



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government



# English Housing Survey

Social Rented Sector Report, 2014-15



---

# Contents

---

Introduction and main findings

Chapter 1: Demographics

Chapter 2: Rent and Housing Benefit

Chapter 3: Overcrowding and under-occupation

Chapter 4: Housing moves

Chapter 5: Housing condition

Technical notes and glossary

---

# Introduction and main findings

---

1. The English Housing Survey is a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England. It was first run in 2008-09. Prior to then, the survey was run as two standalone surveys: the English House Condition Survey and the Survey of English Housing.
2. This report focuses on social rented accommodation, housing owned and managed by local authorities and housing associations (private registered providers). The first chapter presents the profile of households living in the social rented sector and how this has changed over time. The remaining chapters cover rent and Housing Benefit, overcrowding and under-occupation, housing moves and housing conditions of social renters.

## Main findings

### Profile of social renters

**Between 1994-95 and 2014-15, social rented households with a household reference person (HRP)<sup>1</sup> aged 35 to 54 increased. This group now predominates.**

- There was an increase in the proportion of social renters ages 35-54 between 1994-95 and 2014-15, from 26% to 38%.
- Over the same period, the proportion of households with an HRP aged under 35 fell from 24% to 19%, and the proportion aged 65 or more dropped from 38% to 29%.

**In the last 20 years, there has been an increase in lone parent families in the social rented sector, and a decrease in couples without children.**

- The overall proportion of lone parent families in the social rented sector increased from 18% in 1994-95 to 23% in 2014-15. The proportion of couples without children declined slightly, from 17% to 12% over the same period.

**The proportion of social renters working full or part-time increased between 1994-95 and 2014-15.**

- In 2014-15, 38% of HRPs in the social sector were in employment, 26% working full-time and 11% working part-time. These proportions have both increased since 1994-95, when they were 21% and 5% respectively. Over the same period, the proportion of retired social sector renters decreased from 39% to 30%.

---

<sup>1</sup> The HRP is the 'householder' in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented.

---

**About half of social renters had a weekly income in the lowest income quintile<sup>2</sup>, unchanged from 1994-95.**

- In 1994-95, 47% of social renting households had a weekly joint income in the lowest quintile. This changed little such that by 2014-15 a similar proportion (47%) were in the lowest quintile.

### **Rent and housing benefit**

**Among social renters in receipt of Housing Benefit, there was an increase in the proportion with only part of their rent covered.**

- In 2008-09, 64% of social renting households had their rent entirely covered by their Housing Benefit. However, by 2014-15 this had decreased to 54%.
- The proportion for whom the Housing Benefit only covered some of the rent therefore increased from 34% in 2008-09 to 44% in 2014-15.

**The majority of lone parents with dependent children, unemployed or with a long-term limiting illness were in receipt of Housing Benefit.**

- Most households with an unemployed HRP (91%), lone parents with dependent children (83%) and households containing someone with a long-term limiting illness (76%), were in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- After deduction of Housing Benefit from rent due, these households paid on average towards their rent: £9 for households with an unemployed HRP, £20 for lone parents with dependent children and £14 for households containing someone with a long-term limiting illness.

**The households most likely to be or have been in rent arrears included lone parents with dependent children, or with an unemployed HRP.**

- Lone parents with dependent children were more likely than other types of household to be in arrears (24%) or have been so in the previous 12 months (27%). Single person households and couples without children were least likely.
- Households with an unemployed HRP were more likely to be or have been in arrears at some point in the previous 12 months (27% and 29% respectively). Households with a retired HRP were least likely.

---

<sup>2</sup> All households have been divided into five equal groups based on their total weekly income of the HRP and their partner (i.e. those in the bottom 20%, the next 20% and so on).

---

**The main reasons that households gave for rent arrears were other debts or responsibilities, reduction in or delays with benefits, or unemployment.**

- Of those who did not have their rent paid by Housing Benefit, 14% (364,000 households) were in arrears. A further 348,000 households had fallen behind with their rent payments at some point during the previous 12 months. This had changed little since 2011-12.
- The main reasons given for rent arrears were due to other debts or responsibilities (27%), reduction in or delays with benefit (22%), and unemployment (21%).

### **Overcrowding and under-occupation**

**Between 2008-09 and 2014-15, there was a small shift from homes being under-occupied to having the appropriate number of bedrooms.**

- There are indications that the proportion of social sector households living in homes with the appropriate number of bedrooms increased between 2008-09 and 2014-15, up from 52% to 56%. The proportion of social renters who were under-occupying<sup>3</sup> their home fell from 11% to 9%.

**Overcrowding levels fell from a peak in 2010-11, driven by a decrease in overcrowding in the housing association sector.**

- The proportion of social renters living in overcrowded homes declined from a peak of 7% in 2010-11, and has been 6% since 2012-13. This was driven by the decrease in housing association sector from 6% in 2010-11 to 5% in 2014-15. Overcrowding in local authority homes remained constant over this time, and was at 8% in 2014-15.

**A considerable proportion of larger households in the social rented sector were overcrowded.**

- Some 42% of households comprising five or more people were overcrowded compared with just 3% of two person households. In 2014-15, 8% of social rented households contained five or more people.

**There were fewer households with spare bedrooms in London and the South East, than in the North.**

- Households living in London and the South East (10%) were more likely to experience overcrowding than those in other regions (4% in northern regions and 5% in the rest of England).

---

<sup>3</sup> A dwelling is considered to be 'under-occupied' if it has two or more bedrooms that are not required, taking into account the age, sex, and relationships of the household members. This report also refers to having any 'spare' bedrooms, which indicates one or more bedrooms that are not required.

- 
- In contrast, households in the northern regions (44%) were more likely to have spare bedrooms than London and the South East (29%) and rest of England (40%).

**Ethnic minority households were more often overcrowded and less likely to have spare bedrooms than white households, mainly due to fewer single person ethnic minority households.**

- Ethnic minority HRP households were more likely to lack one or more bedrooms than their white counterparts (16% compared with 5%) and less likely to have any spare bedrooms.
- In 2014-15, within the social sector, one quarter (25%) of ethnic minority HRP households were single households compared with 43% of white HRP households. Similarly, 64% of households from ethnic minorities consisted of multi person households or households with children compared with 40% of white HRP households.

### Housing moves

**Most social renters moved or considered moving for personal reasons or because of their accommodation or neighbourhood. A very small proportion moved or considered moving for job related reasons.**

- For households moving in the last three years, 43% did so to find more suitable accommodation, 27% for family or personal reasons and 17% wanted to live in a better neighbourhood. Only 3% had moved for job related reasons.
- For households considering moving, 16% was because they wanted larger accommodation, 14% to move to a better neighbourhood and 13% to have nicer accommodation. Just 3% cited moving to take up a new job or to be in an area with more work.

### House condition

**The quality of the social rented stock improved for all households between 2006 and 2014. Though there remained slight disparities in house condition between different groups of social renters.**

- In 2014, the proportion who lived in a non-decent home ranged from 11% of couples with independent children to 17% of couples with no children.
- Between 2006 and 2014, there was a notable fall in the proportion of households living in non-decent homes for all income groups, but improvement was slightly more marked for the two lower quintile groups.
- In 2014, local authority ethnic minority HRP households (21%) were more likely to live in a non-decent home than their white counterparts (15%).

---

## Acknowledgements and further queries

3. Each year the English Housing Survey relies on the contributions of a large number of people and organisations. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) would particularly like to thank all the households who gave up their time to take part in the survey, NatCen Social Research, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and CADS Housing Surveys, without whom the 2014-15 survey and this report, would not have been possible.
4. This report was produced by Sarah Frankenburg, Alun Humphrey and Nevena Ilic at NatCen Social Research, Helen Garrett at BRE and DCLG.
5. If you have any queries about the report, would like any further information or have suggestions for analyses you would like to see included in future EHS reports, please contact [ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk).
6. The responsible analyst for this report is: Reannan Rottier, Housing and Planning Analysis Division, DCLG. Contact via [ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

---

# Chapter 1

## Demographics

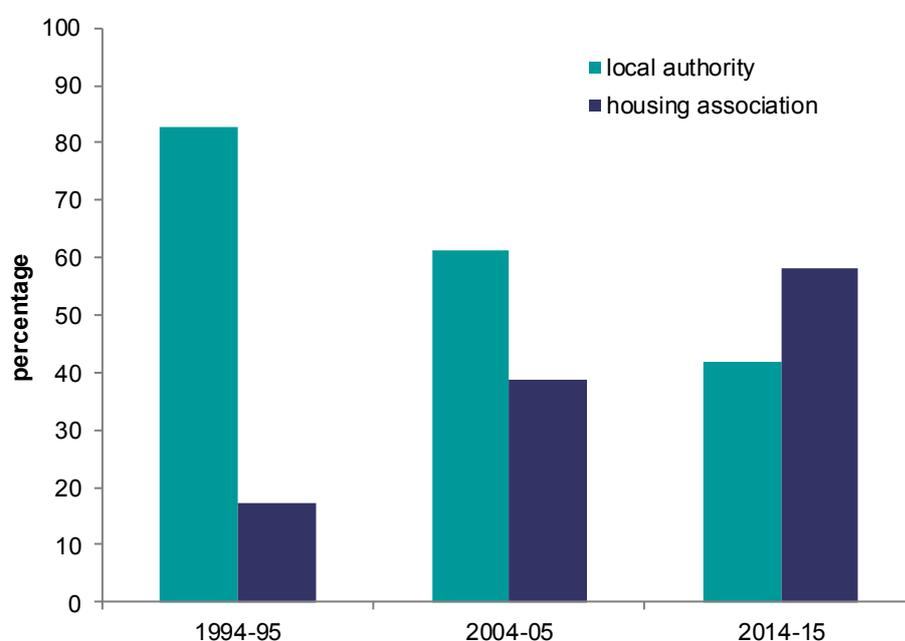
---

1.1 This report focuses on social rented accommodation, housing owned and managed by local authorities and housing associations (private registered providers). This first chapter presents the profile of households living in the social rented sector, how this has changed over time and how it compares to households in other tenure types.

