

News story: The Royal Parks appoint Richard Hamilton

Richard is Director, Digital Land strategy programme at Ordnance Survey, prior to which he was Director of Strategy at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. He began his career at Barclays where he spent ten years, followed by eight at KPMG.

Richard has variously been Strategy Advisor to the British Council, Business in the Community and The Prince's Charities. He was an elected local authority member (Dartford Borough Council) from 1998 until 2003, and a non-executive Director of Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust from 2003 until 2007. He holds an MBA from the University of Oxford.

The role is not remunerated. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointment](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Richard has declared that he delivered leaflets at the 2017 election for conservative candidates.

Press release: UK House Price Index for February 2018

The February data shows:

- on average, house prices have fallen by 0.1% since January 2018
- an annual price rise of 4.4%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £225,047

England

In England, the February data shows on average, house prices have risen by 0.2% since January 2018.

The annual price rise of 4.1% takes the average property value to £242,176.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the North East experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 3.1%

- London saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 2.1%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price February 2018	Monthly change % since January 2018
East Midlands	£186,071	0.5
East of England	£288,468	-0.4
London	£471,986	-2.1
North East	£128,218	3.1
North West	£158,152	1.6
South East	£322,489	-0.1
South West	£250,816	-1.1
West Midlands	£192,648	2.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	£155,385	-0.1

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in December 2017 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in December 2017 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	December 2017
East Midlands	57
East of England	14
London	27
North East	90
North West	127
South East	48
South West	37
West Midlands	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	78
England	531

Average price by property type for England

Property type	February 2018	February 2017	Difference %
Detached	£368,478	£349,569	5.4
Semi-detached	£224,171	£213,593	5.0
Terraced	£195,406	£186,974	4.5
Flat/maisonette	£225,498	£223,873	0.7
All	£242,176	£232,696	4.1

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price February 2018	Annual price change % since February 2017	Monthly price change % since December 2017
Cash	£228,036	3.9	0.3
Mortgage	£249,299	4.2	0.2
First-time buyer	£203,417	3.7	0.3
Former owner occupier	£274,567	4.4	0.1

Building status for England

Building status*	Average price December 2017	Annual price change % since December 2016	Monthly price change % since November 2017
New build	£307,378	8.5	3.3
Existing resold property	£239,015	4.6	0.5

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Sales volumes for England

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for England show the number of completed house sales in December 2017 fell by 21.2% to 62,697 compared with 79,605 in December 2016.

Month	Sales 2017	Sales 2016	Difference %
November	69,963	74,097	-5.6
December	62,697	79,605	-21.2

London

London shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 2.1% since January 2018. An annual price fall of 1% takes the average property value to £471,986.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	February 2018	February 2017	Difference %
Detached	£915,162	£887,959	3.1
Semi-detached	£578,708	£563,242	2.7
Terraced	£489,639	£482,631	1.5
Flat/maisonette	£412,902	£427,256	-3.4
All	£471,986	£476,717	-1.0

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price February 2018	Annual price change % since February 2017	Monthly price change % since January 2018
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Transaction type	Average price February 2018	Annual price change % since February 2017	Monthly price change % since January 2018
Cash	£494,312	-2.2	-3.2
Mortgage	£465,147	-0.6	-1.7
First-time buyer	£412,482	-1.5	-2.2
Former owner occupier	£533,159	-0.4	-2.0

Building status for London

Building status*	Average price December 2017	Annual price change % since December 2016	Monthly price change % since November 2017
New build	£505,112	5.2	3.1
Existing resold property	£479,296	1.6	0.5

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Sales volumes for London

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for London show the number of completed house sales in December 2017 fell by 25% to 6,344 compared with 8,460 in December 2016.

Month	Sales 2017	Sales 2016	Difference %
November	6,834	8,178	-16.4
December	6,344	8,460	-25.0

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 0.4% since January 2018. An annual price rise of 4.8% takes the average property value to £152,891.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	February 2018	February 2017	Difference %
Detached	£232,078	£220,848	5.1
Semi-detached	£146,772	£139,526	5.2
Terraced	£117,459	£112,204	4.7
Flat/maisonette	£111,880	£108,273	3.3
All	£152,891	£145,837	4.8

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price February 2018	Annual price change % since February 2017	Monthly price change % since January 2018
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Transaction type	Average price February 2018	Annual price change % since February 2017	Monthly price change % since January 2018
Cash	£149,073	4.6	-0.1
Mortgage	£155,154	5.0	-0.5
First-time buyer	£131,805	4.7	-0.3
Former owner occupier	£177,546	5.0	-0.5

Building status for Wales

Building status*	Average price December 2017	Annual price change % since December 2016	Monthly price change % since November 2017
New build	£207,355	8.7	3.0
Existing resold property	£150,326	4.5	0.2

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Sales volumes for Wales

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for Wales show:

- the number of completed house sales in December 2017 fell by 14.3% to 3,927 compared with 4,581 in December 2016
- there were 50 repossession sales in December 2017

Month	Sales 2017	Sales 2016	Difference %
November	4,112	4,084	0.7
December	3,927	4,581	-14.3

UK house prices grew by 4.4% in the year to February 2018, down from 4.7% in the year to January 2018.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics for February 2018](#) showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of transactions on residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater is 0.7% lower compared to a year ago. Between January 2018 and February 2018, transactions decreased by 0.3%.

