A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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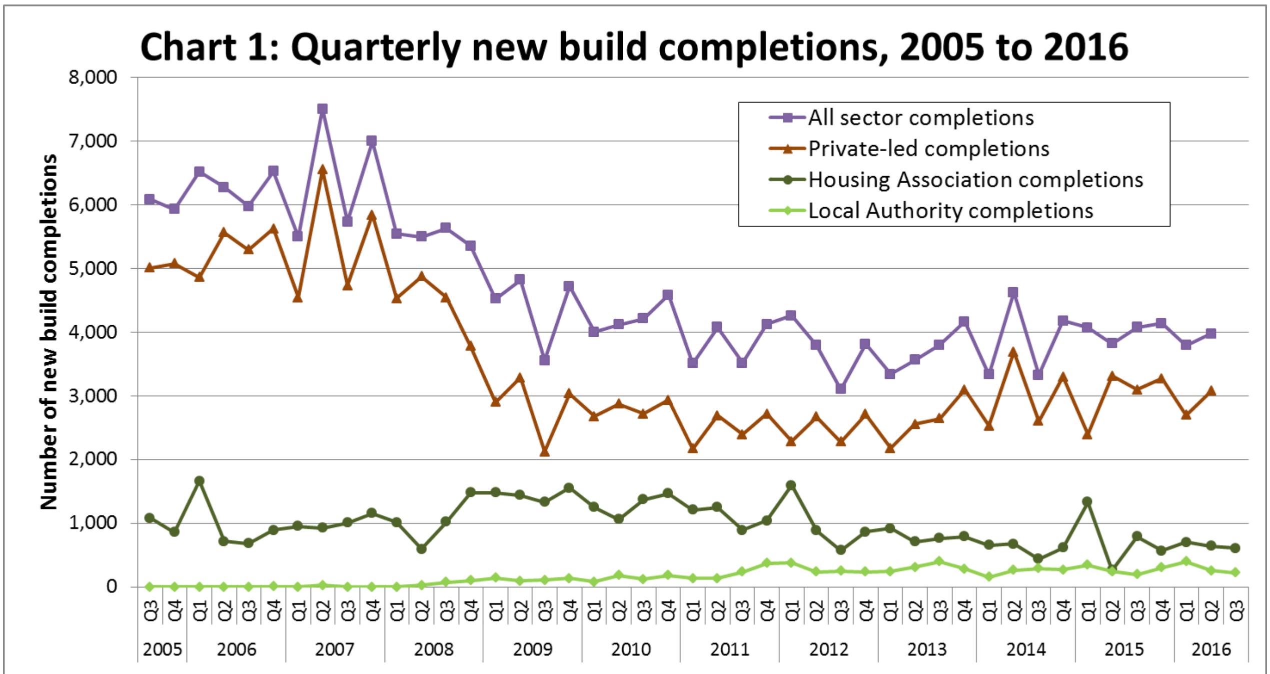
PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Housing Statistics for Scotland Quarterly Update (published 13 December 2016)

This quarterly statistical publication provides information on recent trends in:

- **New build housing starts and completions** by sector (up to end June 2016, with more up-to-date social sector information available up to end September 2016)
- **The Affordable Housing Supply Programme** (up to end September 2016)
- **Local authority house sales including Right to Buy** (up to end June 2016)
- **Long term empty properties and Second Homes** (as at September 2016)

The background data used in this document can be found in the new house building, Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP), local authority house sales and long term empty properties and second homes web tables, along with an explanatory note.



Key Points

New Build Housing – All Sectors

There were 3,973 **new build homes completed** between April and June 2016; a 4% increase on the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 15,991, up 4% (591 homes) compared to the 15,400 completed in the previous year.

There were 3,968 **new build homes started** between April and June 2016; 13% fewer than the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 16,450 which is down by 4% (681 homes) compared to the 17,131 homes started in the previous year.

New Build Housing – Private-led Housing

Between April and June 2016, 3,078 **private sector led homes** were **completed**; down 7% on the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 12,145, which is 5% (537 homes) higher than the 11,608 completions in the previous year.

There were 3,348 **private sector led starts** between April and June 2016, 17% down on the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year ending June 2016 to 11,810, which is 11% (1,433 homes) less than the 13,243 starts in the previous year.

New Build Housing – Social Sector Housing (Housing Association and Local Authority combined)

There were 895 **social housing completions** between April and June 2016; 77% more than the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 3,846. This is a 1% increase on the 3,792 social sector completions in the previous year.

Meanwhile, 620 **social sector homes** were **started** between April and June 2016; 20% higher than the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 4,640. This is a 19% increase on the 3,888 social sector starts in the previous year.

More up-to-date figures show that, in July to September 2016, 832 social sector homes were completed (153 fewer than the 985 completions in the same quarter in 2015), and 1,282 were started (44% more than the same quarter in the previous year). This brings the total completions for the 12 months to end September 2016 to 3,693 (a 9% decrease on the 4,052 social sector homes completed in the previous year). Total starts over the 12 months to end September 2016 are now at 5,030 (23% more than the 4,089 started in the previous year).

New Build Housing – Housing Association Homes

There were 639 **housing association completions** between April and June 2016, more than double the 263 completions in the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 2,696, a 2% (46 homes) increase on the 2,650 completions over the previous year.

There were 277 **housing association approvals** between April and June 2016; 55% more than the same quarter in the previous year. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 3,004. This is an increase of 16% (418 homes) on the 2,586 approvals in the previous year.

More up-to-date figures show that a total of 610 Housing Association homes were completed between July and September 2016, 23% fewer completions than in the same period in the previous year (790 homes). This brings the total completions for the 12 months to end September 2016 to 2,516, which is a decrease of 16% on the 3,001 homes completed in the previous year. A total of 803 Housing Association homes were approved between July and September 2016, more than double the 332 approvals in the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total approvals for the 12 months to end September 2016 to 3,475, a 33% increase on the 2,618 approvals in the previous year.

New Build Housing – Local Authority Homes

There were 256 **local authority completions** between April and June 2016, which is 5% more than the number that were completed in the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year ending June 2016 to 1,150. This is a 1% (8 homes) increase on the 1,142 completions the previous year.

There were 343 **local authority starts** between April and June 2016; 1% higher than the number in the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for year ending June 2016 to 1,636. This is a 26% (334 homes) increase on the 1,302 starts in the previous year.

More up-to-date figures show that, between July and September 2016, 222 local authority houses were completed (27 more homes than the same quarter in the previous year), and 479 were started (81 fewer homes than the same quarter in the previous year). This brings the total completions for the year to end September 2016 to 1,177, which is 12% higher than the previous year. Total starts for the 12 months to end September 2016 now stands at 1,555 which is an increase of 6% on the 1,471 local authority homes completed in the previous year.

Affordable Housing Supply – up to end September 2016

Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) statistics reflect the broader supply of affordable homes (i.e. for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership) and include off-the-shelf purchases and rehabilitations as well as new builds.

The latest quarterly statistics for the year to end September 2016 show that **affordable housing supply completions** have totalled 6,624, down 7% (484 homes) on the previous year. This includes decreases in social rent completions (down by 10% or 433 homes) and affordable rent completions (down by 14% or 142 homes), along with an increase in affordable home ownership completions (up by 5% or 91 homes).

There were 8,786 **affordable housing approvals** over the year up to end September 2016, up by 34% or 2,250 homes compared to the previous year. This includes increases in social rent approvals (up by 29% or 1,279 homes), affordable rent approvals (up by 38% or 349 homes), and affordable home ownership approvals (up 48% or 622 homes).

There were 8,192 new **affordable houses started** in the year to end September 2016, up by 35% or 2,110 homes compared to the previous year. This includes increases in social rent starts (up by 40% or 1,543 homes) and affordable home ownership starts (up by 46% or 605 homes), and a decrease in affordable rent starts (down by 4% or 38 homes).

Quarterly affordable housing supply statistics are used to inform the Scottish Government target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 homes for social rent, over the period 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Local Authority Right to Buy Applications and Sales

The Right to Buy scheme closed to all new applicants on 31 July 2016. The most recent figures available for applications and sales are for April to June 2016. During this period there were 2,961 **Right to Buy applications** (more than double the 1,099 applications in the same quarter in the previous year) and 505 **sales** (58% higher than in the same quarter in the previous year).

Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

The total number of **long term empty properties and second homes** has decreased by 1,871 properties (3%) from 63,736 in September 2015 to 61,865 in September 2016.

Contents

New Build Housing – All sectors

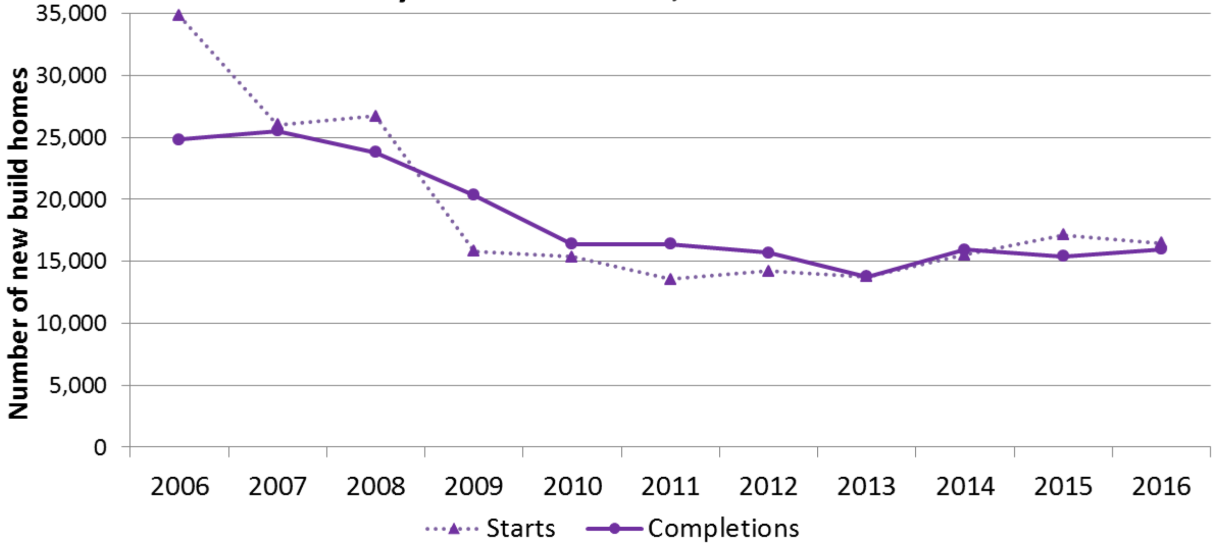
The new-build section of this document provides figures on the number of homes started (when the foundations are begun) and completed (when a building inspector deems the property complete).