### Profile of social renters

- 1.2 In 2014-15, 17% of all households in England (3.9 million households) lived in social sector accommodation. This was slightly lower than in 1994-95 when it was 22%, or 4.3 million households, Live Table FT1101.
- 1.3 Within the social rented sector, there have been changes over the past two decades. In 1994-95, 83% of social sector households rented from a local authority. The proportion of social sector tenants renting from a local authority declined to 61% in 2004-05 and then to 42% in 2014-15, Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1: Social renters, 1994-95, 2004-05 and 2014-15**



**Base:** all social renters

**Note:** underlying data are presented Annex Table 1.1

**Sources:**

1994-95 and 2004-05: Survey of English Housing;

2014-15: English Housing Survey, full household sample

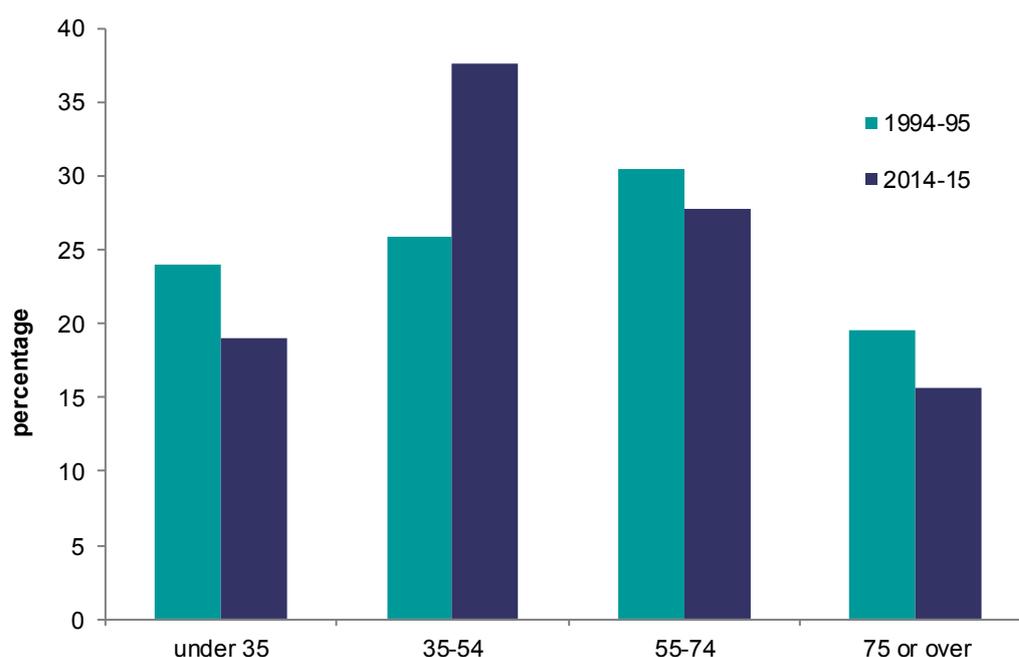
1.4 The last few decades have seen local authority stock transferred to housing associations, and more new stock constructed on behalf of housing associations than local authorities.<sup>4</sup>

## Age

1.5 Between 1994-95 and 2014-15, the age profile of social renters became less evenly distributed. In 2014-15, social renters were less likely to be in the youngest and oldest age groups, and more likely to be in the middle-aged groups.

1.6 There was an increase in the proportion of social renters ages 35-54 between 1994-95 and 2014-15, from 26% to 38%. Over the same period, the proportion of households with an HRP aged under 35 fell from 24% to 19%, and the proportion aged 65 or more dropped from 38% to 29%, Figure 1.2 and Annex Table 1.1.

**Figure 1.2: Age of social renters, 1994-95 and 2014-15**



**Base: all social renters**

**Note: underlying data are presented Annex Table 1.1**

**Sources:**

**1994-95 and 2004-05: Survey of English Housing;**

**2014-15: English Housing Survey, full household sample**

1.7 In 1994-95, housing association tenants were more likely to be younger than local authority tenants. Of housing association households, 31% had an HRP under the age of 35, compared with 23% of local authority households. By

<sup>4</sup> For analysis of housing stock and new builds over recent years: English Housing Survey Headline Report 2014-15, Section 2 Housing stock, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2014-to-2015-headline-report>

---

2014-15, however, this was no longer the case and there was no difference in age profiles between housing association and local authority homes.

## Household type, sex and household size

- 1.8 Compared with the private rented and owner occupied sectors, the social rented sector had a different profile in terms of common household types. Social renters were more likely to be single person households and lone parents than households in other sectors, for example<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.9 In 2014-15, 17% of social sector households were lone parents with dependent children, and a further 6% were lone parents with both dependent and independent children. Of all lone parents with dependent children, 92% were single mothers, Annex Table 1.4. The overall proportion of lone parent families in the social rented sector increased from 18% in 1994-95 to 23% in 2014-15, Annex Table 1.1. The proportion of households accounted for by couples without children declined slightly, from 17% to 12% over the same period, Annex Table 1.1.
- 1.10 There were no differences in household type between local authority and housing association renters in 2014-15, with similar proportions of people living alone, lone parents, and couples with children in both tenure types.
- 1.11 In 2014-15, 58% of social renting households had a female HRP, compared with 44% of private renting households and 37% of owner occupiers. Among all social renters, there was little difference in the proportion of female and male HRPs between housing association and local authority tenants, Annex Table 1.2.
- 1.12 The higher proportion of female HRPs in the social sector might be attributable to the fact that social renters were more likely to be lone parent households, Live Table FA1221. As highlighted above, the majority of lone parent social rented households were single mothers.
- 1.13 The mean overall size of social sector households changed little from 1994-95 and was 2.2 in 2014-15, Annex Table 1.1. In 2014-15, 41% of social renting households were one person households, compared with 24% of owner occupiers, and 27% of private renters, Annex Table 1.3. The proportion of social renters living in single person households has not markedly changed since 1994-95, when 39% of households were single people.
- 1.14 Among all single person households in the social rented sector, 67% were female, and 33% were male, Annex Table 1.5. Of all social renters aged over 75, 75% were living by themselves in 2014-15 – people in this age category

---

<sup>5</sup> English Housing Survey Headline Report 2014-15, Section 1 Households, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2014-to-2015-headline-report>

---

making up the largest proportion of single person households. Of those aged 65-74, 64% lived in one person households, Annex Table 1.6.

## Ethnicity and nationality

- 1.15 The proportion of HRPs from an ethnic minority background has increased in the social sector, as it has among households overall (5% in 1994-95 to 11% in 2014-15). In 2014-15, 15% of HRPs in the social sector were from an ethnic minority background, up from 7% in 1994-95.
- 1.16 In 2014-15, people living in the social rented sector were more likely to be from ethnic minority backgrounds than owner occupiers. Of all social renters, 15% were from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 8% of owner occupiers, Annex Table 1.7.
- 1.17 A higher proportion of social renters in local authority housing were from ethnic minority backgrounds than those renting from a housing association – 18% compared to 13%.
- 1.18 The majority of social renters were UK or Irish nationals, and there was no significant difference in nationality between housing association and local authority renters. In 2014-15, 92% of all social renters were UK or Irish nationals, Annex Table 1.8.

## Economic activity and income

- 1.19 There have been changes in the economic activity profile of social renters over the past 20 years. In 2014-15, 38% of HRPs in the social sector were in employment, 26% working full-time and 11% working part-time. These proportions have both increased since 1994-95 when they were 21% and 5% respectively.
- 1.20 Over the same period, the proportion of retired social sector renters decreased from 39% to 30%. There were no significant differences in the proportions of people who were either employed or retired between housing association and local authority renters in either 2014-15 or 1994-5, Annex Table 1.1.
- 1.21 In part these changes reflect changes in the profile of economic activity of the total household population that have taken place since 1994-95. The increase in the proportion of social renters with an HRP in part-time work (from 5% to 11%) matches that of the population overall, which has increased from 5% to 10%, Live Table FA1301<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> Housing in England 1994/95, Live table A1.11 for 1994-95 employment figures.

- 
- 1.22 However, the proportions of the total household population with an HRP employed full-time or retired have not changed much, thus the changes in the proportions of social renting HRPs who were retired or working full-time reflects changes in the economic profile of social renters.

### **Box 1: Income quintiles**

When considering the impact of income over time, it is helpful to consider relative to the overall population, as household income across the general population increased due to inflation. All households have therefore been divided into five equal groups based on their total weekly income of the HRP and their partner (i.e. those in the bottom 20%, the next 20% and so on). These groups are known as quintiles, and are used throughout this report.

- 1.23 Social renting households generally have lower incomes compared with the overall population. In 1994-95, around one half (47%) of social renting households had a weekly joint income in the lowest 20% income group. This changed little such that by 2014-15 a similar proportion (47%) were in the lowest 20% category, Annex Table 1.1.

## Length of residence

- 1.24 In 2014-15, 39% of all social renters had lived at their current property for less than five years, a very similar to the proportion in 1994-95 (40%). Social renters had lived at their current address for an average of 11.4 years, in comparison with 4.0 years for private renters and 17.5 years for owner occupiers<sup>7</sup>.
- 1.25 Households renting from local authorities were slightly more likely than housing association tenants to have lived at their current property for longer. In 2014-15, 23% of local authority tenants had lived at their homes for more than twenty years, compared with 19% of housing association tenants, Annex Table 1.1.

## Health

- 1.26 Among all social renting households, half contained at least one person with a long-term limiting illness. These data were not available for earlier years. There was no significant difference in the proportion of people with a long-term limiting illness between housing association and local authority households.

---

<sup>7</sup> English Housing Survey, Private rented sector report 2014-15, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey#2014-to-2015>

---

## Chapter 2

# Rent and Housing Benefit

---

2.1 This chapter details rent and Housing Benefit levels of households in the social rented sector. The first sections cover overall levels of rent, the proportion in receipt of Housing Benefit and the amount of benefit and how these have changed over time. The chapter then describes how rent and Housing Benefit receipt varies based on the demographic characteristics of households. The final section details social renting households who had rent arrears.

### Rent

2.2 Social housing can be offered at two different rent levels, social rent and affordable rent. Social rented housing is housing owned and managed by local authorities and other registered providers for which target rents are determined through the national rent regime. Affordable rented housing is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent<sup>8</sup>.

2.3 The EHS does not collect data on whether rent is at social or affordable rent level, so an overall average rent only is presented in this chapter. In 2014-15, the average (mean) rent (excluding services<sup>9</sup> but including Housing Benefit) for households in the social sector was £99 per week.

2.4 As was described in the Headline Report, between 2008-09 and 2014-15, average weekly rents increased in both the social and private rented sector. However, rents increased at a much faster rate in the social sector. In the social rented sector, average rent increased from £71 in 2008-09 to £99 per week in 2014-15, an increase of 39% while average private rents increased from £153 to £179 per week, an increase of 17%<sup>10</sup>.

### Housing Benefit

2.5 Housing Benefit helps tenants who are on a low income to pay their rent. Housing Benefit is administered by local authorities who decide whether a

---

<sup>8</sup> For more detailed information: <https://www.gov.uk/housing/funding-programmes>

<sup>9</sup> Services include council tax, heating, water and sewerage, lighting, hot water, fuel for cooking, regular meals, TV licence.

