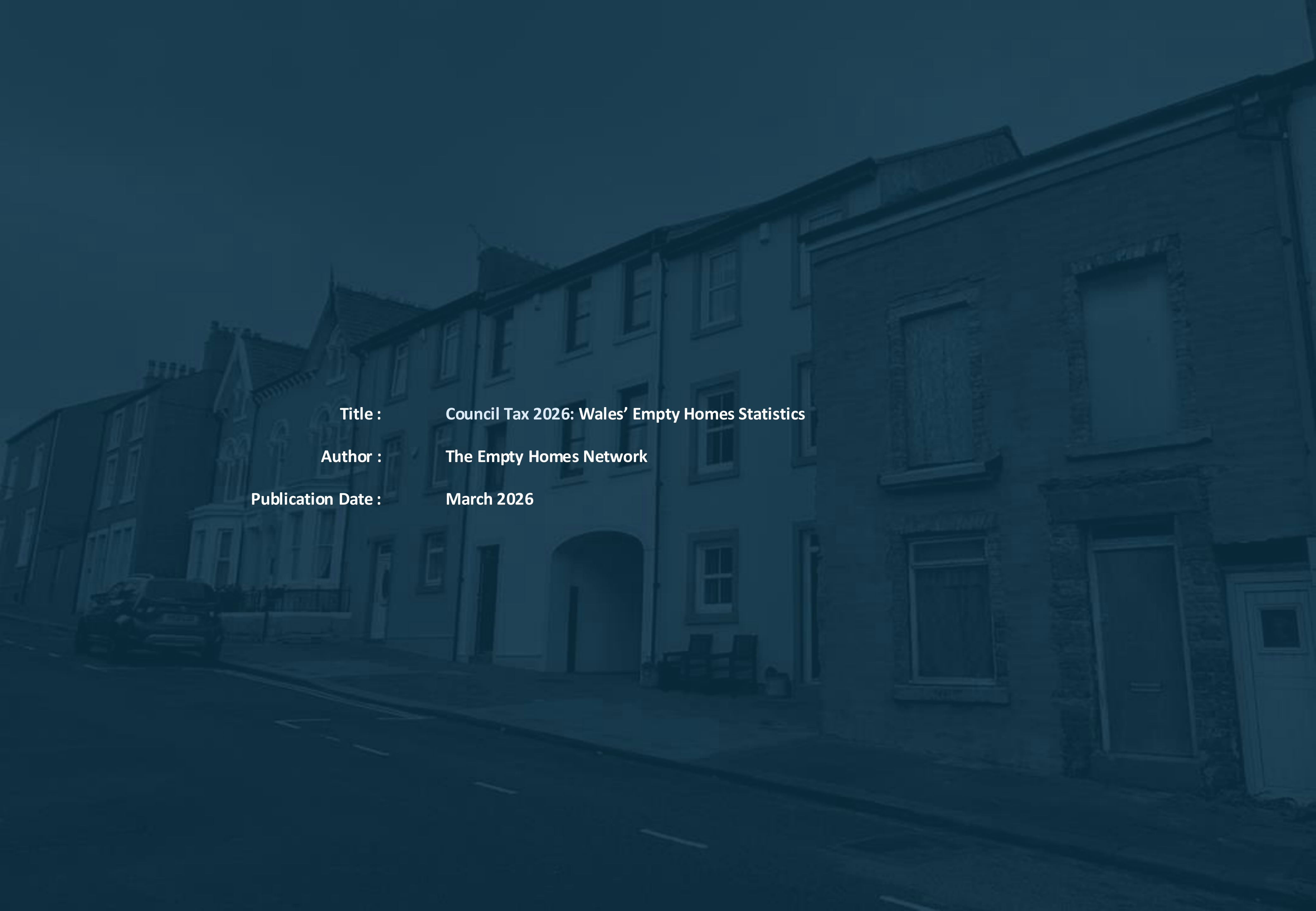
Council Tax 2026:
Wales’ Empty Homes Statistics



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About Us

Established in 2001, The Empty Homes Network (EHN) is the leading national voice, resource, and professional community for those working to bring empty homes back into use. With over 900 members and subscribers drawn from local authorities, housing professionals, and partner organisations, the Network provides expert support, practical tools and a collective platform for learning, collaboration, and innovation.

As a non-profit organisation, EHN works to empower councils and practitioners through advocacy, training, and policy influence. Our mission is to help every local authority develop the confidence, capacity, and capability to tackle emptiness effectively, from prevention and enforcement through to reuse and regeneration. We do this by sharing best practice, enabling knowledge exchange, and supporting those with limited resources while amplifying the expertise of those with long-standing experience.

EHN also plays a vital role in shaping national policy and guidance. By offering operational insight to government, we ensure that policy development reflects the realities faced by councils on the ground. Our work bridges the gap between practice and policy, ensuring that empty homes remain a recognised and resourced part of the housing agenda.

In addition to our active online platform, we host the annual National Empty Homes Conference, the largest dedicated event of its kind in the UK. Our conference brings together practitioners, policymakers, and specialists to share first-hand experience, case studies, and emerging solutions. Its continued growth reflects both the rising profile of empty homes work and the commitment of councils to invest in this vital, though non-statutory, area of housing delivery.

In recent years, EHN has also expanded its training and consultancy services, providing structured professional development and tailored support for local authorities at every stage of their empty homes journey. Our training courses offer foundation level and specialist courses for officers and practitioners, covering subjects from introductory practice and case management to complex areas such as probate, enforcement, and hoarding.

Everything we do is guided by a single goal; to ensure that every empty property becomes a lived-in home once more. By equipping practitioners with the tools and knowledge they need, and by influencing national debate and policy direction, the Empty Homes Network continues to be the authoritative, independent voice championing action on empty homes across England.

Introduction

Across Wales, thousands of people face housing insecurity, overcrowding, and unaffordability, whilst at the same time many homes stand empty. Council Tax 2026: Wales' Empty Homes Statistics brings together the latest national and local authority data to provide a detailed picture of housing underuse across Wales. It examines both the headline figures and the underlying patterns that shape them, including long-term empty homes, second homes, and properties exempt from council tax. The report also explores how these trends vary across Wales and what they reveal about the changing nature of housing demand and supply.

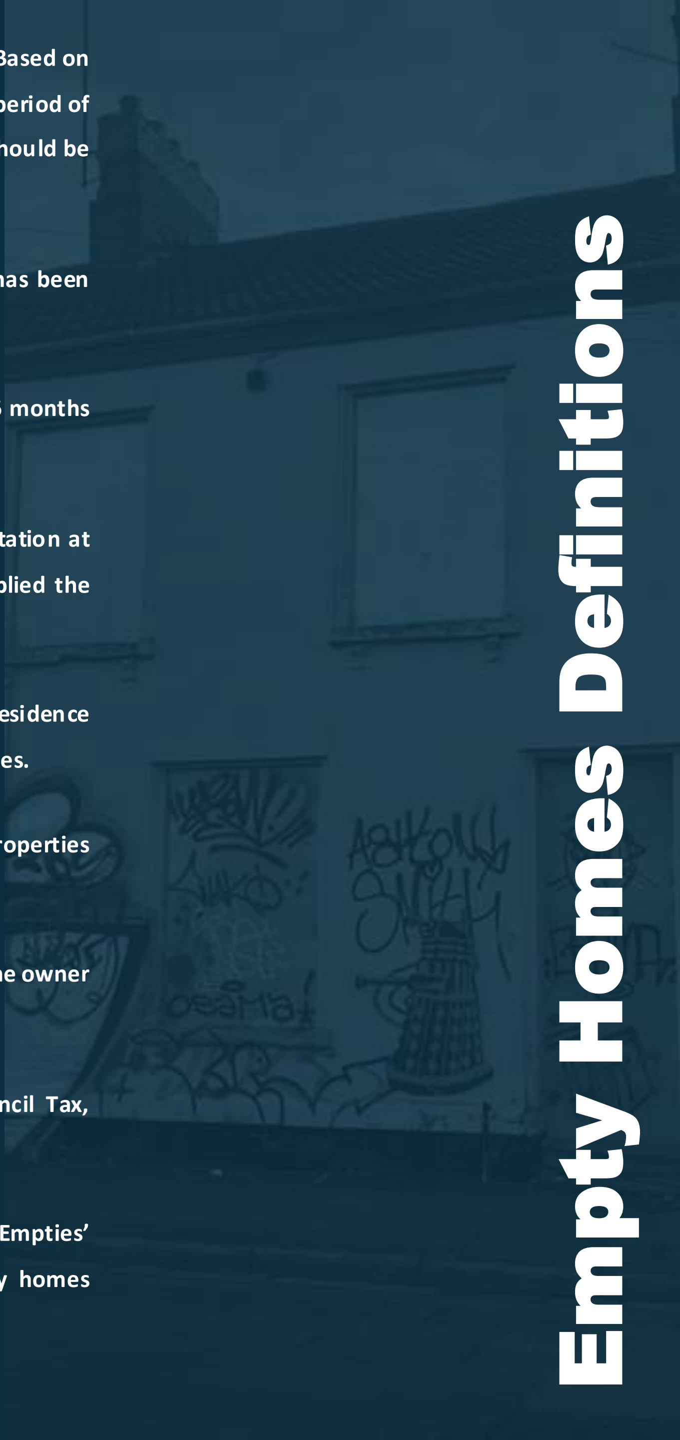
By presenting consistent, evidence-based analysis, this report aims to support both policy development and practical action. It is written to inform local authorities, the Welsh Government, housing professionals, and partner organisations who share a commitment to tackling the waste that empty homes represent. Empty homes are not simply a by-product of housing market activity; they are a visible symptom of a housing system under strain. Every long-term empty property represents a missed opportunity, for a household in need, for communities seeking stability, and for councils facing growing pressure on housing supply and public resources. Understanding the full scale and character of empty homes is an essential first step in addressing the issue. This report provides that foundation by combining national data with local insight to show where the problem is growing, how it is changing, and which policy tools are proving most effective.