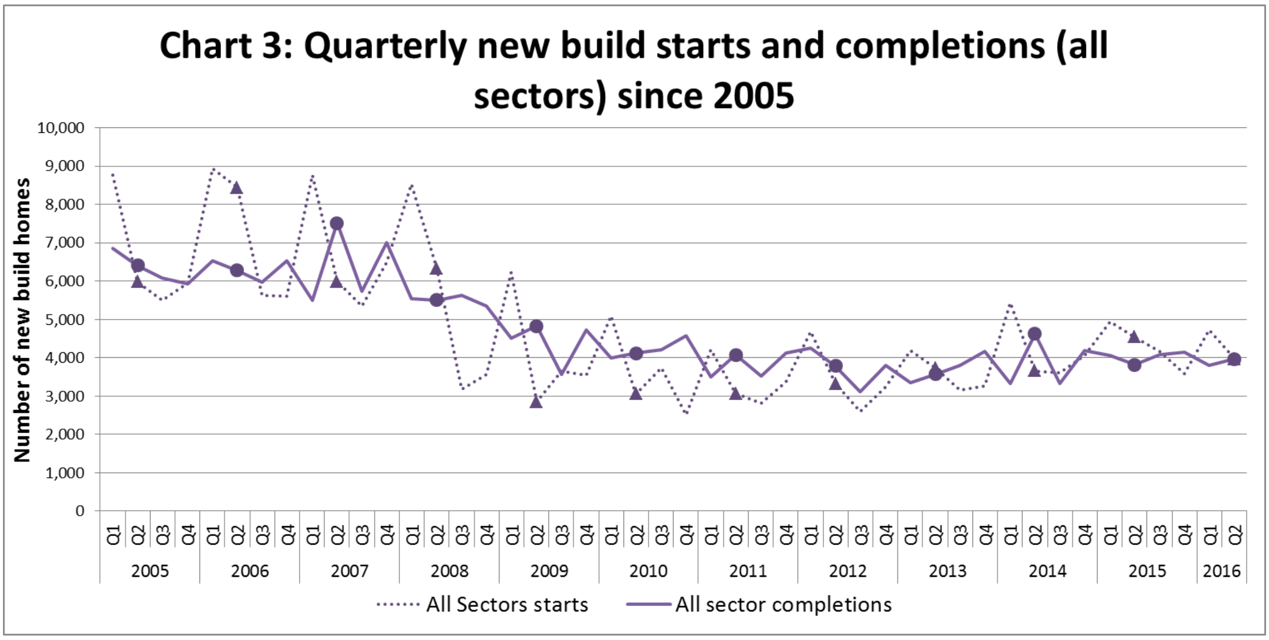
Figures are presented for homes built on privately led (referred to throughout as private sector), local authority led (referred to as local authority sector) and housing association led (referred to as housing association sector) sites. For the private sector the latest information available is for the quarter ending June 2016. Whilst more up-to-date information is available for local authority and housing association new builds, findings for these sectors are mainly presented up to June 2016 to simplify comparisons between sectors.

The figures have not been seasonally adjusted and so commentary tends to compare the latest quarter with the same quarter the previous year. To help with this, Quarter 2 figures (from April to June) have been highlighted in the charts to allow easy comparison over time. Some of the peaks in the number of starts in Quarter 1 (January to March) each year are due to large numbers of housing association approvals being granted near the end of the financial year.

Chart 1 (see page 1) shows the number of private sector, social sector and total new homes completed each quarter since 2005, whilst Charts 2 and 3 (below) show annual and quarterly trends, respectively, in starts and completions across all sectors.

Chart 2: Annual all sector new build starts and completions, years to end June, 2006 to 2016





Trends over the last ten years

Charts 1 to 3 all clearly show the impact of the recession in the second half of the last decade, with private sector led completions in particular falling throughout 2008 and the start of 2009 (years to end June). Completions for all sectors fell more gradually between 2010 and 2013, before increasing to 2014, following which completions have been at similar levels for 2015 and 2016.

Trends to end June 2016

There were 3,973 new build homes completed between April and June 2016; a 4% increase on the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 15,991, up 4% (591 homes) compared to the 15,400 completed in the previous year.

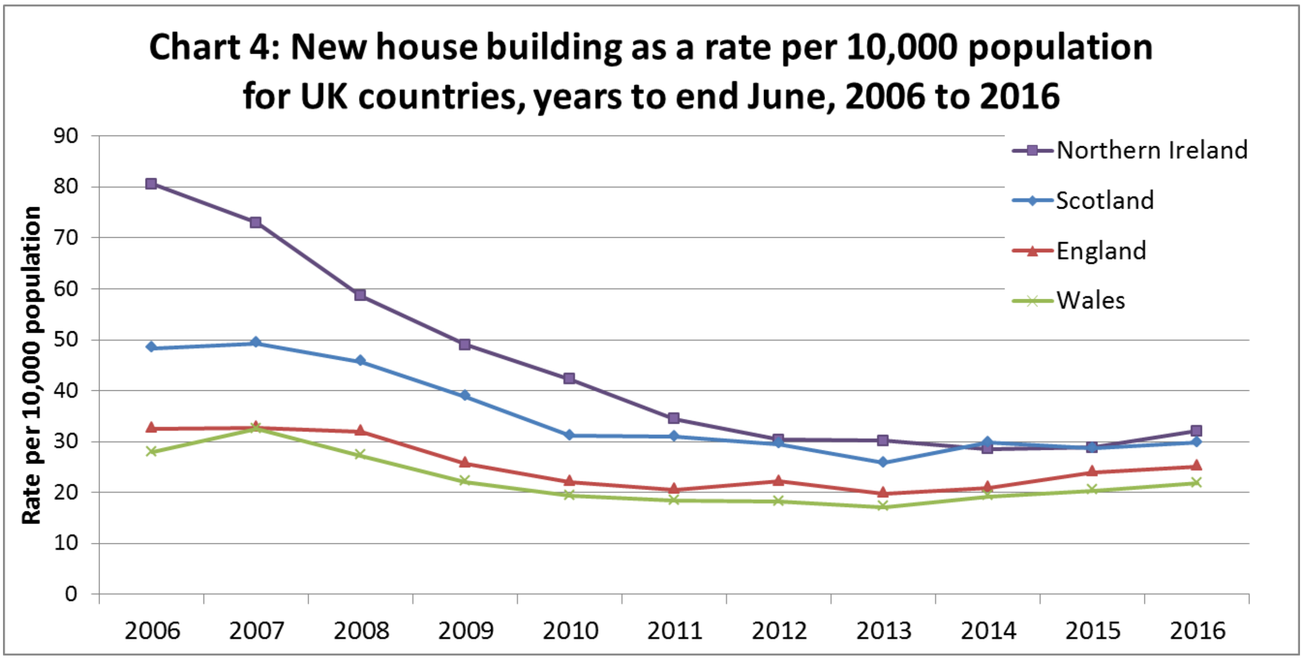
There were 3,968 new build homes started between April and June 2016; 13% fewer than the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 16,450 which is down by 4% (681 homes) compared to the 17,131 homes started in the previous year.

Comparison with the rest of the UK from 2006 to 2016

Each of the countries of the UK produces their own statistics on new build housing and all use broadly consistent definitions. New build statistics for each of the countries of the UK, as well as for Great Britain and the UK as a whole can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building.

As Chart 4 shows, the rate of house building completions in Scotland has been above that of England and Wales throughout the 2006 to 2016 period (years to end June). The rate of house building completions in Scotland has been below that of Northern Ireland between 2006 and 2013, after which the rates have been similar although the rate in Northern Ireland was higher in 2016.

The 15,991 homes completed in Scotland in the year to end June 2016 equates to a rate of 30 per 10,000 population. This is the slightly lower than Northern Ireland (32), but higher than the equivalent rates in England (25) and Wales (22).