<sup>10</sup> English Housing Survey Headline Report 2014-15, page 16, paragraph 1.43. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2014-to-2015-headline-report> (viewed 20 June 2016)

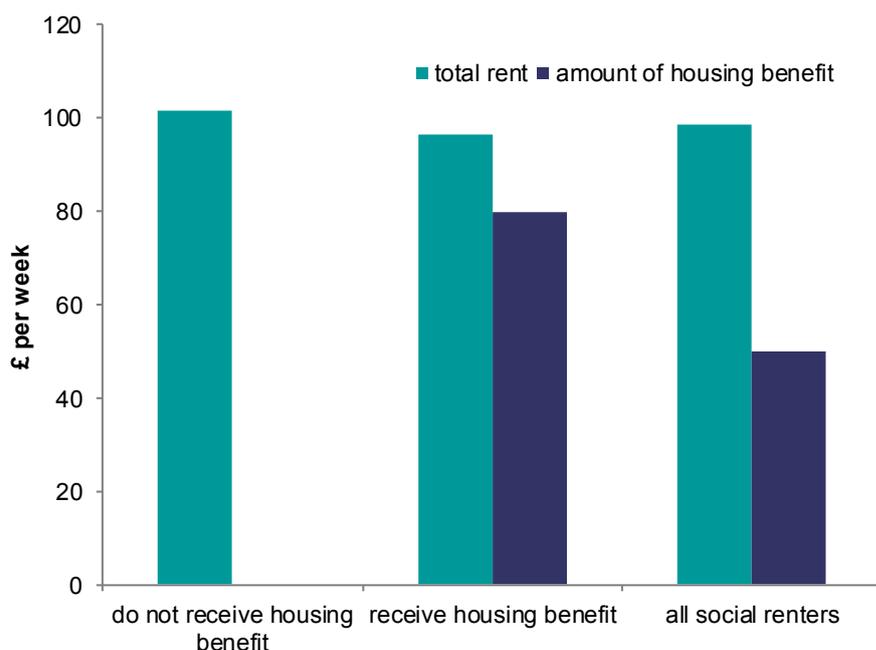
claimant is eligible for Housing Benefit, and how much they are entitled to<sup>11</sup>. In recent years, there have been reforms to the benefits system impacting entitlement to Housing Benefit in the social rented sector.

2.6 In particular, the removal of the spare room subsidy from April 2013, affecting working age claimants only, reduced the eligible rent for many living in the social rented sector. Other reforms to the welfare system may also impact on the overall amount of benefit income available to some households<sup>12</sup>.

### Amount of benefit

2.7 As noted, the average (mean) rent (excluding services but including Housing Benefit) for households in the social sector was £99 per week. For all these social renting households (i.e. including both those in receipt of Housing Benefit and those that were not), the average amount of Housing Benefit received was £50 per week, meaning that on average, social renting households contributed £48 per week to their rent, Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Mean amount of rent and Housing Benefit, 2014-15**



**Base: all social renters paying rent**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.1**

**Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample**

2.8 Total weekly rent was £102 per week among social renting households who did not receive Housing Benefit. Among the 63% of households who received Housing Benefit, the average amount received was £80 per week. Their total

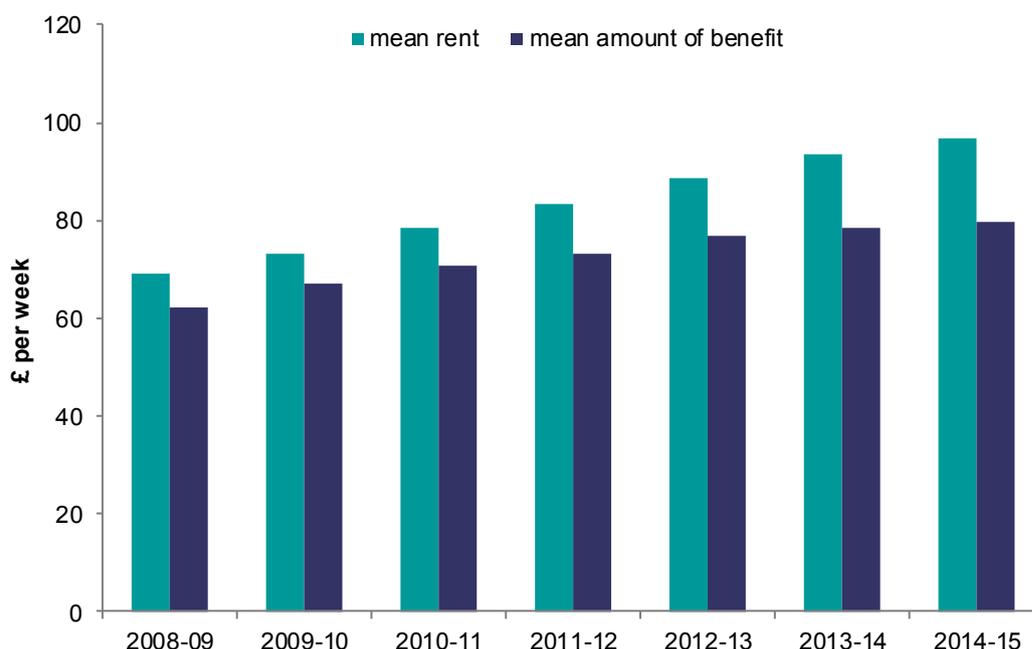
<sup>11</sup> Income-Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up 2014/15, Background information and methodology. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/530981/ir-benefits-background-information-methodology.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/530981/ir-benefits-background-information-methodology.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Households below average income. Benefit and tax reform. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/households-below-average-income-hbai--2>

average weekly rent was £97 meaning their mean rent after benefit was £17, which they had to pay themselves, Figure 2.1.

2.9 Among social renting households in receipt of Housing Benefit, since 2008-09, mean weekly rent net of services has increased from £69 per week to £97 per week, an increase of 39%. Over the same period, the average amount of Housing Benefit received has increased from £62 to £80, an increase of 28%. This means the difference between benefit received and total rent has doubled from £7 per week to £17 per week, Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Mean rent and Housing Benefit, 2008-09 to 2014-15**



**Base: all social renters paying rent and in receipt of Housing Benefit**

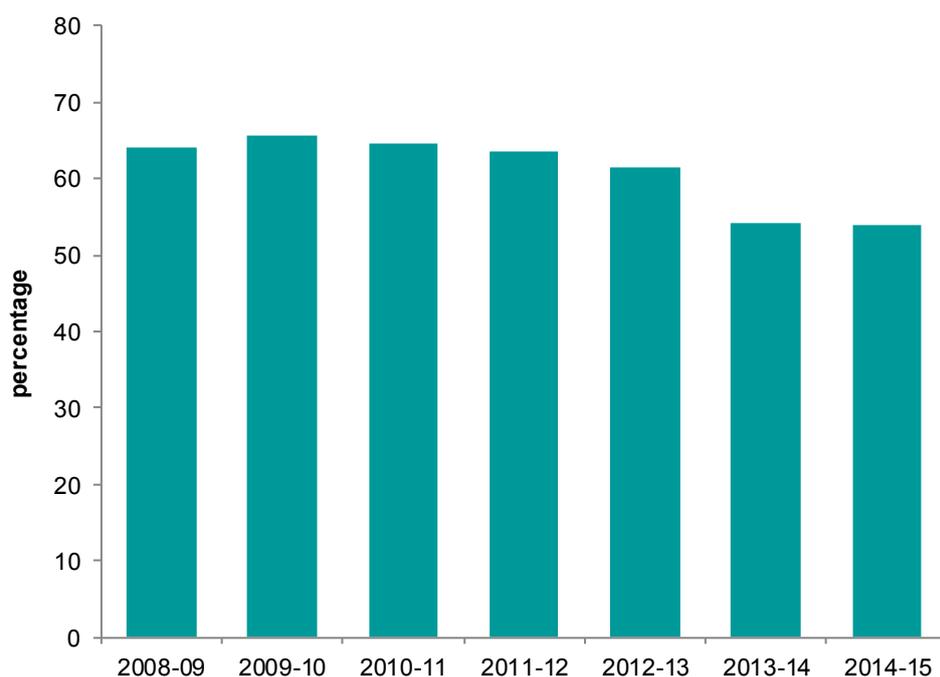
**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.2**

**Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample**

2.10 Just under two thirds (63%) of social renting households were in receipt of Housing Benefit in 2014-15. There was little difference in the proportions of local authority and housing association tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, Annex Table 2.4.

2.11 Households in receipt of Housing Benefit were asked whether the amount of benefit exactly covers the rent or covers some of it. In 2008-09, 64% of social renting households had their rent entirely covered by their Housing Benefit. However, by 2014-15 this had decreased to 54%, Figure 2.3. The proportion for whom the Housing Benefit only covered some of the rent therefore increased from 34% in 2008-09 to 44% in 2014-15.

**Figure 2.3: Whether Housing Benefit covers rent, 2008-09 to 2014-15**



**Base: all social renting households paying rent and in receipt of Housing Benefit**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.3**

**Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample**

2.12 Housing Benefit award can vary based on the numbers, age and disabilities of members of the household<sup>11</sup>. The next section explores rent and Housing Benefit for type of landlord and different demographic groups. This includes the mean amount of rent due and the proportion of each demographic group in receipt of Housing Benefit. Then for those in receipt of Housing Benefit, the amount of Housing Benefit and the actual amount of rent paid by the household – i.e. after deducting Housing Benefit amount from full rent due.

### **Type of landlord**

2.13 In 2014-15, rents were slightly higher among housing association tenants (a mean of £102 per week) compared with £93 per week among local authority tenants. The proportion who were in receipt of Housing Benefit was similar across the two types of tenancy.