The analysis also demonstrates that emptiness is a multi-dimensional issue. In some areas it reflects under-occupation or the use of properties as second homes, while in others it is linked to disrepair, low demand, or barriers to renovation and reuse. Recognising these differences is vital if government and local partners are to design interventions that work in practice as well as in principle.

The Empty Homes Network believes that tackling empty homes must remain a priority within the national housing agenda in Wales. The data and analysis presented here are designed not only to inform debate, but also to influence decision-making, strengthening the case for sustained national funding to bring empty homes back into use, greater local flexibility and powers for councils to respond to housing pressures, and recognition of empty homes work as a key part of housing delivery; making better use of existing homes before building new ones.

By equipping councils, policymakers, and practitioners with robust evidence, this report supports the Empty Homes Network's wider campaigning and lobbying aims: to ensure that every empty property is seen not merely as a statistic, but as a potential home, and that the effort to bring it back into use is recognised as a central pillar of fair and sustainable housing policy in Wales. In short, this paper aims to turn insight into action. It provides the data, context, and narrative needed to shape policy, strengthen collaboration, and support renewed efforts to reduce housing waste. The analysis that follows presents a detailed picture of how emptiness is changing across Wales in 2026, and how it can be addressed through coordinated, practical, and sustained effort.

Empty Homes Definitions



When assessing the number of empty homes, local authorities often look to properties referred to as 'long-term' empty homes. Based on the previously used Class C discount, this term describes a property that had been reported as empty and has remained so for a period of six months or longer. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the number of empty homes, there are seven definitions that should be considered.

- Less Than (<) 6 Months Empty: A property that has been recorded as empty by its owner for council tax purposes, and has been empty for a period of less than six months.
- More Than (>) 6 Months Empty: Often referred to as 'long-term empty', a property that has been empty for any period of 6 months or longer.
- Long Term Empty Premium: An empty property currently charged any level of empty homes premium. With its implementation at the local authority's discretion. Few have chosen not to introduce the premium, whereas other local authorities have applied the premium after 12 months, and some after 24.
- Second Homes: Often referred to as furnished empties, these are properties where the owner has their main or primary residence elsewhere. There are no limitations as to where a second home can be and shouldn't be assumed that these are holiday homes.
- Unoccupied Exemptions: A property where the reason for inoccupation determines its eligibility for an exemption, such as properties going through probate, the liable party is in prison, or the owner has moved to receive or provide care etc.
- 'Occupied' Empties: A known empty property, where the council tax account is showing the property as being occupied by the owner or a liable party.*
- Delisted Property: An empty property where the owner has been successful in having the property delisted from Council Tax, through an application to the Valuation Office Agency.*

*Due to the nature of Council Tax reporting and the collection of data, the statistics relating to properties within the 'Occupied Empties' and 'Delisted Properties' definitions are unobtainable, although may be held within a local authority's standalone empty homes database.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026: Key Headlines

- Wales' housing stock continues to grow, reaching 1,433,015 dwellings in 2026, an increase of over 29,000 homes since 2022.
- More than 80,000 homes across Wales are not used as primary residences, including empty homes, second homes, and council tax exempt properties.
- In 2026, Wales recorded 38,058 empty homes, continuing a gradual upward trend since 2024.
- Long-term empty homes remain a major concern, with 23,033 properties empty for more than six months, representing the majority of vacant homes.
- Second homes account for 24,814 properties across Wales, reflecting ongoing pressures in areas with strong tourism and holiday housing markets.
- Unoccupied exempt properties totalled 17,692 homes, many linked to life events such as probate, major repairs, or owners moving into residential care.
- Around 4.2% of the Welsh housing stock is currently not occupied as a primary residence, representing significant untapped housing capacity.
- The number of properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium has increased significantly, rising from 6,718 in 2022 to 12,357 in 2026, showing increased use of council tax powers by local authorities.
- Regional differences remain pronounced, with Mid Wales recording the highest proportion of under-used homes, while the South East holds the largest number in absolute terms due to its larger numbers and density of housing stock.
- The statistics reinforce that bringing existing homes back into use must remain a key housing policy priority, offering a cost-effective way to increase housing supply alongside new development.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026:
Wales

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total Dwellings	1,433,015	1,424,158	1,416,847	1,411,082	1,403,819
Empty Homes	38,058	37,198	36,945	37,725	37,006
Second Homes	24,814	23,967	21,931	24,170	23,074
Unoccupied Exemptions	17,692	17,686	17,942	16,294	76,921
Total Empty Homes	80,564	78,851	76,817	78,189	76,921
% of Total Housing Stock	4.2%	5.5%	5.4%	5.5%	5.5%
Breakdown					
<6 Months Empty	15,025	14,640	14,311	15,268	14,866
>6 Months Empty	23,033	22,558	22,634	22,457	22,140
Empty Homes Premium	12,357	13,220	11,456	7,064	6,718

The latest Council Tax statistics for Wales show that the nation's housing stock has continued to grow steadily, while the number of empty and under-used homes has also increased in recent years. The data for 2026 provides an important snapshot of how housing occupancy patterns are evolving across Wales, and highlights the continued presence of empty homes within the housing system.

In 2026, the total number of dwellings recorded for council tax purposes in Wales stands at 1,433,015, an increase of 8,857 properties from the previous year and almost 30,000 more homes than were recorded in 2022. This represents a steady expansion of the Welsh housing stock over the five-year period, reflecting both new housing development and the gradual incorporation of previously unregistered properties into the tax base. While this growth is relatively modest compared with larger housing markets elsewhere in the UK, it nonetheless represents a consistent upward trend in overall housing stock numbers.

Alongside this increase in housing supply, the number of homes recorded as empty has also risen in recent years. In 2026, Wales recorded 38,058 empty homes, compared with 37,198 in 2025 and 36,945 in 2024. Although the annual increases are relatively small in absolute terms, the data shows a gradual upward movement in the number of empty properties across the period. Since 2022, the number of empty homes has increased by just over 1,000 properties, indicating that emptiness remains a persistent feature of the Welsh housing landscape.

A closer look at the breakdown of empty homes reveals that long-term vacancy continues to account for the majority of empty properties. Homes that have been empty for more than six months totalled 23,033 in 2026, representing around 60% of all empty homes. This figure has risen slightly compared with 22,558 in 2025 and 22,457 in 2023, suggesting that the issue of long-term vacancy remains relatively stable but continues to affect a significant number of homes.

In contrast, short-term emptiness accounts for 15,025 properties in 2026, an increase from 14,640 in 2025 and 14,311 in 2024. Short-term emptiness often reflects normal housing market activity, such as homes between occupants, properties undergoing renovation, or dwellings in the process of sale or letting. While these figures fluctuate slightly year on year, they generally remain within a consistent range, indicating that routine market turnover continues to play a role in overall vacancy levels.

Second homes remain another significant component of housing under-occupation in Wales. In 2026 there were 24,814 second homes, an increase of 847 from the previous year and the highest figure in the five-year dataset. Although second home numbers fell slightly between 2023 and 2024, they have since risen again, suggesting that the use of properties for intermittent occupation continues to be a feature of certain parts of the Welsh housing market. This is particularly relevant for rural and coastal communities, where second home ownership can have notable impacts on local housing affordability and availability.

