

[Press release: UK House Price Index for September 2017](#)

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for England show the number of completed house sales in July 2017 fell by 17.1% to 64,592 compared with 77,919 in July 2016.

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for London show the number of completed house sales in July 2017 fell by 24.5% to 6,639 compared with 8,794 in July 2016.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics](#) show that the number of seasonally adjusted transactions on UK properties with a value of £40,000 or greater has increased by 4.6% between September 2016 and September 2017. However, comparing September 2017 with August 2017, the number of seasonally adjusted property transactions has decreased by 1.8%.

The Bank of England [Agents' summary of business conditions](#) reported that supply and demand appeared to be broadly in balance across the overall market. Demand had proved more resilient in the new-build sector and the help to buy scheme was regarded as crucial to sustaining demand among first-time buyers.

Looking more closely at regional levels of the UK, the largest annual growth was in the North West at 7.3% up from 5% in August 2017. The slowest annual growth was in London at 2.5%. This is the 10th consecutive month where the growth in London house prices has remained below the UK average. See the [economic statement](#).

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Tuesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The October 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 12 December 2017. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. From next month, we are making some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We will not be publishing average price and percentage change for new build and existing resold property, as we do now, because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that when we publish the October UK HPI in December, the earliest new build/existing resold property breakdown will be for August 2017, 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 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 repossessions recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossessions recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossessions](#).
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 more than £4 trillion, including more than £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles, which show evidence of ownership, covering more than 84% of the land mass.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry
22. Follow us on:

[News story: These SMEs did it and so can you!](#)

In the past 12 months in my role as SME Rep, I've been keen to ensure that smaller businesses do not overlook government as a customer or wrongly fear it will be too difficult to access that market. Online webinars, regional events, supplier guides and contract advice have all been aimed at encouraging SMEs to consider supplying the public sector and government buyers to look at SMEs as new and reliable suppliers.

But which smaller suppliers have been successful? Without knowing anything about the businesses that have been successful, there has been a slight air of mystery. Well not anymore, a list of the [top 100 SME suppliers](#) to central government has been published.

Not only that, but several are now sharing their stories and offering top tips for suppliers considering bidding.

These stories show how with some understanding of the public sector process – which we look at on our [Government is Open for Business site](#) and especially in the [supplier guide](#) – SMEs can successfully bid for, and win, public sector contracts.

Moving forward we have a renewed focus on connecting small businesses with government's largest suppliers so SMEs can win government work, without being the lead bidder. This work will also consider how large contractors can quickly identify a quality supply chain that can help them fulfil contracts.

I hope this will inspire new businesses to 'go for government' and existing suppliers to keep aiming high, even if they haven't yet had the successes they'd hoped for – the opportunities are there.

Don't forget... I'm hosting a ['Meet the Buyer'](#) event in Leeds, at the Town Hall on the 24th November – an opportunity for small businesses to hear direct from government buyers as to what they're after, and an insight into future pipelines.

Plus, we continue the programme of regular [webinars](#) where guests are government buyers or entrepreneurs who have successfully sold to the public sector, and small businesses, from anywhere, can tune in for free.

So much is happening but there is still plenty to do!

Press release: Tesco/Booker merger provisionally cleared after in-depth review

A group of independent Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) panel members has investigated how bringing together the UK's largest grocery retailer and the UK's largest grocery wholesaler would affect competition. It examined evidence from Tesco and Booker, as well as evidence from more than 65 wholesalers, suppliers and retail chains and a survey of hundreds of retailers.

The CMA found that Tesco as a retailer and Booker as a wholesaler – supplying to caterers, independent and symbol group retailers including Premier, Londis and Budgens – do not compete head-to-head in most of their activities. In particular, Tesco does not supply the catering sector to which Booker makes over 30% of its sales.

The group, recognising that Tesco's shops nevertheless compete with Booker-supplied shops, considered the impact of the merger in every local area where a Tesco and a Booker-supplied shop are both present (over 12,000 shops). It did this to examine whether, in any of these areas, it might be profitable for the merged company to raise prices or reduce service levels either in retail or wholesale. The CMA has provisionally concluded that the level of competition in the grocery wholesale and retail markets would be sufficient to defeat such a strategy.

A number of competing wholesalers expressed concern that Booker would benefit from improved suppliers' terms after the merger, making it difficult for them to continue to compete. They argued that as a result, in the longer term, Booker might be able to raise prices to the shops that it supplies.