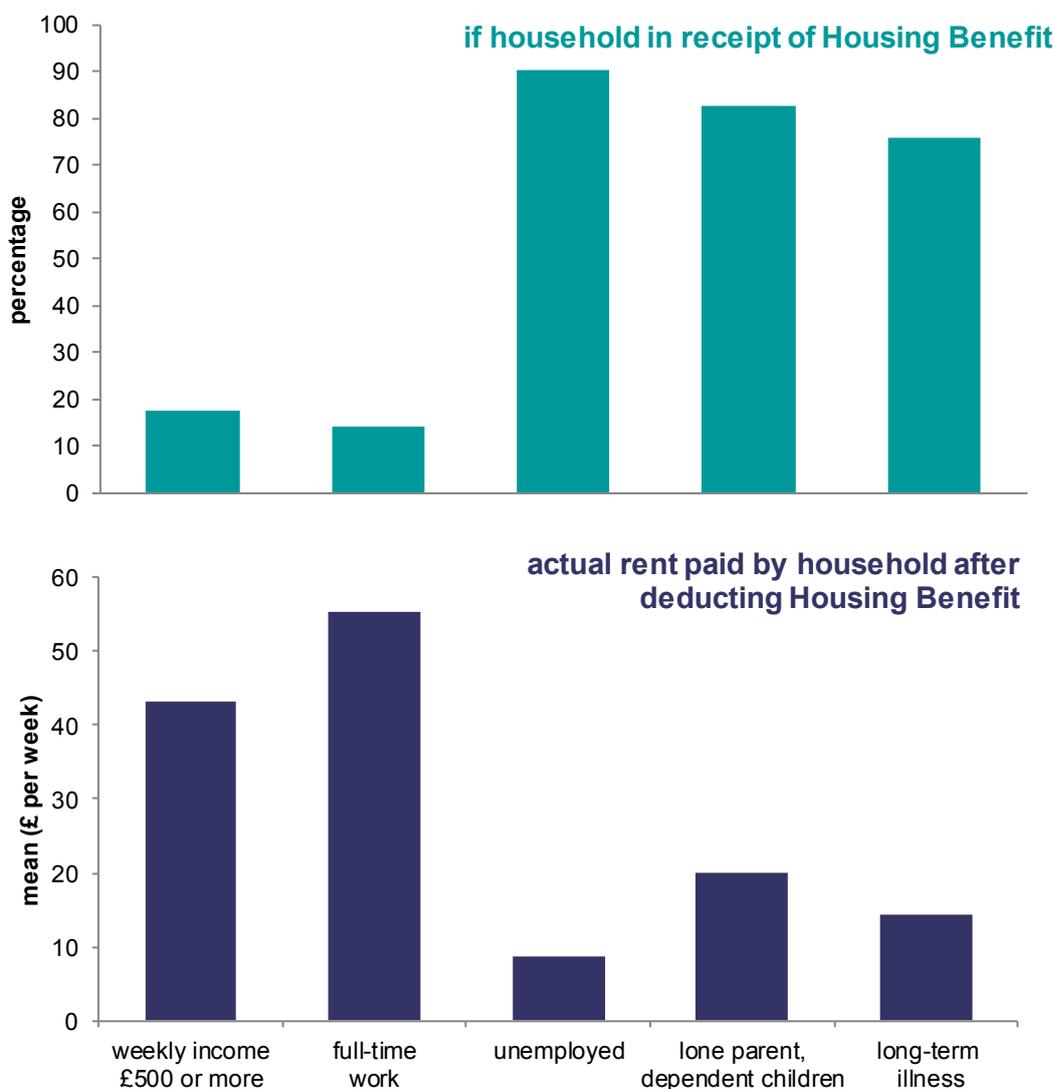
2.14 Among those who were in receipt of Housing Benefit, the amount of benefit received was slightly higher among those in housing association accommodation (a mean of £83 per week compared with £75 per week for local authority tenants). As a result the mean amount of rent actually paid was similar across the two types of landlords.

### **Household characteristics**

2.15 The households least likely to be in receipt of Housing Benefit were those with weekly incomes in excess of £500 (18%) or with an HRP in full-time work

(14%). By contrast, most households with an unemployed HRP (91%), lone parents with dependent children (83%) and households containing someone with a long-term limiting illness (76%), were in receipt of Housing Benefit, Figure 2.4.

**Figure 2.4: If household in receipt of Housing Benefit, and actual rent paid after deducting Housing Benefit, 2014-15**



**Base:** all social renters paying rent (green); all social renting households paying rent and in receipt of Housing Benefit (blue)

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 2.4

**Source:** English Housing Survey, full household sample

2.16 For households with weekly incomes in excess of £500 or in full-time work in receipt of Housing Benefit, their actual weekly rent paid was £43 and £55 respectively. This contrasted with lower amounts of actual weekly rent paid by unemployed households (£9), lone parents with dependent children (£20) and households containing someone with a long-term limiting illness (£14).

---

## Rent arrears

- 2.17 Of those who did not have their rent paid by Housing Benefit, 86% were up to date with their rent payments. The remaining 14% (364,000 households) were in arrears. A further 348,000 households had fallen behind with their rent payments at some point during the previous 12 months. There was little difference between the proportion of local authority and housing association tenants who were in arrears, Annex Table 2.5.
- 2.18 Lone parents with dependent children were more likely to both be in arrears (24%) or have been so in the previous 12 months (27%) than other types of households. Single person households and couples without children were least likely to be or have been in arrears.
- 2.19 Households with an unemployed household reference person were more likely to be in arrears or have been so at some point in the previous 12 months (27% and 29% respectively). Households with a retired HRP were least likely.
- 2.20 The likelihood of being in arrears was higher among those with the lowest income. The proportion in arrears varied from 30% of households with a weekly income of the HRP and partner of less than £100 to 15% among those with a joint weekly income of £500 or more. The proportion of social renters in arrears on their rent has changed little since 2011-12, Annex Table 2.6.
- 2.21 Social renting households who were in arrears, or had been in the previous year were asked why they had difficulty paying the rent: 27% said it was due to other debts or responsibilities, 22% mentioned a reduction in or problems with Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance or Universal Credit and 21% said it was due to unemployment, Annex Table 2.7.
- 2.22 Among those who mentioned a reduction in or problems with Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance or Universal Credit, the most often mentioned problems were benefits being reduced due to their being classed as under-occupying (37%), benefits being reduced for other reasons (34%) and delays in payment of their benefits (25%), Annex Table 2.8.

---

## Chapter 3

# Overcrowding and under-occupation

---

- 3.1 This chapter focuses on overcrowding and under-occupation in the social sector examining which households were most and least likely to be overcrowded in 2014-15 and any changes since 2008-09. The EHS estimates levels of overcrowding and under-occupation based on the 'bedroom standard'<sup>13</sup>. Essentially this is the difference between the number of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing (given the number, ages and relationship of the household members) and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household.
- 3.2 From 1st April 2013, the removal of the spare room subsidy meant that working age households would forego 14% of their eligible Housing Benefit if they had one spare bedroom, or 25% if they had two or more spare bedrooms. This change in the benefits system was intended to free up housing for those currently living in overcrowded circumstances and facilitate effective use of the stock. Exceptions were made for various groups, including pensioners and people requiring overnight care.

## Overcrowding and under-occupation

- 3.3 This section examines which types of households in the social rented sector were most or least likely to live in overcrowded<sup>14</sup> homes.

### Tenure

- 3.4 In 2014-15, a slightly higher proportion of local authority renters (8%) lived in overcrowded homes compared with housing association renters (5%). Housing association renters were also more likely to have the appropriate number of bedrooms (58%) compared with local authority renters (54%). The proportion of renters with spare bedrooms (including those who were under-occupying<sup>15</sup> their homes) was similar for both tenures, Annex Table 3.3.

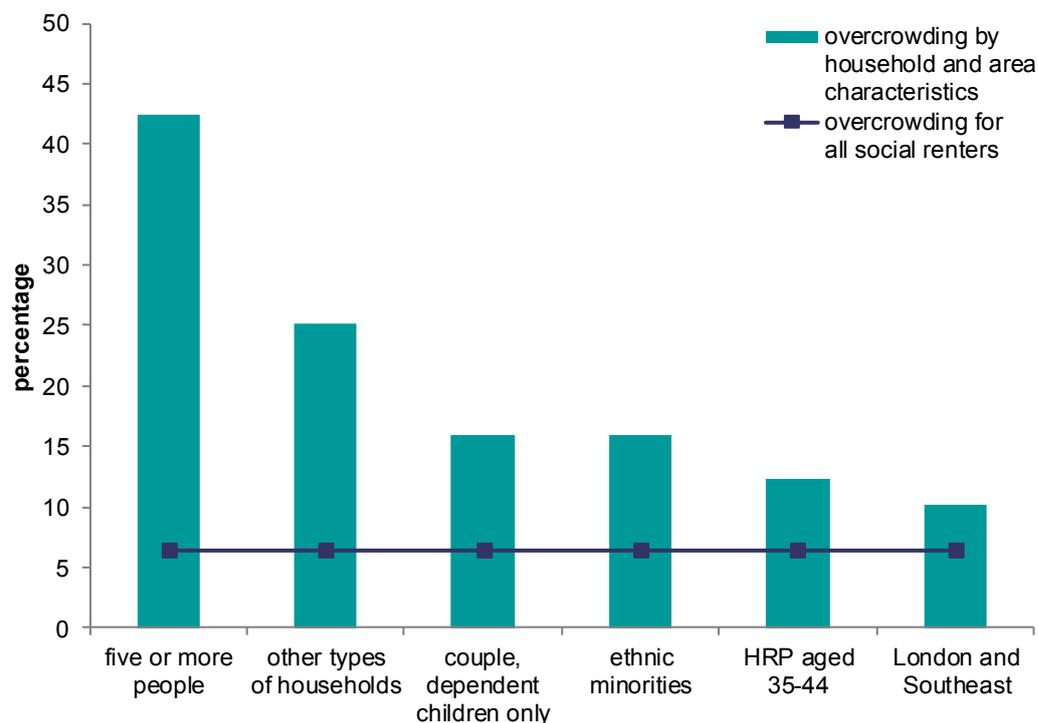
---

<sup>13</sup> Note that the bedroom standard differs from the size criteria used for the purposes of Local Housing Allowance and the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy, under which an adult is considered to be a person 16 or over, rather than 21 or over.

<sup>14</sup> At least one bedroom below the bedroom standard.

<sup>15</sup> A dwelling is considered to be 'under-occupied' if it has two or more bedrooms that are not required, taking into account the age, sex, and relationships of the household members. This report also refers to having any 'spare' bedrooms, which indicates one or more bedrooms that are not required.

**Figure 3.1: Overcrowding in the social rented sector, by household and area characteristics, 2014-15**



Base: all social renters

Notes:

- 1) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see Glossary)
- 2) data are based on three year averages, which are the average of the three years up to and including the labelled date
- 3) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.1

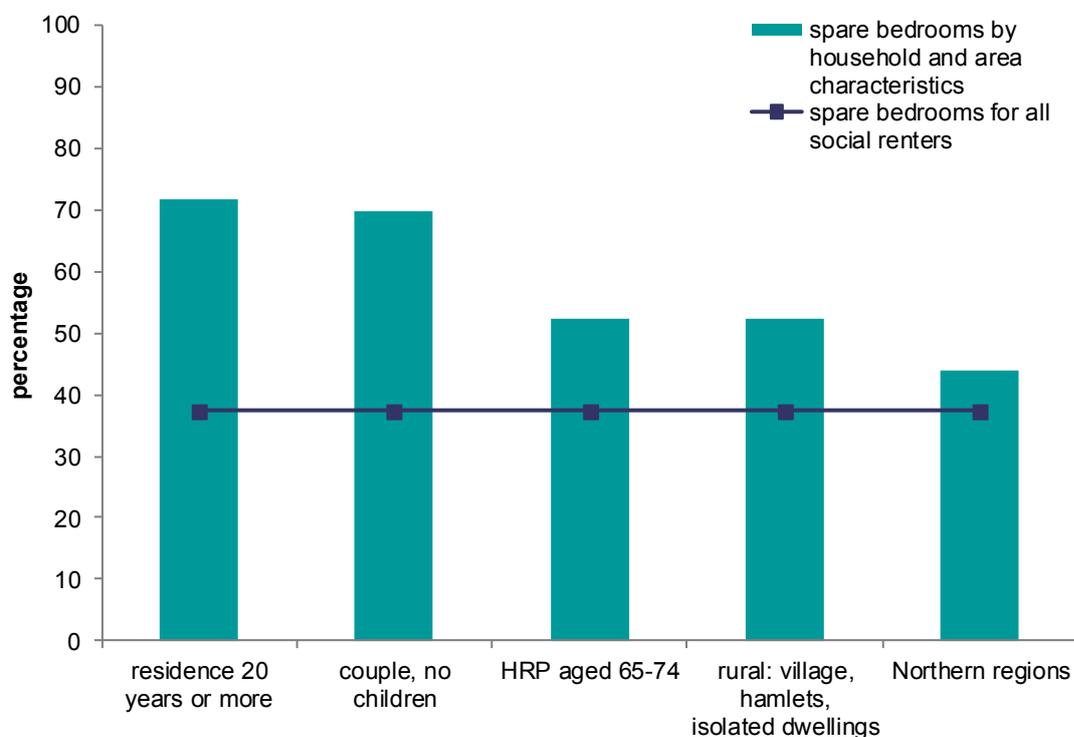
Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