The data also records homes that are temporarily exempt from council tax due to specific circumstances. In 2026 there were 17,692 properties recorded as unoccupied exemptions, broadly consistent with the 17,686 recorded in 2025 and slightly below the 17,942 recorded in 2024. These figures suggest that the number of homes falling into exemption categories has remained relatively stable over the period, reflecting the social and administrative reasons that can temporarily remove properties from active use. When combined, the figures for empty homes, second homes, and unoccupied exemptions result in a total of 80,564 homes in Wales that are not currently occupied as primary residences. This represents an increase from 78,851 in 2025 and 76,817 in 2024. While the rise is relatively modest in numerical terms, it nonetheless indicates that housing under-occupation continues to grow gradually. In proportional terms, the percentage of total housing stock classified as empty or under-used stands at 4.2% in 2026. This represents a notable decrease from the 5.5% recorded in previous years within the dataset. The reduction is largely attributable to the continued growth of the overall housing stock rather than a substantial fall in empty homes themselves. As more properties enter the tax base, the overall proportion of empty homes can decline even if the absolute number of such properties increases.

One of the most notable trends within the data relates to the Empty Homes Premium, which is the additional council tax charge that local authorities can apply to properties that have been empty for extended periods. In 2026 there were 12,357 properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium, representing a decrease from 13,220 in 2025. Despite this year-on-year reduction, the longer-term trend shows a significant increase compared with earlier years. In 2022 there were just 6,718 properties subject to the premium, meaning the number has nearly doubled over the five-year period. This rise reflects the growing willingness of Welsh local authorities to utilise council tax powers to discourage long-term vacancy and encourage owners to bring properties back into use. The Empty Homes Premium has become an increasingly important tool within the wider policy framework aimed at tackling housing under-occupation and supporting more effective use of existing housing stock.

Overall, the 2026 statistics present a picture of gradual change rather than dramatic shifts. Housing stock continues to expand slowly, while empty homes, second homes, and exemptions remain relatively stable components of the wider housing system. Long-term empty homes remain the dominant form of vacancy, and second homes continue to represent a significant share of under-used housing.

Exemption Class	Exemption Definition	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Class A	Major Structural Repair	3,911	3,598	3,750	3,605	4,069
Class B	Owned by a charity	175	166	159	230	41
Class D	Owner in prison	358	272	244	176	194
Class E	Owner receiving care	3,175	3,294	3,201	2,815	2,828
Class F	Owner is deceased	8,428	8,860	9,183	8,127	7,543
Class G	Occupation prohibited	694	610	571	625	579
Class H	Left by a minister of religion	158	148	130	129	104
Class I	Owner moved to receive care	342	350	344	300	337
Class J	Owner moved to provide care	106	89	98	106	110
Class K	Last occupied by a student	13	21	18	13	9
Class L	Property repossessed	305	246	207	151	108
Class Q	Property owner bankrupt	27	32	37	17	19
Total		17,692	17,686	17,942	16,294	15,941

The data also provides valuable insight into properties that are exempt from council tax under specific categories. These exemptions capture a range of circumstances in which homes remain empty for legitimate reasons. Understanding the scale of these exemptions is important, as they often reveal underlying factors that can temporarily remove homes from the housing market and highlight areas where targeted intervention may help bring properties back into use.

In 2026, there were 17,692 properties recorded as unoccupied exemptions, a figure broadly consistent with the 17,686 recorded in 2025. This stability suggests that the overall number has remained relatively steady in recent years. Looking further back however, there has been a gradual increase since 2022, when 15,941 properties were exempt, representing an overall rise of around 1,750 properties over the five-year period. While the annual changes are relatively modest, the longer-term trend indicates that the number of homes temporarily removed from occupation due to specific circumstances has been gradually increasing.

Among the various exemption categories, the most significant is Class F – properties where the owner is deceased. In 2026, this category accounted for 8,428 properties, representing nearly half of all exempt dwellings in Wales. This figure has declined slightly from 9,183 in 2024, suggesting a modest reduction. However, the longer-term trend still reflects a steady presence of such properties within the housing system, and the figures underline the significant role that probate processes play in contributing to temporary housing vacancy.

The second largest exemption category relates to properties undergoing major structural repair or reconstruction. In 2026, there were 3,911 properties recorded under this category, an increase from 3,598 in 2025 and 3,750 in 2024.

Although this category saw higher levels in earlier years, particularly in 2022 when 4,069 properties were recorded, the recent rise may reflect increasing levels of renovation activity across Wales. Homes requiring substantial structural work are often unable to be occupied safely, meaning they can remain empty for extended periods until repairs are completed.

Another prominent category is where the owner has moved permanently into care. In 2026, this category accounted for 3,175 homes, slightly lower than the 3,294 recorded in 2025 but broadly consistent with previous years. Over the five-year period, the number of properties within this category has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between around 2,800 and 3,300 homes. The persistence of this category highlights the influence of demographic change within Wales, particularly the ageing population and the associated transitions into residential care that can temporarily leave properties unoccupied.

Several smaller exemption categories provide additional insight into the social circumstances that can lead to temporary housing vacancy. For example, Class D – properties left empty because the owner is in prison, increased to 358 in 2026, continuing an upward trend from 272 in 2025 and 244 in 2024. While relatively small in overall scale, this category has grown steadily over the past five years and now represents a larger share of exempt properties than in earlier years.

Similarly, Class G – properties where occupation is prohibited by law accounted for 694 properties in 2026, up from 610 in 2025 and 571 in 2024. These cases typically involve homes deemed unsafe or unsuitable for habitation, often due to structural or environmental issues. The gradual increase in this category may suggest a rising number of properties requiring significant remedial work before they can be returned to use. Other exemption classes remain relatively small but nevertheless illustrate the diverse circumstances that can result in temporary vacancy. Class I, where the owner has moved elsewhere to receive personal care, accounted for 342 properties in 2026, while Class J, covering cases where the owner has moved in order to provide care for another person, totalled 106 properties. These categories have remained fairly stable over time, reflecting the personal and family circumstances that sometimes lead to homes being left unoccupied.

One category showing noticeable growth in recent years is repossessed properties, which reached 305 homes in 2026, up from 246 in 2025 and 207 in 2024. This represents almost a threefold increase compared with 108 properties recorded in 2022, suggesting that financial pressures and mortgage repossessions may be playing an increasing role in temporary housing vacancy.

The dominance of probate-related exemptions highlights the continued impact of estate administration on housing availability, while the consistent presence of care-related categories reflects demographic trends within the population. At the same time, increases in repossessions, structural repairs, and legally prohibited occupation suggest that financial and property-condition issues are also shaping patterns of vacancy. Taken together, these figures demonstrate that many empty homes are not simply unused properties but are instead linked to broader life events and structural circumstances. While exemptions are designed to recognise these legitimate situations, they also represent a pool of housing that may eventually return to the active housing market once the underlying circumstances are resolved.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026:
North Wales Region

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total Dwellings	325,785	324,184	322,299	320,502	318,819
Empty Homes	9,273	8,712	8,405	8,275	7,823
Second Homes	8,272	8,808	8,458	9,069	8,753
Unoccupied Exemptions	4,640	4,391	4,521	4,001	3,996
Total Empty Homes	22,185	21,911	21,384	21,345	20,572
% of Total Housing Stock	6.8%	6.8%	6.6%	6.7%	6.5%
Breakdown					
<6 Months Empty	3,680	3,352	4,521	3,600	3,485
>6 Months Empty	5,593	5,360	3,381	4,675	4,338
Empty Homes Premium	3,093	3,269	3,416	3,340	3,105

The North Wales region presents a distinctive housing profile within the national Welsh context, characterised by a steadily growing housing stock alongside a gradual increase in the number of empty and under-used homes. The latest statistics for 2026 show that, while housing supply continues to expand modestly across the region, the scale of empty homes remains a notable feature of the local housing landscape.

In 2026, the total number of dwellings recorded in the North Wales region stands at 325,785, representing an increase of 1,601 properties compared with 2025 and nearly 7,000 more homes than were recorded in 2022. This gradual increase reflects a consistent expansion of the housing stock over the five-year period. While the annual growth in dwellings remains modest, the steady upward trend suggests ongoing development activity alongside the inclusion of previously unregistered properties within the council tax system.