Looking at the regional level, the West Midlands showed the highest annual growth, with prices increasing by 7.3% in the year to February 2018. The lowest annual growth was in London, where prices decreased by 1.0% over the year. This is the lowest annual growth in London since September 2009 when it was negative 3.2%. London has shown a general slowdown in its annual growth rate since mid-2016.

See the [economic statement](#).

Notes to editors

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 2018 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 23 May 2018. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. As from April 2018, this release will be published on Wednesdays.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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](#).
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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](#).

9. 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.
10. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. [See our data tables](#).
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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).
15. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
16. 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.

17. 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](#).
 18. 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.
 19. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
 20. 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.
 21. 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 85% of the land mass of England and Wales.
 22. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
 23. Follow us on Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
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[News story: Best of British showcased to Commonwealth leaders in London](#)



The Duke of Cambridge with Dr. Liam Fox and DIT Permanent Secretary Antonia Romeo

The Department for International Trade's (DIT) GREAT campaign curated an

array of interactive showcases to entertain guests at the 'Welcome to the UK Reception', marking the first day of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London.

The Duke of Cambridge welcomed all 52 of the other Commonwealth countries to London at the reception, which presented the best of British expertise, innovation and creativity.

The interactive showcases included:

- a virtual reality experience, with British astronaut Tim Peake, by the Science Museum
- the men's and women's Cricket World Cup and Premier League trophies brought to life by sport stars Alan Shearer and Ebony-Jewel Rainford-Brent, explaining the impact of sport on the Commonwealth
- a display of Commonwealth fashion, as part of the Commonwealth Fashion Exchange project, showcasing designers and artisans from each of the 53 countries

Promoting UK food and drink, the GREAT campaign allowed guests to sample the very best of British cuisine, with products from each nation of the UK. They ranged from classics like Welsh lamb and Scottish smoked salmon to cutting-edge ice cream – frozen in front of the guests using liquid nitrogen.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

As we welcome the Commonwealth Heads of Government to London, it was fantastic to show our friends the very best of what Britain has to offer – from innovation, sport and cuisine.

As an international economic department, we will continue to promote business and trade with all Commonwealth members driving prosperity both at home and abroad.

Published 18 April 2018

[News story: Sports industry can be top of the league in reducing plastic pollution](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove will today call on sports leaders from

across the Commonwealth to join the fight against plastic pollution in the world's oceans.

As part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting taking place in London this week, the Environment Secretary will host leaders from across the sports sector on board the HMS Belfast in London to drive forward innovation and agree actions to tackle the global scourge of plastic.

With mass sporting events often generating up to 750,000 plastic bottles and seven tonnes of waste, the Environment Secretary and representatives from Premier League football, swimming and ocean sailing will look at how the sector can use its influence to tackle this blight and bring about global change.

This will build on the work already underway by industry – with this year's Commonwealth Games banning the use of plastic balloons and rolling out water refills to reduce plastic, and Twickenham Stadium introducing a deposit return scheme for 'fan cups', where fans pay an extra £1 for their cup and get the money back when they return it to the bar. Tottenham Hotspur has also announced its commitment to phasing out single-use plastics across all Club operations.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time and we all have a role to play to tackle the threats our oceans face.

There are few groups which have the global reach and power the sports sector does to inspire change and mobilise action. The industry is already making great strides, and I look forward to seeing how they can build on this progress to be true ambassadors for global change.

Bill Bush, Executive Director of the Premier League, will also attend the roundtable. He said:

The Premier League is well aware of the importance of taking action against plastic pollution, it affects us all and our fans expect us to do what we can to tackle this threat. We are here today to learn from others as we develop our plans to reduce plastic use throughout our operations.

We also want to use our reach to fans here and across the world to spread the word that each and every one of us can make a difference by choosing to use less plastic.

Jointly co-hosted with United Nations Environment, attendees at the roundtable will also be encouraged to join the UN's ['Clean Seas'](#) campaign – a

global initiative to reduce plastic pollution in the oceans.

Endurance swimmer Lewis Pugh will attend in his role as the UN's Patron of the Oceans. He said:

I've been swimming for 30 years and can be under no illusion life in our oceans is under threat like never before. Beaches across the world are littered with bags, bottles and straws, and plastic has made its way to some of the most remote corners of the ocean.

Single-use plastics have no place in the modern world and I will be urging sportsmen and women, especially those involved with ocean sports, to help us share this important message and be voices for the protection of our oceans.

This year's World Environment Day on June 5 will focus on the issue of plastic pollution – with UN Environment working with sports organisations across the world to take action to address their plastic footprint.

The roundtable comes as just this week the Prime Minister [announced](#) the UK and Vanuatu-led Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance – an agreement between member states to join forces in the fight against plastic.

Britain, together with joint chair Vanuatu, will call on other countries to pledge action on plastics, be this by a ban on microbeads, a commitment to cutting down on single use plastic bags, or other steps to eliminate avoidable plastic waste. New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Ghana have already joined.

To drive this forward, the Prime Minister also announced a £61.4 million package of funding to boost global research and help countries across the Commonwealth stop plastic waste from entering the oceans in the first place.

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