### Age, type and size of household

- 3.5 Households where the HRP was aged 35-44 years were more likely to be overcrowded (12%) than those where the HRP was older, particularly those aged 65 years or over (1%). The rate of overcrowding for under 35s (10%) was slightly lower than for aged 35-44.
- 3.6 Around half of those where the HRP was aged 65-74 years had one or more spare bedrooms compared with 27% where the HRP was aged 35-44 years and 20% of those aged under 35 years, Annex Table 3.1.
- 3.7 Other types of households (which include two or more families and lone parents sharing with other lone persons) and couples with dependent children only, were more likely to be overcrowded. Similarly these two household groups, together with single parents with dependents, were less likely to have spare bedrooms available.
- 3.8 Generally, the larger the household, the more likely they were to lack one or more spare bedrooms. Some 42% of those comprising five or more people

were overcrowded compared with just 3% of two person households. In 2014-15, 8% of social rented households contained five or more people, Annex Table 1.1.

**Figure 3.2: Spare bedrooms in the social rented sector, by household and area characteristics, 2014-15**



**Base: all social renters**

**Notes:**

1) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see Glossary)

2) data are based on three year averages, which are the average of the three years up to and including the labelled date

3) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.1

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

## Ethnicity

3.9 Ethnic minority HRP households were more likely to lack one or more bedrooms than their white counterparts (16% compared with 5%) and less likely to have any spare bedrooms, Annex Table 3.1. In 2014-15, within the social sector, only one quarter of ethnic minority HRP households were single households compared with 43% of white HRP households.

3.10 Similarly, 64% of households from ethnic minorities consisted of multi person households or households with children compared with 40% of white HRP households, Annex Table 3.2.

## Length of residence

3.11 Households who had lived in their current home for at least 20 years were far more likely to have spare bedrooms and less likely to be overcrowded than

---

other households. Those who had lived in their home for less than five years were most likely to have the appropriate number of bedrooms (70% compared with just 25% of those living in their home for at least 20 years), Annex Table 3.1.

### Accommodation type and location

- 3.12 Interestingly, those living in flats were no more likely to be overcrowded than those in houses, although households in houses were much more likely to have one or more spare bedrooms (50% compared with 22%), Annex Table 3.1.
- 3.13 Households living in London and the South East (10%) were more likely to experience overcrowding than those in other regions (4% in northern regions and 5% in the rest of England). In contrast, households in the northern regions (44%) were more likely to have spare bedrooms than London and the South East (29%) and rest of England (40%). Similarly, households in urban areas were more likely to be overcrowded (7%) than those in rural areas: town and fringe (2%) and village, hamlets and isolated dwellings (4%).

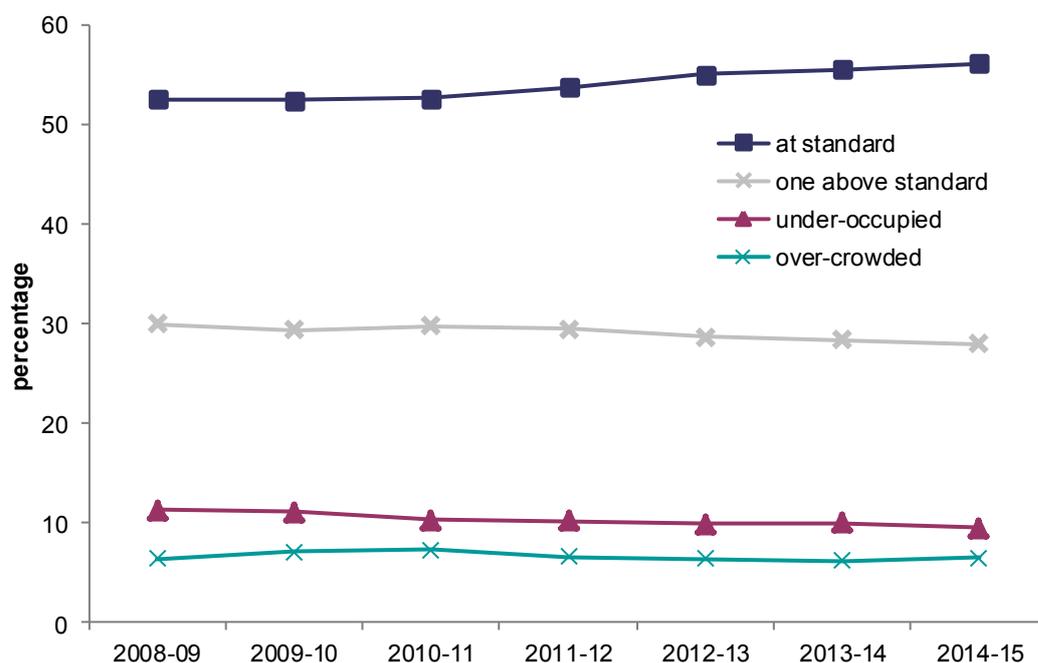
### Trends in overcrowding and under-occupation

- 3.14 In 2008-09, around 251,000 households were in overcrowded social homes falling to around 247,000 in 2014-15. Around 442,000 households were under-occupying<sup>16</sup> their home and a further 1.2 million had at one spare bedroom in 2008-09. These numbers fell to 362,000 and 1.1 million respectively in 2014-15, suggesting that a higher number of social renters are living in homes with the appropriate number of bedrooms, Annex Table 3.3.
- 3.15 The proportion of social renters living in overcrowded homes declined from a peak of 7% in 2010-11, and has been 6% since 2012-13. This finding was also evident for housing association tenants; overcrowding declined from 6% in 2010-11 to 5% in 2014-15. The prevalence of overcrowding has, however, remained constant for local authority tenants since 2010-11, and was at 8% in 2014-15.
- 3.16 There are indications that the proportion of social sector households living in homes with the appropriate number of bedrooms increased between 2008-09 and 2014-15, up from 52% to 56%. Furthermore, the proportion of social renters who were under-occupying their home fell from 11% to 9%, Figure 3.3.

---

<sup>16</sup> two or more bedrooms above the bedroom standard

**Figure 3.3: Trends in overcrowding and under-occupation, 2008-09 to 2014-15**



Base: all social renters

Notes:

- 1) overcrowding and under-occupation are measured using the bedroom standard (see Glossary)
- 2) data are based on three year averages, which are the average of the three years up to and including the labelled date
- 3) underlying data are presented in Annex Table 3.3

Sources:

- 2006-07 to 2007-08: Survey of English Housing;  
 2008-09 onwards: English Housing Survey, full household sample

- 3.17 There were some changes among different household groups between 2008-09 and 2014-15, Annex Tables 3.1 and 3.4.
- 3.18 There was a notable reduction in the proportion of households with spare bedrooms where the HRP was under 35 years (27% to 20%) or aged 45-64 years (50% to 43%). The proportion of overcrowded households remained similar over time for all age groups bar those aged 45-64 years (increase from 4% to 6%).
- 3.19 The proportion of renters who had spare bedrooms at their home reduced most markedly for those households with at least 20 years residence at their current home (78% to 72%).
- 3.20 There was no change in living in an overcrowded home for the largest sized households with five or more people. The proportion of households with spare bedrooms fell for households with two people (57% to 51%) and for single households (43% to 40%).
- 3.21 Living in an overcrowded home for ethnic minority HRP households was similar in both years. The proportion of white HRP households with spare bedroom space fell from 44% to 40%.

---

## Chapter 4

# Housing moves

---

- 4.1 This section explores housing moves for social renters. It presents the number of households moving into, out of and within the social rented sector. More specifically, it explores the reasons social renters considered moving, their main reasons for moving and their experience of local authority or housing association waiting lists.
- 4.2 The main route into social housing is through a waiting list operated by the local authority. An individual or household must apply for social housing. Applicants are then assessed against criteria set individually by each local authority but which by law must give priority to certain types of people, who have a greater housing need. These criteria determine whether applicants qualify to go onto the waiting list as well as their level of priority. In 2015, the government introduced the Right to Move to help existing social tenants move within the social rented sector to be closer to work or to take up a job offer.
- 4.3 Where possible, analysis has been undertaken by household characteristics such as age and household type. Comparisons have been made between 2004-05 and 2014-15 to explore the extent to which trends in social renters' housing moves have changed over the last decade.