Alongside this growth in housing supply, the number of empty homes in the region has also increased in recent years. In 2026, 9,273 properties were recorded as empty, up from 8,712 in 2025 and 8,405 in 2024. Since 2022, when 7,823 empty homes were recorded, the number has risen by approximately 1,450 properties. This gradual increase indicates that, while the housing stock is expanding, the number of homes not currently occupied has also been growing.

A closer examination of the breakdown of empty homes highlights the growing prominence of long-term vacancy within the regional housing picture. Properties empty for more than six months totalled 5,593 in 2026, an increase from 5,360 in 2025 and substantially higher than the 3,381 recorded in 2024. This notable rise suggests that a greater proportion of homes are remaining empty for extended periods, potentially reflecting factors such as renovation delays, ownership complexities, or properties requiring substantial repairs before they can be returned to use.

Short-term emptiness accounts for 3,680 homes in 2026, a modest increase from 3,352 in 2025 but lower than the 4,521 recorded in 2024. The fluctuations within this category across the five-year period indicate the influence of market conditions and routine property transitions.

Second homes continue to represent a significant share of housing under-occupation within the North Wales region. In 2026 there were 8,272 second homes recorded for council tax purposes, slightly lower than the 8,808 recorded in 2025 and below the peak of 9,069 in 2023. While this decline may suggest some reduction in second home ownership, the numbers remain substantial and highlight the continued role of intermittently occupied properties within the regional housing market. In many parts of North Wales, particularly coastal and rural communities, second homes are a well-recognised feature of the local housing landscape and can influence both housing availability and affordability for permanent residents.

Unoccupied exemptions account for 4,640 properties in 2026, an increase from 4,391 in 2025 and 4,521 in 2024. While relatively stable overall, the gradual increase in exemptions suggests that social and administrative factors continue to play an important role in shaping housing occupancy patterns within the region. When combined, the figures for empty homes, second homes, and unoccupied exemptions bring the total number of properties not currently occupied as primary residences to 22,185 homes in 2026. This represents a modest increase from 21,911 in 2025 and 21,384 in 2024, continuing a gradual upward trend seen across the five-year dataset. In proportional terms, 6.8% of the North Wales housing stock is currently classified as empty or under-used. This proportion has remained broadly stable since 2025 and represents a slight increase compared with the 6.5% recorded in 2022. While the change over time is relatively small, the figure nonetheless indicates that more than one in every fourteen homes within the region is not currently occupied as a primary residence.

Another important indicator within the dataset is the number of properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium. In 2026, 3,093 homes in North Wales were subject to the premium, slightly lower than the 3,269 recorded in 2025 and 3,416 in 2024. Despite this recent reduction, the figures remain broadly consistent with earlier years and demonstrate the continued use of council tax powers by local authorities to encourage property owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use.

Overall, the North Wales regional data reflects a housing market in which modest growth in housing supply is accompanied by persistent levels of empty and under-used homes. Long-term vacancy remains a particularly significant component of the regional picture, while second homes continue to play a notable role in shaping housing availability across certain communities.

While the proportion of empty and under-used homes has remained relatively stable over time, the absolute numbers highlight the scale of potential housing supply that could be realised through the effective reuse of existing properties. As the following sections will show, the distribution of empty homes within the region varies considerably between local authorities, underlining the importance of targeted local approaches to bringing empty homes back into occupation.

Exemption Class	Exemption Definition	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Class A	Major Structural Repair	881	675	760	729	786
Class B	Owned by a charity	2	2	4	5	3
Class D	Owner in prison	128	45	36	22	28
Class E	Owner receiving care	890	855	864	758	770
Class F	Owner is deceased	2,153	2,292	2,391	1,985	1,975
Class G	Occupation prohibited	338	312	282	311	272
Class H	Left by a minister of religion	39	41	34	32	28
Class I	Owner moved to receive care	95	73	70	73	74
Class J	Owner moved to provide care	32	25	32	41	34
Class K	Last occupied by a student	5	10	6	2	1
Class L	Property repossessed	66	45	39	40	23
Class Q	Property owner bankrupt	11	16	3	3	2
Total		4,640	4,391	4,521	4,001	3,996

In 2026, the North Wales region recorded 4,640 properties classified as unoccupied exemptions, representing an increase from 4,391 in 2025 and 4,521 in 2024. Looking across the five-year period, the number of exempt properties has risen from 3,996 in 2022, reflecting a gradual upward trend. Although annual fluctuations occur between categories, the overall increase of more than 600 exempt properties since 2022 indicates that temporary vacancy linked to personal, legal, or structural circumstances remains a notable component of the regional housing picture.

As with the national figures for Wales, the most significant exemption category within North Wales is Class F. In 2026, this category accounted for 2,153 properties, representing nearly half of all exempt dwellings in the region.

Although this figure has declined slightly from 2,292 in 2025 and 2,391 in 2024, it remains substantially higher than earlier years within the dataset. The prominence of this category reflects the time often required to complete probate and estate administration, during which homes can remain unoccupied before being transferred, sold, or reoccupied.

Another major contributor to exemption totals is Class E – properties where the owner has moved permanently into residential care. In 2026, 890 homes fell into this category, a modest increase from 855 in 2025 and broadly consistent with previous years. Over the five-year period, the number of homes in this category has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between around 750 and 900 properties.

This consistency reflects wider demographic trends within the region, particularly the ageing population and the associated transitions into residential care.

Properties undergoing major structural repair or reconstruction (Class A) represent another significant category. In 2026, 881 homes in North Wales were recorded under this classification, up from 675 in 2025 and 760 in 2024. Although the figure is slightly higher than earlier years in the dataset, the trend suggests a growing number of homes requiring substantial renovation before they can be safely occupied. Such properties can remain empty for extended periods while structural works are undertaken.

A number of smaller exemption categories also provide insight into the circumstances that can lead to temporary vacancy. One of the most notable increases in recent years is seen in Class D, similar to the picture seen nationally. In 2026, this category rose sharply to 128 properties, compared with 45 in 2025 and 36 in 2024. While relatively small in absolute terms, the increase highlights a growing number of cases in which personal circumstances have resulted in properties remaining temporarily unoccupied. Similarly, Class G – properties where occupation is prohibited by law accounted for 338 homes in 2026, up from 312 in 2025 and 282 in 2024. The gradual rise in this category suggests that property condition and regulatory enforcement continue to influence vacancy levels in some parts of the region.

Other exemptions relate to personal or family care arrangements. Class I, 95 properties, and Class J, recorded 32 properties. These categories remain relatively small and have fluctuated only modestly over the five-year period, reflecting the personal circumstances that can temporarily remove homes from occupation.

Several exemption categories remain minimal in scale but still form part of the wider exemption framework. Class K – properties last occupied by students – accounted for just five homes in 2026, while Class B – properties owned by charities – recorded only two homes. Similarly, Class Q – relating to bankruptcy cases – accounted for 11 properties, indicating that financial insolvency plays a relatively minor role in overall exemption levels within the region. Similarly to that seen nationally across Wales, one category that has seen steady growth is Class L – repossessed properties, which increased to 66 homes in 2026, compared with 45 in 2025 and 39 in 2024. Although small in absolute terms, the upward trend may reflect increasing financial pressures affecting some property owners.

Overall, the pattern of unoccupied exemptions in the North Wales region mirrors the broader national picture, with probate-related cases and care-related moves accounting for the majority of exempt properties. At the same time, smaller categories linked to property condition, personal circumstances, and financial pressures illustrate the diverse range of factors that can lead to temporary housing vacancy. These figures highlight that a significant proportion of empty homes are linked to life events or structural circumstances rather than simple disuse. While these exemptions recognise legitimate situations where homes cannot be occupied immediately, they also represent a pool of housing that may eventually return to use once those circumstances are resolved.

Monitoring trends in exemption categories therefore provides valuable insight into the underlying drivers of vacancy within the region. By understanding these patterns, local authorities and policymakers can better identify opportunities to support property owners, reduce delays in returning homes to the housing market, and ensure that the existing housing stock in North Wales is used as effectively as possible.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026:
Mid Wales Region

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total Dwellings	99,723	98,701	98,332	97,886	97,172
Empty Homes	2,900	2,696	2,461	2,898	2,720
Second Homes	3,209	2,823	2,750	3,164	3,057
Unoccupied Exemptions	1,324	1,486	1,405	1,261	1,239
Total Empty Homes	7,433	7,005	6,616	7,323	7,016
% of Total Housing Stock	7.5%	7.1%	6.7%	7.5%	7.2%
Breakdown					
<6 Months Empty	971	959	979	1,129	1,039
>6 Months Empty	1,929	1,737	1,482	1,769	1,681
Empty Homes Premium	1,137	1,003	1,043	1,333	1,244

The Mid Wales region presents a housing profile that reflects both the rural character of the area and the particular housing pressures faced by smaller and more dispersed communities. The Council Tax statistics for 2026 show that, while the region's housing stock continues to grow steadily, the proportion of homes that are empty or under-used remains relatively high when compared with the Welsh national average.