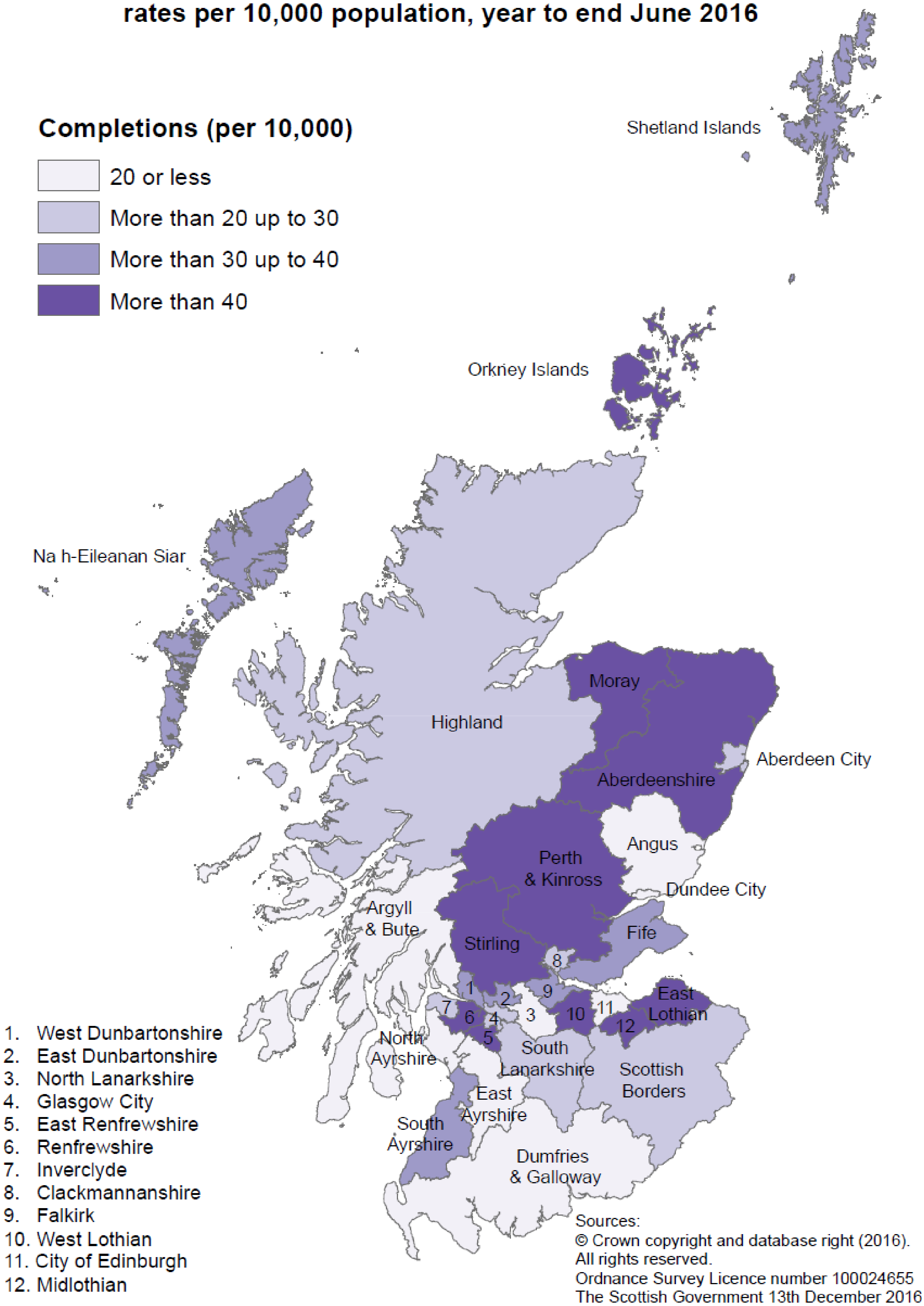


Sub-national figures for the year to end June 2016

The information on new build housing in Scotland is collected and published at local authority level. Map A, below, shows new house building in the year to end June 2016, as a rate per 10,000 population.

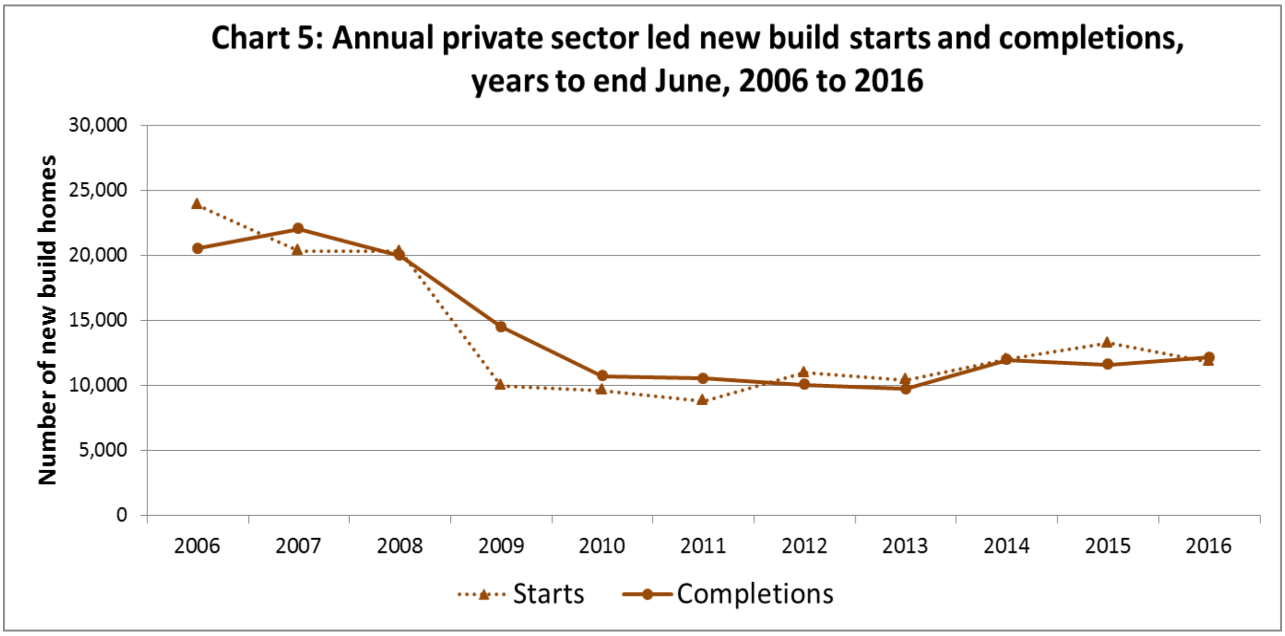
In the year to end June 2016 the highest new build rates were observed in Midlothian, Aberdeenshire, Perth & Kinross, East Renfrewshire and Stirling. The lowest rates were observed in Argyll & Bute, Angus, Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire.

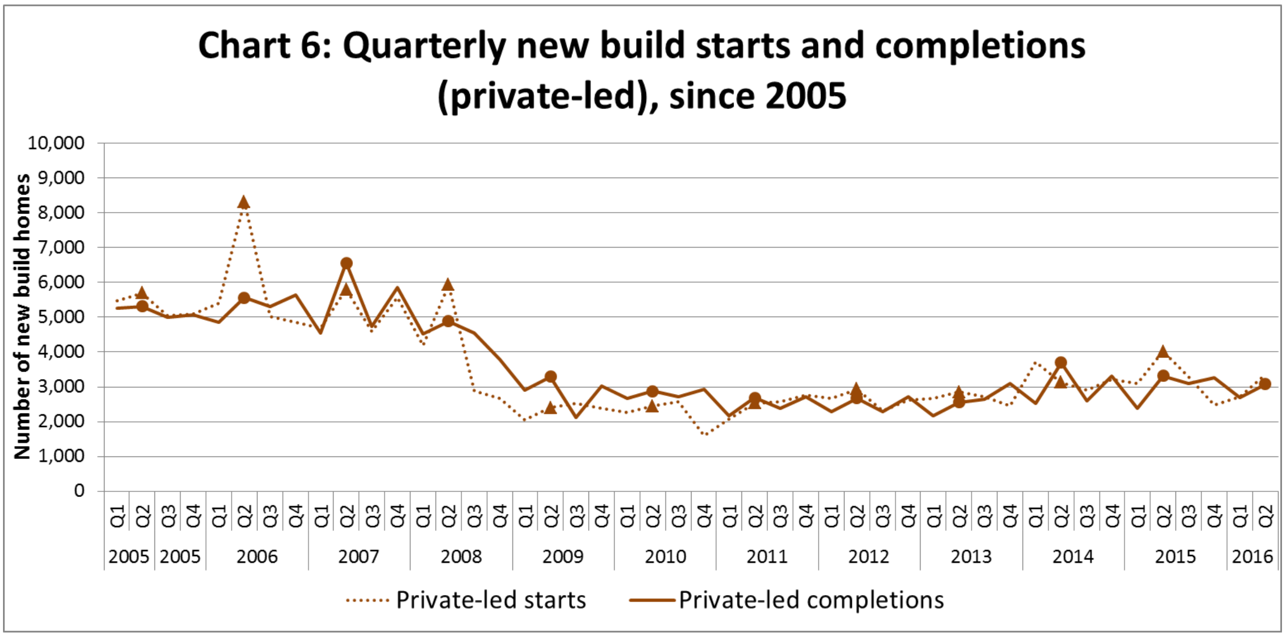
Map A: New build housing - all sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end June 2016



New Build Housing – Private-led Housing

The private sector is the biggest contributor to overall house building, accounting for more than three-quarters (76%) of all homes completed in the 12 months to end June 2016.





Trends over the last ten years

Between 2006 and 2008 (years to end June) the number of private sector homes started were around 20,000 to 24,000 while completions were around 20,000 to 22,000. Private sector led new build housing was hit particularly hard by the recession. The number of homes completed dropped steeply throughout 2008 then continued to decrease more gradually to under 10,000 in 2013. Since then the number of homes completed has increased overall (with a slight dip in 2015), bringing completions through the year to almost 12,000 in the year ending June 2014 and just over 11,500 in 2015 and over 12,000 in 2016.

In September 2013 the Scottish Government introduced the Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme which has aimed to support buyers purchasing a new build home and to stimulate the house building industry. Following this, the Help to Buy (Scotland) Affordable New Build and Help to Buy (Scotland) Smaller Developers schemes were launched on 21 January 2016. Further information on the schemes, along with monitoring information setting out numbers of sales, is available at http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/BuyingSelling/help-to-buy.

Trends to end June 2016

Between April and June 2016, 3,078 private sector led homes were completed; down 7% on the same quarter in 2015 (see Chart 6). This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 12,145, which is 5% (537 homes) higher than the 11,608 completions in the previous year.