### Reasons for moving

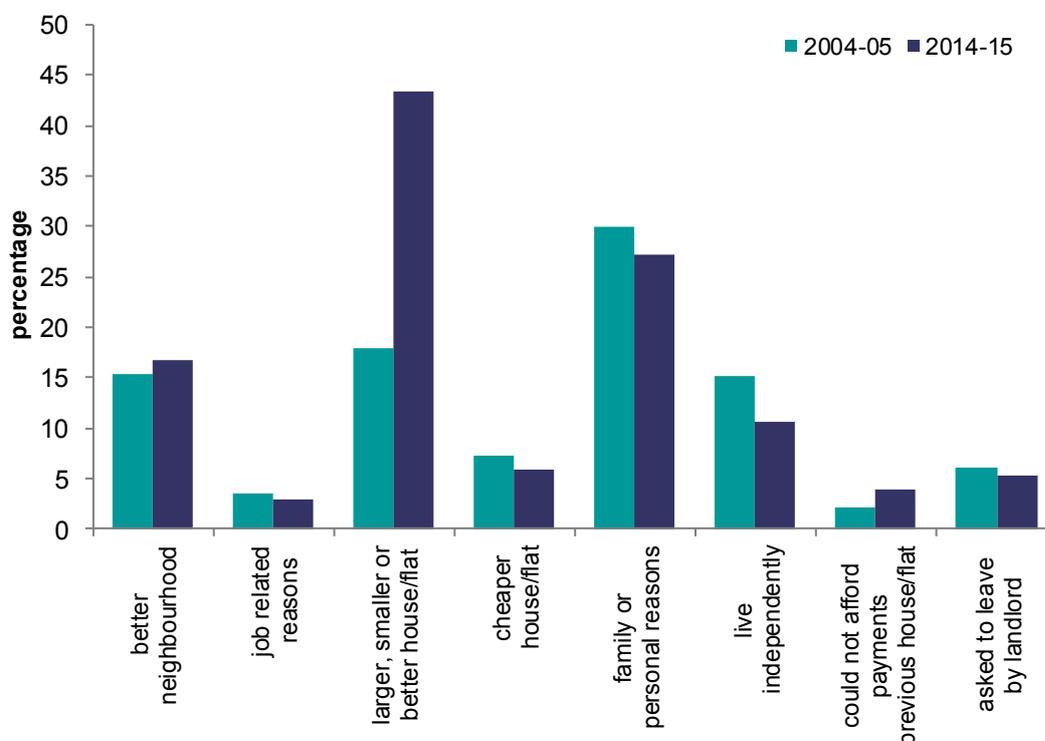
- 4.4 During the household interview, households that had been living in their current home for less than three years were asked the reasons they moved<sup>17</sup>. When answering this question, multiple answers were permitted.
- 4.5 In 2014-15, the most common reason given by social renters in 2014-15 was that they wanted larger, smaller or better accommodation (43%). This is a notable increase of 2004-05, when 18% of social renters who had recently moved gave this reason. However, more categories were offered to respondents in the 2014-15 question. Between 2004-05 and 2014-15 the proportion of social renters who moved because they wanted to buy or live independently decreased from 15% to 11%.
- 4.6 There was no significant change from 2004-05 among others reasons given. In 2014-15, this included family or personal reasons (27%), wanting to live in a better neighbourhood (17%), wanting a cheaper property (6%), had been

---

<sup>17</sup> The 2004-05 Survey of English Housing offered different and fewer answer categories for reasons for moving than were offered in the 2014-15 English Housing Survey. For this reason, answer categories have been combined into more general groups in order to enable comparison between the two years.

asked to leave by their previous landlord (5%), or job related reasons (3%), Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Reasons for moving out of previous accommodation, 2004-05 and 2014-15**



**Base:** all households in social rented sector, who had moved in the last three years

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.1

**Source:** English Housing Survey, full household sample

4.7 In 2014-15, just 4% of social renters who had recently moved said that they had done so because could not afford mortgage payments or rent on their previous house/flat. These 4% were asked why they had not been able to afford the rent. Of these, 25% (or 1% of all social renters who had moved in the past three years) said that their benefit payment had been reduced due to under-occupying, Annex Table 4.2.

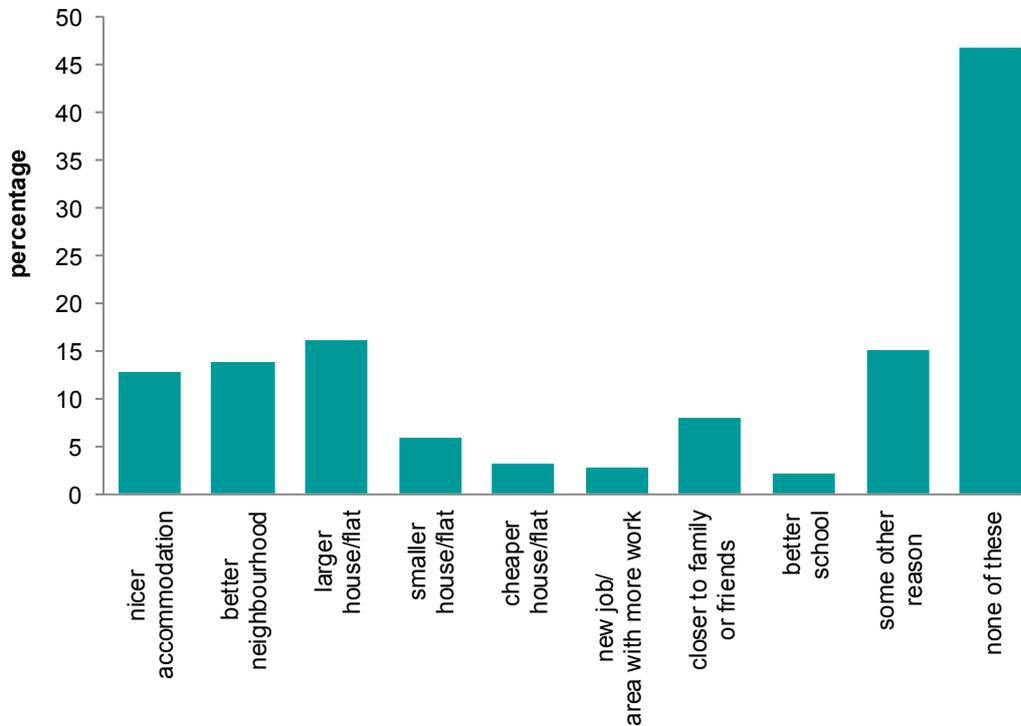
## Reasons for considering moving

4.8 All households in the social rented sector were asked whether they had considered moving in the last 12 months for any of a list of reasons people might consider moving house. When asked, 47% of all renters said they hadn't considered moving for any of the reasons given.

4.9 Of the reasons given, 16% said they had considered moving because they wanted larger accommodation. Of all social renters, 14% considered moving to move to a better neighbourhood and 13% to have nicer accommodation.

Just 3% cited moving to take up a new job or to be in an area with more work, Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Reasons for considering moving, 2014-15**



**Base:** all households in social rented sector

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 4.3

**Source:** English Housing Survey, full household sample

4.10 In 2014-15, younger people were more likely to consider moving to a larger house or flat; 33% of 16-24 and 34% of 25-34 year olds had considered moving to a larger home.

4.11 Moving to a larger property was mentioned by more households with children than those without. Just 6% of households without children mentioned considering moving to a larger home. Of those with children, 42% of households with a youngest child aged 0-4 mentioned considering moving for this reason. The older the youngest child the less likely it was that the household had considered moving to larger accommodation during the last year, Annex Table 4.4.

4.12 The proportion of households that considered moving from their current accommodation because they wanted to move to a better neighbourhood/more pleasant area was highest among parents with dependent children than other household types, at 21%. There was no significant difference between the proportion of lone parents with dependent children and couples with dependent children who mentioned considering moving to a better area, Annex Table 4.5

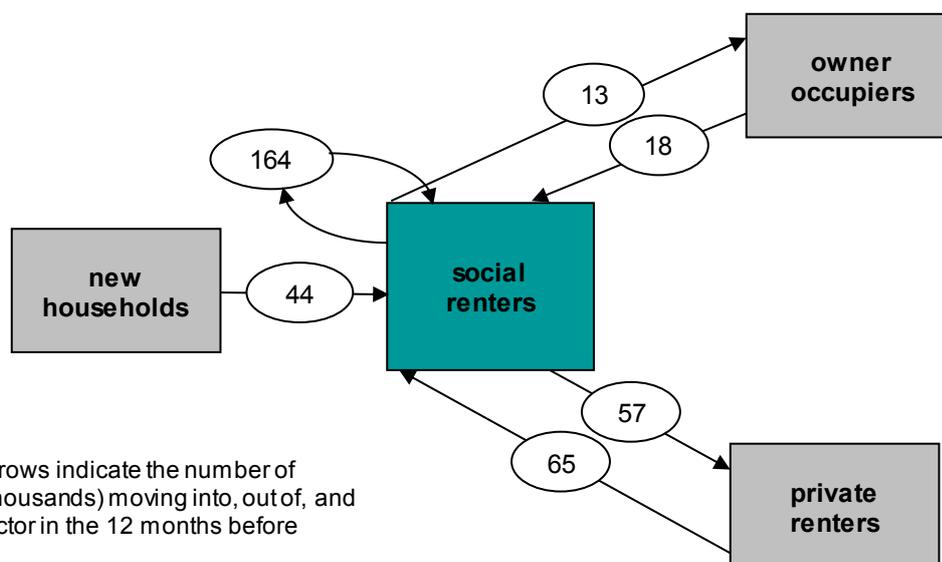
## Waiting lists

- 4.13 Household reference persons (HRPs) were asked whether they or anyone else in the household were on a council and/or housing association waiting list (or transfer list). In 2014-15, 9% of social renters said that there was someone in the household on a waiting list. There was little difference between those in local authority and housing association accommodation, Annex Table 4.6.
- 4.14 Households with dependent children were more likely to have a household member on a waiting list than those without. There was no significant difference in being on a waiting list when the ages of the youngest children in the household were analysed, Annex Table 4.7.

## Movement between and within sectors

- 4.15 This section explores the number of households moving into, out of, and within social rented sector, and the number of new households created in the 12 months prior to interview, Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3: Household moves in the social rented sector, 2014-15**



Figures and arrows indicate the number of households (thousands) moving into, out of, and within each sector in the 12 months before interview. These figures only relate to households that moved from one property to another. They do not include sitting tenant purchasers.

**Base: all households resident less than a year**

**Notes:**

1) underlying data are presented in Live Table FA4301

2) excludes a small number of cases where previous landlord type was unknown

Source: English Housing Survey, full household sample

- 4.16 There was much less movement in the social rented than private rented sector. There were 421,000 moves into the private rented sector, 858,000 from one private rented property to another, and 250,000 out of the private rented sector, Live Table FA4301.

---

# Chapter 5

## Housing condition

---

- 5.1 This chapter examines the housing conditions of social renters over time, by measuring the prevalence of non-decent housing. The definition of Decent Homes was updated in 2006 when the Fitness Standard was replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as the statutory minimum standard for housing<sup>18</sup>. For this analysis, therefore, 2006 and 2014 EHS data have been used to compare non-decent homes over time<sup>19 20</sup>.
- 5.2 In 2006, around 1.0 million (28%) social renters lived in a non-decent home, but this had reduced to 562,000 (14%) by 2014, Annex Table 5.1. The proportion of households living in non-decent housing has always been lower for housing association tenants: 24% in 2006 falling to 13% in 2014, Annex Table 5.3; the equivalent proportions for local authority tenants were 31% and 16% respectively, Annex Table 5.2. The lower prevalence of non-decent housing among housing association homes likely reflects the relatively higher proportion of newer homes in the sector<sup>21</sup>.

### Household characteristics

#### Household type

- 5.3 Among all social renters in 2006, the proportion of households who lived in a non-decent home was very similar for many types of households, ranging from 24% of couples without children, couples with dependent children and lone parents with independent children, up to 30% of single households.
- 5.4 By 2014, the proportion who lived in a non-decent home was also very similar ranging from 11% of couples with independent children to 17% of couples with no children. The most marked percentage point reduction (29% to 11%) over this period arose for couples with independent children, Figure 5.1.