In 2026, the Mid Wales region recorded 99,723 dwellings, representing an increase from 98,701 in 2025 and 98,332 in 2024. Over the five-year period covered by the dataset, the total housing stock has grown by more than 2,500 homes, reflecting modest but consistent growth of the region's housing supply. Although the overall level of growth remains relatively limited compared with more urban regions, the steady increase in dwellings demonstrates that the housing stock continues to expand year on year.

Alongside this growth, the number of empty homes in the region has also increased. In 2026, 2,900 properties were recorded as empty, up from 2,696 in 2025 and 2,461 in 2024. This represents the highest figure recorded across the five-year period. The increase suggests that, while new homes are being added to the housing stock, a growing number of properties remain vacant at any given time.

When examined more closely, the breakdown of empty homes highlights a gradual increase in long-term vacancy within the region. In 2026, 1,929 properties had been empty for more than six months, compared with 1,737 in 2025 and 1,482 in 2024.

Short-term empty homes accounted for 971 properties in 2026, broadly similar to the 959 recorded in 2025 and slightly below the 979 recorded in 2024. These figures suggest a relatively stable pattern of short-term vacancy within the region. Properties within this category typically reflect normal housing market turnover, including homes awaiting sale or letting, or properties undergoing minor refurbishment.

Second homes continue to play a significant role across Mid Wales. In 2026, the region recorded 3,209 second homes, representing an increase from 2,823 in 2025 and 2,750 in 2024. This rise reverses the decline seen between 2023 and 2024 and suggests that second home ownership remains a prominent feature of the regionally across Mid Wales. In rural and scenic areas, second homes can form a substantial component of the housing stock, particularly in communities that attract tourism or seasonal residents.

Unoccupied exemptions totalled 1,324 in 2026, slightly lower than the 1,486 recorded in 2025 but broadly consistent with earlier years. Over the five-year period, this category has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between around 1,200 and 1,500 properties. When empty homes, second homes, and exempt properties are combined, the total number of homes not occupied as a primary residence in the Mid Wales region reaches 7,433 properties in 2026. This represents an increase from 7,005 in 2025 and 6,616 in 2024, continuing the gradual upward trend seen across the dataset.

In proportional terms, 7.5% of the Mid Wales housing stock is currently classified as empty or under-used. This represents a slight increase from 7.1% in 2025 and 6.7% in 2024, returning to a similar level to that recorded in 2023. The figure is notably higher than the national Welsh average, reflecting the particular housing dynamics of rural areas where second homes and long-term vacancy can form a larger share of the housing stock.

Another key indicator within the dataset is the number of properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium. In 2026, 1,137 homes in the Mid Wales region were subject to the premium, compared with 1,003 in 2025 and 1,043 in 2024. While the figure remains below the 1,333 recorded in 2023, the increase between 2025 and 2026 suggests that local authorities are continuing to utilise this policy tool to encourage owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use.

Taken together, the figures for Mid Wales highlight a housing market where modest growth in supply is accompanied by persistently high levels of under-used housing. The relatively high proportion of empty and second homes reflects the distinctive characteristics of the region, including its rural geography, tourism economy, and ageing housing stock.

While some level of vacancy is inevitable within any housing market, the scale of under-occupied homes in Mid Wales indicates a significant opportunity to make better use of the existing housing stock. Bringing long-term empty homes back into use has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to housing availability within the region, particularly in smaller communities where new housing development may be limited or restricted by planning policy.

As with the other Welsh regions, understanding the patterns behind these figures is essential for shaping effective local responses. Targeted empty homes strategies, supported by the appropriate policy tools and resources, can help ensure that more of Mid Wales’ housing stock is brought back into active use for the benefit of local communities.

Exemption Class	Exemption Definition	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Class A	Major Structural Repair	233	281	258	233	270
Class B	Owned by a charity	1	2	0	1	0
Class D	Owner in prison	11	13	10	6	7
Class E	Owner receiving care	302	318	313	271	247
Class F	Owner is deceased	679	759	738	668	624
Class G	Occupation prohibited	31	34	31	30	31
Class H	Left by a minister of religion	23	20	15	14	9
Class I	Owner moved to receive care	26	44	29	26	32
Class J	Owner moved to provide care	6	4	5	8	10
Class K	Last occupied by a student	2	2	0	2	2
Class L	Property repossessed	10	9	6	2	7
Class Q	Property owner bankrupt	0	0	0	0	0
Total		1,324	1,486	1,405	1,261	1,239

Unoccupied exemptions form an important component of the wider empty homes picture in Mid Wales.

In 2026, the Mid Wales region recorded 1,324 properties classified as unoccupied exemptions, representing a decline from 1,486 in 2025 and 1,405 in 2024. Over the five-year period covered by the dataset, exemption totals have fluctuated modestly, ranging between 1,239 in 2022 and 1,486 in 2025. While the overall trend does not show a consistent upward or downward trajectory, the figures suggest that exemption levels remain relatively stable within the region.

As with the national Welsh picture and other regions, the largest exemption category in Mid Wales relates to properties where the owner has died (Class F). In 2026, this category accounted for 679 properties, representing more than half of all unoccupied exemptions in the region. Although this figure has declined slightly from 759 in 2025 and 738 in 2024, it remains the most significant contributor to exemption totals.

The second largest category accounts for properties left empty because the owner has moved permanently into residential care. In 2026, 302 homes fell into this classification, compared with 318 in 2025 and 313 in 2024. Over the longer five-year period, this category has gradually increased from 247 in 2022, reflecting demographic trends across the region, including an ageing population and the growing need for residential care arrangements.

Several smaller exemption categories provide further insight into the varied personal circumstances that can result in temporary housing vacancy. Class D – properties left empty because the owner is in prison – accounted for 11 homes in 2026, slightly down from 13 in 2025 but broadly consistent with earlier years. Although relatively small in scale, these cases illustrate the range of personal situations that can affect property occupancy.

Properties undergoing major structural repair or reconstruction accounted for 233 homes in 2026, representing a decrease from 281 in 2025 but broadly in line with earlier years in the dataset. The presence of properties in this category reflects the reality that some homes cannot be occupied while significant structural work is undertaken. In rural regions such as Mid Wales, where housing stock may include older properties or buildings requiring renovation, this exemption can play an important role in recognising legitimate periods of vacancy while repairs are carried out.

Similarly, Class I recorded 26 properties in 2026, compared with 44 in 2025 and 29 in 2024. This category fluctuates modestly from year to year, reflecting the varied circumstances of individuals requiring temporary care arrangements.

Another category reflecting personal circumstances is Class J – properties left empty because the owner has moved to provide care for another person. In 2026, six properties were recorded within this classification, broadly consistent with previous years. While small in number, this category demonstrates how family care responsibilities can influence patterns of housing occupancy. Some exemption categories remain extremely limited in scale. Class B – properties owned by charities – recorded just one property in 2026, while Class K – homes last occupied by students – accounted for two properties. These categories represent only a very small share of the overall exemption total and have shown little variation across the five-year dataset.

Other categories provide insight into the physical condition or financial status of properties. Class G – properties where occupation is prohibited by law – accounted for 31 homes in 2026, remaining broadly consistent with earlier years. Meanwhile, Class L – repossessed properties – recorded 10 homes in 2026, representing a slight increase from nine in 2025 and six in 2024. Although the numbers remain small, the gradual rise in repossession-related exemptions may reflect wider financial pressures affecting some homeowners. One category notably absent from the dataset is Class Q – properties left empty due to bankruptcy, which recorded no cases across the five-year period. This indicates that bankruptcy-related vacancy remains extremely rare within the Mid Wales region.

Taken together, the exemption statistics for Mid Wales demonstrate that the majority of unoccupied exempt homes arise from life events such as bereavement or transitions into residential care. These circumstances are often unavoidable and can lead to homes remaining empty for a period of time while legal, financial, or personal matters are resolved.

Understanding these patterns is important when considering the wider empty homes picture. While some empty properties may reflect housing underuse, many exempt homes represent temporary situations that will eventually lead to properties returning to the housing market.

