derry/ Londonderry. Northern Ireland staff work with major household names including Sky UK & ROI, Now TV, GiffGaff, Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank.

---

## **Press release: Firstsource Solutions unveil £1 million investment in Belfast**

Indian-owned global business process management firm, Firstsource Solutions has announced a further £1 million investment in Northern Ireland.

---

# Press release: UK House Price Index for February 2019

The UK HPI shows house price changes for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

---

# Press release: UK House Price Index for February 2019

The February data shows:

- on average, house prices have fallen by 0.8% since January 2019
- there has been an annual price rise of 0.6%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £226,234

## England

In England, the February data shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 0.6% since January 2019. The annual price rise of 0.4% takes the average property value to £242,964.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the North West experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 1.3%
- Yorkshire and The Humber saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 2.5%
- the North West experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 4.0%
- London saw the largest annual price fall, down by 3.8%

## Price change by region for England

Region	Average price February 2019	Monthly change % since January 2019
East Midlands	£190,199	-0.5
East of England	£290,137	0.5
London	£459,800	-2.0
North East	£125,397	-0.4
North West	£163,758	1.3

Region	Average price February 2019	Monthly change % since January 2019
South East	£315,700	-1.7
South West	£253,730	-0.4
West Midlands	£196,152	0.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	£155,685	-2.5

## **Repossession sales by volume for England**

The lowest number of repossession sales in December 2018 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in December 2018 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	December 2018
East Midlands	34
East of England	15
London	33
North East	65
North West	111
South East	44
South West	22
West Midlands	58
Yorkshire and the Humber	81
England	463

## **Average price by property type for England**

Property type	February 2019	February 2018	Difference %
Detached	£370,000	£366,752	0.9
Semi-detached	£228,795	£224,239	2.0
Terraced	£196,326	£194,649	0.9
Flat/maisonette	£219,910	£227,060	-3.1
All	£242,964	£241,989	0.4

## **Funding and buyer status for England**

Transaction type	Average price February 2019	Annual price change % since February 2018	Monthly price change % since January 2019
Cash	£228,539	0.3	-0.7
Mortgage	£250,218	0.4	-0.5
First-time buyer	£203,518	0.0	-0.4
Former owner occupier	£276,126	0.7	-0.8

## Building status for England

Building status	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
New build	£301,483	2.4	1.0
Existing resold property	£243,102	1.8	-0.4

Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

## London

London shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 2.0% since January 2019. An annual price fall of 3.8% takes the average property value to £459,800.

### Average price by property type for London

Property type	February 2019	February 2018	Difference %
Detached	£892,443	£898,057	-0.6
Semi-detached	£568,874	£574,508	-1.0
Terraced	£484,380	£489,511	-1.0
Flat/maisonette	£398,579	£423,537	-5.9
All	£459,800	£477,860	-3.8

### Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price February 2019	Annual price change % since February 2018	Monthly price change % since January 2019
Cash	£482,156	-4.4	-1.7
Mortgage	£453,036	-3.6	-2.1
First-time buyer	£400,645	-4.5	-2.0
Former owner occupier	£521,583	-2.8	-2.0

### Building status for London

Building status	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
New build	£485,474	0.5	1.7
Existing resold property	£472,324	-0.8	-0.6

Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

## Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 0.2% since January 2019. An annual price rise of 4.1% takes the average property value to £159,559.

There were 42 repossession sales for Wales in December 2018.

### Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	February 2019	February 2018	Difference %
Detached	£239,352	£232,291	3.0
Semi-detached	£154,272	£147,301	4.7
Terraced	£124,178	£117,732	5.5
Flat/maisonette	£112,715	£111,853	0.8
All	£159,559	£153,210	4.1

### Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price February 2019	Annual price change % since February 2018	Monthly price change % since January 2019
Cash	£154,883	3.8	-0.1
Mortgage	£162,313	4.3	0.4
First-time buyer	£138,025	4.4	0.7
Former owner occupier	£184,589	3.9	-0.3

### Building status for Wales

Building status	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
New build	£212,416	6.3	1.8
Existing resold property	£158,814	5.2	1.1

Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

[Access the full UK HPI](#)

UK house prices rose by 0.6% in the year to February 2019, down from 1.7% in the year to January 2019. This is the lowest annual growth for the UK since September 2012, when house prices increased by 0.4%.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics for February 2019](#) showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of transactions on residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 101,780. This is 2.7% higher compared with a year ago. Between January 2019 and February 2019, transactions increased by 1.7%.

House prices grew fastest in Wales increasing by 4.1% in the year to February 2019. House prices in London fell by 3.8% over the year to February 2019, down from a fall of 2.2% in January 2019.

See the [economic statement](#).

## Background

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Wednesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The March 2019 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on Wednesday 22 May 2019. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).
5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).

8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.



16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession sales data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
  17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#).
  18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
  19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
  20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 86% of the land mass of England and Wales.
  21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit [www.gov.uk/land-registry](http://www.gov.uk/land-registry).
  22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
- 

## **News story: Environment Agency announces new green legacy for £2.6bn flood and coastal risk management programme.**

The Environment Agency has announced a set of new supplier arrangements and partnerships which will increase efficiency, value for money and the green legacy of its £2.6 billion capital investment programme.