---

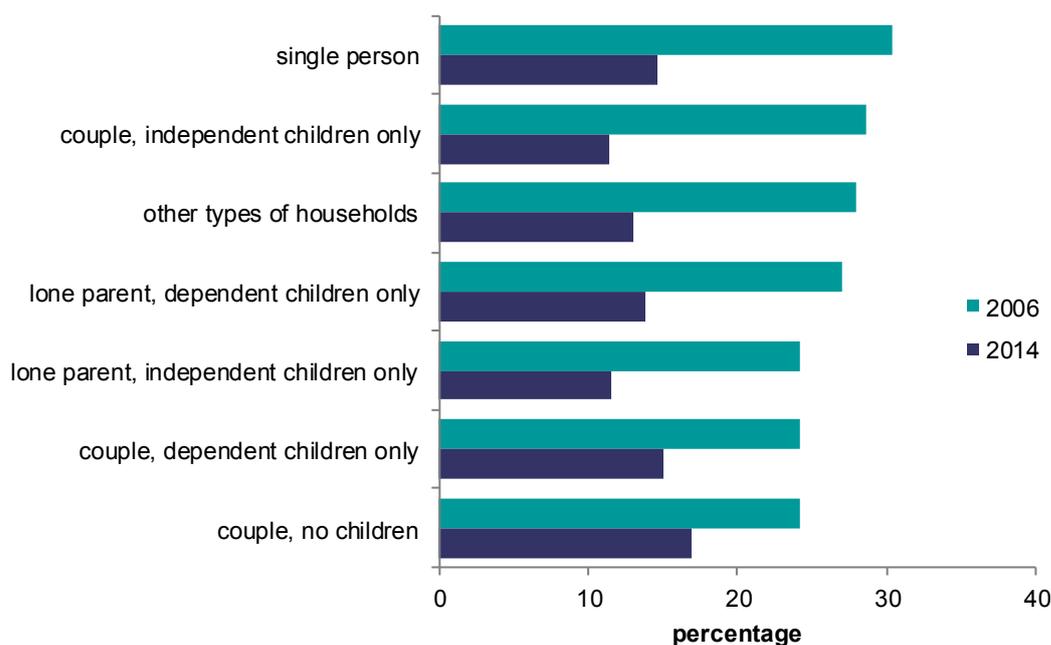
<sup>18</sup> For more details on the Decent Homes Standard and HHSRS: English Housing Survey, Technical Report 2014-15 Chapter 5, Annex 5.5, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey-technical-advice>

<sup>19</sup> The Decent Homes figures using the HHSRS methodology relate to the 15 hazards collected by EHS since 2006.

<sup>20</sup> For wider benefits of the Decent Homes programme, see part 4 of National Audit Office (2010) The Decent Homes programme, Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General HC212, Session 2009-10 London TSO <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/0910212.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> English Housing Survey, Live table DA1101: stock profile, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/stock-profile>

**Figure 5.1: Non-decent homes, by household type, 2006 and 2014**



**Base:** all social renters

**Note:** underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.1

**Sources:**

**2006:** English House Condition Survey, household sub sample

**2014:** English Housing Survey, household sub sample

5.5 Although the proportion of each type of household living in a non-decent home varied among both local authority and housing association tenants in 2006, this was most pronounced for the latter tenure, ranging from 11% of lone parents with independent children to 29% of single person households. By 2014, this disparity among housing associations renters had markedly reduced, and ranged from 8% of couples with independent children to 15% of single households and couples without children, Annex Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

## Ethnicity

5.6 In 2006, 31% of ethnic minority HRP social renters lived in non-decent housing compared with 27% of white HRP households; by 2014 these proportions had fallen to 19% and 14% respectively, Annex Table 5.1. The proportion of housing association renters living in a non-decent home was similar irrespective of ethnicity in both years. In 2014, local authority ethnic minority HRP households (21%) were more likely to live in a non-decent home than their white counterparts (15%)<sup>22</sup>, Annex Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

## Long-term limiting illness

5.7 In both 2006 and 2014, households containing someone with a long-term limiting illness were equally as likely to be living in a non-decent social home

<sup>22</sup> In 2006, there was no significant difference in the likelihood of living in a local authority non-decent home between these two groups.

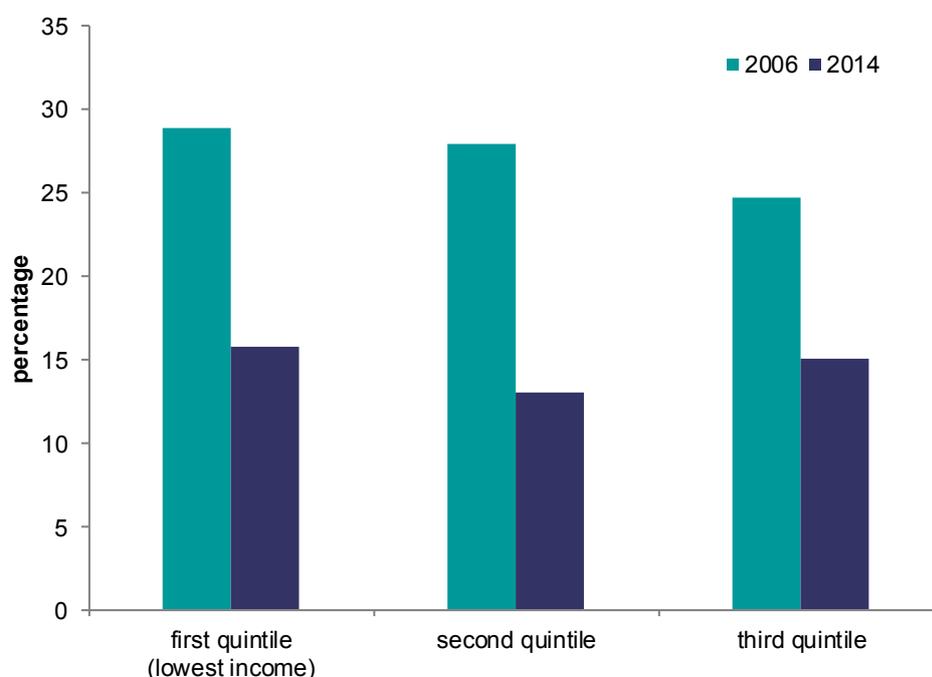
as households without this difficulty. This finding was also evident for both local authority and housing association renters, Annex Tables 5.1 to 5.3.

## Income

5.8 As the vast majority of social sector households were placed among the lowest three income quintiles in England in 2006 and 2014, this analysis will focus on these households<sup>23</sup>.

5.9 There appeared to be no clear relationship between household income and having lived in non-decent housing in both 2006 and 2014. From 2006 to 2014 there was a notable fall in the proportion of households living in non-decent homes for all income groups, but improvement was slightly more marked for the two lower quintile groups, Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2: Non-decent homes, by household income, 2006 and 2014**



**Base: all social renters**

**Note: underlying data are presented in Annex Table 5.1**

**Sources:**

**2006: English House Condition Survey, household sub sample**

**2014: English Housing Survey, household sub sample**

5.10 A similar proportion of local authority households lived in a non-decent home irrespective of whether they were in the lowest, second or third income quintile in both 2006 and 2014. These findings were also evident among housing association renters, Annex Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

<sup>23</sup> Quintiles based on weekly net equivalised income before housing costs, see Technical notes and glossary.

---

# Technical notes and glossary

---

## Technical notes

1. Results for most of this report are presented for '2014-15' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2014 and March 2015 on a sample of 13,174 households. Throughout the report, this is referred to as the 'full household sample'.
2. Some results in the fifth chapter of the report, which relate to the physical dwelling, are presented for '2014' and are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2013 and March 2015 (a mid-point of April 2014). The sample comprises 11,851 occupied dwellings where a physical inspection was carried out and where an interview with the household was also undertaken. Throughout the report, this sample is referred to as the 'household sub-sample'.
3. Where the numbers of cases in the sample are too small for any inference to be drawn about the national picture, the cell contents are replaced with a 'u'. This happens where the cell count is less than five. When percentages are based on a row or column total with unweighted total sample size of less than 30, the figures are italicised. Figures in italics are therefore based on a small sample size and should be treated as indicative only.
4. Where comparative statements have been made in the text, these have been significance tested to a 95% confidence level. This means we are 95% confident that the statements we are making are true.
5. Additional annex tables, including the data underlying the figures and charts, are published on the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>, alongside many supplementary tables that are too numerous to include in our reports. Further information on the technical details of the survey, and information and past reports on the Survey of English Housing and the English House Condition Survey, can also be accessed via this link.

## Glossary

**Area type:** All households are classified according to ONS' 2011 urban-rural classification system:

- **urban:** includes a built up area with a population of more than 10,000 people
- **rural:** includes town and fringe, village, hamlets and isolated dwellings

---

**Arrears:** If the HRP or partner are not up to date with rent payments they are considered to be in arrears.

**Bedroom standard:** The ‘bedroom standard’ is used by government as an indicator of occupation density. A standard number of bedrooms is calculated for each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allowed for each married or cohabiting couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10-20 is notionally paired, if possible, with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, he or she is counted as requiring a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10.

This notional standard number of bedrooms is then compared with the actual number of bedrooms (including bed-sitters) available for the sole use of the household, and differences are tabulated. Bedrooms converted to other uses are not counted as available unless they have been denoted as bedrooms by the respondents; bedrooms not actually in use are counted unless uninhabitable.

Households are said to be overcrowded if they have fewer bedrooms available than the notional number needed. Households are said to be under-occupying if they have two or more bedrooms more than the notional needed.

**Decent home:** A home that meets all of the following four criteria:

- it meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing as set out in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS – see below).
- it is in a reasonable state of repair (related to the age and condition of a range of building components including walls, roofs, windows, doors, chimneys, electrics and heating systems).
- it has reasonably modern facilities and services (related to the age, size and layout/location of the kitchen, bathroom and WC and any common areas for blocks of flats, and to noise insulation).
- it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (related to insulation and heating efficiency).

The detailed definition for each of these criteria is included in *A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation*, Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2006<sup>24</sup>.

**Dependent children:** Any person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or a person aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his

---

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance>

---

or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). It does not include any people aged 16 to 18 who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.

**Dwelling:** A unit of accommodation which may comprise one or more household spaces (a household space is the accommodation used or available for use by an individual household). A dwelling may be classified as shared or unshared. A dwelling is shared if:

- the household spaces it contains are ‘part of a converted or shared house’, or
- not all of the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet, if any) are behind a door that only that household can use, and
- there is at least one other such household space at the same address with which it can be combined to form the shared dwelling.

Dwellings that do not meet these conditions are unshared dwellings.

The EHS definition of dwelling is consistent with the Census 2011.