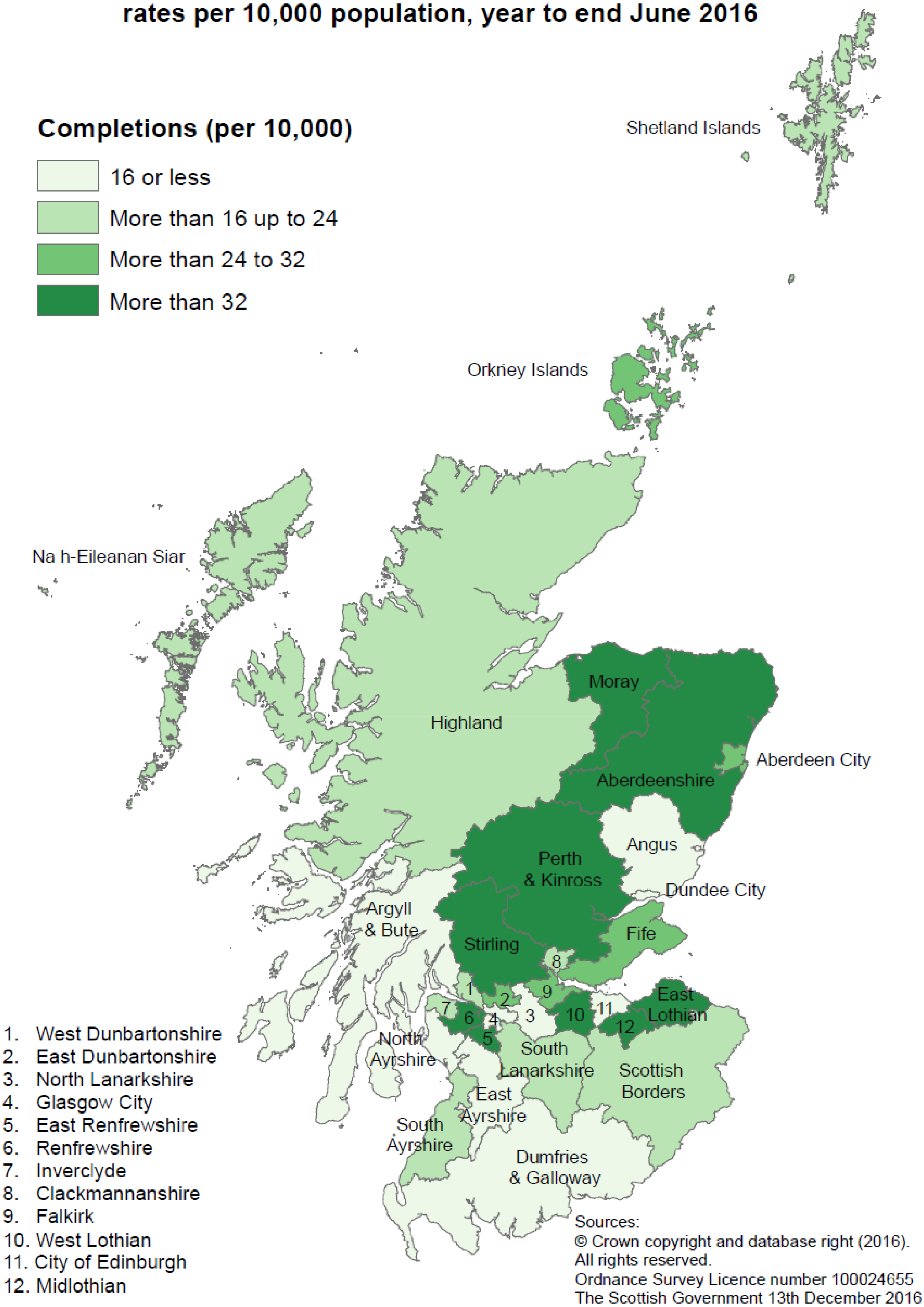
Meanwhile there were 3,348 private sector led starts between April and June 2016, 17% down on the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year ending June 2016 to 11,810, which is 11% (1,433 homes) less than the 13,243 starts in the previous year.

Sub-national figures for the year to end June 2016

Map B shows the rates per 10,000 head of population of private sector led new build completions in each local authority for the year to end June 2016.

The highest completion rates have been in Midlothian, Aberdeenshire, Perth & Kinross and East Renfrewshire. The lowest rates meanwhile, have been in Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Angus and East Ayrshire.

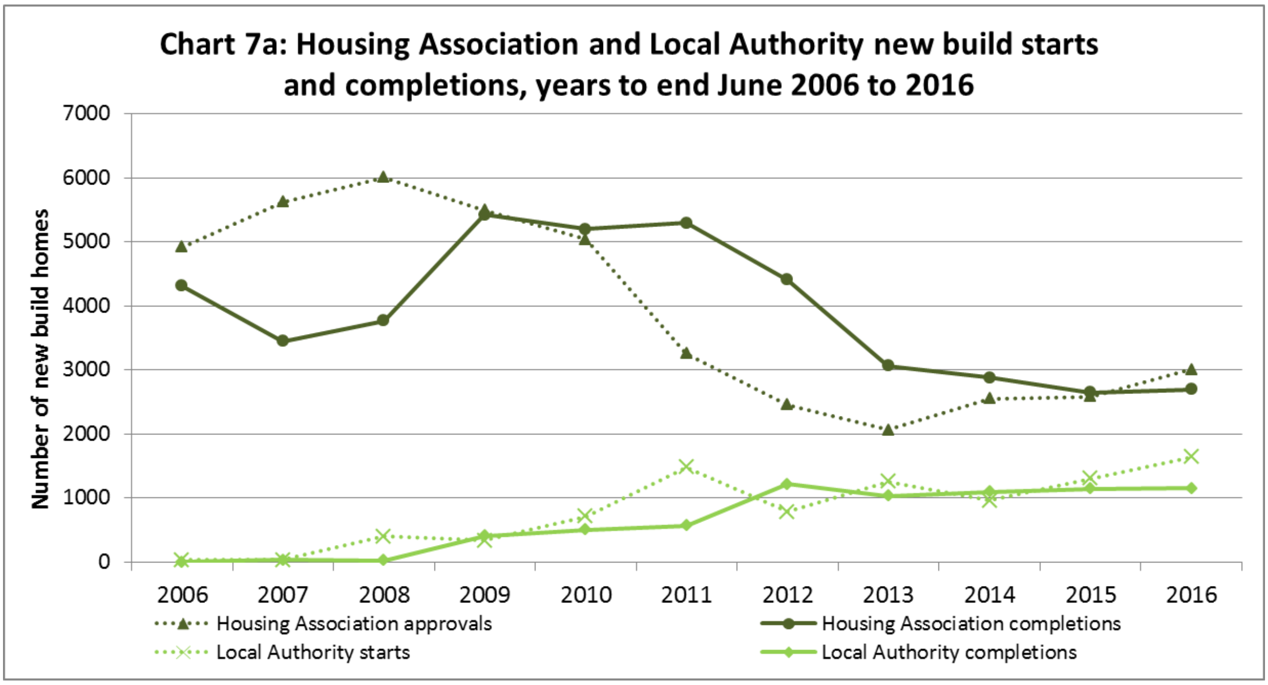
Map B: New build housing - private sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end June 2016