For local authorities and housing practitioners, monitoring these exemption categories can help identify where support or intervention may assist in reducing delays in bringing homes back into use. By recognising the underlying causes of vacancy, councils can better target their resources and develop strategies that help ensure the existing housing stock in Mid Wales is used as effectively as possible.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026:
South West Wales Region

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total Dwellings	324,790	322,752	321,590	320,159	319,144
Empty Homes	9,956	10,451	10.751	10,550	10,229
Second Homes	7,724	7,047	6,977	7,050	7,357
Unoccupied Exemptions	4,161	4,108	4,216	3,861	3,995
Total Empty Homes	21,841	21,606	21,943	21,461	21,581
% of Total Housing Stock	6.7%	6.7%	6.8%	6.7%	6.8%
Breakdown					
<6 Months Empty	3,919	3,924	3,650	4,033	3,887
>6 Months Empty	6,037	6,527	7,101	6,517	6,342
Empty Homes Premium	3,424	3,952	3,484	1,523	1,543

The South West Wales region represents one of the larger housing markets within Wales, combining urban centres with coastal and rural communities. The Council Tax statistics for 2026 show a housing market that continues to expand steadily, while the number of empty and under-used homes remains a persistent feature.

In 2026, the South West Wales region recorded 324,790 dwellings within the council tax base. This represents an increase from 322,752 in 2025 and 321,590 in 2024, continuing a consistent upward trend over the five-year period. Since 2022, the total housing stock in the region has grown by more than 5,600 homes, reflecting ongoing residential development and the gradual expansion of the housing supply.

While the housing stock has grown steadily, the number of empty homes has shown a slightly different pattern. In 2026, 9,956 properties were recorded as empty, representing a decline from 10,451 in 2025 and 10,751 in 2024. This reduction suggests that the number of empty homes in the region has begun to fall after reaching a peak in 2024. Compared with 2022, when 10,229 empty homes were recorded, the 2026 figure indicates a modest improvement in the utilisation of housing stock.

Examining the breakdown of empty homes provides further insight into these trends. In 2026, 3,919 properties had been empty for less than six months, broadly consistent with 3,924 recorded in 2025.

Long-term empty homes remain a significant component of the regional empty homes picture. In 2026, 6,037 homes fell into this category, a reduction from 6,527 in 2025 and 7,101 in 2024. The downward trend suggests that some long-term empty homes may be returning to use or being addressed through local authority interventions and policy measures. However, the figure still indicates that a substantial number of homes in the region remain vacant for extended periods.

Second homes also represent a notable element of the South West Wales housing market. In 2026, 7,724 properties were recorded as second homes, an increase from 7,047 in 2025 and 6,977 in 2024. This growth marks a reversal of the slight decline observed between 2022 and 2024 and suggests that second home ownership continues to play a prominent role in the region. Coastal and rural communities in South West Wales have long attracted seasonal residents and holiday home owners, and these figures reflect the ongoing presence of this type of housing use within the regional market.

Unoccupied exemptions accounted for 4,161 homes in 2026. This represents a modest increase from 4,108 in 2025, though the figure remains slightly below the 4,216 recorded in 2024. Over the five-year period, exemption levels have remained relatively stable, fluctuating between around 3,800 and 4,200 properties. When combined, the total number of homes not currently occupied as primary residences in the South West Wales region reaches 21,841 properties in 2026. This represents a small increase from 21,606 in 2025, though it remains broadly consistent with the levels recorded across the five-year dataset.

In proportional terms, 6.7% of the South West Wales housing stock is currently classified as empty or under-used. This figure has remained remarkably stable over the past five years, fluctuating only slightly between 6.7% and 6.8%. The stability of this proportion suggests that, despite changes in the absolute number of empty homes and second homes, the overall relationship between occupied and under-used housing stock has remained largely unchanged.

A further indicator within the dataset is the number of properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium. In 2026, 3,424 homes in the South West Wales region were subject to this premium. Although this represents a decline from 3,952 in 2025, it remains significantly higher than the levels recorded in 2023 and 2022, when the figures stood at 1,523 and 1,543 respectively. The sharp increase in recent years reflects the wider adoption of premium charges as a policy tool to encourage property owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use.

Overall, the South West Wales regional data presents a picture of a housing market where steady growth in supply is accompanied by relatively stable levels of empty and under-used homes. While the number of empty properties has begun to decline in recent years, long-term vacancy continues to represent a significant proportion of the housing stock.

At the same time, the increase in second homes highlights the continued influence of tourism and seasonal occupation within the region. Together, these factors underline the importance of ongoing policy efforts aimed at improving the utilisation of existing housing stock.

Exemption Class	Exemption Definition	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Class A	Major Structural Repair	1,073	948	1,064	995	1,241
Class B	Owned by a charity	9	11	5	6	15
Class D	Owner in prison	87	94	81	52	56
Class E	Owner receiving care	720	786	728	665	670
Class F	Owner is deceased	1,886	1,922	2,003	1,819	1,704
Class G	Occupation prohibited	151	101	102	131	119
Class H	Left by a minister of religion	39	36	28	29	18
Class I	Owner moved to receive care	92	104	111	91	113
Class J	Owner moved to provide care	29	24	26	24	31
Class K	Last occupied by a student	1	4	7	5	3
Class L	Property repossessed	73	74	56	40	23
Class Q	Property owner bankrupt	1	4	5	4	2
Total		4,161	4,108	4,216	3,861	3,995

In 2026, the South West Wales region recorded 4,161 properties classified as unoccupied exemptions, representing a modest increase from 4,108 in 2025, though slightly below the 4,216 recorded in 2024. Over the five-year period covered by the dataset, the number of exempt properties has fluctuated between 3,861 in 2023 and 4,216 in 2024, indicating a relatively stable level of exemptions across the region.

The largest exemption category within South West Wales are the Class F exemptions. In 2026, 1,886 properties fell into this category, accounting for nearly half of all exempt dwellings in the region. While this figure represents a slight decrease from 1,922 in 2025 and 2,003 in 2024, it remains substantially higher than earlier years in the dataset. The prominence of probate-related exemptions reflects the time required to settle estates, transfer ownership, or prepare properties for sale, during which homes may remain empty for extended periods.

In 2026 the second largest category (Class A), 1,073 homes were recorded under this classification, representing an increase from 948 in 2025 and slightly higher than the 1,064 recorded in 2024. Although still below the 1,241 properties recorded in 2022, the overall scale of this category highlights the role that property condition can play in determining housing occupancy.

Another significant exemption category in the region is Class E. In 2026, 720 homes were recorded within this classification, compared with 786 in 2025 and 728 in 2024. Although the number has fluctuated modestly across the five-year period, the figures remain broadly consistent.

Several smaller categories offer further insight into the diverse circumstances that can lead to temporary housing vacancy. Class D accounted for 87 homes in 2026, a slight reduction from 94 in 2025 but still higher than earlier years in the dataset.

Similarly, Class I accounted for 92 homes in 2026, compared with 104 in 2025 and 111 in 2024. These figures suggest a gradual decline in this category over recent years, although the numbers remain broadly within the same range. Another care-related category, Class J, recorded 29 properties in 2026, slightly higher than 24 in 2025. As with similar exemptions, this category reflects individual family circumstances and therefore tends to fluctuate modestly from year to year.

Certain exemption categories remain limited in scale but still form part of the broader exemption framework. Class G recorded 151 homes in 2026, a noticeable increase from 101 in 2025 and 102 in 2024. Financial pressures also appear in the data through Class L ,which totalled 73 homes in 2026, broadly similar to 74 in 2025 but higher than earlier years in the dataset. Although relatively small in number, repossession cases highlight the role that economic factors can play in housing vacancy.

Other exemption categories account for very small numbers of properties. Class H – homes left empty by ministers of religion, recorded 39 properties, while Class K, properties last occupied by students, accounted for just one home in 2026. Class B, charity-owned properties and Class Q, homes left empty due to bankruptcy also represent only a handful of cases each year.