**Economic status:** Respondents self-report their situation and can give more than one answer.

- **working full-time/part-time:** full-time work is defined as 30 or more hours per week. Part-time work is fewer than 30 hours per week. Where more than one answer is given, ‘working’ takes priority over other categories (with the exception that all those over State Pension Age (SPA) who regard themselves as retired are classified as such, regardless of what other answers they give).
- **unemployed:** this category covers people who were registered unemployed or not registered unemployed but seeking work.
- **retired:** this category includes all those over the state pension age who reported being retired as well as some other activity. For men the SPA is 65 and for women it is 60 if they were born before 6th April 1950. For women born on or after the 6th April 1950, the state pension age has increased incrementally since April 2010<sup>25</sup>.
- **full-time education:** education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.
- **other inactive:** all others; they include people who were permanently sick or disabled, those looking after the family or home and any other activity.

On occasions, **full-time education** and **other inactive** are combined and described as **other economically inactive**.

---

<sup>25</sup> For further information see: [www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension)

---

**Ethnicity:** Classification according to respondents' own perceived ethnic group. **Ethnic minority background** is used throughout the report to refer to those respondents who do not identify as white.

**Full-time education:** Full-time education is education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.

**Gross annual income:** The annual income of the household reference person and (any) partner. This includes income from private sources (regular employment, self-employment, government schemes, occupational pensions, private pensions and other private income), state benefits/allowances and tax credits, as collected on the EHS (this includes Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance but excludes council tax benefit and Support for Mortgage Interest) and interest from savings. It is a gross measure i.e. income before Income Tax or National Insurance deductions.

**Household:** One person or a group of people (not necessarily related) who have the accommodation as their only or main residence, and (for a group) share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area.

The EHS definition of household is slightly different from the definition used in the 2011 Census. Unlike the EHS, the 2011 Census did not limit household membership to people who had the accommodation as their only or main residence. The EHS included that restriction because it asks respondents about their second homes, the unit of data collection on the EHS, therefore, needs to include only those people who have the accommodation as their only or main residence.

**Household reference person (HRP):** The person in whose name the dwelling is owned or rented or who is otherwise responsible for the accommodation. In the case of joint owners and tenants, the person with the highest income is taken as the HRP. Where incomes are equal, the older is taken as the HRP. This procedure increases the likelihood that the HRP better characterises the household's social and economic position. The EHS definition of HRP is not consistent with the Census 2011, in which the HRP is chosen on basis of their economic activity. Where economic activity is the same, the older is taken as HRP, or if they are the same age, HRP is the first listed on the questionnaire.

**Household type:** The main classification of household type uses the following categories, some categories may be split or combined in different tables:

- **couple no dependent child(ren)** married/cohabiting couple with no dependent children or with independent child(ren) only.
  - **couple, no children**
  - **couple, independent child(ren) only**
- **couple with dependent child(ren)** married/cohabiting couple with dependent child(ren) – may also include independent child(ren).

- 
- **lone parent with dependent child(ren)** lone parent family (one parent with dependent child(ren) – may also include independent child(ren)).
  - **other multi-person households:**
    - **lone parent, independent child(ren) only**
    - **other type of household** (includes flat sharers and households containing more than one couple or lone parent family)
  - **one person:**
    - **one person aged under 60**
    - **one person aged 60 or over**

The married/cohabiting couple and lone parent household types (the first three categories above) may include one-person family units in addition to the couple/lone parent family.

**Housing Benefit:** A benefit that is administered by local authorities, which is designed to assist people who rent their homes and have difficulty meeting their housing costs. Council tenants on Housing Benefit receive a rent rebate which means that their rent due is reduced by the amount of that rebate. Private and social housing tenants usually receive Housing Benefit (or rent allowance) personally, although sometimes it is paid direct to the landlord.

**Income quintiles:** All households are divided into five equal groups based on their income (i.e. those in the bottom 20%, the next 20% and so on). These groups are known as quintiles. These can be used to compare income levels of particular groups to the overall population.

**Independent children:** any person aged over 18 or those aged 16-18 who are not in full-time education living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). Independent children may also be referred to as non-dependent children.

**Large Scale Voluntary Transfer:** A Large Scale Voluntary Transfer is the voluntary transfer of ownership of all or some of a local authority's tenanted and leasehold homes to a private registered housing provider, registered by the Social Housing Regulator, in return for a payment for the value of that stock.

**Long-term limiting illness:** This is consistent with the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a long-standing illness, disability or impairment which causes substantial difficulty with day-to-day activities. This is variously referred to throughout the report as long-term limiting illness or disability, long-term illness or disability, and long-term limiting disability.

**New household:** Where neither the household reference person (HRP) nor their spouse/partner occupied the HRP's previous permanent accommodation, in either of

---

their names. The EHS does not differentiate between previous accommodation within England and outside of England (including abroad).

**Overcrowding:** Households are said to be overcrowded if they have fewer bedrooms available than the notional number needed according to the bedroom standard definition. See bedroom standard.

**Private registered providers (PRPs):** private registered providers refer in this document to private providers of social housing in England that are registered with the social housing regulator (from 1st April 2012 this is the Homes and Communities Agency's Regulation Committee). These were previously termed Registered Social Landlords or housing associations. This term excludes local authority registered providers.

**Right to Buy scheme:** The Right to Buy scheme gives secure tenants in a local authority home the opportunity to buy their home at a discount. In order to qualify for the scheme a social tenant must have lived for a total of at least five years in a public sector tenancy.

The scheme is also available to assured tenants of non-charitable housing associations who have transferred with their homes from a local authority as part of a stock transfer. In this case the tenants is said to have a 'preserved Right to Buy'.

The Government has plans to extend Right to Buy to housing association tenants and are currently running a Voluntary Right to Buy pilot scheme amongst a small number of housing associations.

**Recent movers:** Households which moved into their current home in the last 12 months. This includes both new and continuing households, but does not include sitting tenant purchasers.

**Social housing rents:** Most social housing rents are calculated according to 'rent restructuring' policy, introduced in 2001. The overall intention of the policy was that similar properties in similar areas should have similar levels of rents. The formula calculates rents for each individual property based on 30% of the relative property values at 1999 levels, 70% on relative local earnings and the size of the property. The formula rent had been increased annually at the rate of Retail Price Index inflation at the previous September + 0.5% until 2015-16 when it was increased by CPI +1%.

In 2012, the Government introduced Affordable Rent as another main type of social housing rents, which can be set at up to 80% of the market rate of the property, inclusive of service charges.

Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, social housing rents will be reduced by 1% a year, for 4 years except from supported housing, almshouses, community land trusts and fully mutual housing co-ops which will be excepted during the first year.

---

There is also a different arrangement for rents for intermediate rent properties (which falls within the statutory definition of social housing).

**Tenure:** In this report, households are typically grouped into three broad categories known as tenures: owner occupiers, social renters and private renters. The tenure defines the conditions under which the home is occupied, whether it is owned or rented, and if rented, who the landlord is and on what financial and legal terms the let is agreed.

- **owner occupiers:** households in accommodation which they either own outright, are buying with a mortgage or as part of a shared ownership scheme.
- **social renters:** this category includes households renting from Local Authorities (including Arms' Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and Housing Action Trusts) and Housing Associations, Local Housing Companies, co-operatives and charitable trusts.

A significant number of Housing Association tenants wrongly report that they are Local Authority tenants. The most common reason for this is that their home used to be owned by the Local Authority, and although ownership was transferred to a Housing Association, the tenant still reports that their landlord is the Local Authority. There are also some Local Authority tenants who wrongly report that they are Housing Association tenants. Data from the EHS for 2008-09 onwards incorporate a correction for the great majority of such cases in order to provide a reasonably accurate split of the social rented category.

- **private renters:** this sector covers all other tenants including all whose accommodation is tied to their job. It also includes people living rent-free (for example, people living in a flat belonging to a relative).

**Under-occupation:** Households are said to be under-occupying their property if they have two or more bedrooms more than the notional number needed according to the bedroom standard definition. See bedroom standard.

**Universal Credit:** This is a single, means-tested working-age benefit; paid to people whether in work or not. Over time it will replace:

- Child Tax Credit;
- Housing Benefit;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance;
- Income Support; and
- Working Tax Credit.

For more information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

During the 2014/15 EHS survey fieldwork period only a small number of new claimants in pilot areas were eligible for Universal Credit.

---

**Waiting list:** The main route into social housing is through a waiting list which is operated by the local authority. An individual or household must apply for social housing. Applicants are then assessed against rules set individually by each local authority but which by law must give priority to certain types of people, being people in identified housing need. These rules decide whether they qualify to go onto the waiting list and their level of priority.

## Key differences between EHS and SEH data

**Household Reference Person:** From April 2001 the SEH, in common with other Government surveys, replaced the traditional concept of the "head of the household" (HOH) by "household reference person" (HRP). The HRP is defined as the "householder" (that is the person in whose name the accommodation is owned or rented). For joint householders (joint owners or joint tenants), the HRP is whoever has the highest income. If incomes are the same, the older person is defined as the HRP. Thus the HRP definition, unlike the old HOH definition, no longer gives automatic priority to male partners. The switch from HOH to HRP resulted in a lower proportion of male 'Heads'. For this reason, all figures based on the HRP (former HOH) for 1994-95 should be viewed with consideration when comparing them to 2004-05 and 2014-15.

**Household type:** The SEH household type variables are derived based on the eldest person in the household and this is different from the EHS household types variables which are derived based on the HRP. In most households this will not affect the final household type derivation and the SEH 1994-95 and SEH 2004-05 used in this report will be comparable to the EHS 2014-15. This different approach will only be an issue if there is more than one family unit in the household, but even in most of these cases if the eldest family unit is single and there are couples in the household, the household will still be coded as a couple therefore, there will only be a few inconsistencies between the two surveys, see Technical Report, chapter 5 for more details. The EHS 2014-15 household type variable hhtype11 was recoded to match with SEH variable hhcomp in this report.

**Income:** The SEH collected income data based on the households estimate of their income within a band, respondents provided income in terms of either weekly, monthly or annual amounts. For joint income, responses were converted into a monetary value by taking the mid-point of each income band for the household reference person and partner if applicable. Where there was a missing response, the income variable was left as missing and excluded from the analysis. This was different to the EHS income data that was modelled using actual income values for the HRP and partner and factored in all income including benefits. Missing data is modelled and here are no missing income values (see Technical Report, chapter 5 for more details). In this report, SEH income data was used for 1994-95 and 2004-05 and EHS income data was used for 2014-15.

---

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and Signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

*Crown copyright, 2016*

*Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.*

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This document/publication is also available on our website at [www.gov.uk/dclg](http://www.gov.uk/dclg)

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, complete the form at <http://forms.communities.gov.uk/> or write to us at:

Department for Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
Telephone: 030 3444 0000  
Email: [ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ehs@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CommunitiesUK>

July 2016

ISBN: 978-1-4098-4873-8