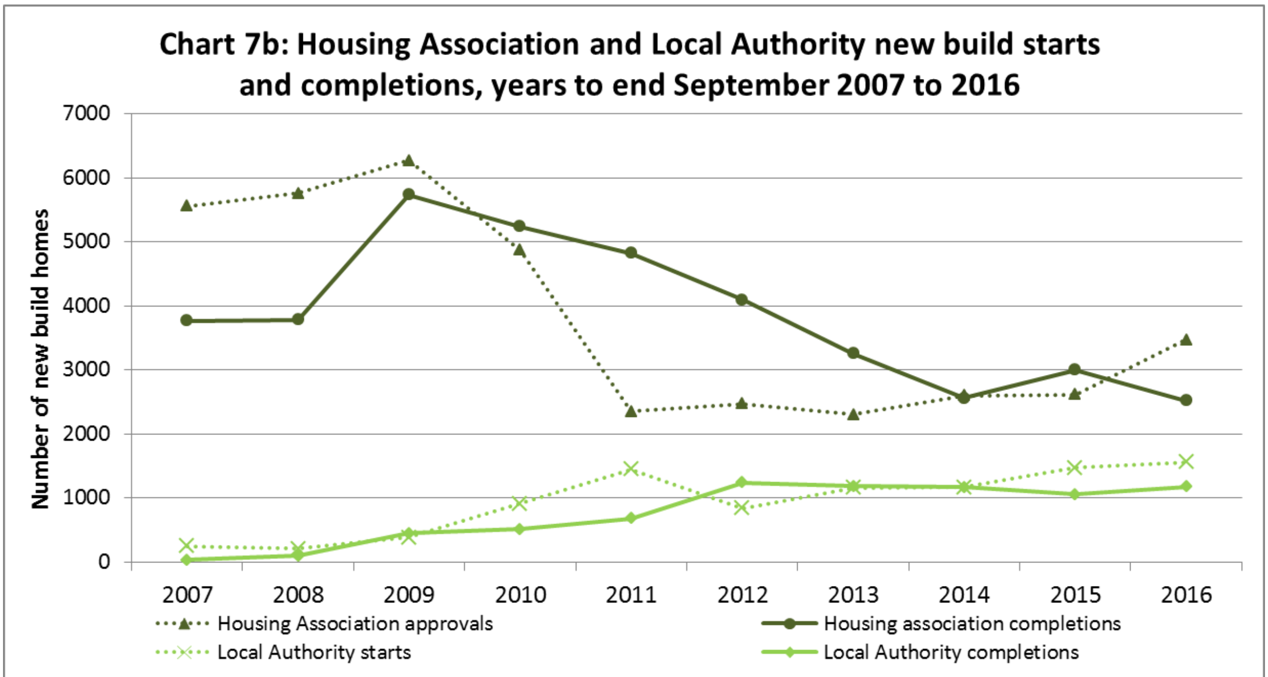


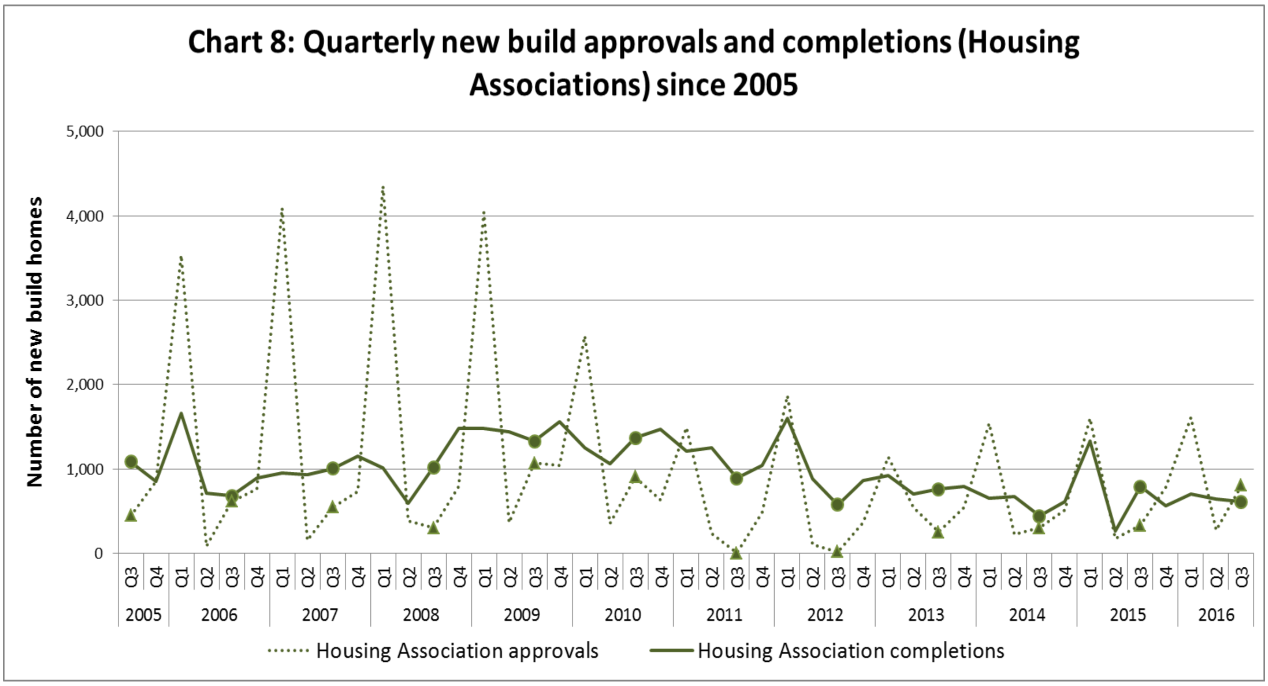
New Build Housing – Social Sector

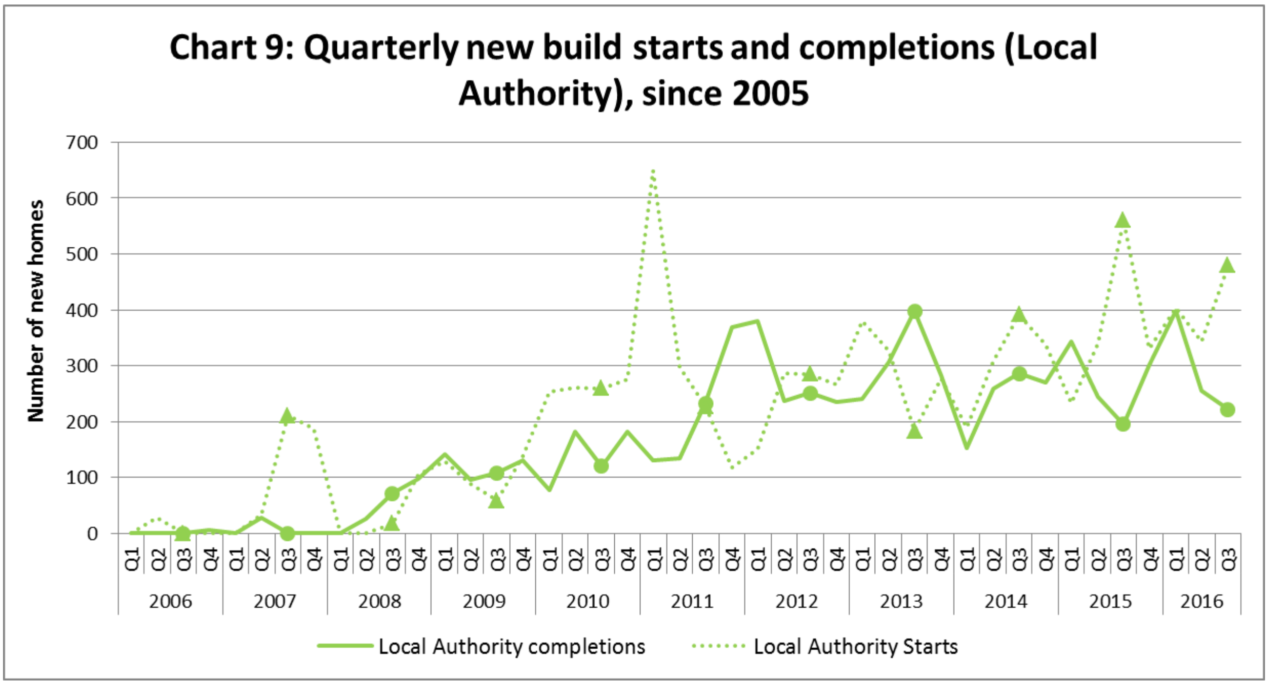
Social sector housing consists of local authority and housing association housing, and has accounted for just under a quarter (24%) of all new build homes completed over the 12 months to end June 2016. Social sector figures are collected a quarter ahead of those for the private sector meaning that figures are available up to the end of September 2016. However, to enable easier understanding of how each sector contributes to the all sector totals described previously, figures are also presented for the same time period to end June (although quarterly charts include the latest quarter's data).

The more up-to-date figures for the social sector are presented later in this section.









Trends over the last ten years

Chart 7a shows the number of local authority and housing association homes started and completed each year (to end June) since 2005, whilst Chart 7b shows the same information but up to end September (the most recent information available). Charts 8 and 9 show quarterly figures for housing associations and local authorities, respectively.

Social sector house building has not followed the same pattern as the private sector over time as the number of homes being built did not suddenly drop in 2008 following the recession.

Between 2006 and 2008 (years to end June) the number of housing association completions were around 3,400 to 4,300 each year before increasing to over 5,400 in 2009. Completions then decreased from 5,300 in 2011 to 2,650 in 2015, with a slight increase in the most recent year to almost 2,700.

The number of housing association approvals meanwhile increased from around 4,900 to 6,000 from 2006 to 2008 (years to end June), before falling to around 2,100 in 2013. The figures have since increased to around 3,000 in the year ending June 2016.

Very few local authority homes were built in 2006 and 2007 (years to end June). The number gradually increased from around 400 in the year ending June 2009 to over 1,200 in the year ending June 2012 and remained fairly steady since then. Local Authority housing has accounted for 7% of the total amount of new build homes completed across all sectors in the 12 months to end June 2016.

Trends to end June 2016

There were 895 social housing completions between April and June 2016; 77% more than the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 3,846. This is a 1% increase on the 3,792 social sector completions in the previous year.

Meanwhile, 620 social sector homes were started between April and June 2016; 20% higher than the same quarter in 2015. This brings the total for the year to end June 2016 to 4,640. This is a 19% increase on the 3,888 social sector starts in the previous year.

Sub-national figures for the year to end June 2016

Maps C and D show the rates of housing association and local authority new build completions in each local authority for the year to end June 2016. The housing stock of 6 local authorities (Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Na h-Eileanan Siar and Scottish Borders) has been transferred to housing associations and so these areas do not build new local authority houses.

In the year to end June 2016 rates of housing association new build completions were highest in Glasgow City, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Shetland Islands and Inverclyde, whilst no new housing association houses were built in East Ayrshire and Moray.