Taken together, the exemption statistics for the South West Wales region show that the majority of unoccupied exempt properties arise from life events. These situations often result in temporary vacancy while legal, financial, or practical matters are resolved. Understanding these patterns is important when assessing the broader empty homes landscape. While some empty homes represent housing underuse, many exempt properties reflect unavoidable circumstances that temporarily remove homes from occupation.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026:
South East Wales Region

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total Dwellings	682,717	678,521	674,636	672,535	668,684
Empty Homes	15,929	15,339	15,328	16,002	16,234
Second Homes	5,609	5,289	3,746	4,887	4,807
Unoccupied Exemptions	7,567	7,701	7,800	7,171	6,711
Total Empty Homes	29,105	28,329	26,874	28,060	27,752
% of Total Housing Stock	4.3%	4.2%	4.0%	4.2%	4.2%
Breakdown					
<6 Months Empty	6,455	6,405	6,301	6,506	6,455
>6 Months Empty	9,474	8,934	9,027	9,496	9,779
Empty Homes Premium	4,703	4,966	3,513	868	826

The South East Wales region contains the largest concentration of housing in Wales and includes many of the country's most densely populated urban areas. As a result, trends within this region have a significant influence on the national housing picture. The Council Tax statistics for 2026 show a steadily expanding housing stock alongside a complex pattern of empty homes, second homes, and temporarily exempt properties.

In 2026, the South East Wales region recorded 682,717 dwellings within the council tax base. This represents a substantial increase from 678,521 in 2025 and 674,636 in 2024, continuing a consistent upward trend over the five-year period. Since 2022, the housing stock in the region has grown by more than 14,000 homes, reflecting both new residential development and changes within the council tax register. The steady growth in dwellings highlights the continuing demand for housing within this economically active part of Wales.

Alongside this growth in housing supply, the number of empty homes in the region has shown a more varied trend. In 2026, 15,929 properties were recorded as empty, representing an increase from 15,339 in 2025 and 15,328 in 2024. Although this increase marks a reversal of the decline observed between 2023 and 2025, the figure remains below the 16,234 empty homes recorded in 2022. The data suggests that while vacancy levels fluctuate year to year, the overall scale of empty homes within the region remains relatively stable.

A closer examination of the breakdown of empty homes reveals that long-term vacancy continues to represent a significant share of the region's empty housing stock. In 2026, 9,474 properties had been empty for more than six months, an increase from 8,934 in 2025 and 9,027 in 2024. Although still slightly below the 9,779 recorded in 2022, the rise between 2025 and 2026 indicates that a growing number of homes are remaining empty for extended periods.

Short-term empty homes accounted for 6,455 properties in 2026, only marginally higher than the 6,405 recorded in 2025 and broadly consistent with earlier years in the dataset. The stability of this category reflects the normal functioning of the housing market, including properties between occupancies, homes undergoing refurbishment, or dwellings awaiting sale or letting.

Second homes represent a smaller share of the housing stock in South East Wales than in more rural regions, but they remain a noticeable component of the housing picture. In 2026, 5,609 second homes were recorded within the region, an increase from 5,289 in 2025 and significantly higher than the 3,746 recorded in 2024. This rise suggests a renewed growth in second home ownership within the region after the notable dip recorded in 2024.

Unoccupied exemptions totalled 7,567 homes in 2026, a slight reduction from 7,701 in 2025 and 7,800 in 2024. Over the five-year period, exemption levels have remained relatively consistent, generally fluctuating between around 6,700 and 7,800 properties. When combined, the total number of homes not currently occupied as primary residences in South East Wales reaches 29,105 properties in 2026. This represents an increase from 28,329 in 2025 and 26,874 in 2024, indicating that the overall level of under-used housing within the region has grown in recent years.

In proportional terms, 4.3% of the South East Wales housing stock is currently classified as empty or under-used. While this proportion has increased slightly from 4.2% in 2025 and 4.0% in 2024, it remains lower than the levels observed in some other Welsh regions. This reflects the more urban character of the region, where housing demand is typically higher and vacancy rates tend to be lower than in rural or coastal areas.

Another notable feature of the dataset is the number of properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium. In 2026, 4,703 homes in South East Wales were subject to this premium. Although this represents a small decline from 4,966 in 2025, it remains significantly higher than earlier years in the dataset. In 2023 and 2022, the number of properties subject to the premium was just 868 and 826 respectively, indicating a dramatic increase in the application of this policy tool in recent years. This sharp rise reflects the expanded use of council tax powers by local authorities seeking to encourage property owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use. The increase in premium charges suggests a stronger policy focus on reducing housing vacancy and improving the utilisation of existing housing stock.

Overall, the South East Wales regional statistics present a picture of a growing housing market with relatively moderate levels of vacancy compared with other parts of Wales. While the number of empty homes has fluctuated over time, the proportion of under-used housing remains comparatively low.

Nevertheless, the absolute number of empty and under-used homes remains significant. The figures highlight the continued importance of targeted empty homes strategies aimed at bringing long-term vacant properties back into occupation. By addressing these homes alongside new housing development, local authorities in South East Wales have the opportunity to make better use of the existing housing stock and support the wider goal of improving housing availability across the region.

Exemption Class	Exemption Definition	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Class A	Major Structural Repair	1,724	1,694	1,668	1,648	1,772
Class B	Owned by a charity	163	151	150	218	23
Class D	Owner in prison	132	120	117	96	103
Class E	Owner receiving care	1,263	1,335	1,296	1,121	1,141
Class F	Owner is deceased	3,710	3,887	4,051	3,655	3,240
Class G	Occupation prohibited	174	163	156	153	157
Class H	Left by a minister of religion	57	51	53	54	49
Class I	Owner moved to receive care	129	129	134	110	118
Class J	Owner moved to provide care	39	36	35	33	35
Class K	Last occupied by a student	5	5	5	4	3
Class L	Property repossessed	156	118	106	69	55
Class Q	Property owner bankrupt	15	12	29	10	15
Total		7,567	7,701	7,800	7,171	6,711

Unoccupied exemptions provide important insight into the reasons why some properties remain empty within the South East Wales housing market.

In 2026, the South East Wales region recorded 7,567 properties classified as unoccupied exemptions, representing a slight decrease from 7,701 in 2025 and 7,800 in 2024. Despite the modest reduction in recent years, the number of exempt properties remains significantly higher than the 6,711 recorded in 2022.

As with the national picture and other Welsh regions, the most prominent exemption category is Class F. In 2026, this category accounted for 3,710 properties, representing almost half of all exempt dwellings in the region. Although this figure has declined slightly from 3,887 in 2025 and 4,051 in 2024, it remains significantly higher than the 3,240 recorded in 2022.

Another major exemption category is Class A. In 2026, 1,724 homes were recorded under this classification, compared with 1,694 in 2025 and 1,668 in 2024. The number has remained relatively consistent across the five-year dataset, reflecting the presence of homes that cannot be safely occupied while substantial building work is carried out. In an area with a large and diverse housing stock such as South East Wales, structural repairs and redevelopment projects can temporarily remove properties from active use.

Class E accounted for 1,263 homes in 2026. This represents a modest decline from 1,335 in 2025 and 1,296 in 2024, although the figures remain broadly consistent with earlier years. The presence of a large number of homes within this category reflects wider demographic trends across Wales, particularly the ageing population and the transition of homeowners into long-term care settings.

Several smaller categories provide additional insight into the personal circumstances that can result in temporary housing vacancy. Class D, properties left empty because the owner is in prison, accounted for 132 homes in 2026, an increase from 120 in 2025 and 117 in 2024. While relatively small in overall terms, the gradual rise in this category demonstrates the variety of personal factors that can influence housing occupancy.

Similarly, Class I, properties where the owner has moved elsewhere to receive personal care, recorded 129 homes in 2026, identical to the 129 recorded in 2025 and broadly consistent with earlier years. Class J, properties left empty because the owner has moved to provide care for another person, accounted for 39 homes in 2026, slightly higher than the 36 recorded in 2025. These categories typically fluctuate modestly from year to year as they reflect individual family circumstances.

Other exemptions remain limited in scale but still contribute to the overall picture. Class G, properties where occupation is prohibited by law, accounted for 174 homes in 2026, up slightly from 163 in 2025. Financial factors also appear within the dataset through Class L, repossessed properties, which recorded 156 homes in 2026, representing a notable increase from 118 in 2025 and 106 in 2024. Although still relatively small in proportion to the total housing stock, the rise in repossession cases may reflect broader financial pressures affecting some households, owners and landlords.

A number of exemption categories remain extremely small in scale. Class H, properties left empty by ministers of religion, recorded 57 homes in 2026, while Class K, properties last occupied by students, accounted for just five homes. Class B, charity-owned properties also represent a small share of the total exemptions, though the category has increased substantially compared with earlier years in the dataset.

Finally, Class Q, properties left empty due to bankruptcy, recorded 15 homes in 2026, slightly higher than the 12 recorded in 2025. Although relatively uncommon, bankruptcy-related cases illustrate the role that financial distress can play in housing vacancy.