The CMA found that it was likely Booker would be able to negotiate better terms from a number of its suppliers for some of its groceries, and that it was likely to pass on some of the benefits of these savings to the shops that it supplies. This might increase competition in the wholesale market, as well as reducing prices for shoppers. However, the CMA also concluded that the wholesale market would remain competitive in the longer term, noting that Booker's share of the UK grocery wholesaling market – at less than 20% – was not sufficient to justify the longer-term concerns.

Simon Polito, Chair of the inquiry group, said:

Millions of people use their local supermarket or convenience store to buy their groceries or essentials. Strong competition in the market ensures that shoppers can choose the best deal for them.

Our investigation has found that existing competition is

sufficiently strong in both the wholesale and retail grocery sectors to ensure that the merger between Tesco and Booker will not lead to higher prices or a reduced service for supermarket and convenience shoppers.

The CMA opened its phase 1 investigation into the merger in May. At the end of June, the companies requested a 'fast track' referral to the next stage of the investigation.

This is a provisional decision and the CMA is now inviting further comment and evidence before coming to a final view.

Notes for editors

1. Tesco operates more than 3,000 stores across the UK. Booker supplies services to over 5,000 'symbol' stores as well as to thousands of independent retailers and caterers.
2. A 'symbol' store is an independent grocery retailer operating under a brand owned by a wholesaler. The retailer is usually required to purchase some of its wholesale supplies from the brand owner, in return for use of the brand and other supporting services. Booker's symbol group brands are Premier, Londis, Budgens and Family Shopper.
3. The provisional findings also found that Booker operates a very small number of shops. In the areas where Tesco and Booker compete, the CMA has found that existing competition is likely to prevent prices from going up.
4. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
5. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's independent panel members. The appointed inquiry group is the decision-maker on phase 2 inquiries. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business. The membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience (including industry experience).
6. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6337.

Government response: Government response to The Mendoza Review: an independent review of museums in England

I am delighted to welcome the The Mendoza Review: an independent review of museums in England, and pleased to respond on behalf of Government.

In September 2016, the 'Mendoza Review' was launched with a public consultation. This met an earlier Government commitment, made in the Culture White Paper published by DCMS in March 2016, to a wide-ranging review, the first in ten years, of national, local, and regional museums. As the Culture White Paper said: Museums are jewels in our national crown and we want to ensure that they remain so and are as best-placed as they can be to continue supporting our aspirations for access, place-making and soft power.

The consultation was a great success, with over 1500 responses. The Government is grateful to those members of the public and museums and heritage sector staff who came forward to explain what museums mean to them. We would also like to thank the dozens of museums that warmly welcomed Neil and his team for visits and discussions, and the hundreds of people within the museums world who spoke to him, attended roundtable events, and provided views and information. We must particularly recognise Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund, which have worked closely with Neil, commissioned data and research to inform the Review, and will be responsible for taking forward many of the recommendations.

I am pleased to say that the Government accepts the report's recommendations and will begin work to prioritise and make them a reality. They are a sensible set of ideas, particularly within the current financial circumstances and in light of Britain's exit from the European Union, designed to streamline and improve how Government and its Arm's-Length Bodies operates with, for, and towards the museums sector – helping them to remain 'jewels in our national crown'.

Since becoming the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism in June 2017, it has been a pleasure to visit museums and galleries around the country and meet with their leaders, volunteers, and visitors. I have been impressed with the breadth of work, from the major global stars like the British Museum and Tate directly sponsored by my Department, to museums like the Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle, the Geffrye Museum in East London, and the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. I have heard about their challenges, and equally their successes.

We can be proud that we have world-leading museums in England. But, there is

no room for complacency. There are changing audience expectations, a greater need for museums as spaces of personal and community reflection and exploration, and opportunities in digital technology that need to be seized. We want to see museums that are strong and valued parts of people's lives, whose staff and visitors are diverse, and that protect, research, and share their collections. And we want to support museums to be at the centre of civic and economic development, helping our towns and cities succeed and individuals to live healthy and happy lives.

I am keen to recognise and celebrate the great work already underway, and to make sure that Government is doing all it can to support museums and enable them to succeed in today's world. Amongst the many important issues the Mendoza Review highlights, we have noted three particularly key points:

The Review found a very diverse and successful sector. It is undeniable that there are challenges, but museums are adapting with excellent examples of innovation and resilience all over the country. The Review sets out key priorities for the sector to enable it to take advantage of opportunities from collections, digital, diversifying workforces, and other areas. I look forward to working with ACE and HLF on ensuring work on these priorities is encouraged.