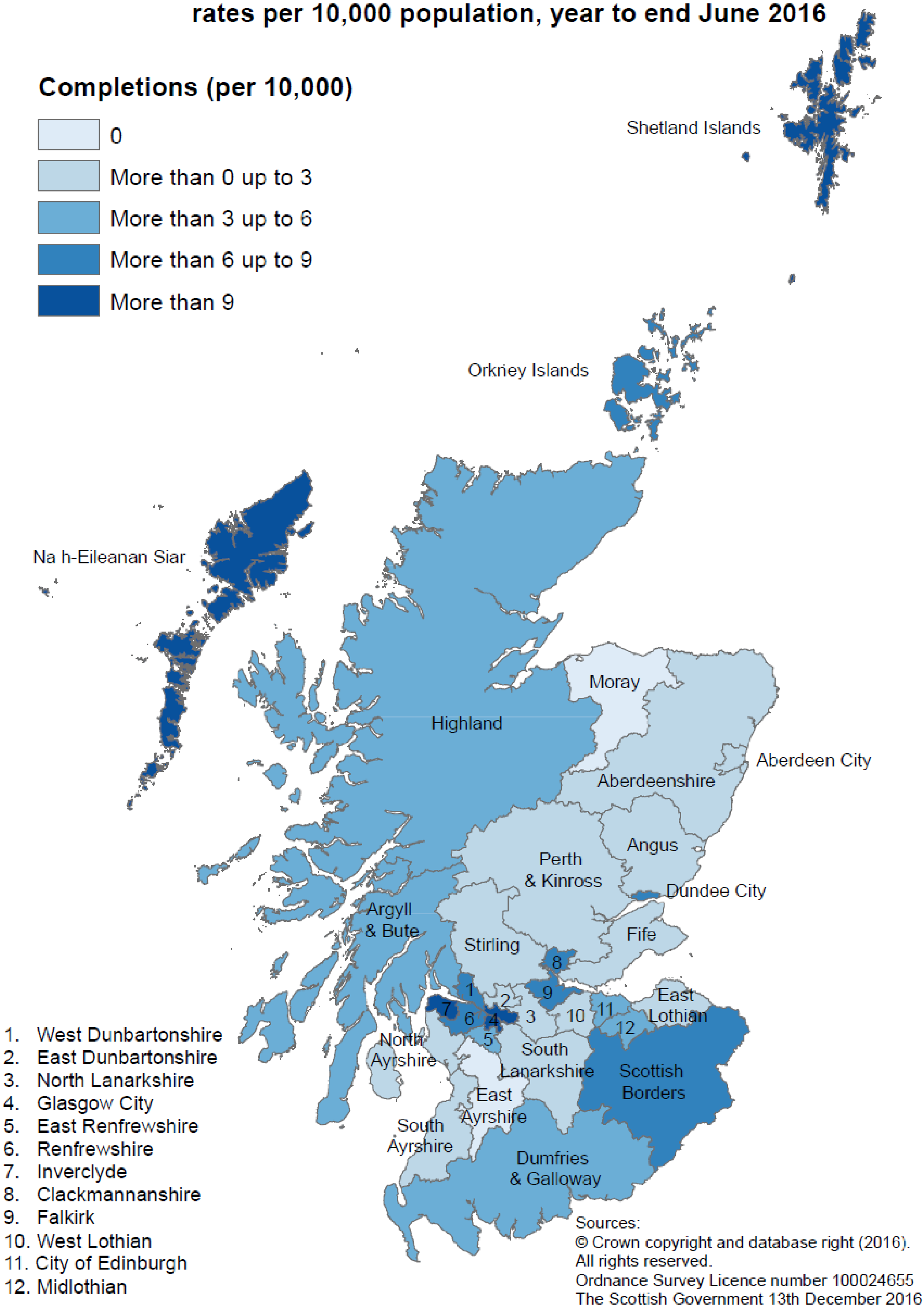
Meanwhile local authority new build rates were highest in the Orkney Islands, Moray, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire. As well as the 6 stock transfer authorities mentioned above, Aberdeen City, Dundee City, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and the Shetland Islands built no new homes in the year ending June 2016.

Latest data to end September 2016

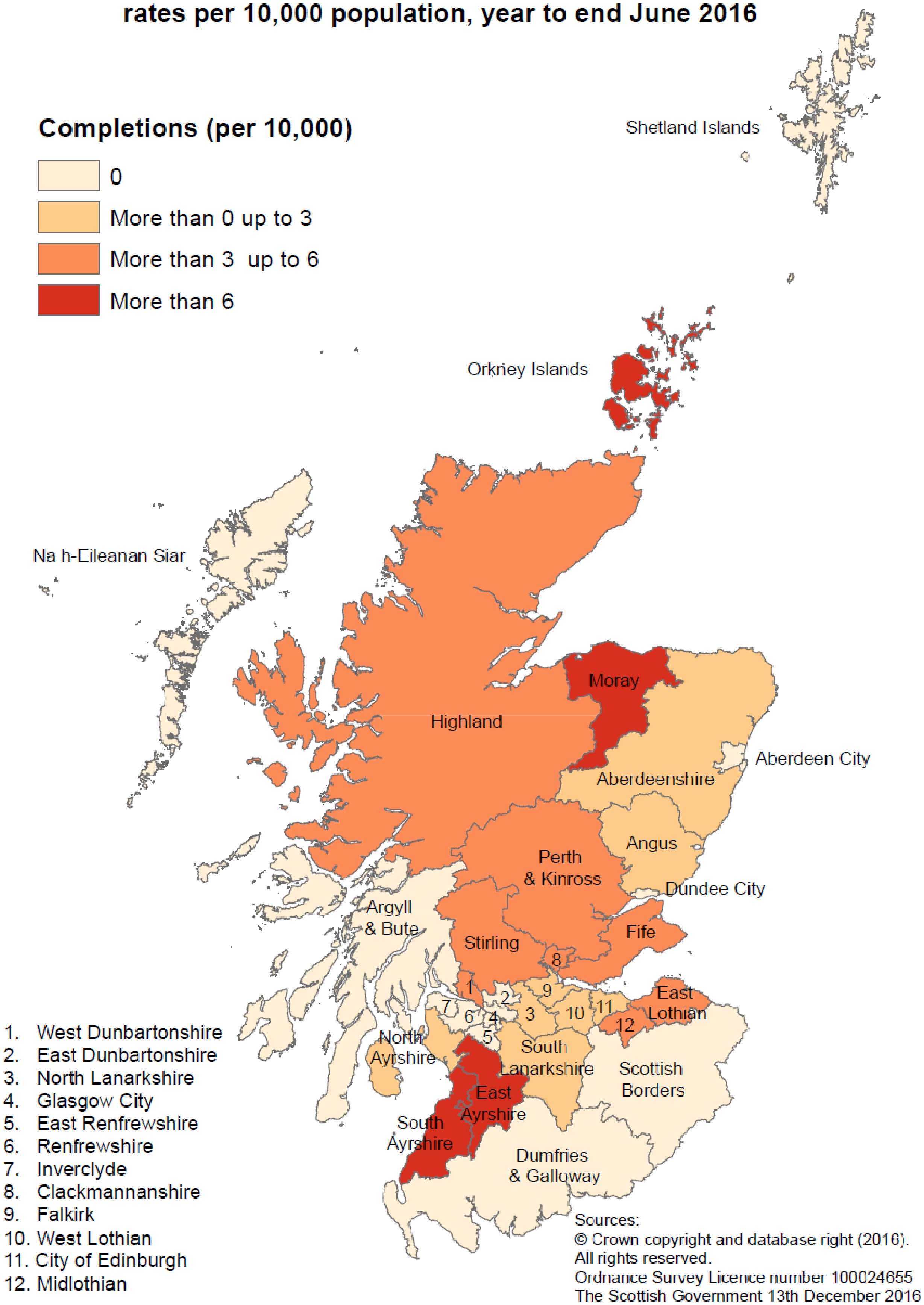
A total of 832 social sector homes were completed between July and September 2016, 16% fewer than the 985 homes completed in the same period in 2015. This brings the total for the 12 months to end September 2016 to 3,693, which is 9% fewer than the 4,052 completed in the previous year. The decrease in the 12 months to end September 2016 is mostly due to an decrease in Housing Association led completions, which decreased by 16%, whereas local authority led completions increased by 12%.

Meanwhile, 1,282 social sector homes were started between July and September 2016. This is up by 44% compared to the same quarter in the previous year. This brings the total for the 12 months to end September 2016 to 5,030 which is a 23% increase (941 homes) on the 4,089 starts in the previous year. The increase in the 12 months to end September 2016 is a result of Local Authority starts increasing by 84 homes and Housing Association approvals increasing by 857 homes (see Charts 8 and 9).

Map C: New build housing - housing association sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end June 2016



Map D: New build housing - local authority sector completions: rates per 10,000 population, year to end June 2016



Affordable Housing Supply up to end September 2016

Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) statistics reflect the broader supply of affordable homes (i.e. for social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership) and include off the shelf purchases and rehabilitations as well as new builds. The social rent new build element of this covers largely the same houses referred to in the social sector new build section of this report. Statistics for the AHSP are available up to the end of September 2016. As a result they have been presented here for the year to end September. This differs from the figures in much of the remainder of this report which cover years to end June.

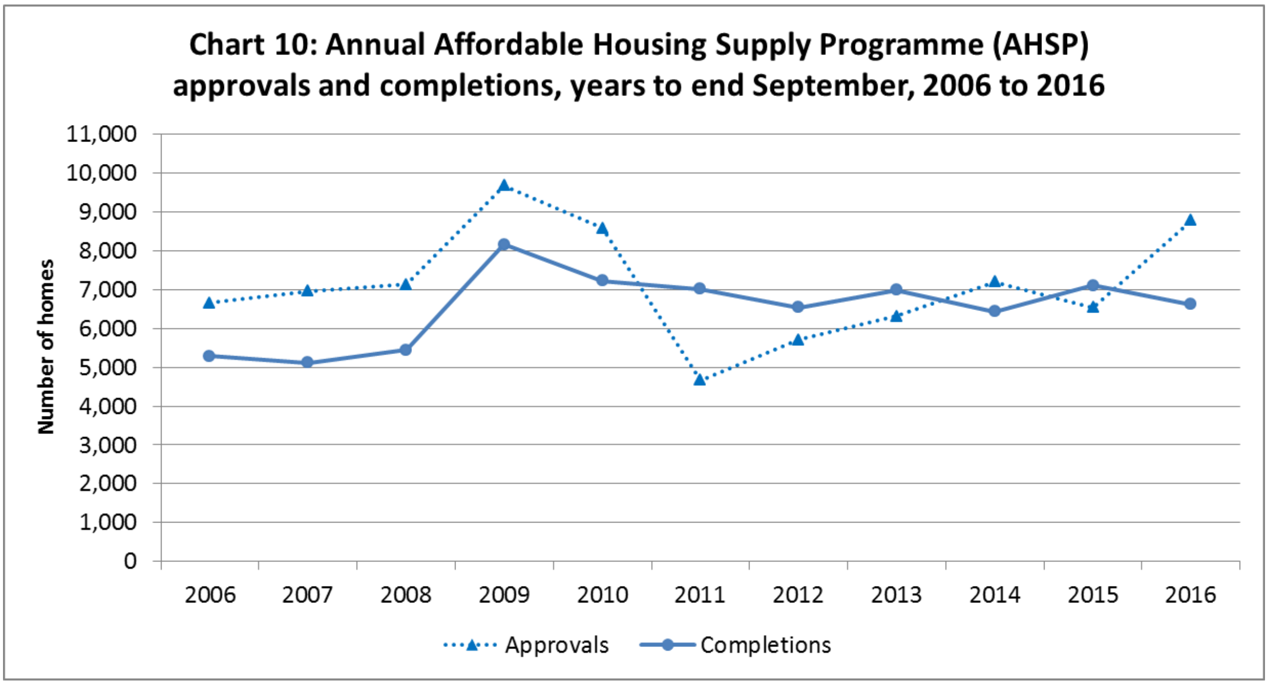
Changes in the funding programme in 2011 and 2012 impacted on the timing of affordable housing activity as well as the level of activity and this should be borne in mind when making comparisons over time.