Taken together, the exemption statistics for South East Wales show that the majority of unoccupied exempt homes arise from life events such as bereavement, structural repairs, and transitions into residential care. These circumstances often result in temporary vacancy while legal, financial, or practical matters are resolved.

Understanding the distribution of exemption categories is essential when analysing the broader empty homes picture. While some empty properties may represent housing underuse, many exempt homes reflect legitimate situations where immediate occupation is not possible.

For policymakers and local authorities, tracking these trends can help inform more targeted interventions. By identifying where homes may eventually return to the housing market, councils can better plan strategies that support the efficient reuse of existing housing stock while recognising the complex circumstances that can lead to temporary vacancy.

Summary

The Council Tax statistics for 2026 provide an important snapshot of how housing across Wales is being used, and where opportunities remain to make better use of existing homes. While the Welsh housing stock has continued to grow steadily, the data shows that a significant number of properties remain empty, under-used, or temporarily exempt from council tax. Understanding how these patterns have evolved over recent years is essential for shaping effective housing policy and ensuring that Wales' existing housing stock contributes fully to meeting housing need.

Across Wales, the total number of dwellings recorded for council tax purposes reached 1,433,015 in 2026, continuing the steady upward trend seen in recent years. This represents an increase of almost 30,000 homes since 2022, reflecting ongoing development alongside changes within the council tax register. While growth in housing supply is an important component of addressing housing demand, the statistics also demonstrate that a notable proportion of the existing housing stock remains unused or under-used.

In 2026, Wales recorded 38,058 empty homes, alongside 24,814 second homes and 17,692 unoccupied exempt properties. Combined, these categories represent 80,564 homes not currently occupied as primary residences, equivalent to 4.2% of the Welsh housing stock. Although this proportion is slightly lower than in previous years, falling from around 5.5% in 2023 and 2025, the absolute number of under-used homes remains substantial.

The breakdown of empty homes reveals that long-term vacancy continues to form a significant part of the picture. In 2026, 23,033 properties had been empty for more than six months, compared with 15,025 homes empty for less than six months. Long-term empty homes are particularly significant from a policy perspective, as they represent properties that could potentially be brought back into occupation through targeted intervention. At the same time, the statistics also highlight the varied reasons why homes may remain empty. A large proportion of unoccupied exempt properties arise from situations such as probate, major structural repairs, or homeowners moving into residential care. These circumstances illustrate that not all empty homes represent housing underuse in the traditional sense; many reflect life events or practical constraints that temporarily remove properties from the housing market.

Nevertheless, the overall scale of empty and under-used homes demonstrates the importance of ensuring that existing housing stock is used as effectively as possible. In a context where many households across Wales face housing affordability pressures, overcrowding, or limited access to suitable homes, each long-term empty property represents a potential opportunity to increase housing availability without the need for new construction. Regional patterns within the data further illustrate the diversity of housing dynamics across Wales. The South East Wales region, which contains the largest share of the national housing stock, recorded the highest number of empty homes in absolute terms, with 15,929 empty properties in 2026. However, because of the region's larger housing base, the proportion of empty homes remains relatively modest at around 4.3% of the housing stock.

By contrast, Mid Wales recorded a much higher proportion of under-used homes relative to its housing stock, with 7.5% of dwellings classified as empty, second homes, or exempt properties in 2026. This reflects the particular housing dynamics of rural areas, where second homes and long-term vacancy can form a larger share of the housing landscape. The North Wales and South West Wales regions sit between these two extremes, each displaying distinctive patterns influenced by tourism, coastal housing markets, and the condition of older stock. In both regions, second homes form a notable share of the housing stock, particularly in rural and coastal communities.

One of the most significant policy developments affecting empty homes in Wales in recent years has been the introduction and expansion of council tax premiums on long-term empty homes and second homes. These measures have been designed to encourage property owners to bring homes back into use and to discourage prolonged vacancy or under-occupation. The data suggests that these policy tools are beginning to influence housing patterns, although their impact varies across regions. For example, the number of properties subject to the Empty Homes Premium has increased substantially in recent years. Nationally, 12,357 homes were subject to the premium in 2026, compared with 6,718 in 2022. This sharp increase reflects the growing willingness of local authorities to utilise the premium as a mechanism for tackling long-term empty homes.

In some regions, there are signs that these measures may be contributing to reductions in long-term vacancy. For example, in South West Wales, the number of long-term empty homes has declined since its peak in 2024. However, the impact is less clear in other regions, where long-term vacancy has continued to rise or fluctuate. Similarly, the application of second homes premiums has been intended to address concerns about housing availability in areas with high levels of seasonal or secondary occupancy. While the number of second homes in Wales increased slightly in 2026, the figures vary significantly between regions, suggesting that local housing markets respond differently to these policy measures. These mixed outcomes highlight an important lesson for housing policy: while fiscal measures such as council tax premiums can influence behaviour, they are unlikely to resolve the issue of empty homes on their own. In many cases, empty homes are linked to structural challenges such as property condition, complex ownership arrangements, or financial barriers to renovation.

As a result, tackling empty homes effectively requires a combination of policy tools. Alongside council tax measures, local authorities need access to enforcement powers, financial assistance schemes, and specialist support to help property owners bring homes back into use. Secondly, greater flexibility for councils in applying policy tools may help ensure that interventions are tailored to local housing conditions. The challenges faced in rural or coastal communities, for example, may differ significantly from those in urban housing markets. Finally, the statistics reinforce the importance of recognising empty homes work as a key part of housing supply policy. While new housing development remains essential, bringing homes back into use represents one of the most cost-effective ways to increase housing supply.

Overall, the Council Tax statistics for 2026 demonstrate that Wales continues to face a complex but addressable challenge when it comes to empty homes. While the proportion of under-used housing has declined slightly in recent years, tens of thousands of homes remain vacant or only partially used. By combining robust data analysis with targeted policy measures and sustained investment, Wales has the opportunity to make progress in reducing housing waste and ensuring that more homes are available for the people and communities that need them most.

Empty Homes Statistics 2026:
Local Authority Data

Region	Local Authority	Total Dwellings	<6 Months	>6 Months	Total EH	LTE Premium	Second Homes	Unoccupied Exemptions	Total of All Definitions	% of Housing Stock Empty
SE Wales	Blaenau Gwent	32,234	407	571	978	343	0	369	1,347	4.2%
SE Wales	Bridgend	65,039	386	1,045	1,431	548	88	560	2,079	3.2%
SE Wales	Caerphilly	79,266	726	1,184	1,910	382	207	1,038	3,155	4.0%
SE Wales	Cardiff	153,249	2,087	1,634	3,721	733	3,332	1,453	8,506	5.6%
SW Wales	Carmarthenshire	87,676	989	1,870	2,859	1,348	1,200	976	5,035	5.7%
Mid Wales	Ceredigion	34,235	298	638	936	350	1,513	541	2,990	8.7%
N Wales	Conwy	56,177	710	846	1,556	356	148	1,080	2,784	5.0%
N Wales	Denbighshire	45,551	590	1,101	1,691	479	439	665	2,795	6.1%
N Wales	Flintshire	69,812	767	1,050	1,817	607	321	755	2,893	4.1%
N Wales	Gwynedd	59,018	573	1,431	2,004	1,027	5,004	938	7,946	13.5%
N Wales	Isle of Anglesey	35,033	338	684	1,022	454	2,297	595	3,914	11.2%
SE Wales	Merthyr Tydfil	26,932	380	430	810	251	182	303	1,295	4.8%
SE Wales	Monmouthshire	43,598	186	411	597	200	321	485	1,403	3.2%
SW Wales	Neath Port Talbot	65,005	736	1,049	1,785	588	461	986	3,232	5.0%
SE Wales	Newport	70,606	641	1,116	1,757	635	277	691	2,725	3.9%
SW Wales	Pembrokeshire	61,857	585	1,104	1,689	362	4,232	860	6,781	11.0%
Mid Wales	Powys	65,488	673	1,291	1,964	787	1,696	783	4,443	6.8%
SE Wales	Rhondda Cynon Taf	108,001	1,145	1,990	3,135	1,201	524	1,517	5,176	4.8%
SW Wales	Swansea	110,252	1,609	2,014	3,623	1,126	1,831	1,339	6,793	6.2%
SE Wales	Torfaen	42,601	155	384	539	0	16	572	1,127	2.6%
SE Wales	Vale of Glamorgan	61,191	342	709	1,051	410	662	579	2,292	3.7%
N Wales	Wrexham	60,194	702	481	1,183	170	63	607	1,853	3.1%

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