It is very interesting to see for the first time the money the taxpayer puts into museums shown together and, for the most part, quantified. As budgets continue to be tight, we need to make this money work as hard as possible for museums and the public. My role, which for the first time brings together culture and heritage, and sponsorship of ACE and HLF, offers us an opportunity to improve central Government's service to and funding of museums and ensure, as much as is possible, that public investment is effective, streamlined across the different awarding bodies, and directed towards agreed priorities.

A Government priority for museums, and all of arts and culture, is making sure that our outstanding heritage can be enjoyed by everyone, all over the country. The national museums my Department sponsors already do great work with many museums across England, the UK and internationally, but they can do even more. They need to align their work so there is a fair spread of national collections objects, exhibitions, and expertise being offered to other museums. So I am pleased to see recommended a partnership framework for how the nationals, ACE and HLF support the rest of the sector, especially outside London. Combined with the recommendations in the Strategic Review of DCMS-sponsored Museums, which Neil Mendoza has simultaneously led and which the Government also publishes today, this should ensure that national museum activity is joined-up, forward-looking, and supportive of our collective priorities.

The recommendations in the Mendoza Review create a solid foundation for how Government will do a better job at putting in place the conditions museums need to serve their audiences, care for their collections, and have sustainable futures as a key part of their local communities and economies.

I will take a close interest in the implementation of the Review within my

Department and with our ALBs, and look forward to helping all our museums continue to prosper, flourish, and provide immense enjoyment and knowledge to researchers and the public.

Press release: The first review of England's museums in over a decade recommends practical guidance for museums and galleries to thrive and grow

The Museums Action Plan will help England's museums and galleries to thrive and grow.

The review asks Arts Council England (ACE) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to show how they will deliver nine key priorities that will enable museums to diversify audiences, contribute to the identity of their local area and become more accessible.

Led by creative industry entrepreneur Neil Mendoza on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the review also recommends that DCMS and its sponsored museums and galleries develop a partnership framework to improve how they work with museums across England, particularly in sharing expertise and ensuring the national collection is accessible to people throughout the country.

The review has identified 16 different sources of public funding and support that have been granted regularly to the museum sector over the last 10 years. This includes investment from central government, local authorities and the National Lottery as well as VAT refunds and the acceptance in Lieu and Cultural Gifts Scheme.

The nine key priorities that the Mendoza Review recommends that DCMS, ACE and HLF include in the Museums Action Plan are:

- Helping adapt to today's funding environment
- Improving curation and management of collections so that they are accessible to the public
- Growing and diversifying audiences

- Ensuring museums contribute to the priorities of the local area
- Delivering cultural education
- Developing future leaders
- Diversifying the workforce of museums
- Increasing digital capacity and using digital technology to create innovative and engaging exhibition content
- Work internationally

Neil Mendoza, author of *The Mendoza Review: an independent review of museums in England*, said:

England has a world-class museum sector. Museums play a vital role in the cultural life of the country. Museums sit at the heart of our towns, cities and communities. They are also our most successful tourist attractions. Their curators care for collections for all of us now and for future generations.

National and local government are both deeply involved in this important sector. This review sets out a series of recommendations to government and its key strategic and funding agencies (like Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund) requiring them to work closely together to help our museums flourish.

John Glen, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism said:

I welcome this report from Neil Mendoza and want to thank him for his work. I am pleased that it has found such a successful and dynamic sector, and we can be proud that the UK boasts so many world-class museums.

The Museums Action Plan will provide additional leadership and expertise to local and regional museums to help them grow and thrive, increase audiences and ensure a sustainable future for this important sector.

The Mendoza Review found evidence of a “strong, dynamic” sector that is responding well to an increasingly competitive visitor market, with museums becoming more entrepreneurial and seeking other forms of income through

cafes, shops and educational services.

More than half of England's adults visited a museum last year and the sector now employs around 33,000 people. England is also home to three of the world's most visited museums.

The review received over 1,500 responses from museums and members of the public describing what museums mean to them. Arts Council England (ACE) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) worked closely with the review team, commissioning data and research to inform the review and will be responsible for taking many of the recommendations forward.