Approvals, starts and completions are all measured for the AHSP. Approval is the point at which funding is granted and, along with completion, is a significant part of the administration process meaning that the data should be of good quality. Starts meanwhile can be recorded at any point in the development, for example when site clearance begins or any point up to the beginning of ground works for foundations. As a result approvals are generally deemed a better measure than starts for AHSP data.

Social Rent includes Housing Association Rent, Council House Rent as well as Home Owner Support Fund Rent.

Affordable Rent includes Mid-Market Rent (MMR), National Housing Trust (NHT) Rent as well as other programmes such as the Empty Homes Loan Fund (EHLF) and Rural Homes for Rent (RHfR).

Affordable Home Ownership includes Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE), New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE), Shared Ownership (LCHO) as well as other programmes such as Home Owner Support Fund Shared Equity.



A total of 1,583 affordable homes were completed in the quarter between July and September 2016, a 12% decrease, or 226 less homes than the same quarter last year. This brings the total for the year to end September 2016 to 6,624, down 7% on the 7,106 completions in the previous year.

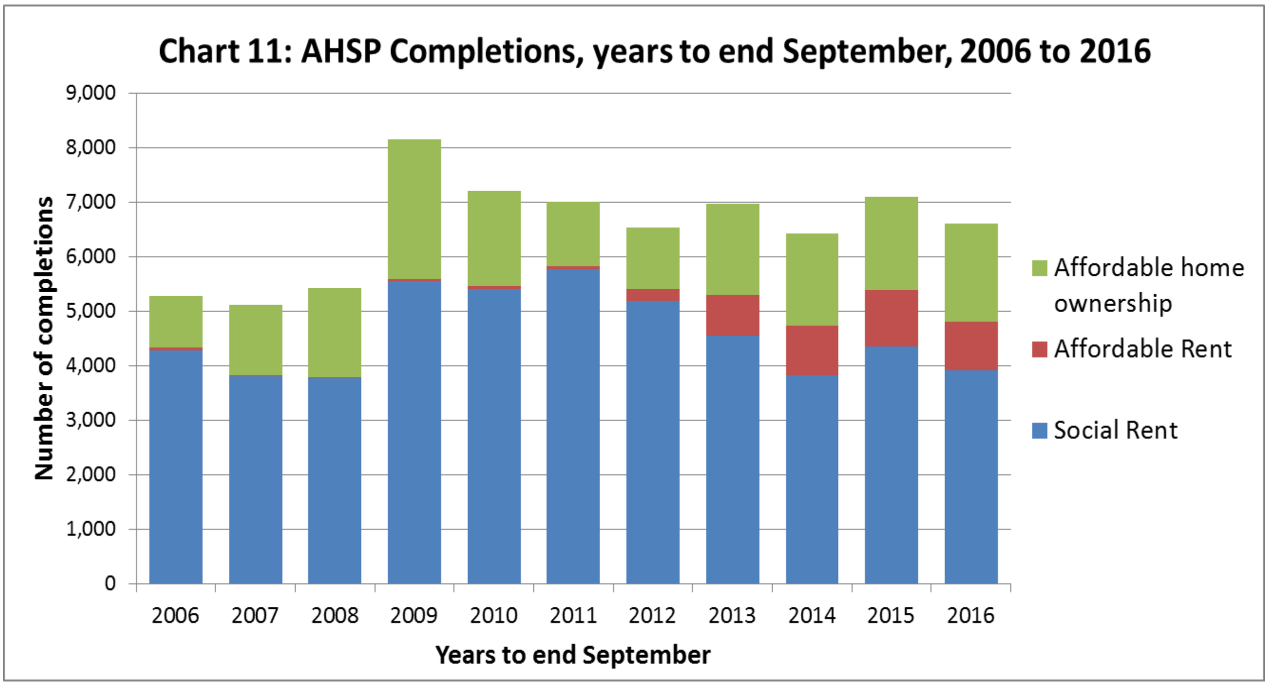
Between July and September 2016 a total of 1,979 affordable homes were approved. This is 719 (57%) more than in the same quarter in the previous year. It brings the total for the year to end September 2016 to 8,786 approvals, up 34% on the previous year.

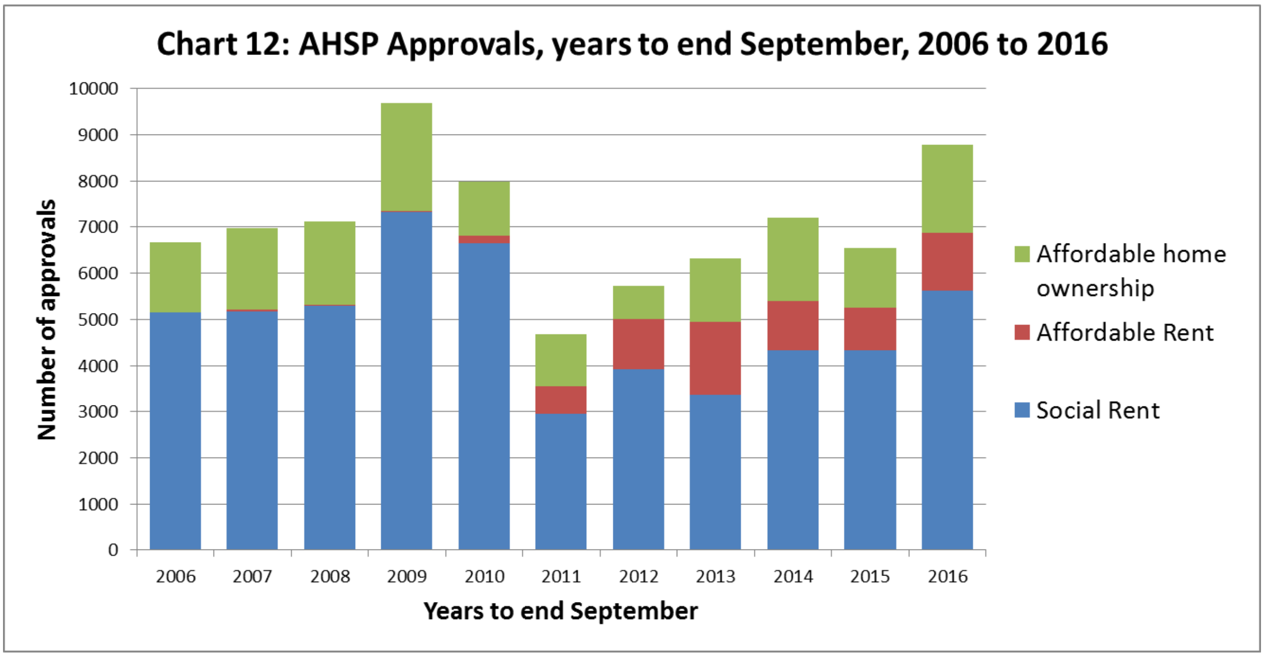
There were 1,906 affordable homes started in the quarter between July and September 2016, a 18% increase, or 294 more homes than the same quarter last year. This brings the total for the year to end September 2016 to 8,192, up 35% on the 6,082 starts in the previous year.

Chart 11 below shows that total affordable housing supply programme completions have varied slightly over the years 2014 to 2016 (years to end September). The percentage breakdown of the different categories has remained fairly stable though. In the latest year, social rent completions have accounted for 59% of all completions, with affordable rent and affordable home ownership making up 14% and 27% of the total, respectively.

Chart 12 below shows that the total affordable housing supply programme approvals have increased in 2016 (year to end September). The percentage breakdown has remained fairly stable over the last three years. In the latest year, social rent approvals have accounted for 64% of all approvals, with affordable rent and affordable home ownership making up 14% and 22% of the total, respectively.

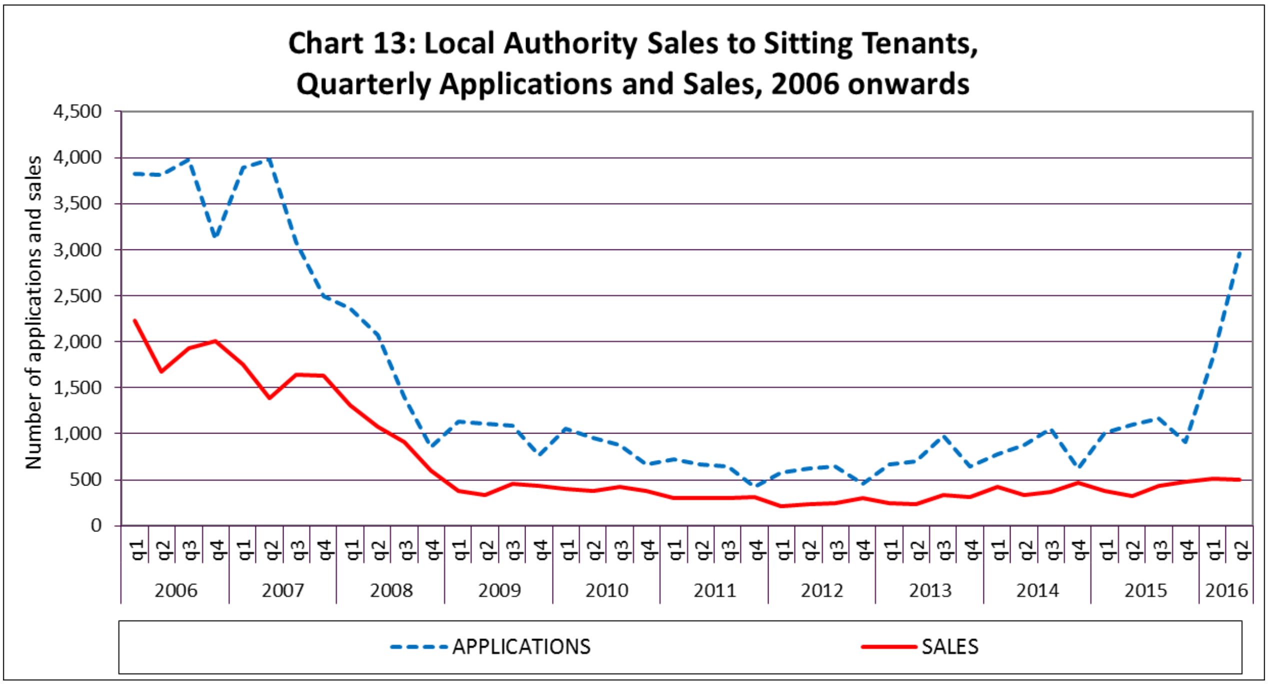
Quarterly affordable housing supply statistics are used to inform the Scottish Government target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 homes for social rent, over the period 2016/17 to 2020/21.





Sales of Local Authority Dwellings to Sitting Tenants (Right to Buy)

Most sales of local authority housing to tenants are sales under Right to Buy although a small number cover other sales such as voluntary sales by local authorities to sitting tenants.



In July 2013 the Scottish Government announced that the Right to Buy scheme was to end for all tenants. Immediately following this announcement the number of applications and the number of sales between July and September 2013 both increased (by 39% and 44% respectively) compared to the previous quarter. The increases were higher than in the same quarter of 2012, where the number of applications and the number of sales increased by 5% and 7% respectively.

The Right to Buy scheme since closed to all new applicants on 31 July 2016. The most recent figures available on applications and sales are for April to June 2016. During this period there were 2,961 Right to Buy applications (more than double the 1,099 applications in the same quarter the previous year, and more than three times higher than the same quarter in 2014). In the same time period, there were 505 sales (58% higher than in the same quarter in the previous year, and 50% higher than in the same quarter in 2014). Throughout the year ending June 2016 there were 1,920 sales to sitting tenants, 25% more than in the previous year and 6,868 applications which is 81% more than the previous year.

Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

Councils classify some properties in their area as long term empty, unoccupied, or second homes for the purposes of calculating council tax liabilities. These statuses impact on the council tax through exemptions for unoccupied properties, discounts for second homes and some long term empty properties, or a levy for some long term empty properties. As a result information on the numbers of such properties is sourced from council tax statistics. It is collected annually from local authorities and is available for:

- **Unoccupied Exemptions:** generally properties which are empty and unfurnished for less than 6 months and exempt from paying council tax.

- **Long Term Empty Properties:** properties which have been empty for more than 6 months and are liable for council tax. This includes properties empty for 12 months or more and which may be subject to an additional levy of up to 100% according to local authority policy.

- **Second Homes:** homes which are furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in a 12 month period but not as someone's main residence. They are entitled to a council tax discount of between 10% and 50%. In 2015/16, all local authorities had opted for a 10% discount on second homes. As of April 2017, local authorities will have the option to remove the council tax discount on second homes.

Empty properties are of particular interest as they can help increase the supply of occupied housing in Scotland when brought back into use.

From 1st April 2013 local authorities gained the discretionary power to remove the council tax discount associated with long term empty properties or to set a council tax increase of 100% on certain properties which have been empty for 12 months or more. These changes, along with associated improvements in the data held by local authorities, have led to the reclassification of a number of properties between the long term empty and second home categories. Some local authorities have also reported issues with categorising properties on their management information systems which may have impacted on the figures. This should be kept in mind when comparing the numbers in recent years.

The latest figures, as at September 2016, show that there were 26,140 second homes, 44,296 unoccupied exemptions which have generally been empty and unfurnished for less than 6 months, and 35,725 long term empty properties that had been empty for more than 6 months. Of those that had been empty for more than 6 months, over half (20,784 or 58%) had been empty for over 12 months, and of those 10,897 had a council tax discount below 10% or a council tax increase applied under the new powers described above.

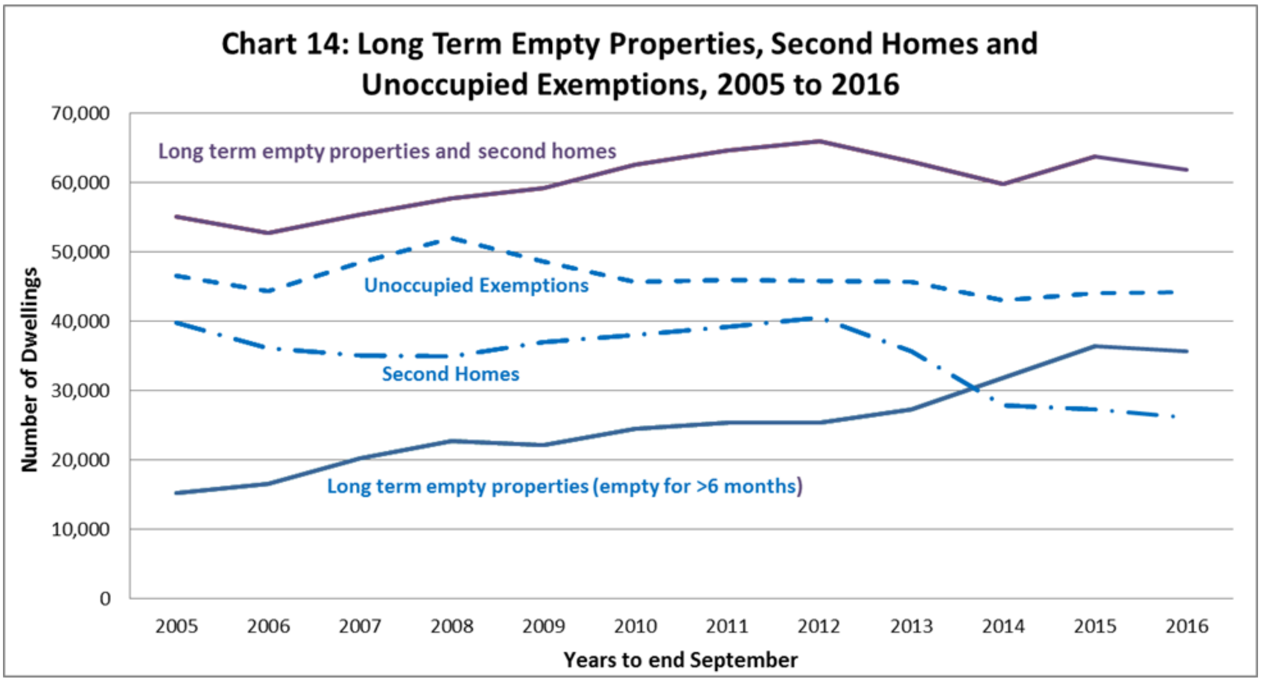


Chart 14 above shows that, since 2005, the number of long term empty properties has generally been on the rise, having more than doubled over this period, however some of the rises in 2013 to 2015 will be due to the reclassification of some properties in the light of the new powers described above. There has been a slight decrease between 2015 and 2016. The number of second homes has remained more steady until recently, with the reductions in 2013 to 2016 also likely to be at least partly due to reclassification. The number of unoccupied exemptions has remained relatively steady since 2005, aside from a slight increase in 2008.

After a decrease between 2005 and 2006 the total number of long term empty properties and second homes increased from 52,823 in 2006 to 66,053 in 2012 (13,230 dwellings or 25%). It has since fallen to 59,763 in 2014 before increasing in 2016 to 61,865 (with a slight peak of 63,736 in 2015). There has been a decrease in the last year of 1,871 properties (3%). However, this change over time should be interpreted with some caution; increases and decreases can be caused in part by reclassification exercises which local authorities carry out from time to time, or issues with management information systems, rather than real changes in numbers of properties.

Notes

This document should be read along with the explanatory document which provides information on how the statistics are collected and how they should be interpreted are provided below.

Starts and completions

New build information is provided for starts (when the foundations are begun) and completions (when a building inspector deems the property complete). In general, the number of starts will be a strong indicator of the likely trend in completions over the longer term, but there may well be differences over the short and medium term depending on factors such as the housing market, economic climate, access to finance, and speed of construction. A wide range of factors can influence the length of time it takes for a new private dwelling to be constructed, including the type of property (house, flat etc.), and the overall size of the site. Depending on the size of the site, the average time from start to completion of the entire site can range from anywhere between around 1.5 years to 2.75 years. Individual homes, or blocks of homes, might be completed in shorter timescales if parts of the site are completed in advance of the rest.

Comparing over time

New build figures are not seasonally adjusted and so it's not always appropriate to compare the latest quarter's figure with the previous one. In particular Housing Association approvals tend to peak in Quarter 1 of each year due to the way in which funding is allocated to these projects. This document generally compares the latest quarter's figures with those for the equivalent quarter in previous years or it compares the latest 12 month period with the previous one. For series where there is no obvious seasonal pattern it may also compare with the average quarterly figure over a period of time.

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Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

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How to access background or source data

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